



Encyclopedia of  
**African American History**



LESLIE M. ALEXANDER AND WALTER C. RUCKER, EDITORS

Encyclopedia of  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY**

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**Leslie M. Alexander and  
Walter C. Rucker, Editors**



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 Octoroon  
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 Poisonings  
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 Pryor, Richard  
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 Sanchez, Sonia  
 Shakur, Tupac  
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### **Political Activity and Resistance to Oppression: From the American Revolution to the Civil War**

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 Abu Jamal, Mumia  
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 Affirmative Action  
 African Blood Brotherhood  
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 Afrocentricity  
 Al-Amin, Jamil Abdullah (H. Rap Brown)  
 Albany, Georgia, Movement  
 Ali, Muhammad  
 Ali, Noble Drew  
 Antiapartheid Movement  
 Antilynching Campaign  
 Asante, Molefi Kete  
 Ashe, Arthur  
 Association for the Study of African American  
     Life and History  
 Atlanta, Georgia, Riot of 1906  
 Baker, Ella  
 Baldwin, James  
 Baraka, Amiri  
 Bass, Charlotta Amanda Spears  
 Bates, Daisy  
 Belafonte, Harry  
 Bensonhurst, New York, Incident of 1989  
 Berlin Conference, 1884–1885  
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 Bethune, Mary McLeod  
 Biko, Steve  
 Black Arts Movement  
 Black Athletes  
 Black Cabinet

Black Codes  
Black Conservatives  
Black Nadir  
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Bloody Sunday  
Bombingham  
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BPP, Los Angeles Branch  
BPP, New York Branch  
BPP, Oakland Branch  
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters  
Brown, Elaine  
Brown, Ron  
*Brown v. Board of Education*  
Bruce, Blanche K.  
Buffalo Soldiers  
Bunche, Ralph  
Busing  
Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture)  
Castro, Fidel  
*Chicago Defender*  
Chicago Race Riot of 1919  
Chisholm, Shirley  
Civil Rights Act of 1866  
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Cleaver, Kathleen Neal  
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Cold War and Civil Rights  
Coleman, Bessie  
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Congressional Black Caucus  
Congressional Reconstruction  
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CORE  
Cosby, Bill  
Cotton States Exposition  
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Destination, Detroit, Michigan  
Destination, Harlem, New York  
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Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1967  
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Disfranchisement  
Double V Campaign  
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East St. Louis, Illinois, Riot of 1917  
*Ebony Magazine*  
Elaine, Arkansas, Riot of 1919  
Ellison, Ralph  
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Evers, Medgar  
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Fanon, Frantz  
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Father Divine  
Fifteenth Amendment  
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Fortune, T. Thomas  
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Hampton, Fred  
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- Hill, Anita  
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Howard Beach Incident, 1986  
Hughes, Langston  
“If We Must Die”  
Jackson, Jesse  
Jackson, Maynard  
*Jet* Magazine  
Jim Crow  
Johnson, Andrew  
Johnson, Lyndon Baines  
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Karenga, Maulana  
Kennedy, John Fitzgerald  
Kennedy, Robert F.  
Kenyatta, Jomo  
Kerner Commission Report  
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King, Martin Luther Jr.  
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Lawson, James  
League of Revolutionary Black Workers  
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Lewis, John  
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Los Angeles, California, Riot 1992  
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Meredith, James  
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Moore, Queen Mother Audley  
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National Council of Negro Women  
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New Negro Movement  
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New York Silent March of 1917  
Newton, Huey P.  
Niagara Movement  
Nicodemus, Kansas  
Nkrumah, Kwame  
Norton, Eleanor Holmes  
Obama, Barack  
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Robinson, Jackie  
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Robinson, Ruby Doris Smith  
Roosevelt, Eleanor  
Rosewood, Florida, Riot of 1923  
Rustin, Bayard  
Scottsboro, Alabama Case  
Seale, Bobby  
Selassie, Haile  
Self-Segregation  
Selma March  
Shabazz, Betty X  
Shakur, Assata  
Sharecroppers Union  
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Sharpston, Al  
Shuttlesworth, Fred  
Simpson, O. J.  
Singleton, Benjamin “Pap”  
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Sixteenth Street Baptist Church  
Soledad Brothers  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
Springfield Race Riot of 1908  
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“Strange Fruit”  
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee  
Students for a Democratic Society  
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Talented Tenth  
Terrell, Mary Church  
*The Birth of a Nation*  
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Thomas, Clarence  
Till, Emmett  
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Trotter, William Monroe  
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Tuskegee Airmen  
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US Organization  
Vietnam War (Black Participation in)  
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War on Poverty  
Ware, Bill  
Washington, Booker T.  
Washington, Harold  
Wells-Barnett, Ida  
White, Walter  
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White Mob Violence  
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Wilkins, Roy  
Williams, Hosea  
Williams, Robert F.  
Wills, Frank  
Winfrey, Oprah  
Woodson, Carter Godwin  
World War I (Black Participation in)  
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# Preface

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**T**he *Encyclopedia of African American History* seeks to introduce readers to the totality of the African American experience, from beginnings in precolonial Atlantic Africa through the dawn of the 21st century. Framed by four interpretive, historical, and historiographic essays, the entire project can be summed up as an introduction to a multitude of themes, across both space and time, that allows readers to connect with the many continuities and discontinuities, tensions and agreements, tragedies and triumphs, and advances and nadirs punctuating African American history. This particular goal is best captured in the symbolism behind the visit by U.S. President Barack Hussein Obama to Ghana's Cape Coast Slave Castle in July 2009. That very moment, at which he passed through the so-called Door of No Return, represented an important point of historical convergence of themes and trends coursing through the African American experience over the past 500 years—from the commodification of black bodies in coastal factories in 15th-century Atlantic Africa to the ultimate expression of black empowerment in the form of Obama's historic election in 2008.

The four 5,000-word section essays written by project editors and members of the editorial board represent fresh interpretive and historiographic segues to the thematic and chronological areas that the editors determined were the major watersheds or pivotal moments and movements in African American history. These themes include

(1) Atlantic African, American, and European Backgrounds to Contact, Commerce, and Enslavement; (2) Culture, Identity, and Community: From Slavery to the Present; (3) Political Activity and Resistance to Oppression: From the American Revolution to the Civil War; and (4) Political Activity, Migration, and Urbanization: Reconstruction, Civil Rights, and Modern African America.

Those contributing the more than 650 smaller essays, ranging in length from 300 to 4,000 words, include archivists, librarians, graduate students, and professional historians and other scholars. Each essay was closely vetted by the editors and selected for inclusion based on a handful of criteria. Above all else, the editors ensured that each entry was clear, uncomplicated, and decisive; factual, descriptive, and explanatory (while avoiding editorializing); and written for intelligent and interested nonspecialists. Given the principal audience for the *Encyclopedia of African American History*—high school students and college undergraduates—the editors solicited and selected jargon-free essays, mostly devoid of specialized and technical language, for inclusion. However, even graduate students and advanced scholars in the fields of American History, African American History, Ethnic Studies, and Black Studies will find this encyclopedia a resource for accessible and useful information. In addition, each entry includes a list of “See also” references to other essays in the encyclopedia that allows readers to easily connect together related topics

and to gain more expansive understandings of particular themes.

Each entry includes a bibliography that can serve as the starting point for more advanced research. All bibliographic entries represent readily available books or articles written by professional historians and other scholars. Students, at various levels, can use the bibliographies to generate more advanced research inquiries and understandings into a vast array of topics related to African American history. In addition, more than 200 illustrations, photographs, and maps are included to further augment the essays. A keenly written introduction, along with the four lengthy section essays, provide the structural framework for the encyclopedia while a detailed subject index allows readers greater understanding of historical connections that exist across chronological and thematic divides in African American history.

A number of editorial decisions helped provide additional shape for this undertaking. Given the various controversies surrounding naming and the proper labels for African Americans, the editors decided to use three main identifiers in the encyclopedia—African American, black, and black American. Whenever possible, the editors tried to avoid using *black* as a noun as opposed to an adjective (as in, “*the black* sought to vote without intimidation”). The usage of the term—as a singular noun—is jarring and grating (and it objectifies human subjects). In the case of

groups residing in Atlantic Africa, the editors try to specify language cohorts (e.g., Akan-speakers, Ga-speakers, Igbo-speakers, etc.) and they actively resist the urge to conflate precolonial African languages with ethnic identities. Likewise, the word “tribe”—a highly problematic, loaded, and empirically unsound concept—is avoided at all costs in the encyclopedia.

Another, more difficult, editorial decision pertained to establishing chronological bookends for the encyclopedia. Though the editors did not face the same momentous task as W. E. B. Du Bois when he began writing the *Encyclopedia Africana*, the scope and scale of the current project—from precolonial Atlantic Africa to the first decade of the 21st century—meant that a few very recent events were left out of the encyclopedia. While the reader will note the entry on Barack Obama, no essays were dedicated in this project to Hurricane Katrina, the Jena 6, the deaths of John Hope Franklin and Michael Jackson, and other noteworthy events directly related to African American history. At some point, the project simply had to end. In addition, as a work of history, it is difficult to gauge the true historical relevance of certain events until several decades have passed. It may well be that some of these recent occurrences will be regarded, by future observers, as mere blips on the historical radar and that they will be greatly eclipsed by events over the next few years. The editors leave that particular assessment and judgment for future scholars to make.

# Acknowledgments

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**I**t has very literally taken a community to create this project. As you might imagine, the process of identifying and compiling the information in this volume has been an overwhelming, daunting, and ultimately thrilling experience. As a result, there are many people who deserve our thanks and gratitude.

First, I would like to thank my family and loved ones who have supported me personally and professionally. I owe everything I am to their love and support: Curtis J. Austin, Sandy Alexander, Michelle Alexander, Nicole Marie Stewart, Jonathan Carter Stewart, Corinne Alexander Stewart, and Carter Stewart.

My deepest intellectual, political, and spiritual inspiration comes from the people I encountered at the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. Although many years have passed since my time as a graduate student at Cornell, I still consider the Africana Studies and Research Center my political and intellectual home. In the nurturing environment of the Africana Center, Ujamaa Residential College, and the Southside Community Center, I learned to love and appreciate the history and culture of African peoples. I have dedicated my life and career to the founding mission of Africana Studies, particularly its commitment to the rigorous study of the history, culture, intellectual development, and social organization of black people and cultures in the Americas, Africa, and the Caribbean; the need to remain grounded in the black community;

and the vital importance of articulating a political agenda for black empowerment. In that spirit, I would like to thank the scholars who have personally touched my life and provided an intellectual and political model for the study of the African Diaspora: Margaret Washington, James Turner, and Sterling Stuckey.

I am also deeply grateful for the intellectual community I have developed at The Ohio State University, especially Lilia Fernandez, Stephanie Smith, Hasan Jeffries, Debra Modellmog, Ousman Kobo, Kevin Boyle, Carol Anderson, Mytheli Sreenivas, Koritha Mitchell, Maurice Stevens, Wendy Smooth, Demetrius Eudell, Cheria Dial, Judy Wu, and John Roberts. In addition, I would like to honor the graduate student assistants who have provided invaluable service over the years, Di Luo, Dawn Miles, and Ernest Perry, along with the larger community of graduate students who have encouraged this project (some of whom have already gone on to greatness): Zawadi Barskile, Robert A. Bennett III, Ashley Bowden, Christina Bush, Tamara Butler, Jelani Favors, Tony Gass, Nicole Jackson, Gisel Jeter, Karen Ngonya, Jason Perkins, William Sturkey, Christianna Thomas, Derrick White, and Noel Voltz.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my co-editor, Walter Rucker, for sharing the trials and tribulations of this important endeavor.

—Leslie M. Alexander

This project would have been impossible without a long list of mentors, peers, friends, and students. As someone who benefited directly from the legacy of Carter G. Woodson—the undisputed father of African American history—I would be remiss if I did not directly thank him for first opening scholarly spaces and venues for advances in the field to be published and heard. As a student intern working for *The Journal of Negro History* during my undergraduate years at Morehouse College, I learned to appreciate all that Woodson contributed in establishing the field by initiating the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Negro History Week, and the *Journal*. In addition, the late John Hope Franklin carried the proverbial torch from Woodson to the newest generation of African Americanists, setting a stellar scholarly example in doing so.

More immediately, I wish to thank Alton Hornsby Jr., Marcellus Barksdale, and Barbara Tagger who first encouraged me to embrace African American history through their outstanding examples as professional historians; Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar—a fellow student at Morehouse and coworker at T. J. Maxx—who compelled me to declare a history major; and Sterling Stuckey and Ray Kea who profoundly shaped my scholarly aptitude in graduate school and beyond. I thank also a long list of colleagues and friends who provided support and encouragement along the way. Ken Goings generously supported this endeavor during his time as Chair of African American and African Studies at

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The many graduate students who did yeoman work for this endeavor have to be recognized. Ernest Perry performed invaluable service from the very inception of the project and his attention to detail and professionalism are much appreciated. Dawn Miles and Di Luo—serving as Graduate Research Assistants—completed mission critical tasks that helped the project get back on schedule. Appreciation is given for the essays contributed by the following graduate students: Jeffrey Ahlman, Zawadi Barskile, Robert A. Bennett III, Ashley Bowden, Christina Bush, Tamara Butler, Tony Gass, Nicole Jackson, Clay Johnson, Karen Ngonya, Jason Perkins, Jamal Ratchford, William Sturkey, and Lindsey Sumner.

Finally, I would like to thank my two Muses—Na'ëem and Njeri—and my co-editor, Leslie Alexander, whose friendship and persistence made the completion of this project possible.

—Walter C. Rucker

# Introduction

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In 1981, Vincent Harding published his classic study entitled *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*. In it, Harding described the black freedom struggle as a river, a “... a long, continuous movement... sometimes powerful, tumultuous, and roiling with life; at other times meandering and turgid, covered with the ice and snow of seemingly endless winters, all too often streaked and running with blood.”<sup>1</sup> For Harding, the black struggle for freedom, justice, and equality was not only natural, but inevitable and undying. Thus, it was his heartfelt desire to honor and celebrate black liberation and self-determination through rigorous scholarship. As a historian, it was his responsibility, he argued, to illuminate the “mysterious, transformative dance of life that has produced the men and women, the ideas and institutions, the visions, betrayals, and heroic dreams renewed in blood that are at once the anguish and the glory of the river of our struggle in this land.”<sup>2</sup> In Harding’s view, this intellectual mission to find meaning in suffering and struggle—in triumph and tribulation—was particularly relevant to the black experience in America and was, he maintained, an essential component to fully understanding the story of our nation, our society, and our humanity. Similarly, historians such as Sterling Stuckey and Margaret Washington have also argued that black resistance and struggle were inevitable, and built upon this concept to illustrate the myriad ways in which African Americans infused their activism

with culture, spirituality, and a deep, abiding connection to their African heritage.<sup>3</sup>

The *Encyclopedia of African American History* embraces these notions—the historical and contemporary inevitability of black resistance, and the influence of African cultural resilience on the black liberation movement—and explores them in four sections, arranged both chronologically and thematically.

## **Atlantic African, American, and European Backgrounds to Contact, Commerce, and Enslavement**

The opening section is dedicated to the complex, intricate, and painful story of the European/African encounter, the rise of the transatlantic trade in humans, and the early enslavement of African peoples in the Americas. In keeping with the larger theme of this study, section one interrogates the role of both European and African elites in the development and perpetuation of the trade, while simultaneously illustrating the ingenious ways in which African peoples resisted and fought against enslavement. As historian Jason Young explains in his introductory essay, interactions between Europeans and Africans were usually “uneven and coerced,” yet it is also clear that Africans—enslaved and free—navigated the terrain with creativity, courage, and defiance. Thus, section one chronicles the origins of the modern

African Diaspora, and the contested nature of the early African presence in America. More specifically, it documents the political and cultural environment in which both black enslavement and the black freedom struggle were born.

### **Culture, Identity, and Community: From Slavery to the Present**

Perhaps more than any other portion of this project, section two investigates and celebrates the power and resilience of African cultural forms in the context of American society. Spanning centuries of African American art, music, dance, spirituality, and forms of resistance—ranging from folktales, religious expression, linguistic forms, jazz music, and soul food—this section seeks to illuminate the dynamic, creative, and spirited ways in which African Americans remained connected to their African heritage despite the horrors of enslavement, segregation, and racial discrimination. As Walter Rucker reveals in his introductory essay, there has been a lively and contentious scholarly debate about the existence, form, and meaning of African cultural retentions in African American life. Yet section two demonstrates that African cultural continuities not only survived the devastating ordeal of enslavement, but served as unifying forces among Africans in America that helped create a sense of identity, racial solidarity, a spirit of resistance, a strong spiritual legacy, and a vibrant musical and literary tradition.

### **Political Activity and Resistance to Oppression: From the American Revolution to the Civil War**

In many ways, sections three and four are in conversation with each other; they are intertwined and are essentially extensions of one another. Section three explores the nature of black political resistance in the early national and antebellum eras, giving particular attention to themes of self-determination, early Black Nationalism, abolition, and the fight for citizenship. As historian Demetrius Eudell notes in the introductory essay, the black freedom struggle during this era was heavily influenced by Revolutionary War rhetoric, which provided a common political language for the spirit of freedom among enslaved Africans and the desire for independence among white settlers. Even so, however, most American rebels were not ready to acknowledge

the ways in which the existence of slavery belied the ideal of freedom. Thus, this was a pivotal moment in African American history and American history more broadly; for while the American Revolution and the subsequent formation of the United States symbolized the triumph of democracy, it also solidified the institution of slavery and black subjugation. As this section illustrates, however, African Americans continued to draw upon their African cultural heritage to enrich and sustain their fight for freedom, justice, and equality.

### **Political Activity, Migration, and Urbanization: Reconstruction, Civil Rights, and Modern African America**

The final section of this project begins where part three concludes—the watershed moment when African Americans were finally released from legal bondage, but were simultaneously stymied by the stubborn tenacity of American racism. As African Americans emerged from slavery, they were faced with new forms of discrimination; most notably, the rise of Jim Crow segregation. Indeed, the paradox of American society persisted; while white Americans espoused notions of democracy and freedom, African Americans languished as they suffered through disfranchisement, segregation, lynch law, and economic deprivation. This obvious contradiction became even more painfully clear during World War II when African American men were sent to fight for freedom and democracy abroad, even as their brothers and sisters faced continual persecution at home. Yet the river of freedom continued to flow. In fact, by the middle of the 20th century, the black freedom struggle became a raging torrent. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements burst onto the American political landscape, irrevocably transforming it. In the final analysis, this era was a testimony to the perseverance of the African American spirit, and the indestructible desire to attain the freedom, justice, and equality that was promised to all of America's citizens.

### **Conclusion**

The story of African American history is clearly rooted in struggle and, ultimately, as Vincent Harding suggested, this struggle—the river of resistance—is both fundamentally human and uniquely African American. While the

quest for freedom and equality certainly reflects a universal human desire, the African American battle for these ideals has been particularly fraught with tension because at the core of American society lies a crucial contradiction: the United States was founded as a country that championed liberty, justice, and equality, but the nation consistently failed to apply these values to African Americans. As one group of African American leaders in the 1850s lamented,

A heavy and cruel hand has been laid upon us. As a people, we feel ourselves to be not only deeply injured, but grossly misunderstood. Our white countrymen do not know us. They are strangers to our character, ignorant of our capacity, oblivious to our history and progress, and are misinformed as to the principles and ideas that control and guide us, as a people. The great mass of American citizens estimate us as being a characterless and purposeless people; and hence we hold up our heads, if at all, against the withering influence of a nation's scorn and contempt.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, the black liberation movement persisted, transformed, thrived, and never surrendered. Thus, the story of Africans in America is, in its essence, a chronicle of a continuous, impassioned crusade to force America to live up to its founding principles: freedom, justice, and equality for all. As such, African American history is *American* history; the two are inextricably linked, and it is impossible to understand one without the other. Yet it is also a history

of Africa, since the culture and values that fueled the African American freedom struggle were also deeply rooted in their African heritage. It is this complexity—the contested juxtaposition of African and American—that this volume seeks to explore.

#### Notes

1. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), xix.

2. *Ibid.*, xi.

3. While Sterling Stuckey and Margaret Washington are certainly not the only scholars to advance intellectual arguments of this sort, they served as mentors to the editors of this project. As such, their ideas uniquely shaped the ideology of this project and therefore their contributions are being highlighted here. Sterling Stuckey and Margaret Washington's most influential works include the following: Sterling Stuckey, *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Sterling Stuckey, *Going through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Margaret Washington Creel, *'A Peculiar People': Slave Religion and Community-Culture among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1988); Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America* (Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

4. *Proceedings of the Colored National Convention, held in Rochester, July 6th, 7th, and 8th, 1853* (Rochester: Printed at the office of Frederick Douglass's Paper, 1853), 16. This quote was also reprinted in James McCune Smith, James P. Miller, and John J. Zuille, "The Suffrage Question," in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), 1:455.





# Atlantic African, American, and European Backgrounds to Contact, Commerce, and Enslavement

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By the turn of the 16th century, Western knowledge of Asia was based on certain theological teachings, classical tales, and phantasmagoria and was shrouded in mystery, misconception, and misunderstanding. In the fourth century BCE, legends of Alexander the Great's conquests included, among other things, tales of Cynophali, or dog-headed men, and Sciopods, or one-legged men who ran with amazing swiftness and used their massive foot as a sunshade when resting.<sup>1</sup> Marco Polo, who had traveled to Asia in the late 13th century, dazzled Europeans with tales of cities and civilizations whose enormity and sophistication not only matched that of Europe, but also eclipsed the West in many regards. Much like earlier legends, Marco Polo also noted the presence of some fantastic creatures including stories of Rukh, a bird of prey so enormous that it could "seize an elephant with its talons . . . lift it into the air, in order to drop it to the ground and in this way kill it."<sup>2</sup> Interestingly enough, while much of Europe's knowledge of the East tended toward fantasy, significant information regarding the topologies, societies, and cultures of Asia and India was available. In the 12th century, Muslim chronicler, Al-Idrisi, had recorded from Sicily in 1154 information on India and Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, communities of European Jews had substantial knowledge of the East through Jewish trade and religious networks that extended from Europe into Eastern lands. In particular, Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jew, traveled throughout Europe and the Middle

East between 1166 and 1171, during which time he visited Italy, Greece, Palestine, Damascus, and Egypt, among other locales. Benjamin's observations, chronicled in *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, bear the distinction of being the first work of the Middle Ages, written in Europe, to mention a possible route to China.<sup>4</sup> As it stands, however, the work of Al-Idrisi and other Muslim scholars went largely untranslated until the 17th century and Christian Europe generally ignored Jewish knowledge of the East.

Regarding Africa, European interest in the continent had been developing since ancient times. Herodotus and other Greek and Roman writers detailed aspects of African life and culture; but much like the chronicles of Marco Polo, these writings were infused with the fantastic and were limited and fragmented in scope. Still, some of the most outlandish stories that ancient writers recorded in reference to Africa turned out to be quite true. So Herodotus wrote in the sixth century BCE, in reference to reports of a Phoenician expedition that rounded the Cape of Good Hope, "there they said—what some may believe, though I do not—that in sailing round Libya [Africa] they had the sun on their right hand."<sup>5</sup> This voyage around the southern tip of Africa occurred well before the 15th-century exploits of Portuguese explorers Bartolomeu Dias, who rounded the Cape in 1488, and Vasco da Gama, who surpassed his predecessor by not only rounding the South African coast but also reaching India in 1497. Thus, the generally held notion

that Europeans first discovered, then navigated the western and southern coasts of Africa in the 15th century is historically inaccurate. But the perdurability of the historical “fact” of a set of European discoveries in this era (including, of course, the “discovery” of America by Christopher Columbus) invites critical attention. V. Y. Mudimbe, in considering the question, argues:

Taken at its first meaning, this discovery [that is, this unveiling, this observation] meant and still means the primary violence signified by the word. The slave trade narrated itself accordingly, and the same movement of reduction progressively guaranteed the gradual invasion of the continent. Thus, doubtless, it was a discovery in this limited sense. . . . We do know what is inscribed in this discovery, the new cultural orders it allowed, and in terms of knowledge, the texts that its discourses built and whose achievement is to be found in . . . the “colonial library.”<sup>6</sup>

The historical veracity of European discoveries in Africa and in other areas of the world is secondary to a much larger project. If the notion of European discovery may not be said to tell *the Truth*, it most certainly tells *a truth*; namely that of European claims to power. As Mudimbe writes, “that discovery spells out only one viewpoint, the European.”<sup>7</sup>

Notably, Eastern interest in and knowledge of the West was also uneven. Many people in the East, including not only Asia but also North and West Africa, regarded Europe as something of a backwater, disconnected from the centers of commodity production and commercial exchange occurring in other parts of the world. Indeed, North Africa, along with West and West-Central Africa, were key centers of global trade in the 15th and 16th centuries, being linked not only to the trans-Saharan trade, but also through the Red Sea to trading networks in South Asia.

Although European knowledge of Africa, India, and the Far East was uneven and largely inaccurate during the 15th century, many in the West desired greatly to retain access to Eastern goods, principally the spices that filtered into Europe through Constantinople, the virtual bridge between Europe and Asia. When, in 1453, Constantinople fell to Ottoman Turks, Europeans faced a veritable commercial and religious crisis. The fall of Constantinople reflected not only the fall of the Byzantine Empire, but also called into serious question Western access to Eastern goods. With Muslim political and commercial power entrenched in the Middle East, and thus in control of the lucrative spice trade,

Western Europeans sought a different route to reach the famed “spice islands.”

From its propitious perch in southwestern Europe, Portugal was well suited to seek a sea route to the East. Prince Henry, son of Portugal’s King João I, led a military offensive against Morocco in 1415 intended to extend the scope of Christian influence in the region. After attacking and sacking the city of Ceuta, Henry’s forces looted gold, spices, oils, and other commodities. In this way, Prince Henry observed North African marketplaces and recognized first hand the wealth and riches that might be had from the Eastern trade. Upon his return to Portugal, Henry devoted himself headlong into overseas commercial expansion. In 1420, Prince Henry was appointed by Pope Martin V to govern the Military Order of Christ, an influential association of noblemen, whose mission had both religious and commercial designs. Indeed, Prince Henry came to be known as “The Navigator” due to his zealous sponsorship of Atlantic exploration. Henry became a patron of Portuguese discovery as he oversaw the development of naval arsenals and observatories and established the *Vila do Infante*, or Prince’s Town, which trained geographers, navigators, and map-makers.<sup>8</sup> Prince Henry’s expansionist designs later received papal sanction when, in 1455, Pope Nicholas V issued a bull, the *Romanus Pontifex*, which granted Christians the right:

to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever . . . and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit.<sup>9</sup>

In effect, Nicholas V claimed for Catholicism all lands and persons, whether yet known or unknown, as the rightful property of the Church. Portuguese expansion, under the aegis of Prince Henry, constituted a particular form of imperialism that enjoyed the political support of the royal court, religious sanction from the highest levels of church authority, and a commercial impetus, driven by European demand for Eastern goods.

Though the early maritime exploration of the Portuguese reflected a singular national zeal and religious fervor, the varied conditions necessary for actual Atlantic expan-

sion required technologies and expertise from a diverse group of people of various nationalities and faiths. Indeed, the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula contributed much to Portuguese overseas designs. Muslims developed several devices, including the astrolabe, the compass box, and cartographic instruments that paved the way for Portuguese navigators. Moreover, the small, mobile ships capable of sailing into headwinds, known as caravels, which were so central to Portuguese expansion, were based on Arab ship-building technology.<sup>10</sup>

In 1418, Prince Henry ordered the occupation of the Madeira Islands, one of several sets of island chains that lay just to the northwest of the western African coast. He later ordered the seizure of other Atlantic islands including the Azores and Canary islands in 1424 and 1427, respectively. Initially, Portuguese forces on these islands were rather modest. They cultivated indigenous plants and introduced other crops including cereals and grapevines. In addition, Portuguese forces established raiding parties on the African continent to secure African labor to work as slaves on these islands.<sup>11</sup>

The rather modest agricultural production taking place on these Atlantic islands shifted drastically during the 1450s when the Portuguese began cultivating sugar on the Madeiras.<sup>12</sup> In great contrast to earlier Portuguese agricultural development on the island, sugar was labor intensive and required a large number of workers. Moreover, sugar production was much more complicated than the harvesting of indigenous plants and required the development of a more intricate system of production. Portuguese officials developed the plantation system on these Atlantic islands that organized and coordinated large-scale cash crop production based on forced labor captured on the African coast. The plantation system integrated large-scale colonial production and global demand, thus fostering Western European notions of mercantilism—a theory of political economy based on the establishment of foreign colonies whose principal function, generally achieved through agricultural production or mining, consists of providing the raw materials necessary for the support and encouragement of industrial production in the mother country. The plantation system was replicated on other Atlantic islands including São Tomé and the Cape Verde islands in the southern Atlantic. Increased sugar production on these islands led to a decrease in the price of the crop, which in turn, spurred demand. Indeed, the plantation system proved so profitable

that it would later be adopted by the Spanish, French, Dutch, and British in other Atlantic locales.

The Portuguese continued to establish trading posts not only along the western coast of Africa, but also in India and Indonesia. Notably, the establishment of the plantation system made clear to European powers that even without identifying an eastern route to Asia, the trade in cash crops, especially sugar, could be profitable. By the turn of the 16th century, thousands of Africans were being taken captive in order to labor on ever-expanding sugar plantations throughout the Atlantic.<sup>13</sup> Due to its prohibitive costs, the consumption of sugar in Europe had initially been restricted to the very wealthy, but within relatively short order, increased production caused a reduction in the price of sugar and resulted, in turn, in an explosive upsurge in demand, especially among men and women of middling status who were increasingly able to afford what had been formerly a luxury product. Increased consumption in Europe required higher production, which meant that more captives would have to be secured to labor on sugar plantations. These developments caused a significant shift in the relations between European merchants and African commercial and political agents.

Illustrative of this shift are the negotiations that occurred between Portuguese trader Diogo Gomes and Mandingo lord Nomimansa. In 1458, Prince Henry dispatched Gomes to negotiate treaties with African rulers. Henry instructed Gomes not to steal slaves or any other commodities, but rather to barter for all that he took. Gomes, however, upon arriving in West Africa saw the riches in ivory, gold, and slaves that might be taken from coastal kingdoms, and disobeyed his orders. Gomes recalled, “I took all by myself twenty-two people who were sleeping, I herded them as if they had been cattle toward the boats, and each of us did the same, and we captured that day . . . 650 people, and we went back to Portugal . . . where the Prince [Henry] was and he rejoiced with us.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Prince Henry likely oversaw the importation of an estimated 15,000–20,000 African captives who served in Portugal as domestic slaves.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, rulers of rival Spain, not to be outdone by their Iberian neighbors, engaged in a program of imperial expansion. By 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain united in an effort to end the 600-year presence of North African Moors in the country. This development galvanized a new politico-religious movement bent on the extension of the power and scope of Christianity while seeking

economic and commercial profit for the mother country. After having won a military victory over the Moors, Spanish authorities quickly passed legislation that called for the expulsion of Jews from the country. Spanish political and religious leaders regarded the expulsion of Muslims and Jews as one aspect of a critical religious war. But if religious conflict characterized late-15th-century Spain, the same may not be said for the entire period of Moorish rule in the Iberian Peninsula. Indeed, the remarkable religious tolerance between Christians, Jews, and Muslims that marked the period was highlighted by significant cultural and religious interaction. The period during which Abd al-Rahman III ruled in Cordoba (912–61), for example, was a time of great opulence in which intellectual circles of Muslims, Jews, and Christians contributed to a flourishing of the arts, literature, astronomy, and medicine.<sup>16</sup> Muslims governing in Spain did not mandate conversion to Islam and in allowing Christians and Jews to observe their faith exhibited tolerance for a people whom they regarded, based on Qur'anic readings, as "People of the Book." This is not to understate the religious and ethnic tensions that most certainly accompanied the Muslim presence in the region, especially after the 13th-century rise to power of the Almoravids. In the end, Arab architecture, language, and culture played a significant role in the region and its legacy is still evident not only in European architecture, but also in the realm of language including such commonly used words as alcohol, almanac, zero, and elixir.<sup>17</sup>

While the Portuguese searched for an eastward route to Asia by establishing trading posts along the coastal areas of Africa, India, and Indonesia, the Spanish gambled on a westward route. Spain sponsored the voyage of an Italian-born navigator, Christopher Columbus, who set sail in 1492 across the Atlantic in search of Asia and the lucrative spice trade. But Columbus knew full well the profits to be had from plantation-style slavery as developed by the Portuguese, and so sought not only a route to the spices of the east, but also desired access to slave labor on the order of the Portuguese example. This intense desire for labor is illustrated in the personal diary of Christopher Columbus who, upon initially coming across native Arawaks in the Bahamas in 1492, noted in his journal, "they should be good servants and intelligent... I will take at the time of my departure six natives for Your Highness." He later made similar observations: "with fifty men they can all be subjugated and made to do what is required of them... a thousand [of

them] would not stand before three of our men... they are good to be ordered about, to work and sow, and do all that may be necessary, and to build towns, and they should be taught to go about clothed and to adopt our customs."<sup>18</sup> In fact, Columbus did have experience with slavery and the slave trade as practiced on Africa's Atlantic islands. Columbus's final port of call before embarking on his transatlantic voyage was not in Spain, under whose flag he traveled, but the Canary Islands.<sup>19</sup>

Within months of Columbus's initial return, Pope Alexander VI issued a papal bull in 1493 that established the earth as the rightful property of the Church to be divided into two regions, the one half belonging to Spain and the other to Portugal. European expansion in this era constituted a particular combination of religious and political aims that is well articulated in the language of the 1493 pronouncement:

Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.<sup>20</sup>

Not wavered by the papal pronouncement, European navigators, not only Spanish and Portuguese, but also Dutch, French, and English, began to develop maps and engage in their own treks across the Atlantic. Indeed, overseas expansion became crucial components of a burgeoning national zeal that swept much of Western Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. The Atlantic Rim operated as a crucial interfaith and intercultural space where European national identities were constructed. Notably, the early development of plantation societies in the Atlantic shifted the Western European gaze away from the spices of the East toward the plantations of the Americas. As a result, the Atlantic Rim, including Europe, America, and Africa, became a complex swirl of race, commerce, and religion.<sup>21</sup>

Atlantic Africans played a critical role in the development of the early Atlantic, serving variously as merchants, sailors, slaves, traders, and clerics. In recent years, scholars have devoted significant attention to the lives and experiences of these Atlantic Africans, noting that during the 17th century, New World colonial societies, especially British North America, developed varied systems of forced labor, of which slavery was simply one among many. That is to say,

slavery existed alongside other forms of coerced labor and did not dominate the economic, social, and cultural formations of colonial British societies as it would in subsequent generations. During this period, one notes a certain openness and fluidity with regard to racial and cultural identities that allowed for a measure of mobility that became progressively closed once the plantation societies of the Americas became more entrenched. Unlike the harshness of fully developed *slave societies* these 17th-century *societies with slaves* were less brutal and afforded for Atlantic Africans a greater measure of mobility. Indeed, during the 17th century, Atlantic Africans often served as cultural and commercial intermediaries, “employing their linguistic skills and their familiarity with the Atlantic’s diverse commercial practices, cultural conventions, and diplomatic etiquette to mediate between African merchants and European sea captains.”<sup>22</sup>

Atlantic Africans intrigue many scholars because their lives exist in stark opposition to the standard images of slavery to which many have become accustomed. Stated simply, the lives of that first generation of Atlantic Africans approximate a degree of personal freedom that would be largely unthinkable just a few decades later. Writing in *Many Thousands Gone*, Ira Berlin argues that Atlantic Africans enjoyed special knowledge and experiences along with a “genius for intercultural negotiation.”<sup>23</sup> They were presumably more confident than other Africans and, as a result, were regularly regarded by Europeans as insolent, impertinent, and arrogant. While Berlin never makes the claim outright, the notion that Atlantic Africans exhibited sagacity and genius vis-à-vis their interactions with Europeans suggests that other Africans were less sagacious than their presumably more cosmopolitan counterparts. That Atlantic Africans led lives apart is beyond question. They traveled back and forth between the continents that comprise the Atlantic Rim and, in many cases, they had experiences that rendered their lives remarkable, often involving, among other things, piracy, military exploits, resistance, and rebellion. But this should not be read to mean that Atlantic Africans were a people apart, distinct from other Africans by talent or intellectual capability. This is an important matter because the cultural interplay indicative of the lives of Atlantic Africans is occasionally rendered so as to suggest a type of racial exceptionality. Indeed, many, though certainly not all, Atlantic Africans were the children of African women and European traders. The talent and ingenuity

that Berlin ascribes to Atlantic Africans may very well be applied to other Africans. As noted above, West and West-Central Africa had been connected through commercial, cultural, and religious networks to the Middle East, India, and Asia in the centuries preceding the Atlantic slave trade. That is, they were engaged in global systems of trade and communication and there is no reason to believe that they were not cosmopolitan in any sense of the word. We know, for example, that European traders along Africa’s west coast marveled at Africans’ skill with language and noted their keen ability in negotiating terms of trade.<sup>24</sup> As John Thornton notes, Africans were well aware of the global systems of trade and competition that marked Atlantic trade and sought, to the best of their ability, to secure beneficial terms at every point.<sup>25</sup>

If the 17th century offered a certain access, freedom, and mobility, a cursory look at the biographies of some Atlantic Africans encourages a qualification of the degree of mobility and movement so often attributed to blacks who lived around the Atlantic Rim during the 17th century.<sup>26</sup> While many argue that Atlantic Africans existed at cultural interstices, I think it important to note that this intercultural space was often uneven and coerced. That is, rather than operating in the liminal spaces between cultures, blacks around the Atlantic were ever made to approximate European culture. In the main, they adopted (or were ascribed) European names, spoke European languages, and were forced to dress and exhibit themselves in accordance with European norms of posture, composure, and attitude. Through religious conversion, the adoption of European dress, diet, and comportment, Atlantic Africans were made to mimic the cultures of the English, French, or Dutch, even if only imperfectly so. So Albert King, born Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, adopted the language and cultures of the Dutch who enslaved him in the early 18th century. Being thus “clothed in the Dutch or English manner,” Gronniosaw donned not only European-styled dress, but also adopted the prejudices and predilections of his captors, coming to regard Africa as a land of devilish heathens and Europe as a space of moral and religious piety and purity.<sup>27</sup>

Consider, for example, the oft-cited life of Anthony Johnson, a captive African who arrived in Virginia in 1621. Johnson married, fathered four children, and eventually earned his freedom in the colony where he became a landholder in his own right. Indeed, he was among the most successful and long-lived planters in the colony. Although

he was called “the ole’ African” in 1654, Johnson did not die until 1670.<sup>28</sup> Even more than this, Johnson was confident and outspoken. He filed suit against fellow whites in his community in order to secure, protect, and recover property, including slaves, and he enjoyed some significant success in this regard. He once defended himself against allegations of slothfulness and laziness by reminding his accuser, a notable Virginia planter, “I know myne owne ground and I will worke when I please and play when I please.”<sup>29</sup> Given his notable success in Virginia, many scholars have taken the example of Johnson’s life as evidence of the greater access, mobility, and rights that blacks enjoyed in various parts of the Atlantic world during the 17th century.

Still, analysis of Johnson’s presumed freedoms may be tempered by the machinations of power and patronage in colonial Virginia. Indeed, most of the advancements that Johnson made during his lifetime required the sanction of his owners, the Bennetts, who allowed him to farm independently while still a slave, marry, and baptize his children. It is perhaps this patronage that encouraged Johnson to file suit against other members of the colonial elite, though he initially proved reticent of inviting the ire of white planters. In fact, the planters against which Johnson filed suit had previously accused John Johnson, Anthony’s son, of committing fornication and other enormities with a white servant, Hannah Leach. John Johnson was convicted of the crime and sentenced in 1665 to labor in the local workhouse. In the end, Anthony Johnson left Virginia at mid-century to build a life in Maryland. In 1670, some months after his death, Virginia courts failed to restore to his family lands that Johnson had owned on grounds that Johnson was “a negro and by consequence an alien,” thus highlighting the growing importance of racism in colonial legislation.<sup>30</sup>

The generation of Atlantic Africans to which Anthony Johnson belonged quickly gave way to the rising tide of plantation slavery that swept the New World during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The uneven, though significant, access afforded blacks in the 17th century dissipated. In addition, the various ambiguities inherent in colonial law with regard to Africans were clarified toward a greater solidification of power in the hands of the slaveholding class. In 1662, the Virginia legislature passed an act establishing that “all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother, and that if any Christian shall comitt fornication with a negro man or woman, hee or shee soe offending shall pay double

the fines imposed by the former act.”<sup>31</sup> In this single piece of legislation, colonial officials effectively took control over the sexual politics of both black and white women. That is, white women’s sexuality was controlled through the institution of marriage. In line with the principle of patriarchy, a man could establish heirs through his children who, in turn, looked not to their mother for inheritance and wealth, but rather received varied privileges and rights based on paternity. Indeed, this had long been standard practice in British law. In instituting this law in 1662, colonial authorities diverged from the British practice in an attempt to control the sexual politics of black women by establishing property rights over the children born of interracial unions.

While the Virginia assembly sought to control the sexual politics of black women, so the Maryland General Assembly tackled the thorny question of freeborn white women who married blacks. After rendering synonymous blackness and slavery, thereby assigning to all members of the former category the status of the latter, the language of the act continues:

and forasmuch as divers freeborn English women, forgetful of their free condition and to the disgrace of our nation, marry Negro slaves, by which also divers suits may arise touching the issue of such women, and a great damage befalls the master of such negroes for prevention wherof, for deterring such freeborn women from such shameful matches. Be it further enacted by the authority, advice, and consent aforesaid, that whatsoever freeborn women shall marry any slave . . . shall serve the master of such slave during the life of her husband.

In effect, colonial officials authorized the control of the sexual politics of freeborn women by establishing rights over them if they chose to marry men of African descent. In this way, colonial officials maintained rights over white women, be they married to a white or a black man. In other ways as well, colonial officials looked to the law to establish more firmly slavery in the Americas. Where British common law held that Christians could not lawfully be enslaved, the Virginia legislature passed an act in 1667 establishing that baptism “doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom.” Interestingly enough, colonial authorities regarded the passage of this law as a mercy for slaves because it presumably opened the way for Christian conversion for African captives, thus ensuring the eternal salvation of their souls, even if their bodies be damned in the here and now.

While British North American colonial law paved the way for the establishment of slavery, the intensity of the slave trade that supplied the burgeoning colonies with labor increased dramatically on the western coast of Africa. European traders—no longer capable of seizing through kidnap enough Africans to satisfy colonial demand for labor—established posts along the coast of Africa and relied on African coastal traders along with royal authorities to capture and transport captives from the interior regions. In this way, African trade networks, which had previously been oriented eastward, toward the Saharan trade, became increasingly focused on the western trade, supplying European traders with African laborers. The extent to which the presence of European traders on the West Coast of Africa affected African cultures and societies has been a matter of intense historical debate for decades. These debates have been so crucial for several reasons, not the least of which results from the fact that discussions about slavery and the slave trade often occur in the midst of contemporary debates concerning racial justice, colonialism, and, perhaps most important, historical culpability.

Many of the early interpretations of the slave trade regarded it as an essential good for the societies of West and West-Central Africa, contending, among other things, that the slave trade spurred economic development for the societies involved. J. D. Fage argued, “there seems in fact to be a close correlation in West Africa between economic development... and the growth of the institution of slavery... in West Africa.”<sup>32</sup> Early scholars implied that Africans required something like a centuries-long transatlantic slave trade before their labor and economy could be made productive. As one scholar noted, “to see enslavement as the precondition of the growth of states is étatiste and elitist in the extreme.”<sup>33</sup>

A revision of these interpretations occurred in the midst of anticolonial movements throughout Africa and Latin America, along with the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Perhaps most influential in this scholarship was the work of Walter Rodney who argued that the Atlantic slave trade, rather than serving a positive good for the African societies involved, was actually detrimental to West and West-Central Africa. Moreover, Rodney argued that the transatlantic slave trade contributed much to the more contemporary economic, political, and social malaise affecting much of the African continent in the

postcolonial era.<sup>34</sup> Rodney’s positions came into question in large part because, as Walter C. Rucker notes, “while it is quite true that European imperial domination of the continent indeed contorted its features and disrupted its outlines, down-streaming that specifically modern reality back to the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries might be to project too much European power and control back through time.”<sup>35</sup> In effect, though Rodney and others revised early scholarship on the slave trade, they did so at the cost of presenting Europeans as the ultimate actors and agents of historical change in Africa.

New work in the field has offered yet another revision, focusing increasingly on the active role that Africans themselves played in the development of the transatlantic slaving system. Of these John Thornton’s thesis is perhaps the most controversial. Thornton, writing in *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, argues that Europeans did not possess either the military nor the political power necessary to force Africans to sell slaves against their will; and further, severe competition among various European powers on the west coast of Africa meant that no one power was able to affect a monopoly over trade that would have enabled them to dictate the terms of trade. Instead, Thornton argues that Africans, as shrewdly demanding traders, were the prime negotiators of the terms of trade. As such, Thornton contends that African participation in the slave trade was voluntary.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, this revisionist stance along with a downward re-estimation of the numbers of Africans enslaved during the transatlantic slavery have been read by some critics as an attempt to palliate European crimes against humanity in the past and, by implication, to minimize more recent economic and political injustices along with present-day inequalities and violence. Surely, this is not Thornton’s aim, though he does seem to discount the role that European powers played in the development of the transatlantic slave trade. Perhaps more important, however, Thornton’s suggestion that African participation in the slave trade was voluntary effectively reduces human action to the level of individual conscious volition. As Robin Law suggests in a review of Thornton’s thesis, “although individual actions may be ‘free,’ the overall outcome corresponds to nobody’s conscious intention, but reflects the internal logic of the economic system: in this sense rather than Europeans imposing their will upon Africans, both European purchasers and African sellers of slaves might be seen as subject



to a form of economic necessity.<sup>37</sup> In the end, the true test of African voluntary participation lies not in the decisions of coastal slave traders and royal courts to provide Europeans with slaves, but rather hinges on the experiences of those who opted out of the trade. That is, in order to be fully voluntary, West African traders and political leaders must be shown to have been “free” not to participate in the trade. In fact, one finds that the choice to participate in the trade was not equal. The attempts made by King Afonso of Kongo are instructive here. When members of his family along with other nobility were captured and sold as slaves to Portuguese merchants, Afonso wrote to Portuguese heads of state, railing against the brutality and licentiousness of slave traders. He attempted to make the trade illegal in Kongo and expressed his conviction that as far as the Luso-Kongo trade was concerned, Kongo had need only of priests, teachers for the schools, and materials necessary for sacraments.<sup>38</sup> Afonso’s request fell on deaf ears as the slave trade increased precipitously despite the king’s desire to see it stopped. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Kongo kings wrote to papal authorities and European monarchs in unsuccessful attempts to address and remedy the harmful effects of an ever-increasing trade.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps Elizabeth Isichei writes it best when she argues that the trade in slaves “was essentially an exploitive alliance between a comprador class—rulers, merchants, and military aristocracy—which joined with an external exploiter to prey upon the peasant population.” Indeed, Walter Rodney suggested as much years ago when he argued: “The responsibility for the slave trade, as far as Africans bear the responsibility, lies squarely upon the shoulders of the tribal rulers and elites of coastal polities. They were in alliance with the European slave merchants, and it was upon the mass of the people that they jointly preyed.”<sup>40</sup>

Notably, recent scholarship illustrates the great lengths to which Africans at all levels of society resisted Atlantic slaving. So Sylviane Diouf argues that Africans engaged in various strategies of resistance including resettling to isolated areas, building fortresses, transforming the natural habitat, forming secret societies, and engaging in armed resistance among others.<sup>41</sup> By these varied methods, Diouf contends that millions of people were likely spared the horrors of the slave trade.

The entries that follow chronicle, in detail, the historical developments that resulted in the creation of an African Atlantic world between the 15th and 18th centuries. Taken

together, these entries are critically important for several reasons, not the least of which stems from an intense treatment of the crucial role played by Africans in the political, social, and economic development of the Atlantic world. Notably, Africa is regarded in its specificity in this volume and thus enables a more enhanced understanding of the particular roles that specific Africans played in the development of the region during the era of slavery and the slave trade. Moreover, these entries highlight several of the key features constitutive of the modern world including the rise of burgeoning capitalist production and consumption, globalization, and industry inasmuch as the raw materials produced in colonial regions were used to support increasing factory production in Europe.<sup>42</sup> Because Africans on the continent along with their contemporaries and progeny held captive in the New World played a persistent role in the development of the Atlantic world, they must be regarded as critical agents of change in a burgeoning modern world, rather than as its mere victims.

Jason Young

#### Notes

1. John Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 8, 9.
2. Manuel Komroff, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing, 1926), 313; Larner, *Marco Polo*, 80, 144–46, 60–67.
3. John Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 183, 329; Larner, *Marco Polo*, 12.
4. Larner, *Marco Polo*, 13; Benjamin Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Travels in the Middle Ages* (Malibu, CA: J. Simon, 1983).
5. Herodotus, *Herodotus*, 4 vols., trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920–25), quoted in V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 18.
6. Mudimbe, *Idea*, 17.
7. Ibid.
8. Peter Russell, *Prince Henry “The Navigator”: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 317, 345.
9. For a fuller treatment of the *Romanus Pontifex* see Mudimbe, *Idea*, 31–37.
10. Esposito, *Islam*, 169, 180–81, 317–20.
11. Russell, *Prince Henry*, 131, 251.
12. Ibid., 90–91.
13. Ibid., 97, 131, 251.
14. Diogo Gomez, *De la Premiere Decouverte de la Guinee* (Bissau, Guinea-Bissau: Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa: Sociedade Industrial de Tipografia, 1959), 22; Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 69.
15. Russell, *Prince Henry*, 258; Thomas, *Slave Trade*, 21–24.

16. Esposito, *Islam*, 317–18.
17. *Ibid.*, 320.
18. Clements Markham, ed., *The Journal of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Burt Franklin Publisher, 1971 [1893]), 38, 41, 114.
19. *Ibid.*, 17.
20. Quoted in Mudimbe, *Idea*, 30.
21. See, for example, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).
22. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998), 17.
23. *Ibid.*, 23.
24. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 43–47, 53, 55, 57.
25. *Ibid.*, 57–66.
26. See, for example, Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*; Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many Headed Hydra*.
27. James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, Related by Himself* (London: R. Groombridge, 1840 [1770]), 7–9.
28. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 41.
29. *Ibid.*, 43.
30. Timothy Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640–1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 43; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 90; Charles Johnson, ed., *Africans in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 44.
31. John Johnson's conviction for fornication with Hannah Leach would have fallen under this legislation.
32. J. D. Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 3 (1969): 397, 400.
33. C. Wrigley, "Historicism in Africa: Slavery and State Formation," *African Affairs* 70, no. 279 (April 1971): 113–24, quoted in Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Nigeria* (London: Longman, 1983), 107.
34. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974).
35. Walter Rucker, "The African and European Slave Trades," in Alton Hornsby Jr., *A Companion to African American History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 51.
36. Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 125.
37. Robin Law, "Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 1 (1993): 192.
38. Louis Jadin and Mireille Dicorato, *Correspondance de Dom Afonso; Roi du Congo, 1506-1543* (Bruxelles: Académie Royale des Sciences d'outre-mer, 1974), 156.
39. Joseph Miller, "Central Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490s-1850s," in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda Heywood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28, 34.
40. Elizabeth Allo Isichei, *A History of Nigeria* (London: Longman, 1983), 108; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 144.

41. Sylviane Diouf, ed., *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), xii.

42. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

## Acculturation

Acculturation describes the transformative process that occurs when two or more groups have prolonged contact. Presumably any cultural/ethnic group can experience acculturation. How this process looks in concrete terms varies as a function of the nature of the intercultural contact as well as the specific cultural elements within each group. Given the historically oppressive relationship of contact between African Americans and whites, the defining criteria of acculturation appears to be the degree to which ethnic and cultural minorities participate in the cultural beliefs, traditions, and practices of their own culture versus those of the majority group.

Though clearly acculturation was a real phenomenon experienced by Africans and their descendants throughout the Western Hemisphere, the search for cultural retentions among enslaved Africans and their descendants has received a heavy amount of the attention in recent scholarly work. Scholars across a number of disciplines have been divided into one of three major interpretive camps: the Annihilationist school, the Africanist school, and the Creolization school. Robert E. Park, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, was the father of the Annihilationist approach. Writing in 1919, he claimed that slavery had obliterated African culture and that nothing in the culture of African Americans living in the U.S. South could be traced back to African roots. The Annihilationist School was later championed by one of Park's former students, E. Franklin Frazier. Frazier contends, in three separate works, that slavery destroyed the black family and this reality facilitated their Americanization and the complete annihilation of African culture in the United States. As a black sociologist, he sought to de-emphasize any nonmainstream elements in African American culture in order to promote social goals like integration, black suffrage, and equal rights.

The pioneering efforts of anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits sought to counter the Annihilationists' claims. His 1941 work, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, illuminated

several examples of African influences in the sacred and the secular ethos of African Americans. Herskovits not only established the foundations for the Africanist School, he also challenged several prevailing myths about African American life in the United States. By demonstrating tangible cultural links between Africa and its diasporic communities—that is, communities of Africans dispersed outside of Africa—Herskovits took full aim at several misconceptions, including the notion that Africans came from extremely diverse cultures and were randomly distributed in the Americas in a concerted attempt to undermine their ability to fashion a collective identity. The Africanist School, therefore, actively searches for evidence of “Africanisms” in areas such as religion, language, family, and socialization among other areas.

The third school of thought, serving as an interpretive middle ground between the Annihilationists and the Africanists, is the Creolization School. This approach is epitomized by the work of anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price. In 1976 they published *The Birth of African-American Culture* with the intent to critique and revise Herskovits’s earlier findings. They claimed that Africans transported across the Atlantic to become slaves in the Americas developed and created a culture that cannot be characterized simply as African. According to their research, the nature of the slave trade and enslavement in the Americas made the continuity of African culture nearly impossible. Mintz and Price contend that, while African culture was an important element of African American culture, it was by no means central and not independent of European influences or new cultural developments in the Americas arising out of the slave experience. In this regard, acculturation (or creolization) was something that began in the holds of slave ships and continued through the experiences of enslaved Africans on Western Hemisphere plantations. African American culture, therefore, is a product of cultural fusion and was as connected or disconnected to Africa as it was to Europe and the unique social and cultural milieus of the Americas.

Acculturation will continue to exist as a concept and lived experience for centuries to come. As globalization broadens economic and political ideas, it also increases contact among a diverse group of people. The end result of such sustained contact is the creation of cultural polyglots, which, themselves, are the result of acculturation. For African Americans the process may be encapsulated best

by conceptualizations like W. E. B. Du Bois’s “Double Consciousness,” Paul Gilroy’s “Black Atlantic,” or Ira Berlin’s “Atlantic Creoles.”

See also: Amalgamation; Atlantic Creoles; Double Consciousness; Salt-Water Negroes

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## African Burial Ground, New York City

The New York African Burial Ground—the oldest and largest cemetery for enslaved Africans in the United States—was unearthed in 1989 as construction workers prepared to install a 34-story federal office building in lower Manhattan. Following the discovery that the building site was situated above an 18th-century “Negroes Burying Ground,” a crew of archaeologists was employed to conduct an archaeological excavation. In 1991, the construction of the federal office building ensued alongside an extensive archaeological dig that uncovered the skeletons of more than 400 enslaved Africans buried at the cemetery during the early to late 18th

century. The excavation and construction project was suspended in 1992 following a congressional mandate issued largely in response to a public demand. The African American New York community pressured the federal government to ensure that the skeletal remains of their African ancestors be appropriately studied and ultimately reinterred.

In 1992, a team of researchers from Howard University's department of sociology and anthropology began studying the skeletal remains found at the African Burial Ground site. The New York African Burial Ground—formerly referred to as the Negroes Burying Ground—was established in 1712 and used until 1794 as the final resting place for “people of African descent, paupers (poor people), and British and American prisoners of war during the American Revolution” (Hansen and McGowan, 2). The enslaved populations interred at the burial site were believed to have originated from West Africa, West-Central Africa, and the Caribbean, exported to the North American mainland through the Atlantic slave trade.

By 1644 when the British acquired New Amsterdam, subsequently renaming the territory New York in reverence of the Duke of York, increasing numbers of enslaved Africans were channeled into the colony to labor for British colonists. As a consequence of the English acquisition of New Amsterdam, black New Yorkers—enslaved and free—were subject to more restrictive laws that suppressed New York Africans' ability to participate in the social and religious institutions that existed in colonial New York. With the strict governance of the social, religious, and political welfare of enslaved New Yorkers came orders that regulated the activities of enslaved blacks during nonlaboring hours. Due to the special edicts designed for persons of African descent residing in New York City during the colonial period, New York Africans were forced to bury their deceased outside of the New York City limits.

With the suppression of the social and human liberties of enslaved Africans in New York City, enslaved blacks fashioned the African Burial Ground as one of the initial social institutions established by enslaved Africans in the colony. The institution of slavery and its practitioners consistently challenged the humanity of the enslaved who were routinely forced to relinquish their identities through arbitrary “renaming” practices, separated from kin—blood born and fictive, prohibited from the exercise of religious expression, and defrauded the ability to communicate through the use of indigenous African languages. The assault on the African

identity, culture, physical and social mobility, and overall humanity, coupled with the legal mandates that prohibited enslaved blacks from sharing burial space with whites, made necessary the African Burial Ground among other Negroes Burying Grounds interspersed throughout the African Diaspora.

West African culture remained a consistent influence on enslaved Africans in the Americas during the colonial and postcolonial periods. The effect of West African culture on enslaved blacks in New York was articulated through the retention of various West African traditions and beliefs, especially as it related to funerary customs. The use of burial shrouds, the ritual adornment of bodies and coffins, and even the physical orientation of the bodies demonstrate links to West African spiritual practices alive in colonial



*Photograph of Burial 213 at New York's African Burial Ground shows a brick drain constructed during the 19th century extending down through the grave. (National Park Service)*

New York City. Researchers involved in the African Burial Ground Project recognized almost immediately the African continuities that existed, reflected in the various ornaments, engravings, jewelry, beads, coins, coffins, and other artifacts uncovered at the site.

The skeletal remains of enslaved Africans discovered at the African Burial Ground site provide important cultural evidences, but also points to the brutality that the enslaved were forced to endure in New York. The skeletal remains of a young adult woman, burial #25, discovered October 16, 1991, signified the frequent inhumane and brutal physical treatment regularly enacted upon the enslaved. The musket ball resting in her rib cage furnished a horrific example of the abuse that many enslaved men, women, and children encountered in New York. The African Burial Ground provides a constant reminder of the strength and resiliency of African peoples during the colonial era, and inspires a greater interest in further exploring the contributions and impact of enslaved populations on American society.

*See also:* Africanisms; Grave Decorations

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## African Diaspora

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Over the span of nearly four centuries, more than 4 million Africans were taken from their homelands and brought to North America, South America, and the Caribbean Islands. Africans were taken from various regions of Africa, but mostly from coastal areas. The Guinean coast is home to the Bantu and the Mandé cultures. By virtue of their

geographical placement, many of these populations ended up working on plantations or as domestic servants in the United States.

This phenomenon is typically referred to as the Atlantic slave trade. It also marks the beginning of the African Diaspora in the Americas. These people, who were separated from everything they knew (in terms of family members, linguistic groups, and cultural norms), managed to preserve their traditions in their new and unknown environments. This is how the African Diaspora was formed. Members of the Diaspora kept alive the religions, languages, and stories that served as portals to their existence in Africa. Gradually, many of these African practices would inform the cultural elements (culinary, musical, and otherwise) that comprise Creole and African American cultures.

When discussing the African Diaspora, the term “cultures” must be used in the plural form. Due to the diversity of peoples coming from Africa as well as the regional specificities of the areas in which they ended up in the New World, myriad cultures developed. Each possessed a unique combination of religious, linguistic, and social elements. In addition, each had a different economic and political relationship to slavery as an institution. Slavery practices also influenced where the most members of the African Diaspora were placed. Regions that were known for plantation farming, such as the Deep South, typically had more slave communities than certain Northern states. Therefore, there was greater diversity among the African populations in the South (due to the greater number of imported slave labor) than in the North (where the same or similar cultural populations tended to procreate, thus passing on cultural traditions from one generation to another).

Even though each diasporic culture had its specific norms, one similarity to be found throughout many is the way in which Christianity was used to preserve certain African religions. As counterintuitive as this may sound, members of the Diaspora used Christianity as a disguise for their own beliefs. Throughout the slave trade, many slaves were evangelized and forced to be baptized by their owners. This was done primarily as a means of controlling them. As a result, these baptized members of the Diaspora commingled their African beliefs with the tenets of Christianity and created their own theologies and belief systems. Members of the Diaspora especially identified with the more mystical (or even magical) parts of Christianity. Thus, they found Christianity to be conducive to their African belief systems

and practiced a combination of these religions. Claiming to be having “Christian” gatherings (so as not to be punished by their owners for practicing African religions), slaves would engage in these hybrid religious practices as a way of preserving some aspects of their spiritual traditions.

These populations, cultures, and themes are currently studied under the field of Diaspora Studies. This field was created in the late 20th century and addresses a variety of displaced or dispersed ethnic populations as well as the cultures born of these geographical shifts. As myriad Diaspora studies scholars have indicated, the term “Diaspora” has the connotation of forced movement due to exile, national conflict, slavery, or racism. Preeminent scholars of African Diaspora Studies include Paul Gilroy, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Robin D. G. Kelley, Carole Boyce Davies, and Henry Louis Gates.

The African Diaspora in the United States continues to grow and become more diverse thanks to recent histories of immigration to the United States from certain parts of Africa, specifically Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Guinea, Rwanda, and Burundi. Thus, the African Diaspora in America is a constantly shifting and growing cultural phenomenon. It changes with each wave of immigrants and set of cultures that enter the country and evolves when these cultures meet and intermingle with the preexisting cultures in a certain geographical area.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Black Atlantic; Pan-Africanism; Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

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## Africanisms

For most of the 20th century, historians have explored the continuity of African culture in the United States. Studies such as Melville J. Herskovits’s *Myth of the Negro Past*

(1941), Lorenzo D. Turner’s *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949), and Lawrence Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (1978) studied the African cultural elements in the music, language, folklore, sculpture, textiles, and religion of African Americans. In their works, the scholars developed many theories that demonstrate substantial retention of African culture in the United States.

According to Christopher L. Miller, the term “Africanism” refers to the study of the retaining African speech patterns, styles, or performance. In a similar tone, V. Y. Mudimbe associates the word “Africanism” with the approach that early scholars such as Maurice Delafosse, Melville J. Herskovits, and Claude Levi-Strauss developed in the 1950s and 1960s in order to analyze African legends, fables, and oral traditions and develop data that could contribute to understandings of people of African descent. Yet the study of Africanisms in the Americas is traceable to the debate on the genesis of African American culture which, according to Lawrence Levine, began in the 1860s when white American folklorists such as Lucy McKim, D. K. Wilgus, and William Francis Allen attempted to study the structure and origin of slave religious music. This work, which was the genesis of the White-to-Black school of acculturation, maintained that religious music among African Americans imitated European compositions with slight variations.

By the 1920s, James Weldon Johnson and Alain LeRoy Locke, two major scholars of the Harlem Renaissance, challenged the White-to-Black thesis. In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* (1925), Johnson notes that black spirituals were derived solely by people of African descent under the conditions of living in alien environments. Like Johnson, Alain Locke believes that the early African slaves in the United States created the spirituals. Yet Locke views these songs as part of an African American tradition that is also the heritage of all Americans. Locke’s theory of the diverse origins of the spirituals is apparent in his 1925 essay “The Negro Spirituals” where he argues that the songs are both African American and American. Unlike most early scholars, Locke stresses the resilience, humanity, and universality of the spirituals.

Despite Locke’s thesis that the spirituals are American and universal at the same time, the debate on African retentions has remained centered on whether the elements in African American culture are of European or African origins. In the first half of the 20th century, some black scholars denied outright that any remnant of Africanisms

survived in African American culture. In *The Negro Family in the United States* (1968), E. Franklin Frazier contends that African Americans, in the process of adapting to life in the Americas, created cultural modes and forms that had little to do with Africa. Frazier's thesis was inconsistent with the new directions that anthropologists had taken since the 1930s with regard to the question of retention of African culture in the New World.

By the late 1930s, the idea that African elements were not retained in the United States had become scientifically untenable. In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits championed the cause of African cultural retentions in African American culture. Specifically, he argues not only that African elements might have been retained in African American worldviews, rituals, and folklore but also that such retentions might have influenced Euro-American culture as well.

Like Herskovits, Lorenzo D. Turner argues in *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949) that African Americans preserved their African culture and traditions and mixed them with European American patterns to contribute to the formation of the New World cultures. Turner discovered many African elements in the syntax, word formation, and intonation of African Americans. In this book, he found in the United States, especially in the South, words of African origin such as *guba* (peanut) (Kimbundu, Angola), *gombo* (okra) (Tshiluba, Belgian Congo), and *tot* (carry) (Vai, Liberia and Sierra Leone). In *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, Turner also identified hundreds of Gullah names that derive from African words.

In a similar vein, the 1970s saw a new upsurge of works seeking to connect African American culture to Africa. John W. Blassingame's *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1979) is a major example of this scholarship, since it argued that the antebellum slaves were deeply rooted in their African worldviews and folk rituals of courtship, wedding, drumming, and worshipping. In his comparison of the courtship rituals of the Ewe people of Africa with those of slaves in antebellum America, Blassingame found a similar use of riddles and memorization of poems that black men recited to the women they wanted to court.

By the mid-1970s, great emphasis was placed on the importance of slave folklore. Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (1977) found that African folk practices such as Voodoo, spiritual cure of sickness, and

folktales permeated antebellum slave culture. Following Levine, other scholars stressed the importance of Voodoo and other African folk practices in the Americas. In *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (1984), Thompson found in the United States, Brazil, and Cuba the influence of Kongo herbalist healing and divination lore in the presence of "conjurers" and "root doctors." Thompson also found the influence of African religion in the presence of charms, ritual dances, and Voodoo cross-road signs in New World black religions.

Known as Voodoo, Hoodoo, and conjure in the United States, Voudoun in Haiti, Shango in Trinidad, Candomblé and Macumba in Brazil, Santería in Cuba, Cumina or Obeah in Jamaica, Vodun is the West African belief in supernatural phenomena manifested in the acts of healing, divination, the casting of spells, and the use of curative herbs, roots, rituals, amulets, charms, and oral and transcribed incantation. As a religion that permeates the African Diaspora, Voodoo is generally defined as a synthesis of religions of Dahomey, Yorubaland, and Kongo with an infusion of Roman Catholicism. Yet, the sacrificial rituals, conjuring, and magic of the religion can also be traced to coastal West Africa where the beliefs that parallel those of Voodoo had stronger presence in Dahomey, Kongo, and Nigeria than in Senegal, Mali, and Guinea. The West African traditions of Vodoo creolized in Haiti where many African-derived terms are used to describe the ritual.

Like Thompson, William D. Piersen found elements of African religions in black American culture. In *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture* (1988), Piersen argues that 18th-century African Americans believed, like Africans, that their soul would return home [to Africa] when they died. Piersen tells the story of Jin, a mid-18th-century Congo slave woman in Deerfield, Massachusetts, who collected pierced coins, colored beads, and stones as objects, believing that she would carry them with herself to Africa when she died. In a similar tone, Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundation of Black America* (1991) identifies many African elements in African American folktales, ring shouts, counterclockwise dances, and ancestral worships. In *Going through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History* (1994), Stuckey argues that songs, like folktales, were forms of oral tradition that slaves used to develop a context that placed them closer to Africa than the Western Hemisphere.

The discussion above shows that Africanisms are traceable to slave culture and to the various aspects of New World black cultures such as names, courtship rituals, Voodoo religion, and literature. By revisiting the scholarly debates on the pervasiveness or absence of African elements in the New World, one can gauge the strength of these survivals. Evidently, the cultural and demographic diversity of Africa requires a broader definition of the African influence and a fuller account of how it is perceptible in 20th-century African American culture.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Slave Culture; Slave Religion

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## Asiento

The asiento was a contract awarded by the Spanish Crown that bestowed rights to import African slaves to Spain's colonies in the New World. In 1494 the Spanish Crown officially renounced claims to Africa by the Treaty of Tordesillas,

but the development of plantation agriculture in Spanish America required large-scale importation of African slaves. Subsequently, beginning in the early 1500s, various European merchants and companies began purchasing monopoly privileges to import a certain number of slaves at a fixed price and in a specified time to Spanish America.

The union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, from 1580 to 1640, stimulated the more regularized slave import system known as the asiento, whereby an agreement was made between a private contractor and the Spanish government in which the entrepreneur or company purchased a monopoly over the importation of a certain number of slaves, at a set price and in a specified time, to Spanish America. In 1595, the Crown concluded the first asiento with a Spaniard, but the Portuguese quickly dominated the system. The standard of importation was a *pieza de Indias*, or Indies piece, a young adult male in good physical condition. Women, children, and older males counted as fractions of a *pieza de Indias*.

The asiento was a prized possession and a major issue in a number of wars. Not only were profits to be made in the slave trade, but the asiento provided cover for importing contraband goods to Spanish America with the cooperation of corrupt Crown officials. Holders of the asiento often resold their licenses to subcontractors. The Dutch dominated the asiento system in the second half of the 17th century. After a French Bourbon assumed the Spanish Crown in 1700, French merchants were awarded the asiento. In 1713, after defeat in the War of the Spanish Succession, Spain awarded the asiento to Britain. The English Crown then designated the South Seas Company to fulfill the contract. By the 1750s, reformist Bourbon officials had started attacking the institution along with other anachronistic government monopoly controls on trade that were often circumvented by colonists. In 1789, the asiento system was abolished as the Spanish Empire was officially opened to all foreign traders.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Dutch West India Company; Hispaniola

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## Atlantic Creoles

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The term “Atlantic Creoles” generally refers to people born in regions of the Atlantic World (the four continents that surround the Atlantic Ocean) whose origins lie outside the areas in which they were born. The term “Creole” may also be associated with a specific language and/or culture. Atlantic Creoles developed various Creole languages, which draw on the vocabulary of modern European languages, but with a grammatical structure atypical of those languages. For example, a Portuguese Creole language developed among the settlers of the Atlantic islands such as Cape Verde and São Tomé, off the West African coast, as early as the 16th century. The growth and development of American Creole languages relied heavily on Creole-speaking slaves who could teach other slaves. Africans probably never spoke the Creoles as native languages, but soon Americans, the children of the first generation of slaves, did. As Africans from different regions interacted with each other and Europeans, their New World language gradually emerged as the first, or “creolized” language of American-born blacks.

The term “Creole” takes on various meanings across time and regions of the Atlantic World. In Sierra Leone, Creoles are the descendants of slaves who were repatriated between 1787 and 1870, from all over the West African coast, and settled with help from philanthropists, missionaries, and the British government. Cut off from their own traditions, the Creoles acquired the cultural ideals of the British and, aided by missions, gained substantial educational and professional advantages over the peoples of the interior and indeed over most West Africans. In the 19th century, they became clerks, parsons, teachers, lawyers, and doctors and played an important role in the administrative and educational development of the whole of English-speaking West Africa. The Creoles’ consciousness of their own superiority and disrespect for the indigenous peoples’ cultures, however, created hostility and deep mistrust between the Creoles and other Sierra Leoneans. These Creoles were the elite of African society in Sierra Leone.

In 16th-century-colonial Latin America, Creoles were individuals of pure Spanish or Portuguese descent born in America. The social hierarchy in the early Spanish empire distinguished between Creoles and a higher status group called *Peninsulares*. Both the Creoles and the *Peninsulares* were considered pure Spanish, with one differentiation—the

*Peninsulares* were born on the Iberian Peninsula. Today in Brazil the term “Creole” refers to blacks. In Nicaragua, Creoles are native-born blacks and inhabit the east coast of the country along with Indian and Hispanic groups. The Nicaraguan Creoles originated as shipwrecked or escaped slaves, or slave laborers used by the British in the 17th century to work in the lumber camps and plantations. Some of them feel a stronger alliance to the British than to fellow Nicaraguans on the west coast, who tend to regard them as foreigners. The Nicaraguan Creoles speak English. In the Latin American country of Belize, the identity of Creoles takes on a racial meaning with a negative attitude among light-skinned Creoles toward blacks. Both groups, however, are considered “Creole.”

In North America, when Africans first arrived in the Chesapeake during the early 17th century, they interacted culturally and physically with white indentured servants and American Indians. Interracial sexual contacts (miscegenation) produced people of mixed race. In New Orleans, Louisiana, “Creoles” were people of any race or mixture, descended from settlers in Louisiana before it became part of the United States in 1803 after the Louisiana Purchase. The term also refers to a broader culture. Although people with African lineage may not have been included in this definition, a broader use of the term was common by the late 18th century with references to “free Creoles of color” and to slaves of pure African descent born in Louisiana as “Creole slaves.” Contemporary usage of the term in New Orleans encompasses a broad cultural group of people of all races who share a French or Spanish background.

Creoles in the 18th-century British Empire (those born and reared within colonial society) were distinguished from newly arrived Africans. The continuing large-scale importation of Africans created a constant dynamic within slave communities everywhere—a dynamic that changed as the population balance shifted from African to Creole predominance. A growing number of mulattos—offspring of sexual unions between white and black parents—produced further complications. Where Africans formed the majority population, as they did in the Caribbean for much of the 18th century and in the Carolina Lowcountry for many years, Creoles often experienced ridicule and exclusion from community life. As Creoles became the majority, they often looked down on the Africans. By 1740, most colonial slaves were no longer considered Africans. They had become Creoles, also the contemporary term for American-born blacks.

By 1750, the number of African slaves comprised about 40 percent of Virginia and Maryland's total population, and four-fifths of them were Creoles. Eventually, strong bonds developed between new arrivals and Creole slaves.

One Creole population that absorbed European values lived among whites in Charleston and Savannah. These Creoles were often mixed-race relatives of their masters and enjoyed social and economic privileges. Cultural exchanges became an essential part of the process of creolization that led African parents to produce African American children. Miscegenation and creolization often occurred together, producing physical and cultural change. At the same time, in British colonial North America, mixed-race people were defined as black. Although biracial slaves—those of mixed African and European ancestry—enjoyed some advantages, as a group their legal status remained as slaves. Creolization and miscegenation transformed the descendants of the Africans who arrived in North America into African Americans.

In the Caribbean region the term “Creole” refers to anyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, who was born and raised in the region. It also reflects the blending of the various cultures (African, French, British, and Spanish among others) that influenced the area. This is also referred to as the creolization of a society. On Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, planters divided slaves into three categories: Creoles (slaves born in the Americas), old Africans (those who had lived in the Americas for some time), and new Africans (those who had just survived the middle passage). For resale, Creole slaves were worth three times the value of those considered to be “unseasoned” new Africans. These new Africans were called “salt-water Negroes” or “Guinea-birds” by planters and Creole slaves. Seasoning was the beginning of the process of making new Africans more like Creoles.

*See also:* Acculturation; Black Atlantic

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## Atlantic Islands

European expansion, African plantation slavery, and the development of the Atlantic World began in the Atlantic islands off the coast of northwest Africa: the Canary Islands, Madeira, the Azores, Cape Verde, and São Tomé. In the 14th century, West African watercraft was specialized for coastal, riverine, and interior travel along the Gambia, Senegal, and Niger rivers, which connected with overland routes across the Sahara. With exceptions, West Africans did not pursue seafaring in the open Atlantic nor did they settle several of the islands along the Atlantic coast. The navigational difficulties presented by the eastern Atlantic's Canary Current prevented Mediterranean and Arabic sailors from successfully navigating the Atlantic coast of Africa as well. Grain trade connecting Europe's large inland seas—the Mediterranean, Baltic, and North seas—stimulated innovation in Iberian shipbuilding as well as accidental voyages of discovery. Ultimately, the prospect of a sea route to West Africa's goldfields prompted a collaboration of Iberian, Italian, French, and English people, vessels, and capital in the pursuit of short-range maritime exploration along the West African coast.

The rediscovery of the Canary Islands by Malocello in 1312 signaled the start of European exploitation of the Atlantic islands as sources of profit and expansion. The Canaries were filled with natural products for commodification: timber, honey, hides, and dyestuffs. The Canaries were inhabited, and the Portuguese and Spanish raided the islands for cattle and people whom they sold as slaves in

Mediterranean markets. Iberian endeavors to build trading factories and slave-raiding forts in the Canary Islands made them the first site of European trading and raiding in the Atlantic. In 1402 Castile sponsored the first permanent colonization of the Canaries with Norman colonists. In the following century the Canary Islands produced sugar, wine, and sheep and cattle products. Because the Canary Islands were a source of profit for Europeans, much attention was devoted to their navigation, shipping south of the Straights of Gibraltar increased, and raiding and commercial activity expanded farther south. The Canaries served as a crucial base for the development of additional European raiding and trading operations along the African coast as well as for the colonization of uninhabited Atlantic islands to the west.

In the 15th century, Portuguese colonized the uninhabited islands of Madeira, the Azores, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and exported their wild products: honey, wax, and wood. Madeira and the Canaries soon began to export large quantities of wheat, cultivated by Canarians pressed into service, as well as dependent laborers from Europe, to consumers in Portugal, North Africa, and West Africa. Madeira also produced and profitably exported wine; however, the cultivation of sugar, particularly in Madeira and, later, São Tomé, had the largest economic impact for the Atlantic islands, and, ultimately, the Atlantic World. Preceding production in the New World, Portuguese and northern Italians developed a sugar plantation complex in the Atlantic islands where a nonreproducing slave labor force produced massive quantities of sugar for export.

The cultivation of sugarcane had originated in Southwest Asia during the ancient period and gradually spread westward to Persia. In the 12th and 13th centuries, Arabs brought sugar cultivation to the Mediterranean where the first plantation system emerged. Mediterranean shippers imported bond laborers from southern Russia (Slavs from whom the word *slave* derives), the eastern Mediterranean, and North Africa to produce sugar for a European market. By the 14th century, Cyprus produced large quantities of sugar with the labor of Syrian and Arab slaves, and the plantation system, based on coerced labor, large land units, and long-range commerce, moved still west, to Sicily. The Sicilian sugar plantation served as a model for the Portuguese and Spanish colonies in the Atlantic islands where climate and soil were favorable and nearby African sources provided coerced workers. In 1420 Portugal's Prince Henry

sent to Sicily for cane plantings and sugar technicians. The desire for cane field labor fundamentally altered the nature of Portuguese slavery from domestic servitude to plantation labor. In the 15th and 16th centuries almost all of the Atlantic islands experienced sugar booms. By the 1460s, Madeira was the largest producer of sugar in the Western world.

The Atlantic islands provided a model and a launching ground for New World sugar cultivation based on African slavery and the plantation system; their successful exploitation prompted European explorers to seek additional islands further west in the Atlantic Ocean. The prospect of finding new Atlantic islands and the aspiration of reaching India inspired Christopher Columbus's voyage of 1492. Trained in the Madeira sugar trade as a young man, Columbus brought his experience to the New World on his second voyage of 1493 when he introduced sugar cane plantings to the Caribbean. In the following century, the immense profits of sugar plantation in the Americas prompted the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade. The Atlantic islands not only established the pattern of European colonization and plantation for the New World, but also served as crucial way stations for Atlantic slavers.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Sugar Plantations

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## Atlantic Slave Trade

In the 15th century, Europeans—beginning with the Portuguese—engaged in trade relations with Africans along the Atlantic coast which, over time, would lead to the one of the most tragic chapters in human history. In search of commercial opportunities and allies against the Islamic conquest of

Iberia, Portuguese navigators encountered a series of kingdoms and smaller polities in West and West-Central Africa. This contact with Atlantic Africans, beginning in the period after 1444, culminated in the erection of Elmina Castle by the Portuguese on the aptly named Gold Coast. Given the names the Portuguese chose for their castle and for the region they established it in, it should be no surprise that gold and gold-mining became the central elements of commercial activity for the first century after contact. Even before this historical moment, a number of economic and political forces converged to explain the eventual rise of the Atlantic slave trade. First, the Portuguese and the Spanish colonized a number of Atlantic islands, beginning in the 14th century. Second, sugar and sugar-cultivation techniques were rapidly spreading eastward from West Asia and Arabia. Third, since at least the 12th century CE, the trade in enslaved West African women to serve primarily as domestic servants in North Africa and Arabia produced a lucrative stream of commerce. It was this convergence of Iberian colonization from the north, Asian sugar from the east, and African slavery from the south that allowed for the enormous trade in enslaved Africans and their transportation across the Atlantic for more than three centuries.

It is important to note, however, that though slavery existed in Africa before European contact, it could often be quite different from chattel bondage in the Americas. While it is always difficult to evaluate whether a system of slavery was “benign” or “mild,” quite a few qualitative differences are evident: slaves in Atlantic Africa were often manumitted; slavery did not transcend generation, it was not an inheritable status and, thus, race or nativity were never employed as signifiers of caste; slaves could, at times, achieve high social rank, status, and wealth; and the relationships between slaves and their African owners were not always mediated by the use or threat of force. With this said, it is also quite true that a continuum of slave experiences existed in Atlantic Africa from brutal chattel slavery to relatively milder forms of clientage and debt servitude. Perhaps the most important difference between African and European/American variants of slavery was that women were the most significant group of enslaved Africans in Atlantic Africa and, in the Atlantic slave trade, men were strongly preferred by European slave buyers.

Qualitative differences between African and European/American variants of slavery were given voice in a number of ex-slave narratives. Perhaps the most written about and

analyzed ex-slave memoir is Olaudah Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*. In many ways, his life opens an instructive window into the internal workings of the slave trade as well as the critiques and fears of European traders as voiced by enslaved Africans. Despite recent commentary to the contrary, Equiano’s account includes verifiable information and perhaps epitomizes an “authentic” Igbo account of enslavement and the Middle Passage. Kidnapped in 1756 from the Igbo village of Essaka—a minor eastern tributary of the Kingdom of Benin—Equiano was held as a slave by various African merchants for six months before finally arriving at the coast of Calabar. He apparently embarked on a ship in the Bight of Biafra with other Igbo-speakers, for it was among some of his own language cohort that young Equiano found some degree of comfort.

The brutality of the European crew and the intolerable conditions on this ship confirmed Equiano’s belief that he had indeed been handed over to evil spirits and demons who intended to eat his flesh. This apparently was a ubiquitous belief among captives from the Bight of Biafra who witnessed the various horrors and inhumane abuses made famous by the European traffickers of enslaved Africans. It was in this horrid context that two of his countrymen committed suicide by jumping into the ocean. Equiano himself noted an intense interest in following the path of his comrades. At least according to this particular account, the alleged Igbo propensity for suicide was directly related to the savage treatment they received at the hands of European shippers. In this particular regard, then, enslaved Africans voiced their collective opposition to abuse at the hands of Europeans through the most drastic means. This perhaps solidifies the point that Africans perceived qualitative differences in their status as slaves once they were handed over to Europeans.

Slavery, in its variety of forms, was widespread in Atlantic Africa primarily because enslaved Africans were the principal form of private, income-producing property throughout the region. In an area with an overabundance of land, gaining access to—and control over—additional labor became a primary motivator for Atlantic African kingdoms and city-states. In this regard, the concept of private land ownership never fully developed in Atlantic Africa and, when kingdoms or city-states expanded militarily, the goal was typically to gain control over more people by capturing smaller polities or villages and forcing them to pay tribute. In sum, the Atlantic African ruling classes keenly

understood the labor theory of value, which contends that human effort is the principal means to derive value or revenue from natural resources and raw goods. Indeed, in a sense, owning land amounts to owning dirt and land only really becomes valuable when human labor is applied to it. So the principal thrust of military conquest in Atlantic Africa focused on acquiring additional tributaries and labor, not territory.

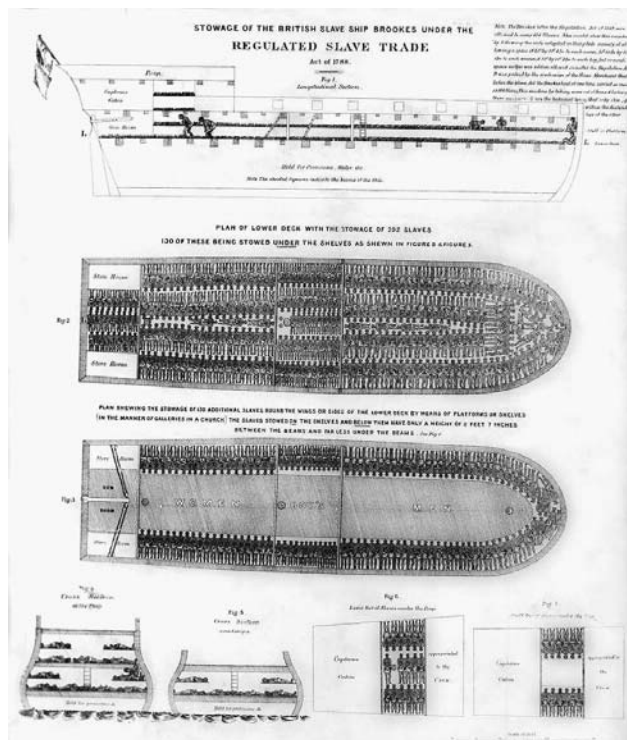
Slavery, pawnship, clientage, indentured and debt servitude, and other forms of forced labor were means to guarantee agricultural surplus and steady flows of revenues for powerful states in Atlantic Africa. This private ownership or control over labor does not mean that forced labor was central to Atlantic African economies. It does mean that the idea of humans becoming commodities predated the arrival of Europeans in Atlantic Africa and set the stage for the Atlantic slave trade.

The preexistence of slavery and other forms of forced labor was augmented by a long-standing trans-Saharan slave trade, which was the first step in the formation of an

Atlantic African Diaspora. The trans-Saharan slave trade, beginning sometime near the 12th century, was used by the Portuguese after 1448, decades before they established castles and fortresses along the Atlantic African coast. With European interests in acquiring slaves increasing exponentially after the establishment of colonies in the Atlantic islands and the Western Hemisphere, the former trans-Saharan slave trade shifted from North Africa to the Atlantic coast by the late 1490s to early 1500s. Thus, the indigenous African forms of slavery and slave trading facilitated the role that Europeans would begin to play in Atlantic World affairs.

In addition to the existence of indigenous forms of slavery and slave trading in Africa, several key factors contributed to the decisions made by Europeans to rely so heavily on enslaved African labor in the Western Hemisphere. Due to their exposure to a tropical disease ecology, Atlantic Africans had developed natural resistances to malaria—a disease that wiped out large numbers of Native Americans and Europeans. Thus, the rice swamps of the Carolinas or the tobacco fields of the Chesapeake were not as deadly for enslaved Africans, making them an ideal labor pool. Another important determinant was the fact that the vast majority of enslaved Africans came from agricultural surplus-producing societies. This meant that Atlantic Africa was densely populated and thus a prime location to use as a foundation for a substantial labor force. It also meant that, unlike the subsistence to small surplus-producing Native Americans encountered in the Caribbean, coastal Brazil, or North America, enslaved Africans were more likely to be used to the intensive labor required for cash crop cultivation. This was especially true in the case of rice cultivation in the Carolinas and Georgia. In both colonies, enslaved Africans from Sierra Leone and Senegambia had a particularly useful expertise in rice cultivation, which generated enormous profits in the Southern colonies. In this regard, both African brawn and brains made them an attractive group of dependent laborers for European plantations throughout the Americas.

Finally, because men and women tended crops in Atlantic Africa, both groups could be enslaved by Europeans, ensuring a self-reproducing labor force. This circumstance proved advantageous to European planters on a number of different levels. First, early attempts to enslave Algonkians in the Chesapeake had utterly failed, mainly because of the unique gender division of labor among this native



*This plan of a British slave ship, included with the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788, depicts, in horrifying detail, the inhumane conditions used by the slavers. The plan notes the ability to transport over 400 slaves on the lower deck, with many of the human cargo cramped into spaces underneath closely packed shelves. (Library of Congress)*

group. In most Algonkian societies, women tended crops and men hunted. Thus, when British colonists attempted to enslave the men for tobacco cultivation, this enterprise was doomed to failure. While all European powers tended to concentrate on importing enslaved African men, even if they managed to bring over large numbers of enslaved women, both groups were fully equipped and socialized to engage in agricultural labor. Second, by importing men and women together, the natural outcome would be enslaved children and a new generation of labor. This was deemed advantageous over using white indentured servants, in the Chesapeake especially. Not only did the service of indentured workers terminate after a set number of years, but their children were always legally free and owed no labor obligation to their parents' master. By enslaving the womb of African women, planters throughout the Americas could guarantee a steady supply of labor that transcended generations.

When the Portuguese first arrived on the Atlantic coast of Africa in the 15th century, they witnessed commerce on a scale Europeans had not seen since Roman times. West Africa, far from being the backwater many scholars have envisioned it as, was one of the key centers of trade in the early modern world. Linked to East and North Africa via the trans-Saharan trade and, as a result, indirectly connected to Arabia, India, and Indonesia, goods were flowing into Atlantic Africa that originated thousands of miles away. Ultimately, the Portuguese search for the mythical Prester John—combined with their commercial interests—led to the establishment of trading posts, factories, and fortresses along the West and East African coasts beginning in the early to mid-16th century. By effectively replacing East African Swahili merchants in the Indian Ocean trade network, the Portuguese positioned themselves as a global power with economic interests in Africa, Arabia, India, and Indonesia.

In the birth of the Atlantic World, one of the most important events that led to the Atlantic slave trade was the colonization of the numerous inhabited and uninhabited Atlantic islands by Iberians. By the 1450s, the Portuguese had colonized the previously uninhabited Azores, Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands, and São Tomé and, within a few decades, had transformed each territory into a profitable sugar plantation colony. This pattern was repeated by the Spanish in the Canary Islands with one slight difference—the Canaries were already inhabited by the Guanches. This group,

of likely Native American origin, became a slave labor force throughout the Atlantic islands, and both Spain and Portugal quickly became experts in acquiring additional dependent labor. By the early 1500s, all of the Atlantic islands were using a mixture of Guanche, Moor, and Atlantic African slave labor, establishing a pattern that would be replicated on a much larger scale in the Americas.

Beginning with Christopher Columbus's 1492 expedition through to the establishment of Hispaniola and Brazil as sites of Iberian colonization in the Americas, the patterns that began in the Atlantic islands became a foundation for a variety of activities engaged in by the Spanish and Portuguese. The depopulation of the Taino in the Spanish Caribbean and the Tupi-Guarani in Portuguese Brazil created a massive demand for labor in these burgeoning sugar plantation colonies. The solution to this demand for labor was offered first by Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Spanish friar who supported the mass importation of African slaves as a means of protecting Native Americans living in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The flood gates were opened soon after, beginning with the massive importation of enslaved Africans into Portuguese Brazil. In the early 1570s, Portugal conquered Angola and established peaceful commercial relations with the nearby Kongo Kingdom. West-Central Africa therefore would be an early source of labor for the Portuguese colony of Brazil and the rest of the Americas, accounting for about 45 percent of all enslaved Africans brought to the Western Hemisphere between 1519 and 1867.

Entering the fray by the late 1580s were the English, who began to establish a series of settlements in North America. The first permanent English colony, Jamestown, was founded in 1607. Though they struggled mightily for the first four years, by 1611 the colonists of Jamestown had discovered a means to create enormous profits—tobacco cultivation. After a brief and failed experiment with Native American slavery, the tobacco planters of the region began to rely heavily on white indentured servants. This solution was only a stop-gap and became completely unfeasible after 1640. Indentured servants, including the 300 Africans imported into the Chesapeake between 1619 and 1640, represented a significant set of problems to tobacco planters: they only worked a set number of years before they were freed; once freed, they received "freedom dues" including seed, land, farming tools, and guns; as land-owning tobacco farmers, ex-servants represented a source of competition for the tobacco-planting elite; and the increased

production of tobacco caused by the ever-increasing number of tobacco planters drove down the price of the once lucrative crop.

The problems inherent in the indentured servant system were magnified in the 1640s when, for no clear reason, a higher percentage of white servants survived their terms of indenture to accept their freedom dues. This required immediate reaction by the Tidewater elite who moved to eliminate land as a portion of the freedom dues, purchased most of the arable land, and extended the term of indenture with the hope that more servants would die before becoming free. While they successfully stunted the creation of more competition, the Tidewater planting elite also managed to destroy their most reliable source of labor. While the notion of land ownership had appealed to the English poor, compelling many thousands to come to the Chesapeake to labor in the tobacco fields, this incentive was gone and other North American colonies offered better economic opportunities and higher living standards. Beginning in 1640, a slow but decided shift toward racialized slavery occurred in the Chesapeake colonies, which culminated in the legalization of slavery by the late 1660s and the increasing importation of enslaved Africans. The intense rivalry between several European powers—Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and England—convulsed both sides of the Atlantic in a series of imperial conflicts. A number of colonies changed hands in the Americas and a number of trading posts and fortresses were captured and recaptured by a long line of European interests. Between the 1590s and the 1670s, Portugal was integrated into the Spanish Crown; northern European pirates were attacking Iberian possessions throughout the Atlantic; the Dutch waged long-standing wars against the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English; the French gained a sizable foothold in the Americas with their colonization of the western half of Santo Domingo; and the English founded several North American and Caribbean colonies in direct opposition to Spanish territorial claims. In the decade between 1637 and 1647 alone, the Dutch West India Company claimed the Portuguese possessions of Elmina, Príncipe, Angola, and São Tomé through military conquest. Even though the Dutch could manage to control Angola only from 1641 to 1648, they had effectively replaced the Portuguese as the dominant European power in Africa by the mid-1640s. This complex web of interconnections within the Atlantic World, fostered by trade, international rivalry, and war,

became an essential component in the development of a number of Euro-American societies.

While European nations were vying for power in the Atlantic, a number of expansionist kingdoms emerged in Atlantic Africa during the 15th and 16th centuries, which played fundamental roles in the slave trade. While the “intertribal” warfare model was once the dominant theory in explaining the rapid expansion of slave-trading activities in Atlantic Africa, there was perhaps more conflict between European powers than between African kingdoms and city-states. Nevertheless, the very nature of military expansion and the tributary system in Atlantic Africa meant the creation of a large number of slaves for purchase by European buyers. Principally, the kingdoms of Asante, Dahomey, Benin, Kongo, and Futa Jallon—among many others—expanded significantly, creating political and social ripples that displaced hundreds of thousands of people. At the same time, European traders were importing guns and horses, which further contributed to military expansion and displacement.

At least during the early years of this trade relationship between European merchants and African traders, there existed a partnership based on equality and balance. European slave raiding undoubtedly occurred, but it was not the primary way by which enslaved Africans were acquired. Instead, Europeans typically followed African protocol and obeyed African laws, paid rent for their use of coastal slave fortresses, and even paid tribute to coastal kingdoms. In certain cases, European merchants had their goods confiscated and lost trade privileges if they violated protocols established by coastal polities. In other cases, Europeans lost their lives in retaliation for raiding for African slaves. In this regard, one of the many locations of power of the slave trade resided in Atlantic Africa among African kingdoms. Thus, they played a much larger role in the creation of the Atlantic World and the formation of the Atlantic slave trade than previously understood.

One pattern that shaped African-European relations was the significant amount of resistance to the continuation of the slave trade mounted by certain Atlantic African polities and even enslaved Africans themselves. This is one level of agency that is often understated or ignored by scholars of the Atlantic slave trade. Resistance to the slave trade occurred on a number of different levels: the 400 or more instances of shipboard revolts; the thousands of suicides during the Middle Passage; the formation of escaped

slave communities in Atlantic Africa; the numerous mass revolts organized by slaves or peasants; the involvement of a handful of religious opposition movements, inspired by Islam, Christianity, or African religion; and active attempts by states or their leaders to suppress the trade. Indeed, it may even be possible to discuss the African roots of abolitionism given the fact that, as early as 1614, an Islamic scholar named Ahmad Baba al-Timbucti wrote a detailed legal treatise that critiqued and undermined the various justifications for enslavement.

In terms of the demography of the slave trade the Du Bois Institute CD-ROM compiled by David Eltis, Stephen Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert Klein, which provides the best and most reliable set of estimates, shows that some 11 to 12 million were exported from Africa, about 10 million were imported alive into the Americas, and roughly 1.5 million died on ships during the Middle Passage. While the estimates regarding the mortality rates onboard slave ships have raised a great deal of commentary, students of this topic should be cognizant of the fact that the 1.5 million estimate does not include the untold millions who died in forced marches from inland markets to coastal markets, those who perished in the squalid conditions of slave dungeons, and those who did not survive seasoning in the Americas or who died within their first three to five years as slaves. While reliable estimates for mortality rates will never be fully achieved, some 14 to 26 million Africans died during the slave trade, and the millions of survivors—on both sides of the Atlantic—bore the psychological scars of their collective trauma for centuries thereafter.

See also: African Diaspora; Asiento; Equiano, Olaudah; Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah

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## Bacon's Rebellion

Bacon's Rebellion was the first rebellion in the American colonies. In 1676 Nathaniel Bacon, a Virginia planter, led a rebellion against the government of Sir William Berkeley. Bacon's Rebellion was one of the first collaborations between whites and blacks in colonial America. The white and black settlers of Virginia united against their common enemy—the Virginia ruling class. This partnership escalated fears within the ruling class as to what would protect them and their power from the united poor masses. It was out of this fear that the institution of racial slavery was born. While slavery and indentured servitude had been present in the colonies prior to Bacon's Rebellion, the rebellion turned slavery into a predominantly racial institution. The large majority of slaves from the rebellion onward would be solely of African descent.

Bacon lived on the frontier. He, like many of his fellow frontier planters, felt that Governor Berkeley was not adequately protecting the planters from the Native Americans. Consequently, Bacon and his fellow frontier planters united to defend themselves against the Native Americans. Bacon petitioned Berkeley for a commission to allow himself and his followers to move forcefully against the Native Americans. Berkeley, as the head of the government, and thus the head of the militia, refused Bacon's request. Berkeley felt Bacon was not trying to defend himself against the Native Americans, but rather was trying to stir up trouble among the settlers who were already unhappy with the colony's



government. The Virginia settlers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with both Berkeley and his government. High taxes and special privileges awarded to those close to the governor were two of the settlers' biggest complaints. Bacon, therefore, received a lot of support from the Virginia masses.

Despite Berkeley's refusal, the planters regarded the Native Americans as a larger threat than the Governor. Consequently they moved on the offensive and attacked the nearby Native Americans. When Berkeley heard of the planters' actions he declared Bacon guilty of treason. The colonial legislature then met in June to resolve the issue. The legislature granted Bacon a commission to fight the Native Americans and also implemented laws to lower taxes and reform the abuses of power within the government. Despite the legislature's ruling, Berkeley refused Bacon the commission. Bacon, along with more than 500 supporters, then marched into Jamestown.

The conflict between Berkeley and Bacon had escalated. Both men strove to garner all the support they could. Bacon even promised to give land to any servant who rose up against his master. Many of the Virginia settlers had long been unhappy with the government of Berkeley, and therefore allied themselves with Bacon. In September 1676 the Governor and his supporters were driven out of Jamestown to a refuge on the eastern shore. To discourage their return, Bacon and his followers burned down the town of Jamestown. A month later, Bacon unexpectedly died. Without its charismatic leader, Bacon's Rebellion quickly fizzled out. Berkeley and his followers returned to the colony and reasserted their authority. Berkeley hanged more than 20 of the rebellion leaders and let his men loose to plunder Bacon's supporters.

While Indian policy seemed to have been the deciding factor that brought on rebellion, there were many other issues involved. High taxes, low prices for tobacco, and indentured servitude were all protested by the settlers. In 1676, when Bacon and his followers began the rebellion, many of the Virginia settlers—white and black—united to use the rebellion as a means to protest Berkeley and his government. The end result was twofold. First, the rebellion brought both white and black settlers together to fight for one cause. Second, the rebellion demanded and successfully brought reform to the colony of Virginia. Many of the reforms that the Virginia settlers sought were conceded by the Virginia government. In London, the Crown authorities saw Bacon's Rebellion as the result of bad government

in the colonies. King Charles II's primary concern was the cultivation of tobacco. Rebellions, in his opinion, took the colonists' attention away from cultivation. Consequently, after Bacon's Rebellion, King Charles II dispatched an army to restore order in Virginia. King Charles also demanded the removal of Governor Berkeley. The king believed that if Berkeley was not liked by the settlers more rebellions would be imminent. More rebellions would take more attention away from the cultivation of tobacco and thus reduce the profits of the Crown. In 1677 Berkeley was ordered back to England, where he died within the year.

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Indentured Servitude; Racialized Slavery

Mindy R. Weidman

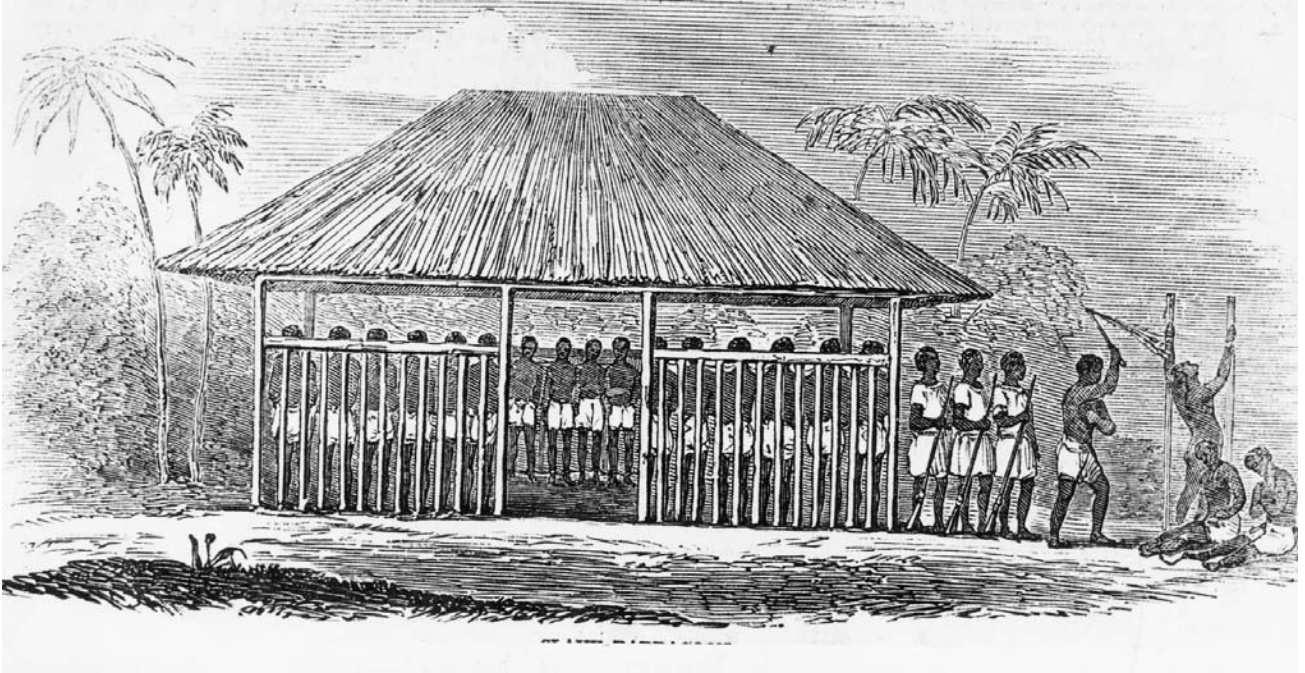
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## Barracoons

Surfacing in the late 15th century with the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, barracoons are identified as small pens or shelters that held captured Africans, as slaves for sale, prior to their departure for the New World. Located along the coast of Africa, barracoons ranged in size and form; they varied from small, makeshift confinements without protection from natural elements to larger, more developed and protected structures. In any case, regardless of the simplicity or sophistication of the structure, a captive's stay at a barracoon was not pleasant. Rather, it was marked by sickness, hunger, disease, and death; in fact, countless men, women, and children died while awaiting embarkation.

Upon arriving at a barracoon, the men were separated from the women, at which time their heads were shaved, and bodies stripped of any and all clothing. Furthermore, the imprisoned individuals were inspected by European doctors to determine their health. The purpose of these inspections was to identify and separate able-bodied individuals



Slave barracoon in the Gallinas, on the coast of Africa, about 1850. (Rischgitz/Getty Images)

from the poor and sickly, and to ensure that the strong and healthy would survive the transatlantic voyage. Although men and women were separated and apprehended in different confinements, captured individuals were not separated according to ethnic origins or their place of extraction. All were treated with the same harshness, regardless of their place of origin, sex, or age.

Confinement in a barracoon would last anywhere from a couple of weeks to months. Time spent in a barracoon was contingent on two factors: the slaver's ability to accommodate additional and preferred slaves on their ships, and the health of the enslaved—whether or not it was believed that he or she would have survived the Middle Passage.

Barracoons also marked sites where captured Africans were introduced to Christianity. Oftentimes, upon boarding the ships that would transport slaves to the New World, slaves were baptized and branded with a cross or the trading company's coat of arms. The baptismal, from the point of view of the European slaver, represented a religious conversion where the slave was expected to discard African religions. In addition, the branding signified a change in the captured status from an individual to a commodity, or property.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade

Ashley C. Bowden

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## Bight of Benin

The “Bight of Benin,” a term used by Europeans in the Atlantic slave trade era, refers to the West African coastal region between the Volta and Benin rivers and the body of water within the open bay. East of the Volta River was called the “Slave Coast” and constituted regions that faced the Bight of Benin. This area includes present-day Togo, Benin (formerly Dahomey), and western Nigeria. The Bight of Benin region was a consistent supplier of slaves from the 17th through the early 19th centuries, and the site of two powerful ancient African kingdoms—the forest state of Dahomey and Benin.

The kingdom of Dahomey (present-day Benin), located to the north of the rainforest region, was established around 1625. One element of early Dahomean culture was human sacrifice, practiced in annual rituals and ceremonies.

Dahomeans also believed in witchcraft, which at times they considered as the source of a king's illness. Religion revolved around an established priesthood, and the king served as the nation's high priest. Priests professed their view on the nature of man and divinity, and the establishment of the social and divine order.

Dahomey was organized along military lines and governed by a highly centralized authority with a king (*oba*) who was granted total power by his people. He appointed local rulers, army officers, and administrators. Dahomean women were appointed along with men in government offices and in various roles as advisors to men and replacements during wars. The women's military corps was a functioning unit. Europeans referred to these women as "Amazons." These military women included female commanders who fought alongside men. They engaged in rigorous training and combat and were regarded as equals of men. With unwavering loyalty and service from all citizens and appointed officials, the king became one of the most powerful monarchs along the West African coast, even though the kingdom was small and poor. Dahomey enjoyed uniqueness as one of the few absolute monarchies in the region.

Early Dahomey's power and prestige depended on profits from the slave trade to a greater extent than that of almost any other West African state.

The Dahomey coast trade was second to the Gold Coast in importance as a trade network moving goods from Togo, Dahomey, the eastern part of Upper Volta, the western part of Nigeria, and northwest Nigeria down the Sudanic belt, into several key trading towns. The Portuguese established a successful and profitable trading station in Dahomey. Beginning in the early 1600s, Dahomey took advantage of the demand for slaves to expand its military power and used the profits from the slave trade to invest in firearms. Access to new weapons expanded Dahomey's regional power and allowed the *obas* to centralize their authority. In 1725, Dahomey was strong enough to extend its borders. The powers in central Dahomey controlled most of the coast and the European slave trade. The Atlantic slave trade increasingly grew to be the basis of Dahomey's economy. Different trading towns along the Bight of Benin from modern Benin to Cameroon continued to participate in the Atlantic slave trade until 1850–1860 when the British launched a major antislave trade offensive. Dahomey, however, continued to thrive from the slave trade in the second half of

the 19th century. After the abolition of slavery and suppression of the slave trade, Dahomey's prosperity declined. The French occupied the area, defeating and disbanding the famous brigade of women—the Amazons—who were the best of Dahomey's soldiers. The French declared Dahomey a French Protectorate in 1892. They challenged a historically powerful system of African nobility, and it took them more than 50 years of treaty-making to establish Dahomey as one of their colonies.

The original Benin kingdom, located in western Nigeria, was also part of the Bight of Benin. According to tradition, the Benin dynasty was founded by immigrants from Ife three centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century. It was one of the earliest African states to come into contact with Europeans. Most of Benin's history lies in the Coastal Contact Period (1475–1850), but the genesis of its state dates back to an earlier period. Benin City was fairly large by the 15th century. By the time the Portuguese arrived on the Guinea coast, Benin was already firmly established with a royal court, and its founding dynasty was in its 10th reign. The Portuguese found a rich and civilized kingdom. Visitors in the 16th and 17th centuries described Benin as a great city, and one that could be fairly compared to European cities of the time. What started out as a city and mini-state progressed over a long period of time to a kingdom type of government.

Significant for its development in size and level of political structure as a forest state, Benin rose to political eminence and ultimately became the main state of the Edo-speaking peoples. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, its empire stretched across the southern tier of Yoruba states to Lagos and Badagry, near the western edge of modern Nigeria. The kings of Benin initially refused to take part in the Atlantic slave trade, but they did participate later. In 1516, the Benin king restricted the export of male slaves. Benin exported an estimated 10,000–12,000 slaves in 1763. In the early 19th century, Benin dropped out of the slave trade entirely but thrived and survived as a major state until close to the end of the 19th century when it was conquered by the British in 1897. As a militarily powerful early state, Benin exercised considerable political and cultural influence over extensive areas becoming best known for its early works of remarkable bronze art.

According to 19th century oral tradition, Benin learned the art of brass-casting from Ife in the 13th century. Benin artists and craftsmen were producing magnificent bronze

castings as early as the 14th century. Bronze sculptures from Benin reflect great art and a technical proficiency in metallurgy suggesting that the forest people were just as advanced as those of the savanna region. The Benin kingdom is better known for its brass sculptures than any other brass-casting center in West Africa. Benin is also known for its ivory, and ivory sculpture continues to be produced in some areas today.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Kingdom of Benin; Kingdom of Dahomey

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## Bight of Biafra

As a bay in the Gulf of Guinea, the Bight of Biafra was once known for its exportation of African slaves. Located along the West African coast, and extending northerly from the Niger River delta to Gabon's Cape Lopez, the Bight of Biafra encompasses 371 square miles. Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé, Príncipe, and Gabon are all countries that are located along the Bight of Biafra. The Bight of Biafra was based mainly on the ports of Bonny, Brass, Opobo, and Calabar (formerly Old and New Calabar). The term "Biafra" has European roots. As a name given to the

area by European travelers, and reinforced with maps, Biafra essentially encompasses the entire region east of the Niger, where it further extends to Mount Cameroon and also to parts of Senegambia. The Bight of Biafra changed the way that Africans participated in the slave economy. African intermediaries traded slaves to Europeans who had established castles along the coast to house Africans before being shipped across the Atlantic Ocean. With their ships packed tightly and loosely, European slavers prepared their chattel for redistribution in the Americas. Most of the time, slaves stayed belowdecks in cramped quarters where Europeans parceled out food, in spoons, to them, which they ate with their bare hands. The Bight of Biafra played a leading role in the slave trade.

From the 1740s on, the Bight of Biafra along with Benin dominated the transatlantic slave trade, accounting for 47 percent of the slaves exported. Figures revealed that from that time period on, the trade in slaves expanded from about 1,000 slaves per year to 17,000 per year in the 1790s. Most of the slaves ended up in the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland and Virginia, where they adapted to performing grueling manual labor. With no centralized pattern of enslavement, each polity controlled its spheres of influence. Aboh and Idah dominated the interior trade, and private cartels participated freely in the commercial process. Not only were slaves exported, but inhabitants also maintained their own slave institution and culture. Based on the system of clientage, and debt peonage (whereby pawns performed service for a specified amount of time), Africans had their own form of slavery long before the arrival of Europeans and their chattel economy. Europeans commercialized slavery whereas Africans wanted to settle debts or obtained slaves through raids or wars. As a result of European presence and the appearance of Africans as intermediaries who brought Africans from the interior to the coast for sale, the commercialization that erupted during then transatlantic slave trade altered the way that Africans participated in the slave economy. No longer did Africans trade among themselves. Other inducements that Europeans offered compelled African merchants to sell other Africans to European traders for a variety of goods.

Biafra earned historical distinction for another reason. Along its bight developed a city of its namesake, the Republic of Biafra (ROB), located in southern Nigeria. The Republic seceded from Nigeria for three years from March 30, 1967, to January 15, 1970. During its short stint of independence,

the countries of Gabon, Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, and Tanzania recognized the Republic as an independent state. Other countries such as France, the former Rhodesia, and South Africa provided covert military aid. In 1972, following the secessionist Biafran War, the ruling leader obliterated everything with the name Biafra, thereby anointing the area with the new name of the Bight of Bonny. This attempt to eradicate Biafra's historical value was unsuccessful as the bight continues to garner academic and lay attention. *See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Chesapeake Colonies; Equiano, Olaudah; Igbo

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## Bosman, Willem

Willem Bosman (1672–?) was born in Utrecht, Holland. He set out for West Africa at the age of 16 and spent 14 years in the service of the Dutch West India Company on the Guinea coast. The establishment of the company was a reflection of Dutch commercial designs on Spanish and Portuguese possessions in Africa and the Americas. The company sought to monopolize the Guinea coast portion of the Atlantic slave trade that supplied captive labor to New World plantations. In 1637, the Dutch succeeded in ousting the Portuguese from São Jorge de Mina, also known as Elmina, the largest and oldest European fort on the coast. Bosman became the second most important Dutch official on the coast of Guinea after being appointed to the Dutch West India Company's Elmina factory, where African coastal merchants sold slaves they obtained from the interior.

Besides Elmina, other Dutch West India Company forts lined the Guinea coast, serving as ship repair stations, as well as emporiums for ship supplies, trade goods, and above all, slaves. Africans allowed the Europeans to construct forts on their land in return for rent and were willing to ally with Europeans because agreements protected their

position as middlemen in the trade. Having consented to restrict their trading to a particular European nation, the African coastal merchants would expect that nation's military support during disputes with their neighbors. The notes, as these commercial papers were called, seldom remained long in the hands of the same Africans, and the forts themselves rarely could be held for any great length of time by the same European nation. The construction of forts was not always the result of reciprocal contacts between Africans and Europeans. Often, forts were built against the will of the local inhabitants, leading to war.

Bosman's account of his experience in Africa, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, was written during the waning years of the Dutch West India Company's power on the Guinea coast. The interior beyond Elmina was highly unstable, as Africans raided their weaker neighbors and sold them as slaves to Europeans, or fought each other in an effort to control the trade routes leading to the European coastal forts. Other Europeans, notably the English, French, and Portuguese, presented considerable challenges to the Dutch. Perhaps the most serious setback to the strength of the Dutch West India Company, indeed a major cause of its final demise, were the intrusions of interlopers who profited by ignoring the commercial prerogatives of the company. Bosman complained that many interlopers were financially supported by noncompany merchants in Holland. *See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Dutch West India Company; Elmina; Factor; Gold Coast; Gulf of Guinea

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## Bunce Island

Bunce Island (or *Bance*), once the largest British slave castle on the Rice Coast of West Africa, is a tiny island approximately 20 miles up the Sierra Leone River from the Atlantic Ocean, in the largest natural harbor on the African continent.

Established about 1670 (the year Charles Towne was founded in the Carolina Colony), the island operated as a slave castle until shut down by the British government in 1807—after tens of thousands of kidnapped Africans from that region were shipped through the facility and on to the Caribbean Islands and the colonies of South Carolina and Georgia. Africans of this region (the Rice Coast) had grown numerous varieties of rice for hundreds of years and could command a premium price as enslaved workers for the rice plantations in the Lowcountry region of those colonies. During its time as a slave castle, several London-based companies operated the facility, including the Gambia Adventurers, the Royal African Company of England—which had official recognition from the British Crown, plus Grant, Oswald and Company and John and Alexander Anderson, both private firms.

Richard Oswald, one of the wealthiest merchants in London, was the principal owner of Bunce Island by the 1750s. Oswald established a lucrative business arrangement with Charleston merchant and rice planter Henry Laurens, who brokered the sale of cargoes from Bunce Island for Oswald in Charleston. Laurens received ships from ports around the Atlantic that had stopped at Bunce Island to load a cargo of Africans from Oswald's operations, then would advertise the arrival of those vessels with their expected contents, and sell the cargo on commission. Laurens also sent his own slaving vessels to Bunce Island to return to Charleston, advertising their human cargo as possessing the skills and knowledge necessary for rice production. *See also:* Carolinas; Gullah; Laurens, Henry; Rice Cultivation; Royal African Company; Sierra Leone

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## Cape Coast Castle

Standing at 23,000 square feet, and located a couple of miles from Elmina Castle along the west coast of modern Ghana, Cape Coast Castle is a slave dungeon that held captured

Africans as slaves for sale in the transatlantic slave trade. First established by the Swedish as a trading fort for the exchange of materials and goods in 1653, Cape Coast Castle soon became a dungeon for holding enslaved Africans for sale and transport across the Atlantic. Because of its strategic location, European powers constantly fought for control over possession of the slave castle; since its inception, the Swedish, Dutch, Portuguese, and British actively contested each other for dominion over the castle and, as a result, it changed hands several times. Finally, in 1664 the British gained control over the castle; from 1664 until the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, Cape Coast Castle served as the headquarters for the British for the duration of their involvement in the slave trade.

Similarly to other slave dungeons, upon arriving at Cape Coast Castle, men and women were separated, horded into segregated dungeons, and then chained together. Regardless of sex or point of origin, all slaves were harshly treated, poorly fed, and subjected to physical abuse and psychological trauma. In contrast to other slave dungeons along the former Gold Coast, Cape Coast Castle is particularly unique because, unlike other slave warehouses such as Elmina and Christianborg castles, and other makeshift dungeons, slaves at Cape Coast Castle were confined underground until embarkation for the New World. Slaves were held below the ground by slavers to prevent the possibility of potential uprisings. The underground dungeon was exposed to the earth; the floor was covered with feces, blood, mucus, and other bodily excretions. Furthermore, the close confinement and overcrowding, in addition to unsanitary living conditions, contributed to the spread of diseases such as dysentery, diarrhea, malaria, and smallpox. Many untold thousands died at Cape Coast and, very likely, far more enslaved Africans died in the various slave dungeons dotting the Atlantic African coastline than on slave ships.

What is even more unique about Cape Coast Castle is its strategic positioning along the coast of Ghana. Specific to Cape Coast Castle is its natural barrier of jagged and once-impermeable rocks that nearly prevented penetration to the coast. Because of its location, slave traders had to travel from their ships to the coast in smaller boats. Given the rough waters, the trek from the Atlantic to the littoral was frequently marked by numerous deaths via drowning as a result of capsized boats.

Today, Cape Coast Castle stands as a World Heritage Site, as identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Cape Coast



*Cape Coast Castle along the west coast of Ghana. (Julius Cruickshank)*

Castle also serves as a point of destination where many people, especially persons of African descent, travel to visit yearly. Recently, a placard has been placed on the other side of the so-called Door of No Return that reads “Door of Return.” This Door of Return welcomes the descendants of enslaved Africans dispersed throughout the Western Hemisphere as a result of the transatlantic slave trade and is, perhaps, a lasting testament to their collective victory over the tragic historical circumstances that occurred at Cape Coast Castle.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Elmina

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## **Carolinas**

Carolina colonies depended upon the economic success of four major agricultural items, sugar, rice, indigo, and cotton, and the transatlantic slave trade. From the 1600s to the 1740s, planters demanded a labor supply from the Windward (Sierra Leone and Liberia) and Gold (Ghana, Togo, and Benin) coasts for rice production. Between the 1750s and 1787, an influx of slaves from Senegambia (Senegal and Gambia) facilitated indigo cultivation. By the early 19th century, cotton production demanded slaves from the Kongo-Angola region.

In 1670s, British sugar planters and enslaved Africans from the island of Barbados arrived in the port of Charles Town, South Carolina. Although the first set of enslaved Africans in the Carolinas originated from the Gold Coast, three major shifts contributed to the change in African regional preference: competition with Caribbean colonies, introduction of rice, and the prevalence of slave resistance.

During the early 17th century, British and French colonies in the Caribbean dominated sugar production and

the transatlantic slave trade. Since Gold Coast slaves were favored by owners of British Caribbean sugar plantations, planters in the Carolinas circumvented the competition by expanding their slave market to include peoples from Kongo-Angola, Senegambia, and the Windward regions.

A second factor contributing to the shift from Gold Coast slaves was an increase in slave resistance in the Caribbean and the Carolinas. Enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast were linked to and accused of instigating slave insurrections in Antigua and Jamaica. As a result, several legislative acts curbed the importation of slaves not directly from the African continent. In 1717, Carolina government enforced a head tax on slaves from other American or Caribbean colonies. In response to the Stono Rebellion of 1739, which occurred near Charleston, South Carolina, fewer West-Central Africans were imported beginning in 1740 since colonial authorities blamed “Angolans” for the uprising. From the 1740s through the end of the slave trade, South Carolina would import larger numbers of Africans from Senegambia and Sierra Leone.

The third factor contributing to the shift in African labor preference was the introduction of rice into the Carolinas. In 1680, Captain John Thurber brought gold seed rice from the island of Madagascar, located off the east African coast, and dispersed to fellow colleagues in South Carolina. Once the seed proved to be an agricultural and economic success, the plantation system became a major source of rice cultivation. The influx of slave labor from the African continent increased to maintain the region’s growing number of rice plantations.

In the 1750s, planters relocated rice fields from the inland to tidal and river swamps, where the plant was more susceptible to flooding by freshwater. The land required to successfully grow rice was located in humid areas plagued by tropical diseases. European laborers and landowners often contracted and died from tropical diseases such as malaria, carried by mosquitoes, and cholera. Under such conditions, plantation laborers shifted from European indentured servants to enslaved Africans. Peoples of the Windward Coast were found to be ideal for rice cultivation for two reasons: rice was a staple crop along the Windward Coast and the people of the region were immune to malaria. Malaria-resistance was later linked to the group’s production of sickle-shaped blood cells, which prevented the pathogen’s survival and transmission. Since European planters were unable to survive in the tropical environment of the rice plantations,

the properties were maintained under the system of absenteeism. Plantation owners assigned a person to manage the daily concerns of the property while they traveled to Europe or islands in the Caribbean, or resided further inland.

By the mid-18th century, indigo became an important article for export and source of wealth among Southern colonial planters. Since the crop required dry, light soil, indigo, like rice, was also cultivated in the South Carolina Sea Islands. The production of indigo became tedious and time-consuming as months of cultivating, drying, monitoring, and steeping were necessary in order to produce the most valued form of the commodity—a blue-violet dye. As the process became a health concern, as steam and chemicals from steeping were often lethal, cotton emerged as the new staple in the Carolinas. By the 1790s, the need for similar agricultural environment and demands of the English market allowed cotton to replace indigo as the dominant crop in the Carolina colonies.

Plantation slavery in the Carolina colonies differed from the systems found in the Caribbean and other American colonies and contributed to the development of African American cultures in the Carolinas. Rice cultivation gave rise to the task system and absenteeism, which played major roles in the cultural development of South Carolina Sea Islands’ Gullah communities. In the task system, a slave was assigned one acre of land requiring weeding, hoeing, tilling, or harvesting. Once the “task” is completed, slaves could tend to their own gardens, known as “Negro” or “slave” fields, or travel to the markets to sell any crops or goods they produced. Without the presence of European influence, absenteeism allowed the plantation to become a space for enslaved Africans to develop their own language and culture. *See also:* Angolan/Kongolese; Atlantic Slave Trade; Bunce Island; Gold Coast; Gullah; Juba Dance; Malaria; Rice Cultivation; Senegambia; Sierra Leone; Stono Rebellion; Task System; Turner, Lorenzo Dow; West-Central Africa

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## Chesapeake Colonies

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The first African slaves of the Chesapeake colonies arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, on a Dutch trading ship. The Virginians bought the slaves, but they treated them as indentured servants. Indentured servants served a contractual term, whereas slaves were bound for life. Africans were able to join the white indentured servants, once their contract expired, and they established farms and families themselves. Unfortunately, the Chesapeake colonies quickly ran out of labor, because indentured servitude was not sufficient to satisfy the increasing demand of the main staple crop, tobacco. As a result of the labor shortage, the Chesapeake colonies began to import African slaves, once the survival rate of new arrivals reached a satisfactory percentage. By the mid 1600s, roughly 1,700 Africans lived in the colonies, about one-fifth of them free.

The role of slaves quickly changed with the advent of the plantation society in the Chesapeake colonies. Whereas slaves were formerly part of the society, baptized, and even allowed to travel, the plantation regime now heavily restricted the slaves' rights. Based on the color of their skin, slaves were easy to identify and to ostracize. The settlers of the Chesapeake quickly followed the model of British Caribbean islands, where slavery and plantations had been in place since the early 1600s. Colonial judges singled out African indentured servants and levied harsher penalties for equal crimes committed by whites. Virginia recognized slavery by law in 1661, and in 1662 a second law stipulated that the child would follow the status of the mother, free or enslaved.

In 1676, Bacon's Rebellion further encouraged the planters to establish tighter control over slaves. Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion against the ruler of the colony. Bacon's rebels consisted of white indentured servants, as well as 10 percent of Virginia's black males. Planters concluded that slaves were the more dependable workforce, since they could be legally subjected to bondage for life. In addition, their black skin made it easier for planters to detect fugitive

slaves and thus simplified the control of the labor force. Tobacco planters especially preferred slaves to indentured servants, and when Indian slaves were no longer available at the end of the 17th century, planters began the mass importation of African slaves. From 1695 until 1700, more African slaves were imported than in the previous 20 years. With increasing numbers of African slaves, Virginia passed its first slave code in 1680.

In the first decade of the 18th century, 8,000 new slaves were imported into the Chesapeake. These slaves were predominantly male and the standard of living of these slaves steadily decreased, as planters became more interested in making a quick profit. Planters followed the Caribbean model of "seasoning" slaves: they stripped the new arrivals from all ties to their homeland. This became necessary because the Chesapeake colonies started to import slaves directly from Africa, rather than from the British Caribbean colonies. One of the first ties removed was their African name, but planters failed to completely erase the slaves' African identity. A second slave code in 1705 limited the rights of free blacks, regulated the right of black people to bear arms, and discouraged planters from freeing their slaves by attaching numerous provisions designed to stop the planter from acting. Slaves that were manumitted had to leave the colony within six months, or they would receive severe corporal punishment from the colonial legislature.

As long as tobacco prices remained stable and high in Great Britain, planters in the Chesapeake continued to import slaves in large numbers. However, after 1750, the soil of the Chesapeake was exhausted and the demand in Great Britain dwindled. The tobacco boom turned into a tobacco crisis, and planters cut their acreage and switched to wheat cultivation. Wheat required less slave labor than tobacco, which also led to a decrease in the slave imports after 1750. Nevertheless, slaves constituted one-third of the population in Maryland and two-fifths of the population in Virginia on the eve of the American Revolution. Slaves were not evenly distributed across the Chesapeake colonies; slave numbers were significantly larger in the coastal regions. Subsistence farmers, whose demand for slave labor was low, primarily settled the backcountry of Virginia and Maryland. However, about 61 percent of American slaves lived in the Chesapeake colonies in 1750.

The Chesapeake colonies differed from their British sister colonies in the Caribbean. Slaves never constituted

the majority of the population, and nonslaveholders outnumbered slaveholders. In the Chesapeake colonies, unlike in the Caribbean, the birth rate of slaves exceeded the death rate, which led to an ever-growing Creole (American-born) population of slaves. The Creole slaves developed slave communities in the Chesapeake colonies that mixed traits of their African heritage such as burial rites, music, and dance with traits of American colonists such as religion, clothing, and names. Slaves constantly forced their owners to rethink the master-slave relationship, often in favor of the slaves. This mixture formed a unique kind of slavery that was challenged, but not overthrown, by the American Revolution and developed continuously through negotiations between master and slave.

The British tried to incite slave flight during the Revolution and Lord Dunmore's Proclamation in 1775 to slaves to fight for the British incited widespread panic among white planters. During the Southern Campaign of the British Army, slaves fled plantations in large numbers. The British settled a small number of these slaves in Nova Scotia, but many slaves either died of diseases in military camps, were given to British officers as slaves, or were left behind to be recaptured by their former masters. The American Revolution changed the life of slaves just as much as the life of all Americans.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Bacon's Rebellion; Freedom Dues; Headright System; Indentured Servitude; Jamestown, Virginia; Jefferson, Thomas; Lord Dunmore; Rolfe, John; Tobacco

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## Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano (1757–?) was an abolitionist and writer who advocated for the repatriation of former enslaved Africans in Sierra Leone. Born in a Gold Coast

Fante city-state named Agimaque (or Ajumako) near Assini, Cugoano's very name denotes his Gold Coast, Akan-speaking heritage. Quobna, an Akan-day name for a male born on a Tuesday, was a name he probably received seven days after his birth. His father was a companion of the king of Agimaque (or Agimaquehene) and Cugoano was a frequent visitor in the Agimaquehene's court, even befriending a number of his children. While staying with an uncle, Cugoano was kidnapped by slave raiders at age 13 with about 20 other children and transported to a coastal trade factory. After a three-day stay, he was transported by ship to the infamous Cape Coast Castle. Once the ship had received a full cargo of enslaved Africans, it disembarked to Grenada and Cugoano later reflected on the human misery he witnessed on this slaver—including the frequent rape of African women and an attempted revolt that was discovered and brutally crushed by the ship's crew.

After about 10 months of working on a sugar plantation in Grenada and another year living in various locales throughout the Caribbean, Cugoano was purchased by Alexander Campbell and arrived in England just months after the Mansfield decision in the *Somerset* case of June 22, 1772, which ended slavery in England. After his arrival, Cugoano was baptized as "John Stuart" at St. James's Church in 1773 and, by 1784, he was employed by Richard and Maria Cosway—two artists who eventually connected Cugoano to prominent figures like William Blake. On July 28, 1786, Cugoano enlisted the aid of Granville Sharpe to help save Harry Demane—an enslaved man who was literally tied to the mast of a ship headed to the British Caribbean. After this successful intervention, Cugoano would write a letter to the Prince of Wales in order to encourage his support in abolishing the slave trade and slavery.

Cugoano, along with Olaudah Equiano and 24 other black men, became actively involved in the Sons of Africa—a group that sought rights for the black community in England and the abolition of slavery. This was the context in which he wrote a 1787 treatise entitled *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*. This work was a sustained diatribe against the slave trade and slavery and was the first of its kind published by a former enslaved African in the Anglophone world—preceding Equiano's narrative by two years. According to Vincent Carretta, Cugoano's *Thought and Sentiments* is also the first historical work on slavery and the slave trade written by an Anglophone African, and

he may have been the first African to criticize European colonization in the Americas.

By 1791, Cugoano had ended his long-standing employment with the Cosways and was apparently working with the Sierra Leone Company as an active proponent of emigration and repatriation. In his last known set of writings, a letter to Granville Sharp and a shorter version of *Thoughts and Sentiments* written in 1791, Cugoano states that he was planning to sail to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and, from there, he was to join Nova Scotia ships to Sierra Leone where he hoped to open a school for repatriated Africans. No records exist detailing Cugoano's later life as he completely disappears from the historical record after 1791.

See also: Abolition, Slave Trade; Atlantic Slave Trade

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## de Las Casas, Bartolomé

Bartolomé de las Casas (1471?–1566) was a Spanish Dominican priest who spent much of his long life fighting against the cruelty and subjugation of the indigenous people and African slaves in the Spanish colonies in the New World. Ironically, his empathy regarding the plight of the Taino and other indigenous people led Las Casas to be one of the first to support the large-scale importation of African slaves into the Spanish Americas.

Las Casas's father was a struggling merchant; he and several family members were involved in Christopher Columbus's voyages to the New World. Bartolomé also joined these enterprises, sailing for Hispaniola in the West Indies with its governor in 1502. His service there was rewarded with a royal land grant, an *encomienda*, which included forced labor. Las Casas served as a catechism teacher (*doctrinero*) to the aboriginal peoples. Although some historians believe he was ordained to the priesthood before he left Spain, others claim he was not ordained until 1512 or 1513. He may have been the first person to receive holy orders in the Americas.

These early years in the New World provided many illustrations of the brutality and corruption of royal officials toward those forced to labor for the Spanish overlords. Through his experiences in the New World, his study of scripture, and the guidance of a Dominican confessor, Las Casas came to a new appreciation of the plight of these subject races.

In 1514 Las Casas gave a sermon announcing he was giving his serfs back to the governor. He returned to Spain in 1515, knowing that he had to pursue his campaign for improved conditions for the native people in the heart of the Spanish government. Las Casas found a powerful ally in the archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros. Together they designed the *Plan para la reformación de las Indias*, which named Las Casas priest-procurator of the Indies. Las Casas was also to take part in a commission investigating the condition of the subject people.

Much of Las Casas's life was spent honing his moral and legal arguments against colonial oppression while trying to gain access to the Spanish ruler, Charles I (Emperor Charles V), and his influential courtiers. Las Casas's impassioned arguments before the Spanish Parliament in 1519 were instrumental in convincing the king to endorse a colony of free Indians. Only Spaniards committed to peaceful coexistence with the natives were allowed within the prescribed zone (the coast of Paria). Lack of Spanish support, open hostility from the defenders of the *encomienda* system, and an aboriginal uprising took their toll on the community. By 1522 it was evident the project had failed.

Seeking solace in his religious vocation, Las Casas joined the Dominican order in Santo Domingo shortly thereafter (1523). It was during this phase of his life that he began to write one of his major works, the *Apologética historia summaria de las gentes Indias*, and his magnum opus,

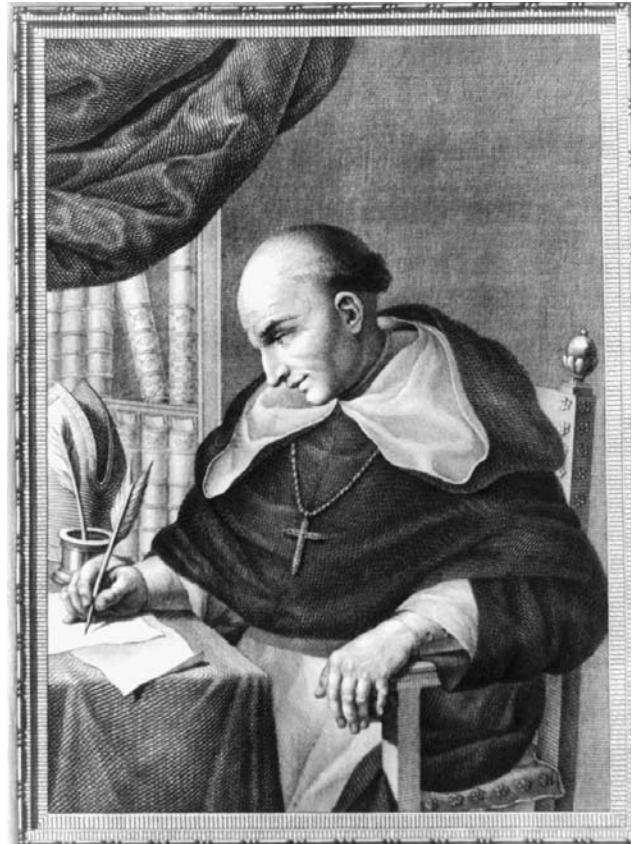
the *Historia de las Indias*. The *Historia* was a catalogue of aboriginal suffering but it is also a morality tale. Las Casas predicted that God would not suffer the subjugation and cruel treatment of the aboriginal peoples and would ultimately bring down His judgment upon the European conquerors.

During the 1530s, Las Casas continued revising his manuscripts as well as writing letters to Spain railing against the encomienda system in the Spanish colonies. He wrote *De único vocationis modo* (1537), in which he articulated why peaceful evangelization of non-Europeans would yield the best spiritual results. Las Casas's arguments were bolstered by the *Bulla Sublimis Deus*, in which the pope proclaimed the Indians' equality, rationality, and the necessity of their receiving Christian instruction.

Las Casas's advocacy of the Indians and condemnation of colonial exploitation won both important allies and enemies. He hoped his efforts had reached fruition when Charles passed the *Leyes Nuevas*. These "new laws" placed restrictions on the encomienda system and named Las Casas bishop of Chiapas in Guatemala to oversee their implementation (1544). Las Casas went so far as to deny absolution to those who used the encomienda system to oppress the Indians. This brought about a firestorm of opposition and he left for Spain in 1547.

Las Casas carried on his fight in the Old World. He used his influence at court and on the Council of the Indies as a platform for advocating the protection and education of aboriginals. This brought him into direct conflict with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who argued that the Indians were childlike and needed to be under Spanish subjugation for their own welfare. The learned Sepúlveda based his arguments on Aristotelian principles and proved himself a match for Las Casas. Sepúlveda also had the added weight of defending a well-established system of aboriginal servitude that was extremely popular and profitable for New World colonists. Their debate (1550–1551) has attracted much contemporary and subsequent attention. Las Casas is generally regarded as the victor.

Las Casas carried on his mission until his death in 1566, acting as an advisor to the King and the Council of the Indies as well as producing more written works focusing on oppression in the New World. Though Las Casas was among the first to suggest the importation of African slaves, he would later regret this after witnessing their harsh and brutal treatment.



*Bartolomé de Las Casas, a 16th-century Spanish historian and Dominican priest, worked diligently to highlight the plight of the Taino and other indigenous peoples living in the Caribbean. (Library of Congress)*

He lived into his 90s at a time when such longevity was truly remarkable. While Las Casas was, in many ways, a "voice crying in the wilderness" of his own age and, in the centuries that followed, his works have found a new resonance in the modern era. While modern secular readers may reject his profoundly Christian worldview, his tireless efforts to fight colonial domination in the New World are much more in step with our own day than his own.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Encomienda; Hispaniola

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## Destination, Florida

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With the founding of the colony of Carolina in 1670, the Spanish presence in Florida served as a facilitating space for escaped African slaves. The very existence of Spanish St. Augustine, established in 1565, drew enslaved Africans from British plantations and, between March and November 1739, runaways from Carolina helped to establish the semiautonomous black town of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose—two miles north of St. Augustine. The initial draw to Florida might have been due to the prior experience of many enslaved Africans brought to Carolina with both Catholicism and an Iberian language (Portuguese).

Beginning in 1491, the Kingdom of Kongo in West-Central Africa voluntarily converted to Catholicism due to the influence of Portuguese-speaking Capuchin missionaries and the baptism of the king of Kongo Nzinga a Nkuwu. In addition to this, nearby regions in West-Central Africa witnessed the spreading influence of Catholicism and a uniquely Africanized version of Christianity with the Portuguese founding of a permanent presence in Luanda beginning in 1575. In urban centers and rural hamlets alike, Africanized Christianity may have spread to the degree that the majority of enslaved Africans shipped from West-Central Africa were self-avowed Christians or had significant prior exposure to Christianity. In addition, the exposure to and mastery over Portuguese by these Atlantic Creoles likely facilitated communication with the Spanish in Florida.

Even before Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose (Fort Mose) was founded, the Spanish Crown had issued a series of edicts in the period between 1693 and 1733. Thousands of Carolina slaves, understanding the unique geopolitical circumstances, exploited the imperial rivalry between the English and Spanish in order to secure their freedom. Indeed, it is very likely that the 1739 Stono Rebellion in South Carolina was ultimately a movement initiated by enslaved Africans from West-Central Africa seeking asylum in Spanish Florida.

While thousands left Carolina and Georgia (established in 1732) for Florida, not all of them ended up in St. Augustine or Fort Mose. Some formed maroon societies while others joined with the Seminoles, creating unique biracial enclaves in which aspects of South Carolina and Georgia Gullah culture (e.g., rice cultivation) became embedded. In the course of the First, Second, and Third Seminole Wars,

the so-called Black Seminoles fought to protect both their freedom and their Seminole Indian allies. Ultimately, many Black Seminoles were removed from Florida and like other members of the “Five Civilized Nations,” they were relocated to the Oklahoma Indian Territory.

Between the 18th and 19th centuries, escaped slaves and their progeny lived in 15 black or biracial settlements or villages, including Fort Mose (1738–1740 and 1752–1763), the Fort at Prospect Bluff (1812–1816), Bowlegs Town I (1780s–1812), Bowlegs Town II (1813–1818), Mulatto Girl’s Town (1818–1820s), Payne’s Town (1790s–1813), King Heijah’s Town (1818–1823), Big Swamp (1800s–1840s), Okahumpka (1818–1820s), Powell’s Town (1818–1840s), Pilalikaha (1803–1840s), Chocahatti (1767–1830s), Bukra Woman’s Town (1818–1823), Boggy Island (1814–1840s), and Sarasota (1750s–1840s). When Florida was ceded to the United States in 1821, it no longer effectively served as a frontier or haven for escaped slaves. Even in that case, free black and biracial forts, villages, and towns continued to exist into the 1840s and served as the lasting manifestations of black agency, the unique geopolitical circumstances evident in Florida, and mutually beneficial alliances with Seminoles and Spaniards.

*See also:* Atlantic Creoles; Black Seminoles; Fugitive Slaves; Gullah; Kongo Kingdom; Seminole Wars; Stono Rebellion; West-Central Africa

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## Du Sable, Jean Baptiste Point

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Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable (1745?–1818) was an entrepreneur who is acknowledged as the first known settler in the

area now known as Chicago. The son of a French sea captain and an African-born former slave, Du Sable was born around 1745, in Saint-Marc, Sainte Dominique (present-day Haiti). Not very much is known about Du Sable's early life except that his mother may have been killed by the Spanish when he was 10, and he probably escaped death by swimming out to his father's ship. His father sent him to France to be educated, and he learned to speak English and Spanish in addition to his mother tongue. When he returned from France, he went to work on his father's ships. When Du Sable was about 20, he undertook a voyage to New Orleans. The vessel sank and Du Sable was injured. When he arrived in New Orleans without his identification papers, he discovered the port had been taken over by the Spanish government. He was in danger of being captured and sold as a slave, but was rescued by French Jesuit priests who protected him until he was well enough to travel again.

Du Sable traveled up the Mississippi River to the St. Louis area, and then settled in a frontier area near what is now Peoria, Illinois. He was accepted by the local Potawatomi Indians and took a Potawatomi woman, named Kittahawa, but whom he called Catherine, as his wife. In order to be given permission to marry her, the 25-year-old Du Sable had to become a member of her nation. The Potawatomi called him "Black Chief," and he became a high-ranking member of the nation. They had a son, Jean, and a daughter, Susanne, together. They prospered financially and eventually owned more than 80 acres of land in the Peoria area.

Before it became a city, Chicago was a trading center, and, as its first permanent resident, Du Sable operated the first elaborate fur-trading post during the first two decades before 1800. In the late 1770s Du Sable headed north to explore the region near the shores of the Great Lakes. He saw potential in a swampy area that had been passed over by previous European explorers. The Indians called this land *Eschikagou* (Chicago), the place of bad smells due to the odor of the swampland. Whites in the area had been fearful of attacks from hostile Native Americans. Du Sable, however, got along well with various Indian groups, and he knew several of their languages. He stayed and built a five-room house, the first permanent structure in the area. It stood in what is now downtown Chicago. In 1782 Du Sable established a trading post that grew successfully, becoming well known all around the Great Lakes region. The trading

post became the main supply source for fur trappers, traders, and Indians in the area. After a few years, Du Sable's trading post also supplied staple food items to trading posts in Canada and Detroit. It had a mill, bakery, dairy, smokehouse, poultry house, and workshops, barns, and stables. Du Sable's business thrived, and he owned much livestock. Du Sable became well known for trading goods throughout the Midwest. As a result, he became very wealthy. In 1784, he brought his wife and children to live with him in Chicago. Du Sable's granddaughter, Eulalie, was born in 1796. She was the first non-Indian baby born in Chicago.

After the death of his wife and son, Du Sable sold his property in Chicago for \$1,200 and moved to St. Louis, Missouri, to live with his daughter, her husband, and granddaughter. When his daughter and her husband moved to Canada, Du Sable bought a house on a farm in St. Charles, Missouri, that he deeded to his grandchildren on the condition that granddaughter Eulalie care for him until his death and then bury him with Catholic rites in a Catholic cemetery. For the next few years, Du Sable lived on his St. Charles farm. Jean Baptist Point Du Sable died on August 29, 1818, at the age of 73.

In 1968, Du Sable was officially recognized by the state of Illinois and the city of Chicago as "the Founder of Chicago." In recognition of his pioneering role, the U.S. Postal Service, on February 20, 1987, issued a Black Heritage Series 22-cent stamp in honor of Du Sable. The Du Sable Museum of African American History, on Chicago's South Side, is named in his honor in addition to his homesite, a high school, a park, and a harbor in downtown Chicago. The Chicago Du Sable League is dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable's life and history and in maintaining his respectful place in American, African American, and Chicago history.

*See also:* American Revolution

*Janice D. Hamlet*

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## Dutch New Netherland

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The history of forced labor in New Netherland began in 1625 with the arrival of a Dutch warship that unloaded a cargo of Africans plundered from a Portuguese vessel on the Atlantic. The status of the first Africans brought to Dutch North America was not clearly defined initially and there existed a number of avenues forced laborers could use to obtain freedom that were open for at least a few decades. The idea of permanent and racialized slavery did not develop in the region until the mid-1660s. Like their counterparts in the Chesapeake, the first Africans arriving in New Netherland inhabited a nebulous social space between indentured servitude and slavery. Initially it seemed that they would have the same opportunities as their European counterparts and would, perhaps, share the fruits and rewards the New World offered. To borrow the words of Peter Wood, the “terrible transformation” that led to the eventual development and proliferation of race-defined slavery during the second half of the 17th century helped determine the poisonous race relations that have manifested throughout much of North American history.

Established primarily as a fur-trading post by the Dutch West India Company, New Netherland and its Dutch settlers struggled during the early years of the colony’s history to find sufficient sources of revenue and labor. Concentrating most of their efforts on major territorial claims in West Africa and the Caribbean—Gorée and Curaçao, respectively—the directors of the company had little interest in investing the significant amount of capital necessary to make New Netherland a successful settler colony. As a result, the Dutch West India Company proposed two separate plans to solve the economic problems faced by its North American colony. The first solution was the establishment of patroonships or landed estates granted to the wealthy. Patroonships, much like the headrights bestowed by the Virginia Company in the Chesapeake, were incentives meant to encourage immigration to America. Wealthy Dutch settlers receiving landed estates under this system had the responsibility of attracting and paying the necessary transportation costs for up to 50 new settlers each. This plan met with only limited success with the establishment of only one patroonship during the entire period of Dutch rule in New Netherland. The company’s second and most successful plan was the importation of Africans to be used

primarily as agricultural laborers and as workers in the construction of public buildings and military fortifications.

The names of some of the first Africans imported into New Netherland—Paul d’Angola, Simon Congo, and Anthony Portuguese—clearly denote their origin in West-Central Africa. In the early 1570s, Portugal conquered Angola and established peaceful commercial relations with the nearby Kongo Kingdom. West-Central Africa therefore would be an early source of labor for the Portuguese colony of Brazil and, due to the actions of Dutch warships and privateers on the Atlantic, both British Virginia and Dutch New Netherland would import a number of Africans from this region as well. When the Dutch West India Company was first chartered in 1621, it began an aggressive campaign against Portuguese claims in Atlantic Africa and the Americas in an attempt to undermine the Portuguese trade monopoly and to acquire Africans by more direct means. The company captured portions of Brazil by 1637 and moved to wrest control of a number of possessions in Africa away from its Portuguese rivals.

In an attempt to fulfill its public promise to provide the colonists with as many enslaved African laborers as possible, the company sought to become the primary conduit of Africans entering Dutch American colonies. In the decade between 1637 and 1647 alone, the Dutch West India Company claimed the Portuguese possessions of Elmina, Príncipe, Angola, and São Tomé through military conquest. Even though the Dutch could only manage to control Angola from 1641 to 1648, they had effectively replaced the Portuguese as the dominant European power in Atlantic Africa by the mid-1640s. This complex web of interconnections within the Atlantic World, fostered by trade, international rivalry, and war, became an essential component in the development of a number of Euro-American societies.

By 1627, a total of 14 Africans had arrived in Dutch New Netherland and this initially slow trickle became a torrent over the course of the next half century. The absence of cash crops such as sugar, tobacco, or rice did not slow the need for African labor in Dutch North America. In fact, the importation of Africans became the principal focus for the company with the arrival of the first slave ship in 1635. In addition, as a result of its direct control over large portions of Brazil between 1637 and 1654, the company was able to create a unique trade relationship between New Netherland and Brazil. In a trade arrangement drafted in 1648, the colonists in New Netherland agreed to ship fish, flour, and

produce to Brazil in exchange for as many African laborers as they required. Within four years of the establishment of the Brazil–New Netherland commercial agreement, direct trade with West Africa for slaves was opened and a slight reorientation of the slave trade began. In prior decades, the Dutch were satisfied with plundering Portuguese slave ships or establishing direct trade relations with Brazil or Spanish America to procure African laborers. As a result, the majority of Africans entering New Netherland were from Loango and other West-Central African regions. Enslaved “Angolans” or West-Central Africans would prove essential to the economic viability of the colony during its early years.

By allowing Africans to be directly imported into North America via Dutch West India Company–owned or commissioned ships, New Netherland soon began to receive a number of Gold Coast Akan-speakers exported from Dutch-controlled trading factories in West Africa to supplement the West-Central African imports. After capturing Elmina Castle from the Portuguese in August 1637, the Dutch would control the most important slave-trading factory along West Africa’s Gold Coast. The immediate result of the capture of Elmina was the importation of Gold Coast Africans into Dutch American colonies. This new source of African laborers became even more important after 1648 when the Portuguese managed to recapture their Angolan possessions from the Dutch, which effectively cut off a major source of West-Central African imports. Also, with the Portuguese recapture of Brazil, the unique commercial arrangement between New Netherland and Brazil was brought to an abrupt halt.

The dominant position in Africa and the Americas enjoyed by the Dutch came to an end in 1664. The Second Anglo-Dutch War of 1664–1667 helped create a major power shift throughout the Atlantic World. During the course of the war, the English seized most of the Dutch claims along the Gold Coast with the notable exception of Elmina Castle. Equally important, the English managed to capture New Netherland. Angered over repeated violations of the Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660, the English Crown decided that New Netherland was a significant obstacle to its economic interests in the Americas. By claiming this region as theirs, the English grabbed control of the contiguous territory from the Chesapeake to the New England colonies. Having already proven the military vulnerabilities of Dutch colonies during the First Anglo-Dutch War of 1652–1654, the English were able to peacefully capture New Netherland

after a brief naval blockade. Peter Stuyvesant—Director General of the Dutch West India Company and Governor of New Netherland—capitulated on September 8, 1664, effectively ending four decades of control by the company over what would soon become New York.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Dutch West India Company; Gold Coast; Patroonship

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## Dutch West India Company

The Dutch West India Company was a private joint-stock company that received its first charter in 1621 from the States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the Dutch national assembly, for commerce and colonization in the Western Hemisphere and Africa. The company’s board of directors represented investors in the various Dutch republics, and the company was awarded a monopoly on Dutch trade with Africa, the Atlantic islands, the Caribbean, and the American mainland. Granted extensive powers by the Dutch government, the company made treaties with foreigners, administered justice, and maintained armed forces. With military and economic support from the public funds of the States General, Dutch West India Company ships began traveling to the west coast of Africa and across the Atlantic as interlopers in areas of the world claimed for colonization by Spain and Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas.

The Dutch West India Company played a major role in the 17th-century Atlantic slave trade, though the total Dutch portion of the trade from the 16th through the 19th centuries was never more than 5 percent. Portugal’s profitable sugarcane plantations in northeastern Brazil attracted



Dutch attention and led to the Dutch West India Company's seizure of the captaincy of Pernambuco in 1630. Seeking to provide more slaves for its Brazilian colony, the company attacked several Portuguese forts in Africa. In 1636, a West India Company force captured the Portuguese fort at São Jorge da Mina (Elmina), the main Portuguese outpost in West Africa. For a short time in the mid-17th century, the company also controlled Central Africa's main slave port, São Paulo de Luanda in Angola. The company held 7 of the 14 captaincies of Brazil before being driven out by the local populace in 1654. The Dutch invasion of Portuguese Brazil and the war to oust them allowed many slaves the opportunity to escape to maroon societies. During the era of Dutch colonization in northeastern Brazil, more than 30,000 slaves were imported to work for the area's predominantly Portuguese sugar plantation owners.

In the second half of the 17th century, the company supplied slaves mainly to Spain's American and Caribbean colonies through both legal and illegal trade, often operating as a subcontractor for assorted merchants and companies that held an official *asiento* with the Spanish Crown. In the Caribbean, the Dutch West India Company controlled Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire, three small islands off the coast of Venezuela. Farther north, the company held the islands of Saba and St. Eustatius, and part of the island of St. Maarten. Curaçao became the hub for Dutch West Indian trade and the main slave distribution center to Spanish America. Slaves were transferred on a lesser scale from St. Eustatius to the French Caribbean. The Dutch exploited the Caribbean, as well as the Guiana region of South America, for sugar cultivation. By 1700, the colony of Dutch Guiana, present-day Suriname, contained some 50,000 slaves. After 1700, Dutch Guiana received the majority of slaves transported by the company.

In North America, the Dutch West India Company was primarily interested in the lucrative fur trade. The company oversaw the colony of New Netherland, which included North America's first permanent Dutch settlement at Fort Orange in what is today Albany, New York, as well as New Amsterdam, now New York City. The majority of New Netherland's slaves arrived via Curaçao. Slaves numbered around 450 and made up 5 percent of the total population of the colony, estimated at 9,000 in 1667 when the Dutch ceded New Netherland to the English. Large deficits and free trade policies caused the company to be dissolved in 1791.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Dutch New Netherland; Elmina; Gold Coast

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## Elmina

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Constructed by the Portuguese in 1482 on the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) of West Africa, the Castelo São Jorge da Mina, Elmina, was the first significant European fortification in sub-Saharan Africa. The castle fortress, erected under the direction of Commander Diogo de Azambuja, solidified a Portuguese monopoly on Gold Coast trading for more than a century. The fortress represented a permanent foothold in tropical Africa, and as a result, rival European naval powers, such as the British and Dutch, felt compelled to construct similar fortifications across the West African coast. Dozens of structures dotted the region in the succeeding centuries, changing forever the relationship between Europeans and both the coastal African populations as well those in the interior regions.

Elmina was built near an existing African settlement of Akan-speaking people who welcomed the construction of the fort, both sides seeing its existence as advantageous to their trading prospects. The local Africans gained a stable supply of goods and some measure of protection from warfare, while the Portuguese were able to reduce the vulnerability of shipboard trading from hostile European navies and gained larger storage and administrative spaces. Commerce initially consisted of gold and some natural products from the interior such as ivory and wood. In later centuries the slave trade would define the castle's major export; however, during the first several decades African slaves were

imported into Elmina from other coastal regions outside of the Gold Coast. This was due to a prohibition established by the Portuguese against enslaving local people on the Gold Coast, fearing that slave raiding would interfere with the profitable gold trade.

Elmina was built a decade before Christopher Columbus set sail for the New World, but by the 17th century, the mining of large gold deposits in the Americas lowered the value of, and European dependence on, African gold. At the same time, the Dutch were ascending as a naval power and wrested control of Elmina from the Portuguese in 1637. Gold remained a major trade good for the Dutch, yet there was also an increased demand for labor in the New World, and Elmina's traders turned to trafficking in enslaved human beings at unprecedented numbers. Most of the slaves were brought from the interior to be traded on the coast and were often held for several months in the castle's slave dungeons while awaiting purchase. Elmina was a comparatively small-volume slave trading port, with undersized slave quarters compared to other coastal castles on the Gold Coast. Nonetheless, having been the forerunner of European trade centers in Africa, its name remains synonymous with the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade.

The Dutch held the fort for 235 years, until the British took possession of Elmina by treaty in 1872. The slave trade had long ended, and the Dutch were eager to tap other sources of wealth in other parts of Africa and particularly in Asia. Many of the town's inhabitants refused to acknowledge the authority of the new power; the British responded by razing most of the surrounding town. After nearly 400 years, the British had become the sole European power on the Gold Coast.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Cape Coast Castle; Gold Coast

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## **Encomienda**

Encomienda was a system of labor employed by the country of Spain within its own borders, and abroad in its possessions in the New World, during the late 15th to late 18th centuries. The encomienda is rooted in the tradition of medieval feudalism and is marked with two very distinct forms. The first version of the encomienda was practiced by the Christian rulers in Castile. Loyal citizens called *encomenderos* were temporarily granted by the sovereign the right to govern parcels of territory, which included population centers. Such areas were formerly under Muslim rule and had been reabsorbed into the Christian kingdoms during the period of the Reconquista. The *encomenderos* were permitted to collect a stipulated portion of the revenue from the reclaimed territory and were due the same services normally expected by the Crown.

The encomienda evolved as the Spanish empire seized control of territory from native populations in the New World. The American version of the encomienda began in the late 15th century with Christopher Columbus in Hispaniola. In an effort to feed the Spanish settlers and maximize tribute from the Native Americans under their sway, Columbus assigned a set number of Native Americans to labor for select citizens. This arrangement came to be known as *repartimiento*. Although Queen Isabella questioned the legal and ethical issues regarding the Native Americans who were placed in outright slavery or under the *repartimiento*, both systems continued. To get the unwilling Native Americans working to provide for the incoming Spanish settlers, who often were unable to fend for themselves the first few years, and set them to the grueling work in the mines, the governor of Hispaniola, Nicolas de Ovando, formalized the *repartimiento* in 1502.

Ovando altered it into a system similar to the encomienda found in Castile, but adapted to their current situation. Control was given over specified numbers of Native Americans rather than a geographic region. Some of the provisions developed by Ovando were that the property rights of the natives were to be honored, no physical harm was to come to them, and any of the Spaniards who had taken wives or daughters against their will as their own had to return them to their families, and further had to seek consent to marry.

Perhaps the most pivotal provision involved the spiritual welfare of the Native Americans. Properly indoctrinating the “savages” into the Christian church was the cornerstone of the *encomienda* system in the New World. Native Americans were to promptly abandon their ancient worship, attend services in the Catholic Church on a regular basis, and be properly baptized. This lent the *encomienda* a moral imperative to salve over the frequent abuses and excesses.

The Native Americans were to be considered free subjects, but it was necessary to employ their labor for farming or mining for the good of the commonwealth. Any returns for their labor was at the discretion of the Spanish. Measures to quell the inevitable dissent included a provision that no native was allowed to bear arms and another that prevented “Moors”—a term used to describe Berber Muslims, Jews, heretics, or *reconciliados* (people reconciled to the church)—from coming into the Indies.

A royal missive from Queen Isabella formalized much of Ovando’s earlier instructions, stating that the Indian inhabitants were “free and not servile,” that their spiritual education was paramount, and they were to work the fields and toil in the mines on behalf of the Spanish in exchange for wages determined by the local government. The result was a brutal system that was slavery in all but name and which decimated the native population.

Dominican missionaries, moved by the suffering of the natives, pleaded with Ferdinand for better treatment of his subjects. A council made up partly of theologians comprised the first codes of Native American law in 1512–1513, the Laws of Burgos. These 35 articles were to provide a more humane and Christian life for the natives. Their plight was later taken up by a Dominican convert named Bartolomé de Las Casas. Las Casas submitted a proposal that advocated freedom for the natives and the abolishment of the *encomienda*.

Under pressure to revise the system for humanitarian concerns, but mainly to reign in the power of the *encomenderos*, Charles I in 1520 ruled that the institution was to be phased out of the imperial arsenal; existing *encomiendas* were allowed to continue but if vacated they were not to be reassigned. Despite these changes Charles was compelled to revise the Laws of Burgos in 1542. Ultimately, any efforts at serious reform of this troubled system was hindered by the revenue generated.

The success of the *encomienda* paved the way for other exploitative labor systems such as debt peonage and the *hacienda* system. The *encomienda*, or one of its derivative offshoots, accompanied future Spanish colonization

in the Americas. Such systems were practiced in Puerto Rico, in Mexico after Cortes conquest of the Aztecs, in Peru after Pizarro’s conquest of the Incan Empire, and in New Mexico. The *encomienda* system did not cross over into Florida, as it had fallen out of favor with the Crown by that point of settlement.

The *encomienda* gradually lost effectiveness due to the greatly reduced Native American population and change of focus from mining commodities to sustained agriculture. The *encomienda* was nonhereditary and as the number of *encomenderos* decreased, the population was reclaimed by the Crown. Pockets of this transitional labor system survived in the Platine region and in Paraguay until the late 1700s.

*See also:* de Las Casas, Bartolomé; Hispaniola; Reconquista

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## Estévan

Estévan (ca. 1500–1539), also referred to as Esteban, Esteban the Arab, Estevanillo, Estevanico, or Estevanico de Dorante, appears to have been born in the city of Azamor in Morocco. While accounts vary as to whether he was a willing participant or enslaved by a Spaniard on the expedition, Estévan joined the expedition of Narvaez when he was 28 to 30 years old, sailing from San Lucas de Barrameda, Spain, in 1527. The expedition began with 506 participants who landed on the coast of Florida. After a period of aimless wandering and skirmishes with the local native peoples, the Spaniards dwindled to 240 people.

Along with the remaining explorers, Estévan set sail across the Gulf of Mexico where the group was beset with more catastrophes and only four survived the journey—three Spaniards and Estévan. (Some sources identify all

four survivors as Africans.) With no support, the four men struggled for eight years as they wandered across the unknown landscape, periodically battling and/or enslaved by the local groups. Eventually, the men became skilled in the native methods of medicine and were revered for their skills. All were elevated in stature to that of “Medicine Men” within the native communities.

Estévan, especially, developed skill using the Indian dialects and at understanding the characteristics of the individual groups. When the chance arose for the four gentlemen to return to Spain, the three other men accepted the opportunity while Estévan chose to remain in Mexico. He was greatly valued for his experience by the newly arrived Spanish who were interested in expanding Spain’s influence in the region. Again, accounts vary as to Estévan’s reasons for remaining in Mexico as one theory suggests that his language skills and social power as a Medicine Man allowed him substantial freedom and wealth within the native society, demanding gems and women from the local groups.

In 1539 Estévan was sent as a scout with two friars in search of the Seven Cities of Gold. Reportedly, as they traveled throughout the Southwest, the Spanish friars realized that Estévan was more easily accepted by the northern groups than they were and sent him on ahead to negotiate with groups as they approached new areas. The friars sent Estévan ahead into the Suni pueblo of Cibola where he was killed by the Zuni Indians—some say because they would not tolerate his demands for riches and women.

The role of Estévan in the exploration and discovery of new areas of Mexico and the American Southwest continues to be debated. The pejorative and continued use of “Estevanillo” and “Estevanico” as his name concerns scholars who argue that, as an enslaved African, he is assigned inappropriate and unattractive characteristics that are intended to rob him of his accomplishments. Many do agree that in his trip to Cibola he was the first non-native person to enter the territory that is now New Mexico, although Spaniards generally are given that credit.

*See also:* Atlantic Creoles; Hispaniola

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## Factor

Factors were agents of European commercial enterprises operating along the African coast beginning in the late 15th century. The term referred to European merchants who resided in the trading facilities, called factories. Many factors took African wives. Their offspring often became factors themselves, and were called *lancados* or creoles.

Factors functioned primarily as intermediaries between European/American merchants and African merchants. To ensure high quality of trade goods, factors inspected each shipment of goods from Europe and America, which included textiles, guns, and liquor. From Africans, factors traded a variety of commodities, which included gold, ivory, and dyes. These items were warehoused in storage facilities within the factory so as to make them quickly available for sale to European ship captains. Factors also conducted a lucrative slave trade with African merchants from the interior of the continent. Once obtained, slaves awaiting sale were kept in a special enclosed area of the factory known as a barracoon.

The *lancados* and creoles had a significant impact on African society. By the 18th century, there were more than 100 in the Elmina factory along the Gold Coast of West Africa, and they were just as numerous elsewhere along the west coast of Africa. European in dress and manners, knowledgeable about local practices, and multilingual, they were able to function easily in both societies. Rarely accepted by either society, however, they created their own separate societies. As cultural and economic brokers, they took advantage of the increasing competition among European and African traders. Without a specific European or African identity, however, they were placed in a very vulnerable position. Sometimes they were enslaved themselves. By the 19th century, as the slave trade declined, so did the importance of the factors.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Bosman, Willem; Dutch West India Company; Elmina; Gold Coast; Royal African Company

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## Freedom Dues

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Freedom dues refer to the payment given to indentured servants by their masters, upon completion of their term of service. Most often these dues came in the form of clothing, land, seeds to plant crops such as tobacco, and sometimes livestock. Indentured servitude, as was carried out by settlers in the Virginia colony, was the solution proffered around 1620, to the crisis of labor shortage in the colonies. In exchange for a term of indenture, sometimes previously specified and at other times negotiated upon arrival, European immigrants had their passage from Europe to the colony paid. Initially, indentured servants were exclusively from England but later came from various places in Europe, including Scotland, Ireland, and Germany. These immigrants were overwhelmingly men of lower socioeconomic status in their home countries, who despite high mortality rates, came from Europe to Virginia in hopes of establishing themselves through the acquisition of wealth and gaining the social ascent that came with it.

For planters, initially, indentured servitude proved to be an effective system, as the numbers of newly freed servants who, using their freedom dues, established their own small tobacco farms, were minimal and therefore were not deemed a serious threat to the profits of their previous owners. After the middle of the 17th century, however, as death rates began to fall and life spans increased, the numbers, and indeed the profits, of the emerging planter class began to jeopardize those of the master class.

Several solutions were proposed to combat the adverse economic effects of the emerging planter class. One such measure used to address depressed tobacco prices and subsequent loss of profits was to extend servants' terms of indenture. Servants who engaged in behaviors that were deemed transgressive or disruptive, including but not limited to absconding, stealing, sexual liaisons resulting in childbirth, could be penalized though the lengthening of the term, among other more brutal forms of punishment.

However, the increasing emergence of the planter class was only one factor of an array including weather, war, and cessation that worked in concert to depress profits and rouse frustration and disillusionment among planters in Virginia. Eventually, it became apparent that economic effectiveness of indentured servitude had run its course, and some other, more permanent, less expensive, measure would have to be

implemented if Virginias were to quell rebellious undercurrents and once again see the profits they enjoyed in the earlier part of the 17th century. Although slaves were present in the colonies in small numbers from approximately 1619, roughly the same time indentured servitude began to take hold, slavery as opposed to indentured servitude proved to be no more economically advantageous, but rather more costly, as the price of slaves compared to that of white immigrants, coupled with high death rates, was simply not as cost-effective as indentured servitude. By the 1660s, however, slavery would prove to be the answer to the problem of indentured servitude and become, arguably, the single most important factor, whose tenure and legacy would be essential in coloring the economic, social, and political landscape of what would become the United States.

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Headright System; Indentured Servitude; Jamestown, Virginia

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## Futa Jallon

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The history of the whole area from the Gambia to Sierra Leone was dominated from the beginning of the 18th century on by the development of the great Fulbe state of Futa Jallon. Thanks to it, long-distance trade carrying Sudanic influences found its way to the coast and there linked up with the Europeans. The Fulbe founded the Muslim state of Futa Jallon only after 1727.

Futa Jallon used to raid for slaves and imported a large number from the hinterland or took them from the coastal minority peoples. Some were then made available for export.

Futa Jallon developed as a center of Islamic learning. During the 18th century, Futa Jallon developed as an important intellectual center of Islam. Students were sent

from great distances to study at the Islamic schools that had been established throughout the Futa Jallon region.

But, above all else, it was through trade that the Fulbe extended their influence throughout the region. The slave trade continued to be of paramount importance to the state of Futa Jallon long after its formal abolition by the British in 1807. Many slaves taken by the Fulbe were war captives, victims of various campaigns that had taken place between Futa Jallon and its neighboring rivals.

*See also:* Senegambia; Sierra Leone

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## Ghana

Founded by Soninke-speaking peoples, the Sudanic empire of Wagadu (Ghana) was the first of its kind in the region. Wagadu is also known more popularly as Ghana, a name derived from the Soninke word for “king,” which Arab and North African merchants applied to the entire kingdom beginning in the eighth century CE. While the precise origins of Wagadu are unclear, in a text entitled *Tarikh as-Sudan* written in Timbuktu in 1650 the author claimed that there were at least 22 kings of Wagadu before CE 622. If true, this would place the origins of the kingdom at about CE 300. By CE 800, Wagadu had emerged as a powerful trading kingdom with an advantageous geographic locale in the region known as the Sahel. This transitory zone between the northern desert and the southern forests proved a fortuitous region for Wagadu as its rulers had the ability to collect tax revenues from the lucrative gold–salt trade. In addition to these revenues, the kingdom managed to subjugate an increasing number of smaller polities that were forced to pay tribute in the form of agricultural surplus, gold, and other commodities.

Wagadu’s capital city, Kumbi Saleh, was the epitome of the wealth of the growing empire. Housing 15,000 to 20,000 people, Kumbi Saleh was the largest city in West

Africa before CE 1300. Its stone houses and tombs, the elaborate royal court, and several magnificent mosques were important features of the capital. In Kumbi Saleh and coursing through trade centers throughout Wagadu were commodities originating from hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away, including horses, dates, silk, cowrie shells, and ivory. Wagadu’s commercial power was more than matched by its military might. With the ability to field up to 60,000 conscripted and regular soldiers, the empire was the dominant military force in the western Sudan. In addition, iron smelting and the importation of horses combined to create significant military advantages that would be shared by subsequent Sudanic empires. Iron weapons—particularly swords, lances, javelins, and arrow tips—and the use of fast-moving cavalries allowed Wagadu to crush all local states. This uncontested domination came to an end in 1076 when the Almorvids, a kingdom of Islamic North Africans, defeated Wagadu’s military and conquered the empire. The Almorvids had been Wagadu’s principal rival for control over trans-Saharan trade routes. With Wagadu’s defeat, its former tributary states would vie for power for more than 150 years before the emergence of Mali as the next great Sudanic empire.

*See also:* Mali; Sahel; Senegambia; Songhai; Sudanic Empires; Timbuktu; Tribute

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## Gold Coast

Derived from the Portuguese in the late 15th century and later adopted by the British, Gold Coast is the colonial name of the region located on the coast of West Africa, neighboring present-day Togo to the east, Côte d’Ivoire to the west, and Burkina Faso to the north. The region comprises primarily the Akan, Ewe, Ga, and Moshi-Dagomba peoples. Gold, as the name suggests, was plentiful in this region, attracting both African and European traders. In the early

18th century with the emergence of European interests in the New World, humans replaced gold as the main export from this region. Captives from the Gold Coast were highly valued in parts of North America such as Jamaica and South Carolina.

The Akan controlled the gold trade by the 14th century, exchanging cloth, kola nuts, and salt with Muslim traders from the north. The focus of the northern gold trade changed with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1471. Attracted to the large quantity of gold in this region, the Portuguese labeled the area “Costa d’Mina.” They traded firearms and captives from other parts of Africa for gold. In 1482, the Portuguese established their first trading post, São Jorge. Soon after, other European nations such as France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain built their own posts along the coast.

The increasing demand from European nations with New World colonies shifted the trade from gold to human captives. The firearms supplied by Europeans aided the growth of the slave trade by provoking wars of conquest and, consequently, more captives.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, European traders identified Africans exported from this region as “Kromantine.” The term, also seen as “Coromantin” and “Caramantee,” refers to an English trading post and a commercial village located on the coast. The English as well as the Dutch preferred captives from the Gold Coast because they were considered good farmers and domestic servants. The Dutch enslaved large numbers of captives from this region in Suriname, while the English shipped their prisoners to the West Indies and South Carolina.

The structure of the trade and politics on the Gold Coast changed again in the early 19th century after European nations abolished the slave trade. European nations resumed their interest in gold, while the Asante and Fante (subgroups of the Akan) nations fought wars for territorial control. The British gradually dominated the region by creating a protectorate over the Fante states in 1844, battling the Asante in a series of wars, and declaring the Gold Coast a Crown colony in 1874. The Asante refused to acknowledge the British treaty of protection and in 1896, the British exiled the Asante king, Prempeh I, and formally annexed the Asante nation and northern territories. After a British attempt to obtain the Golden Stool, an Asante symbol of authority, Yaa Asantewaa led the nation in a final uprising that resulted in Asante defeat. In 1901 the British had colonial

rule over the Asante and Fante nations. After World War I, the British colonial government obtained its final territory from parts of German Togoland, which brought all of present-day Ghana under colonial rule.

On March 6, 1957, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, people in the Gold Coast gained their independence. Nkrumah renamed the region Ghana after the western Sudanic kingdom.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Coromantee; Elmina; Kingdom of Asante; Nkrumah, Kwame

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## Gorée Island

Gorée is a 45-acre island off the west coast of the African nation of Senegal. As a result of its convenient location (at the entrance to the Middle Passage), Gorée became the center of the European slave trade from 16th century to the 19th century. Throughout this time, it was ruled in succession by the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French. Gorée Island was used as a holding ground for slaves before they were sold. Millions of Africans were captured and brought to Gorée before being shipped across the Atlantic to landowners in South America, North America, and the Caribbean. Given what we now know about the immensity of the slave trade, millions of Africans went to the House of Slaves, the main holding area, and passed through the Door of No Return before being sent across the Middle Passage.

The main structure on Gorée, the House of Slaves, was built by the Dutch in 1777. In the House of Slaves, up to 30 men would be shackled and forced into an eight-square-foot room to sit for days until they were sold. Children were separated from their mothers and piled into cells specifically



Room in the House of Slaves on Gorée Island off the coast of Senegal. (Shutterstock)

for them. The mothers were kept across the courtyard from their families, as to inhibit conversation between them. Slaves were fed once a day. They were naked, save a small piece of fabric around their waists, and forced to defecate in their cells. Above these holding areas there were more luxurious accommodations for the dealers and European officials who hosted parties and dinners on a regular basis. In 1848, the French abolished slavery and freed the slaves who were left on Gorée. At this time, there were 6,000 inhabitants on Gorée, 5,000 of them former slaves.

The island was named a United Nations Education, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site and is now one of Senegal's major tourist attractions. The island has been visited by myriad foreign dignitaries and international figures, including the pope, Nelson Mandela, President Bill Clinton, and President George Bush. The principal sites on the island include the Maison des Esclaves (The House of Slaves), The IFAN Museum (dedicated to the history of Senegal), Le Musée de la Femme (The Women's Museum, which discusses the role of women

in West African societies), and Le Musée Maritime (The Maritime Museum).

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Signares

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## Griot

A griot is a member of a hereditary caste of praise singers, poets, genealogists, storytellers, musicians, and oral historians in West African society. The griot are present among the many peoples of West Africa such as the Mandinka, Malinke, Fulani, Hausa, Tukolor, Wolof, and live in many parts



of West Africa today, including Mali, Gambia, Guinea, and Senegal. The role of the griot in African history and society is multifaceted. Africa as a continent with 54 countries and over 1,000 major ethno-linguistic groups coupled with multiple communal dialects (some with no relationship to the major language groups of the continent) has a long oral tradition of which the profession of the griot is integral. “Griot” is a French transliteration of the word *guirot* and in English understood as griot and griottes for females. The Portuguese pronounced the term as *criado* for servant. In West African dialects, the word *jeliya* (“transmission by blood,” indicating the hereditary nature of the title), which comes from the root word *jeli* or *djeli* (“blood”), is used for “griot” by Africans residing in areas that formerly constituted the Mali Empire (1235–1645). The Mali Empire was founded by Sundiata (1235–1260) and at its height encompassed the geographic area from Chad and Nigeria in central Africa to Mali and Senegal in West Africa today. The first professional griot, Balla Fasseke, appeared during the Mali Empire and founded the Kouyate line of griots as mentioned in “The Epic of Sundiata.”

Griots both performed and preserved traditions through story and song. They were responsible for learning both the quantity and content of a song, melodies, and rhythms, thereby preserving the story, genealogy, and history of a warrior king or village. Griots have been said to possess the ability to sing of one’s “fortune or doom” because the words they espouse as “keepers of the word” are considered sacred and powerful. Each village, clan, and royal warrior family had a griot that maintained an oral record and told stories of births, marriages, battles, and other significant historical events. Griots have been known to memorize the entire genealogy or family history of everyone in an entire village going back for centuries. The African American author of *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976) Alex Haley claimed to have heard the stories of his long-lost relative Kunta Kinte from the stories of West African griots. According to Haley, through his encounter with a West African griot in 1966, he was able to hear the story of Kunta Kinte’s capture and enslavement. The history of West Africa has been largely preserved through the stories of the griot.

Aspects of the griot’s craft in terms of poetics, music, and the centrality of orality survive in African and African American contemporary culture. These characteristics include call-and-response, repetition, contrapuntal rhythms, and the use of symbolism and metaphor to represent events

or people in time. Elements such as these are present in blues, jazz, and hip-hop music today. The griot has not disappeared from African history. Although griots were customarily provided with gifts for their services, many griots today have talent agents, record compact discs, and receive fees for their professional services. The Cheick Oumour Sisoko film *Guimba the Tyrant* features a griot character, and the writer Ahmadou Kourouma incorporated important griot characters into his novels *Waiting for the Wild Beasts* and *Allah Is Not Obligated*. An estimated 90 percent of Senegalese musical performers today claim the status of griot. *See also:* Mali; Occupational Castes; Oral Culture; Senegambia; Songhai; Sundiata: The Epic of Old Mali

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## Gulf of Guinea

The Portuguese explorer Nuno Tristo sailed around the coast of West Africa, reaching the Guinea area in about 1482, searching for the source of gold and other valuable commodities, notably slaves. With the help of local groups in about 1600, the Portuguese, and numerous other European powers, including France, Britain, and Sweden, set up a thriving slave trade along the West African coast. It will never be known exactly how many human lives were bought and sold in the slave markets along the Guinea coast, but it is today approximated at 10 million.

Dahomey fell within that area of West Africa that received the toponym of the Slave Coast. Throughout the 17th century, the Dutch had obtained some slaves from Allada, especially after 1635 when their Brazilian possessions required African labor. The period of notoriety began when the Dutch were joined by other Europeans in the scramble for slaves from 1670 onward. The French started trading at Allada in 1670. They built the first European factory at Whydah in the following year and English slave traders



An 18th-century engraving of a slave compound maintained by traders from four European nations on the Gulf of Guinea in the mid-18th century. (Library of Congress)

established a factory in Allada in 1674. Up to about 1671, an estimated annual average of about 3,000 captives were exported from Aja ports. Within a decade, the figure was probably doubled at Allada, and Whydah went to the forefront. Thus, coastal societies were fully exposed to the damaging impact of the European slave trade.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Bight of Benin; Bight of Biafra; Bosman, Willem; Gold Coast; Kingdom of Dahomey; Sierra Leone

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## Headright System

When the first permanent English colony in North America, Jamestown, was founded in 1607 it was immediately beset by a series of problems. In addition to the colonists

being ill prepared to create sufficient amounts of food, they struggled with the Powhatan Confederacy and a sheer inability to locate easily exploitable resources. The combination of famine and wars with local Native Americans meant that Jamestown would struggle to maintain the population needed to make the colony a success. By 1611 the colonists of Jamestown had discovered a means to create enormous profits in the form of tobacco cultivation. However, with high mortality rates came a severe lack of labor in order to make this new cash crop reach its profit potential. In an attempt to solve the labor crisis, the Virginia Company of London granted headrights to settlers in Jamestown as a means of recruiting more people, growing the population, and meeting the labor demand in the tobacco fields.

Beginning in 1618, headrights were legal grants to land offered to settlers in Jamestown and could range from 50 to 100 acres of land for those willing and able to make the Atlantic crossing to Virginia. Moreover, headrights were granted as bounties to tobacco planters who were willing to finance the transportation costs of anyone willing to serve a five- to seven-year term of indenture and to be employed, principally, growing tobacco. In this way, the already established tobacco planters received two critical and highly

profitable benefits through headrights—more land and a steady supply of labor.

The headrights in the Chesapeake were similar to patroonships granted to Dutch settlers in New Netherland. In fact, the use of headrights spread to other English colonies including Maryland, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Despite the initial success of this system, indentured servants, including the 300 Africans imported into the Chesapeake between 1619 and 1640, represented a significant set of new problems for tobacco planters: they only worked a set number of years before they were freed; once freed, they received “freedom dues” including seed, land, farming tools, and guns; as land-owning tobacco farmers, ex-servants represented a source of competition for the tobacco-planting elite; and the increased production of tobacco caused by the ever-increasing number of tobacco planters drove down the price of the once-lucrative crop.

See also: Chesapeake Colonies; Freedom Dues; Indentured Servitude; Jamestown, Virginia; Patroonship; Tobacco

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## Hispaniola

The island of *Hispaniola*, today’s Haiti and the Dominican Republic, weaves together the stories of the indigenous inhabitants of the island, the *Tainos*, the slaves, and the French and Spanish colonial powers. Sent by the government of Spain, Christopher Columbus first arrived on the island in 1492, and soon after his arrival, Spaniards began arriving in mass numbers in order to establish farms, ranches, and mines, drawing from the vast amounts of resources the new land had to offer. Many of the native inhabitants began to die at alarming rates, resulting from harsh treatment and/or from the plethora of diseases brought by the colonists. In response to this loss, and in need of a labor force to support the growing economy, the colonists began importing African slaves to work the land. In 1494, on his second voyage to America, Columbus settled on the north coast of the

island, and officially established the colony known as Santo Domingo.

The western third of the island, colonial Saint Domingue, which is known today as Haiti, had been given to the French by the Spanish in 1697. By 1791, nearly 100 years after the transfer of colonial power, it is estimated that more than 864,000 African slaves had been imported by the French, thus allowing the colony to become one of the main economic centers in the New World. In fact, the plantation-based economy, with about 8,000 plantations that produced crops for export, led in sugar and coffee production, producing nearly half of that consumed in Europe and the Americas. In addition, Saint Domingue produced large quantities of molasses, rum, indigo, and cotton, also for export.

Population totals in 1790 estimated more than half-a-million people living in Saint Domingue. Of the three social divisions of people, the whites, or *grands blancs*, were at the top of the social hierarchy, totaling about 40,000. The slaves, the majority of whom were African-born, were at the bottom of social hierarchy, and totaled about 450,000 in number. In between these two groups were the “freed people,” or *affranchis*, who were also referred to as mulattos, and they totaled about 28,000 in number. The *affranchis* were particularly significant because many members of this group had a dual social role in that they had particular economic interests and legal rights similar to those of whites, but many, unless they could pass for white, suffered discrimination based on their color, thus allowing them to also identify with the slaves. They also had a stronghold on a vast percentage of the economic resources, which was a source of tension with the whites, but became a moot point when the slaves revolted.

Born a slave in 1743, Pierre-Dominique Toussaint Louverture became a key figure in the slave-led revolt. The revolt coincided with the French Revolution in Paris, and given Saint Domingue’s economic wealth, both England and Spain were interested in the land. The revolt in essence had become a “three-way racial war” among the whites, mulattos, and the slaves over access to economic resources. Toussaint joined the revolt in 1791, providing the structured and organized leadership needed at the time. He initially joined forces with the Spanish against the French, then defeated both the Spanish and English, and re-aligned with the French given that, in 1793, they had officially abolished slavery in Saint Domingue with civil rights given to



Engraving from 1671 of Santo Domingo on the island of Hispaniola. Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain in 1492, but after 50 years of exploiting its resources and bringing disease to its inhabitants, Spain found Santo Domingo to be an unprofitable colony. The destruction of the native population of Hispaniola prompted Bartolomé de las Casas to suggest the use of enslaved Africans as a replacement labor force in the Spanish Americas. (Library of Congress)

all regardless of color. Late in 1800, Toussaint then marched into Santo Domingo with his armies and overtook it. Soon after entering, he announced the emancipation of all slaves on the island and incorporated the former Spanish colony into his own state, which was still a French colony. Toussaint continued to lead until 1802, but was tricked by the French that same year and imprisoned. He died in 1803, the same year that Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of Toussaint's army commanders, was finally able to defeat the remaining French insurgency. Dessalines became the first president of the republic of Haiti, declaring its independence on January 1, 1804.

Political struggles over land in the colony of Santo Domingo ensued over the next 44 years, with political rule changing hands between the Spanish and the French at various times, with Haiti ruling the colony from 1822 to 1844. Finally, on February 27, 1844, the colony of Santo Domingo

was able to proclaim its independence after Jean-Pierre Boyer, the Haitian ruler who had occupied Santo Domingo for the last 22 years, was overthrown. Juan Pablo Duarte, the leader of *la Trinitaria*, a secret nationalist organization, along with Ramón Mella and Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, were responsible for overthrowing Boyer. It was at this time they established a constitution and declared themselves to be a new nation, the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately, this was only the beginning of a long and tumultuous relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and a series of political struggles between the two nations has ensued.

*See also:* Asiento; Boyer, Jean Pierre; de Las Casas, Bartolomé; Encomienda; Haitian Revolution; Las Siete Partidas; Louverture, Toussaint

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## Igbo

Igbo-speakers from the Bight of Biafra—the inland region of modern Nigeria—had a significant influence on what became African American culture. Known variably as Ebo(e), Ibo(e), and Eboan, Igbo-speakers represent loosely connected language cohorts and not a single or unified ethnic group or people. The Bight of Biafra itself was a region of vast cultural diversity and included a variety of language cohorts—Igbo, Ibibio, Igala, Efik, and Ijo, among others. Despite this diversity, three-quarters of all enslaved Africans embarked on European ships in Biafra and Calabar were of likely Igbo- and Ibibio-speaking backgrounds. During the course of the Atlantic slave trade, it became standard practice to lump together most if not all Africans exported from the Bight of Biafra under the "Igbo" linguistic and cultural banner.

Kwa language groups including Igbo-speakers originated, historically, near the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers and these groups eventually migrated to their present-day homeland near the Niger and Cross rivers in modern Nigeria. Igbo-speakers and others are credited with the rise of Nok culture—an iron-based society in existence between 500 BCE to CE 200. By the 9th century CE, Igbo speakers founded the Nri and Igbo-Ukwu—the latter known for the production of bronze figurines and statuettes using the lost wax technique. Igbo-speaking expertise in metalsmithing and metallurgy served as a basis for the development of the famous Benin and Ife bronzes created beginning in the 10th century CE. These earlier Igbo-speaking societies were also notable for their high population densities, political decentralization, and agrarian economies—patterns that would persist into the 17th and 18th centuries.

By the beginning of the 17th century, Igbo-speaking groups had largely settled into the areas they currently

occupy, but the development of a unified identity among these peoples was something facilitated in the Americas by slavery and in the Biafran interior by European imperialism. In this way, speaking Igbo and being Igbo were not the same thing (just as speaking English and being English are not). Typically, identity in the precolonial Biafran interior—and for that matter, other parts of the African continent—was based on local or provisional concerns. Thus, across the various Igbo-speaking cities and villages, despite similarities in language and culture, the people would have understood themselves to be distinct based on a range of factors, including political affiliation with a particular polity. The "Igbo" did not exist as a distinct ethnicity in Atlantic Africa until they were created in the 20th century as a direct consequence of British colonial policy and the need for solidarity in the presence of a new and foreign enemy. Like a number of ethnonyms used by Europeans during the slave trade era, Calabar, Moko, and Igbo were imprecise and, at times, overlapping identities that Africans in this region did not create or embrace. However, "Igbo" was a term Igbo-speaking people embraced abroad and the best example of this comes from the most famous Igbo-speaker to be enslaved in the Americas—Olaudah Equiano.

In the Americas, the Igbo were generally reviled as enslaved imports due to their alleged propensity to commit suicide. In general, European preferences for certain African ethnic groups in the Americas were due to a range of factors—the cost of importing enslaved Africans from certain regions, limited access to certain slave markets on the Atlantic African coast, or the demand for Africans from specific regions with expertise in the cultivation of certain crops and other skills. In the case of the Igbo, the various stereotypes associated with them—their propensity for suicide, their slight stature, and physical endurance—relegated them to backwater slave colonies and, in some cases, relegated them to domestic service. Regarding their concentration in backwater colonies, the Du Bois Institute database bears out this conclusion. The Du Bois database, for example, demonstrates that of 101,925 enslaved Africans from identifiable locations sent to Virginia, 44.8 percent came from the Bight of Biafra. In South Carolina—a more central colony in terms of the slave trade—enslaved Africans from the Bight of Biafra accounted for just 9.89 percent of identifiable imports; in British North America/the United States as a whole, Bight of Biafra exports were 18.6 percent of those imported. So it is possible to discuss, as historians Lorena Walsh, James Sidbury, and Douglas Chambers have,

a Bight of Biafra (Igbo) enclave in Virginia as a phenomenon unique in North America.

The Igbo-speaking imports into the Chesapeake played a significant factor in the rise of Afro-Virginian culture. One implication of the presence of so many Igbo-speakers was the proliferation of Igbo terms and concepts—*okra*, *buckra*, *obia*—or discrete Igbo cultural practices (e.g., the Jonkonu celebration, funerary customs, and spiritual beliefs) in Jamaica, Virginia, and other regions of the Anglophone Americas that imported significant numbers of Africans from the Bight of Biafra. Another implication was the possibility that Gabriel Prosser—leader of the failed Richmond, Virginia, slave revolt in 1800—was accorded a great deal of respect and veneration because of his blacksmithing skills and the spiritual powers associated with this trade among the peoples living in the Biafran interior. In fact, three separate blacksmiths were claimed to have been part of the leadership core of this attempt to capture and raze the capital of Virginia.

*See also:* Buckra; Coromantee; Ebo Landing; Transmigration

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## Indentured Servitude

Before the introduction of African slaves to the North American colonies in 1619 and as a result of the inability to enslave the native Indian population, most un-free labor

in the American colonies, prior to 1700, came in the form of white indentured servitude. Many Native Americans groups residing in what became British North America were not a successful labor source due to the fact that many died from Old World diseases or were unaccustomed to the skills required for surplus agricultural production. In some cases, particularly among Algonquian-speaking groups, a unique gender divide of labor in which women performed agricultural work and men hunted would have made their successful enslavement difficult given the English proclivity for enslaving men in the production of cash crops. Additionally, settlers could expect reprisals if they enslaved the local native peoples.

Thus, voluntary indentured servants accounted for nearly half the white settlers in all the colonies outside of New England. The term derived from the indenture, or contract, signed by poor persons, who promised to work for a fixed number of years in return for the cost of their transatlantic voyage. Generally, the term of service lasted five to seven years and once their service ended, indentured servants hoped to become landowners themselves. During the 17th century the desire for land drew to the North American colonies a significant number of English, Irish, and German men and women willing to serve as un-free laborers.

Most of those who chose to become indentured servants came from British cities infested with poverty, pollution, and disease. The hard work and loss of personal freedom was seen as a small price to pay for the opportunity to start over in the New World. Nevertheless, not all servants went voluntarily. Some criminals escaped prison or death through a sentence that relocated them to the colonies. Still others in the poverty-ridden urban centers were "kidnapped" and sold into servitude.

Most indentured servants immigrated to the Chesapeake region (the Virginia and Maryland colonies) throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries. Of the English emigrants to the region during that period, nearly 60 percent came under indenture. These servants would live in their master's household, where they were given room and board but no other wages or compensation during their term of service. The contract could be sold or transferred from one master to another without consent from the servant. The vast majority of servants were single people who were not allowed to marry until they were independent. By law, at the end of the contracted period, most servants were granted "freedom dues," goods, and sometimes land, to support themselves as independent settlers.

Although the system of indenture was more formalized than most labor arrangements in England during this period, the practice was similar to that of a trade apprenticeship that most Englishmen were familiar with. An apprenticeship was a dependent position that usually lasted for seven years; the apprentice would live and eat in the master's house. In turn the master would train the young apprentice in a useful craft. Often this process was a step in becoming part of a guild or led to the status of a master craftsman. Some historians see the indentured servants as an extension of the apprenticeship of servants in the art of husbandry (farming).

The system of indentured servitude and the labor that it brought to the Chesapeake colonies was in demand due to the agricultural needs of the settlers. Free settlers needed laborers to clear land for agricultural production and to tend the tobacco fields. Paid wage labor was too expensive and there was little natural population growth within the free white community. Due to the hot, humid climate and harsh terrain of swamps and dense forests, many settlers died in the first years. This high mortality rate meant that early in the settlement process, population growth could only be achieved by bringing in people from outside the North American colonies. After they had become accustomed to the climate and fought off diseases like malaria, a process called at the time "seasoning," the population began to naturally increase. Once tobacco was grown widely in the Tidewater regions of the Chesapeake, a readily accessible and cheap workforce was essential to make profits. Indentured servitude fit the bill and the population of the Chesapeake swelled based on the influx of servants. In the mid-1620s the population of Virginia was recorded at 1,200. By 1660 the population had risen to nearly 21,000.

Based on the cost of their transport to the New World, compared to that of daily or weekly wage laborers, indentured servants were at the time the most cost-effective labor force. For this reason they remained in high demand for most of the 17th century and due to the type of work required of the servants, the white population in Virginia and Maryland was drastically distorted. Most indentured laborers were young adult males, thus an unbalanced sex ratio developed. By the mid-17th century, men outnumbered women six to one among emigrants to the Chesapeake region. This situation, along with the disease environment of Virginia and Maryland, slowed the formation of stable family units. It was not until the 18th century that a more

balanced gender ratio developed in the Chesapeake region. In New England family migrations from the Old World were the norm and a more temperate climate resulted in high fertility rates along with low death rates. In the initial settlement of New England, around one-third of the settlers were indentured servants. After the Great Migration of the 1630s, few indentured servants were imported to New England.

Treatment of indentured servants, just as it did for slaves, differed greatly from one master to another. According to legal statutes slaves, servants, and any other dependents could be beaten for insubordination. Punishment for servants who ran away was severe. Initially, running away could be punished by death. Later Virginia and other colonies moved away from capital punishment and substituted extra service time to the servant's term of indenture. According to local and colonial law, the extra time ranged from 10 days for each day a servant was away to thousands of days of additional service. Additionally, a master could sell the remainder of the servant's service and prohibit his right to marry.

However, local courts in the Chesapeake provided protection for servant's rights, which gave servants more protection than slaves. By law masters were required to provide appropriate lodging and food for their servants; they could not make a second indenture with servants who had completed their term; also, they were not allowed to overwork or mistreat servants beyond the statutory limitations for corporal punishment. Servants fared better than slaves in other respects; they had access to the courts and were entitled to own land.

Servants who believed they had been mistreated could bring their masters to court through a petition. Unlike slaves or servants in Britain, they had full testimonial capacity. Court records indicate that they often succeeded in their claims regarding poor treatment over food, shelter, or clothing. Yet, when witnesses were required to substantiate the claims, the servant filing the complaint ran a risk of failure, since more often than not the witness was another servant. These servant witnesses were not always reliable because they feared reprisals from the master. A significant number of cases indicate that masters often abused their servants. This abuse could take the form of beatings or overwork, which included requiring a servant to work at night. Masters who were found guilty of the charges against them received "punishments" ranging from directions from the court to stop the offending acts to minimal fines.

The social status of indentured servants was another way in which their plight fared better than slaves. Historians have found that prior to entering into their indenture, servants' occupations ranged from husbandmen and yeoman farmers to artisans, tradesmen, and laborers. There were also unskilled workers, unemployed persons (debtors), and criminals. Whatever their status upon entering into indentured servitude, there was no stigma for them when they became freemen.

From the early to mid-1600s, there are a number of cases of former indentured servants experiencing successful lives in the New World after they finished their contracts. Most married shortly after they were freed, some became successful landowners, and a few rose to positions of power. In 1629 seven members of the Virginia legislature were formerly indentured servants. However, at the end of the 17th century and early 18th century, many indentured servants were not given land. Some became artisans or skilled craftsmen and worked as laborers in an ever-increasing competitive market. Nearly 80 percent, however, either died as servants, returned to England, or became part of the lowest segment of colonial free society, poor white workers. This growing population of landless, disgruntled former servants led to an increased desire for slaves and to Bacon's Rebellion, which signaled an eventual end to indentured servitude.

In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, a rich English squire's son who had been in Virginia for only two years, led a band of mostly former indentured servants and small farmers in attacks on both frontier Indians and the Virginia governor, Lord Berkeley. They desired more land and wanted the colonial government to help push the Native Americans off the land. Bacon's men eventually burned Jamestown, but failed in their attempt to take control of the government. Bacon fell ill and died near the end of the conflict. Governor Berkeley gained control and executed 23 of the rebels. The king considered Berkeley's actions too harsh and recalled him to England. In the end, Virginia's planters began to consider indentured servants a possible risk.

In addition to Bacon's Rebellion, several other factors contributed to the end of indentured servitude in colonial North America. First, the economic situation in Britain improved to a point where many of the urban poor could find employment at home and thus indentured service was not as enticing. Next, mortality rates in the Chesapeake region improved, birth rates increased, and the free white

population experienced a natural population growth. Finally, most planters and small farmers found it more economical to purchase African slaves who would not be freed after five to seven years. African slavery as the mode of labor was what colonists in the Chesapeake and throughout the other colonies turned to in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

*See also:* Bacon's Rebellion; Chesapeake Colonies; Freedom Dues; Headright System; Jamestown, Virginia; Johnson, Anthony; Malaria; Tobacco

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## Jamestown, Virginia

Jamestown was the capital of Virginia from the English colony's founding in 1609 until it was replaced by nearby Williamsburg 90 years later. Almost as soon as the colonists in Jamestown discovered the potential of tobacco as a cash crop, they began to import African slaves to help them grow it. Seventeenth-century Afro-Virginians' experiences with slavery were quite different from what their descendants would face in the 18th and 19th centuries. During most of the 17th century, only a small number of blacks lived in Virginia, and they were often treated as well (or as badly) as the English indentured servants who lived and worked alongside them. Seventeenth-century Afro-Virginians lived in a society in which racial distinctions were not yet seen by most whites as reasons for discrimination; some blacks were never enslaved, and there was even a chance for fortunate slaves to obtain their freedom and prosper as respectable small planters. But economic, demographic, and political



changes in the last quarter of the century—particularly after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676—eroded the opportunities that blacks had taken advantage of earlier in the settlement's history. By 1699, when Jamestown lost its position as the colony's capital, Virginia blacks had likewise lost most of the potential for freedom and economic independence that they had briefly enjoyed.

The first record of Africans in Virginia is the purchase planter John Rolfe (widower of Pocahontas) made of 20 blacks from a Dutch ship in 1619. Recent research throws into question whether the slaves were newly arrived from Africa or transplanted slaves from the sugar-producing islands of the Caribbean, or if the ship was really Dutch. Another unanswered question is whether the score of blacks purchased by Rolfe were treated as slaves for life, or as indentured servants, serving for a term of years before earning their freedom. Rolfe's purchase of African labor in 1619 was one way of satiating Virginia's new demand for tobacco laborers. Five years earlier, Rolfe had discovered that sweet West Indian tobacco would grow well in the Virginia soil. The addictive crop was so profitable that soon the settlers were growing tobacco in the streets of Jamestown. Men were eager to expand their tobacco production by acquiring workers, but in a place with so few colonists, and so much land, it was almost impossible to hire a free person to work for wages. It was just too easy for free individuals to acquire their own land and grow tobacco themselves. Wealthy Virginians first met this challenge by importing white indentured servants from England. In exchange for passage to Virginia and the basic necessities of life, an indentured laborer worked for his master or mistress between three to seven years. Thus, some of the first blacks brought to Virginia were freed after serving a term of years similar to that of white indentured servants because their English masters were either uncomfortable with or unsure about the legality of chattel slavery. Other masters immediately accepted the idea of permanent slavery and held their African bondsmen for life.

During the first several decades of the colony's history, the number of blacks in Virginia grew very slowly. In 1650, there were only about 300 blacks, and that number had only increased to about 2,000 by 1676. Until the last decade of the 17th century, blacks never made up more than a small fraction of the total population of Virginia. The first black Virginians were mostly Creoles, individuals born into slavery in other parts of the Americas, such as Brazil or the

Caribbean islands. Because the Virginia planters could not yet absorb shiploads of slaves directly from Africa, they acquired slaves a few at a time from trading ships that had already stopped at Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch colonies that had been importing Africans for a century before the founding of Jamestown. Prior to their arrival in Virginia, these Creole slaves had already become familiar with many aspects of European culture, such as their languages, styles of dress and manners, legal systems, and Christian religion. Thus, the first blacks in Virginia seemed less foreign, less "savage," than would later arrivals coming directly from Africa.

Because slaves were both few in number and often acculturated to European ways, 17th-century black Virginians faced less discrimination than slaves would a century later. Some mastered English society so thoroughly that historians have dubbed them "black Englishmen." One example of a black who thrived in the racially fluid 17th century was Anthony Johnson. When Johnson arrived in Virginia in 1621, he was known simply as "Antonio a Negro." By 1635, he and his wife, Mary, had obtained their freedom and moved to the eastern shore of Virginia. Johnson and his family eventually acquired land and slaves of their own. When Johnson's slave, Casor, ran away and sought shelter with Johnson's white neighbors, Johnson successfully sued in court for the return of his slave. Johnson's life illustrates much about slavery and race relations in 17th-century Virginia. First, he moved from slavery to freedom. Laws had not yet been passed that limited an owner's ability to manumit his or her slaves, and many owners chose to do so. Before 1680, 20 percent of blacks were free in some Virginia counties. Second, Johnson was able to purchase land and prosper as a small farmer. Just as white indentured servants were sometimes able to become successful landowners at the end of their indentures, Johnson's status as a freedman and a black man did not limit his opportunities. Third, Johnson became a slave owner in his own right. As a tobacco planter, he had the same need for labor as white planters did. There is no evidence that Johnson's neighbors were troubled by a black slave owner, or that Johnson himself was troubled with a sense of hypocrisy. Finally, Johnson was able to win a court case against his white neighbors for the return of his slave. His race did not limit his legal rights; his ownership of land and labor gave him status in his community. Property was more important than race in marking a person's worth in 17th-century Virginia. Further, the court found in his



*A Dutch man-of-war brought the first African captives to Jamestown in 1619. (Library of Congress)*

favor—another sign that Johnson’s white peers did not hold his race against him.

Even blacks who were destined to remain slaves experienced greater opportunity and less racial discrimination than would blacks in the 18th and 19th centuries. Slaves usually lived and worked alongside whites, including indentured servants and their owners, who were rarely wealthy enough to leave the fields. Likewise, owners rarely spent the effort to build a separate slave “quarter” for one or two slaves. Thus, slaves often partook of the same food, shelter, and working conditions as the whites around them. The only thing that differentiated them from other servants was the length of their servitude. Living in close proximity with one another, blacks often formed friendships and romantic attachments with whites, especially indentured servants. Race was less important to white indentured servants than their shared situation as poorly treated laborers. Slaves and indentured servants sometimes ran away together, indicating a degree of camaraderie and trust in one another. Interracial sexual unions were common, and interracial marriage was

not unknown. In just one example, Elizabeth Kay, a mulatto woman from Northumberland County, successfully sued for her freedom in 1656 because her father had been white. Afterward, Kay married William Greensted, the white attorney who had assisted her in the court case. Slaves sometimes also created close bonds with their owners. In the 1660s, a white York County man freed his slave in his will, then designated the newly freed man both the inheritor of his estate and the guardian of a young white girl in his care.

What, then, caused this transformation from the racially open society of the 17th century to the virulently racist one that developed in the 18th? Political, economic, and demographic changes in Virginia from about 1660–1700 laid the foundation for this change. First, Virginia planters continued to use laborers to work in their tobacco fields, but by the 1660s, the number of English people willing to become indentured servants in Virginia had dropped considerably. This occurred because the birth rate in England had dropped, thereby raising the wages the poor could receive at home. Also, those Englishmen who still desired to travel to America had other more appealing choices by end of the century, such as Pennsylvania and South Carolina. By 1700, almost no one willingly came to Virginia as a servant. Planters coped with their labor needs by buying slaves instead. Planters were already familiar with the idea of slavery because of the small number of slaves who had been in the colony for decades. Although slaves were considerably more expensive than indentured servants, the rising life expectancies that benefited all Virginians in the second half of the 17th century also made slave ownership more affordable. If a slave cost twice as much as a servant with a seven-year term, but they both were likely to live only five years, the lower-priced servant was the obvious choice. But if, with the rise in life expectancy, each person was likely to live another 10 or 15 years, the purchase of a slave made more sense, and eventually became the better bargain. This proved especially true when slave women bore children, who replenished their master’s labor supply at little additional cost.

These factors explain why slaves replaced indentured servants, but not the reasons for the growing racial discrimination among whites in Virginia. One reason is related to demography; as the demand for slaves grew, ships began carrying cargoes of slaves directly from Africa to Virginia for the first time beginning in the 1680s. These Africans were often newly enslaved, and unfamiliar with

English customs, language, laws, and religion. They were much less assimilated than the Creoles who had made up the majority of slaves before 1680, and to white Virginians they seemed strange and less human than the earlier Afro-Virginians had. In addition, there were greater numbers of blacks in Virginia than ever before. The large numbers of unassimilated slaves seemed threatening, and white Virginians began to discriminate against them in ways that had never before seemed necessary. This was especially true in the wake of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, the largest social upheaval in Virginia history before the Revolution. During Nathaniel Bacon's revolt against Virginia's leadership in Jamestown, indentured servants, poor landless white free men, and slaves banded together to fight the emerging Virginia gentry. After the rebellion was over, the dangers of a combined underclass of poor whites and black slaves was not lost on the wealthy white planters. They began to actively promote discrimination against blacks in order to drive a wedge of racial difference between poor whites and slaves. They accomplished this in part by passing laws that punished blacks more harshly than whites for identical crimes, forbade marriage between whites and blacks, and limited blacks' ability to use the courts to defend themselves against white depredations. Gradually, poor whites began to associate themselves more with upper-class whites than with black slaves who shared their economic condition.

By the end of the 17th century, as the Jamestown era ended, blacks in Virginia were much worse off than they had been when the colony was new. The foundation for a society that despised and mistreated African Americans had been laid by an elite that both feared black Virginians and hoped to profit by them.

*See also:* Bacon's Rebellion; Chesapeake Colonies; Freedom Dues; Headright System; Indentured Servitude; Racialized Slavery; Rolfe, John

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## John, Prester

Prester John, and his kingdom, refers to what Europeans on expeditions of conquest and imperialism into various regions of the world, specifically Africa, recognized as a potential Christian ally against an expansive Muslim enemy. Prester John's Kingdom was believed to be located in what would be modern-day Ethiopia. Despite various points of contention regarding Prester John's origin and whether he was merely an allegorical figure or an actual historical personage, Prester John no less represents larger ideas about European exploration and exploitation from the 12th century on, and can be understood as a catalyzing figure for imperial conquest. Though there was a degree of haze surrounding his existence, there does exist some confirmed information regarding Prester John.

A letter ostensibly written and sent by him in 1165 to Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comeneus who later forwarded it to Fredrick Barbarossa, Holy Roman Emperor, was a significant document in positioning Prester John favorably into the minds of Europeans. The letter is supposedly marked by a tone of condescension as Prester John goes on to promulgate the enormity of his wealth and power and vastness of his diverse Christian sovereignty and the various natural wonders that his kingdom possesses, while simultaneously professing his humility, which he states should be apparent through the adoption of the name Prester as opposed to a more grand appellation. Prester John and his kingdom are of particular importance to Iberian ideas of conquest, and he represents an important lens through which to understand much of the complexity and motivation behind European conquest, specifically in regard to geopolitical and economic interests.

In terms of geopolitics and economics, European colonizing expeditions are conceived of in terms of two types of goals—long term and short term. During the 1500s in Iberia there existed a Christian minority within a larger Muslim majority. For this minority the idea of an established Christian kingdom already in Africa coupled with

imperialist aims was important, as Prester John's Kingdom could be potentially invaluable in the success of ousting Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula. The idea that the motivation for African exploration was born from the desire to transcend the expansive Muslim hegemony and gain control of the eastern trade routes into Arabia and through parts of Asia such as India and Indonesia constitutes a long-term goal.

Short-range goals, on the other hand, were less concerned with sweeping objectives such as becoming free from Muslim dominion or controlling expansive trade routes, but instead focused on the step-by-step process of expeditions that was more in alignment with the financial constraints of expeditions. Despite the differences that existed between long-term and short-range goals of European expansion, both were marked by an element of economic gain.

Under the realm of economics European expansion and conquest took on two distinct trajectories. The first type of European expansion in Africa sought to finance small expeditions along the coast through the acquirement of certain mainland goods such as gold and slaves. During these types of short voyages, there was the expectation that along the route either trading or raiding would take place. The other type of European expansion was concerned with exploitable land. For Europeans, the purpose of acquiring this land, which may or may not have been previously inhabited, was the acquisition of valuable raw goods. The colonization of these lands underwent a general process by which they were prepared for cultivation and subsequent profit production. After the removal of existing profit-producing materials, such as timber or honey, was carried out, the colonized land would be prepared for its primarily profit-producing function as crops such as sugar or wheat were introduced.

In the 1500s, upon their arrival on the western coast of Africa, the Portuguese were privy to an expansive commercial network and trade. Goods originating from places as far east as Indonesia were being funneled into Africa via the trans-Saharan trade. The Portuguese quest for Prester John also led to substantive effects of exploration. Although the search for Prester John is primarily associated with the Portuguese, the modes and motivations for exploration in Africa would be adopted later by other European powers in the 17th and 18th centuries. The aftermath of the search for Prester John worked in concert with Portuguese commercial aspirations, prompting the erection of various fortresses

as well as trading posts on both the coasts of East and West Africa. These entrepôts would eventually equip the Portuguese with a strategic global location through which they could carry out trade throughout Africa as well as in Arabia, India, and Indonesia. The early establishment of a colonial presence throughout Africa by the Portuguese was merely an example of the colonization efforts that would be carried out by numerous European powers, including England, France, Germany, Italy, and others. Eventually Europe's imperialist presence and objectives would diffuse throughout Africa and would leave an indelible mark not only on Africa, Europe, and various parts of the Atlantic World, but on the entire globe as well.

*See also:* Reconquista

*Christina Bush*

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## Johnson, Anthony

Anthony Johnson (ca. 1600–1670), sold to the English at Jamestown of the Virginia Colony in 1621, is referred to in early documents as "Antonio a Negro." He was sold for his labor in some form of servitude similar to enslavement. Records refer to him as "servant" as opposed to "slave" and, at that early date in Virginia, both European and African immigrants entered the colony in a form of indentured servitude. Not much is known about his early years in Virginia. Antonio worked on the Bennett family's plantation and was one of five individuals (out of 56 people) to survive an attack by the local Native Americans in 1622. The census of 1625 listed him as "servant." He married an African woman ("Mary, a Negro") from the same plantation. Antonio apparently was not only a strong worker, but also won the

personal approval of the Bennett family as they became his benefactor. Under their sponsorship, Antonio was allowed to farm some acreage independently while still enslaved. He and Mary were able to work their way out of indentured servitude by purchasing the balance of their contract. Together they had children, whom they had baptized. Once freed, Antonio anglicized his name to Anthony Johnson.

By 1650, the man now known as Anthony Johnson had acquired not only his freedom, but also a 250-acre estate, where he probably grew tobacco and corn while tending a herd of cattle. Further, his son John received a patent for 550 acres and Anthony's son Richard owned a 100-acre estate. Johnson and his sons were clearly men of substance in early Virginia and, along with holding property and farming independently, they were slaveholders who accumulated sizable estates for their heirs. Indeed, Anthony Johnson may have held contracts on indentured servants of both African and European origin. The Johnson family, and other free black families of early Virginia, enjoyed the same rights as their white counterparts in their community and could employ the law to protect themselves and their interests.

The experience of Anthony Johnson and his family illustrates the fluidity of the community for Africans in mid-17th-century Virginia as well as somewhat of a balance of power and rights between races—albeit racial discrimination did exist—that would not survive much beyond Johnson's lifetime. In 1653 the Johnson family suffered a heavy financial loss due to fire and successfully petitioned the court for relief on their tax debt. Next, in 1655, Johnson sought legal action against a white man, Robert Parker, for detaining a slave owned by Johnson. Again, Johnson sought legal action and successfully regained custody of John Casor, a black man who was now legally determined to be Johnson's slave.

By the early 1660s, as racial tensions grew in Virginia, slave laws began to clearly state that indentured servitude was an appropriate form of service only for individuals arriving from Christian homelands, or Europeans. Individuals brought to the colony from Africa, a non-Christian region, would be subject to a lifetime of enslavement. Johnson and his family, concerned by the tightening of the race laws within their community and the increasing racial discrimination they experienced, moved to the Somerset area of Maryland where they once again prospered.

Anthony Johnson died in Somerset, Maryland, in 1670. That same year, courts back in Virginia determined that, as

Negroes, he and his family were technically aliens. Therefore, they had no rights to land ownership in the colony. The court confiscated all lands previously owned by the Johnson family on behalf of the Crown.

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Freedom Dues; Indentured Servitude; Jamestown, Virginia; Tobacco

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## Kingdom of Asante

Of the many Akan-speaking states in the Gold Coast region of West Africa emerged a powerful and centralized kingdom known as Asante. Before the rise of Asante, two sizable Akan states—Denkyira and Akwamu—competed for power and access to lucrative trade routes during the early 17th century. Indeed Denkyira, which had a number of smaller tributary states within its dominion, practically monopolized the gold and kola trade in the Pra-Ofin river basin. By the 1670s, Osei Tutu, a member of the Oyoko clan and a vassal in the court of Denkyira who rose in the ranks to become a general in the Denkyira military, established control over a trading center named Kumasi. In defecting from Denkyira, Osei Tutu began to group local clan leaders and regional kings of tributary states under the collective domination of Denkyira into loose military and political alliance.

In 1695, this loose alliance of clans and city-states was formally brought together into a military pact with the intent to overthrow the Denkyirahene—the king of Denkyira. With his close adviser and friend, *Okomfo* Anokye, Osei Tutu gathered together local rulers to witness a miracle that catapulted him to the role of king of a new and powerful nation. According to legend, *Okomfo* Anokye, declaring that he was on a mission from the Akan supreme

god—Onyame—called down a Golden Stool from the very heavens to rest on the knees of Osei Tutu in full view of the assembled royalty. *Okomfo* Anokye announced that the Golden Stool contained the soul of the Asante people. In addition, he marked the spot where the stool descended with a sword and noted that if the sword was ever pulled from the ground, the newly founded Asante kingdom would come to an end. With these important and transcendent cultural symbols, the Asante kingdom rose and began a steady march to complete military and political consolidation in the region.

Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu, king of the confederation of Akan-speaking states, made Kumasi the capital of the kingdom and organized a massive army equipped with guns imported from Dutch and Danish traders along the coastline. By 1700, Asante defeated Denkyira and by 1715, Osei Tutu led his armies to victories against Twifu, Wassa, and Aowin. These victories allowed Asante direct access to Elmina and other European-controlled coastal factories. From this point forward, the Kingdom of Asante would be a major player in the Atlantic slave trade and in the dispersal of enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast. After a century of expansion and political domination, Asante controlled most of the country of modern Ghana, some of the inland region of Côte-d'Ivoire, and portions of modern Togo. Their dominion would not be threatened until the advent of British imperial incursion in the period between 1873 and 1900.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Elmina; Gold Coast

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## Kingdom of Benin

Benin was an influential city-state in northwest Africa from the 15th to the 17th century. It was founded by the Edo or Bini people in the 13th century, and by the early 14th

century a royal court was in place. It was always ruled by a powerful king who was usually a former war leader. The king, however, later became a more religious figure. The kingdom extended throughout what is presently southern Nigeria.

One of its most successful kings was Ozoula. During his reign, from about 1480 to 1504, Benin established many commercial and diplomatic relations with Portugal. In 1481 emissaries from the king of Portugal visited the court of the king of Benin. Portuguese soldiers aided Benin in its wars. Gwatto, the port of Benin, became the depot to handle the peppers, ivory, and increasing numbers of slaves offered by the king of Benin in exchange for coral beads, textile imports from India, and European-manufactured articles, including tools and weapons.

Benin profited from its close ties with the Portuguese and exploited the firearms bought from them to tighten its hold on the lower Niger area. Two factors checked the spread of Portuguese influence and the continued expansion of Benin. First, Portugal stopped buying pepper because of the availability of other spices in the Indian Ocean region. Second, Benin placed an embargo on the export of slaves, thereby isolating itself from the growth of what was to become the major export from the Nigerian coast for 300 years. Benin continued to capture slaves and to employ them in its domestic economy, but it remained unique among Nigerian polities in refusing to participate in the transatlantic trade. Gradually, the power of the kingdom decreased and eventually, in 1897, the area was annexed to British Nigeria.

*See also:* African Imperialism; Atlantic Slave Trade; Bight of Benin; Gulf of Guinea

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## Kingdom of Dahomey

Dahomey was an African kingdom situated in what is now Benin. The kingdom was founded in the 17th century and

survived until the late 19th century, when it was conquered by French troops from Senegal and incorporated into France's West African colonies.

The origins of Dahomey can be traced back to a group of Aja from the coastal kingdom of Allada who moved northward and settled among the Fon people of the interior. By about 1650, the Aja managed to dominate the Fon, and Wegbaja declared himself king of their joint territory. Based in his capital of Agbome, Wegbaja and his successors succeeded in establishing a highly centralized state, in which all land was owned directly by the king, who collected taxes from all crops that were produced.

Economically, however, Wegbaja and his successors profited mainly from the slave trade and relations with slavers along the coast. Dahomey's kings embarked on wars to expand their territory and began using rifles and other firearms traded with Europeans for captives, who were sold into slavery in the Americas. Most of the slaves were acquired either by trade into the interior or by raids to the north and west into Nigeria. Under King Agadja (ruled 1708–1732), the kingdom conquered Allada, where the ruling family originated, thereby gaining direct contact with European slave traders on the coast. Europeans began arriving in the area in the 18th century. Trading posts were established in Porto Novo, Ouidah, and Cotonou. This relationship continued into the mid-19th century.

Dahomey was very reluctant to give up the slave trade in the 19th century and continued to carry on a clandestine trade past the mid-19th century. However, without the slave trade, Dahomey could no longer maintain the same level of military superiority over other kingdoms. Thus, King Guezo signed a treaty establishing French protectorates in Cotonou and Ouidah. Dahomey was finally conquered by France in 1892–1894. Most of the troops that fought against Dahomey were native African.

*See also:* African Imperialism; Atlantic Slave Trade; Bight of Benin; Gulf of Guinea

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## Kongo Kingdom

The Kingdom of Kongo was founded in the 14th century. In the 15th century, the kingdom stretched from the Congo River in the north to the Loje River in the south and from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to beyond the Kwango River in the east. Several smaller autonomous states to the south and east paid tribute to it.

The Kingdom of Kongo came into contact with Portugal in 1483. In the early 16th century, the king and most of the kingdom adopted Christianity and welcomed numerous European missionaries, traders, and craftsmen. The kingdom reached the height of its political power in the 16th century during the reign of Afonso I (1505–1543) and its alliance with the Portuguese, but the establishment of the Portuguese port of Luanda and the colony of Angola as well as the interests of the Portuguese residents there in increasing their private fortunes, especially through capturing Africans and selling them into slavery, undermined this relationship.

After the death of King Afonso I, Kongo declined rapidly and suffered devastating civil wars from the late 17th through the early 18th centuries, when many of its people were enslaved and sent to the Americas. Thus, the slave trade, which undermined the social structure of Kongo, continued to weaken the authority of its king.

In 1641, King Garcia II allied himself with the Dutch in an attempt to control Portuguese slave traders, but in 1665, a Portuguese force decisively defeated the army of Kongo and from that time onward the kingdom disintegrated into a number of small states, all controlled to varying degrees by the Portuguese. The area of Kongo was incorporated mostly into Angola and partly into the Independent State of the Congo in the late 19th century.

*See also:* Kongo Cosmogram; Mbebm, Nzinga (Afonso I); Vita, Dona Beatriz Kimpa; West-Central Africa

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## Las Siete Partidas

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*Las Siete Partidas*, the Seven-Part Code, was a set of laws codified in medieval Spain, some of which were crucial to the legal foundation of modern slavery in the New World. The code, possibly the most consequential and comprehensive set of laws of the medieval period, was compiled in Castile between 1251 and 1265 under Alfonso X the Wise. The laws went into effect around 1348 and became the foundation for all Spanish jurisprudence. Beginning with Spanish expansion in the 16th century, the code spread to Spain's New World possessions in the Americas, Asia, and Africa, giving the code the widest territorial influence of any single legal code.

In Iberia the institution of slavery relied on the legal precepts of the ancient Visigoths and Romans as well as the Byzantine Justinian Code that combined Roman and Church law in the early medieval period. Traditionally slavery was justified by the rules of war; slaves were furnished by the vanquished and prisoners of battle. In the early medieval period, as a result of the Islamic conquest of southern Spain (711–1492) and the Crusades spanning the 11th to the 13th centuries, religion became a significant component of the justification of war and enslavement. The *Siete Partidas* built on these legal and ethical traditions.

The Castilian code permitted individuals as well as municipal and religious organizations to own slaves and codified the criteria that had justified enslavement. Prisoners of just wars, particularly non-Christians, as well as condemned persons, children of enslaved mothers, and those who voluntarily sold themselves into slavery for debt relief or other economic reasons were regarded as legitimate slaves. The *Siete Partidas* appended the traditional conditions with two additional categories of persons eligible for slavery: children of priests were required to serve as slaves in their father's churches and Christians who provided war material to Moors could be legally enslaved. Muslims, Jews, and others considered infidels could not legally own Christian slaves.

The *Siete Partidas* protected certain rights for enslaved individuals and provided a number of legal channels for manumission. Christian slaves were entitled to marry one another with the masters' permission, and masters were legally bound to grant permission unless they could prove that the union posed a serious danger to their interests. Masters were prohibited from exhibiting cruel treatment,

including separating families, excessive physical punishment, starving slaves, or exploiting them sexually. Masters who did not abide by these laws could be taken to court, and, if proven guilty, their slaves would be sold to another master or, in certain cases, manumitted. Slaves who displayed exceptional service to a master or the state were eligible for manumission. Slaves were legally permitted to ply a trade and to own property; they had the legal right to earn, borrow, and lend money and to purchase their freedom or that of another. Slaves were permitted to bring legal suits, testify in court, and organize religious brotherhoods.

The laws of the *Siete Partidas* addressing the rights of masters and slaves in medieval Spain reflected a system of slavery that was largely domestic, urban, and temporary and affected an enslaved population of various nationalities. Sub-Saharan and North African soldiers and slaves accompanied the occupying Muslim armies, and those captured in battle were considered Spanish property, while other Africans arrived in Spain via slave markets or as free persons. Sardinians, Greeks, Russians, Spaniards, Canary Islanders, Turks, Egyptians, and Moors were among the various peoples who served as slaves in medieval and early modern Spain. While the laws of the *Siete Partidas* were closely aligned with the Catholic Church and favored Christians, slaves in medieval Spain might be Christian as well as Jewish or Muslim. The slave laws of the *Siete Partidas* did not refer to nationality or race. Because the *Partidas* reflected the Spanish cultural and religious belief that enslavement was an unfortunate and accidental status rather than a natural state, the burden of proof of a person's enslaved status fell on the owner; without positive evidence, an alleged slave would be freed.

After 1500, the *Siete Partidas* spread to Spain's overseas possessions, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Florida, and Louisiana. While Spain developed colonial policy in subsequent centuries to regulate the transatlantic slave trade and the growth of plantation slavery, both of which were on a scale unparalleled in the ancient and medieval worlds, Spanish legislators continued to rely on several elements of the *Siete Partidas*. The influence of the *Partidas* made for greater legal rights, protections, and channels to freedom for slaves in the Spanish Americas relative to British North America. How much these rights were observed in practice is a matter of scholarly debate. Nonetheless, numerous slaves in Spanish-influenced regions such as Cuba and Louisiana petitioned courts to



uphold their rights and either won or purchased their own freedom based on the legal precedents of the *Partidas*.

Elements of the *Siete Partidas* remained in force in Florida, Louisiana, and Texas even after these territories went from Spanish to American possession. The *Partidas* continue to undergird basic law in Spanish America and the Philippines.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Hispaniola

Christina Proenza-Coles

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## Laurens, Henry

Henry Laurens (1724–1792), who rose from the son of an immigrant Huguenot to one of the wealthiest men of the elite planter class in the Carolina Lowcountry, is remembered as a merchant, a statesman active in the colonial assembly, a militia leader during the Cherokee Expositions in the 1760s, a patriot and president of the Continental Congress during the American Revolution, and a diplomat at the Treaty of Paris. Laurens should also be remembered as one of the most successful brokers of enslaved Africans in the Carolina Colony.

Forming a commercial partnership with George Austin in 1747 (Austin and Laurens) and adding George Appleby to the firm in 1759 (Austin, Laurens, and Appleby), the firm handled the traditional goods shipped in the region: exporting rice, indigo, deerskins, and naval stores and importing wine, textiles, rum, sugar, and Africans. By 1760 Laurens had acquired enough wealth to establish himself as a planter of rice and indigo, holding four plantations in South Carolina, including Mepkin, Wambaw, Wrights Savannah, and Mount Tacitus; and two in Georgia, Broughton Island and New Hope—as well as multiple lots of land in the cities of Charleston and Savannah. In 1762 he dissolved his shipping partnerships and continued trading on his own.

Laurens brokered the sale of Africans in Charleston in arrangement with Richard Oswald, one of the wealthiest merchants in London. Oswald was the principal owner of Bunce (*Bance*) Island, the largest British slave castle on the Rice Coast of West Africa in what is now Sierra Leone, a region where rice has been grown for hundreds of years. Laurens received ships from ports around the Atlantic that had stopped at Bunce Island to load a cargo of Africans from Oswald's operations and would advertise the arrival of those vessels with their expected contents, selling the cargo on commission. Often the ships would be loaded with rice and local goods for payment due the vessels' owner. Laurens also sent his own slaving vessels to Bunce Island to return to Charleston, advertising their human cargo as possessing the skills and knowledge necessary for rice production. In 1764, Henry Laurens boasted that he had sold the cargo of his ships for higher prices than anyone else in the colony. This joint venture made both Oswald and Laurens extremely wealthy men.

By 1769 Laurens ended his participation in the business of importing Africans as an involuntary workforce for the rice plantations of the Lowcountry. His explanation was that he no longer had a business partner for the operation. However, in 1776, he wrote to his son regarding his ambivalence about slavery and reportedly began to make plans to manumit his slaves. Many historians argue that Laurens wrote this letter after receiving his copy of the Declaration of Independence and used this statement to his son as evidence that Laurens was expressing opposition to slavery—and was one of the only men of the lower South to express such an opinion. While a few members of Laurens enslaved populations may have received their freedom, he still was in possession of almost 300 slaves as late as 1790.

See also: American Revolution; Bunce Island; Carolinas; Jay, John; Rice Cultivation; Sierra Leone

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## Loose Pack

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One of the more intriguing historical issues connected to the Atlantic slave trade is whether loose pack or tight pack materially increased or decreased mortality during the course of Middle Passage. Since the 1960s a debate has ensued based upon contemporary accounts, and scholars have positioned themselves pro or con. Revisionist scholars have assessed the loose pack versus tight pack issue in a manner less cut and dry than the initial arguments.

Historian Daniel P. Mannix in his book titled *Black Cargoes*, published in 1965, presented the position of both advocates of tight pack and loose pack. Slave traders who favored loose pack believed that maximizing space onboard slave vessels, providing better nutrition, and allowing some latitude for slaves to exercise during their forced confinement would effectively reduce Middle Passage mortality. Consequently, advocates of loose pack believed that they received a better price for surviving slaves. Decades after Mannix wrote his seminal work on the Middle Passage, some scholars continue to expound on the philosophy of slave traders who practiced loose pack.

Contemporaries during Middle Passage likewise took sides on the debate. Loose pack had its share of supporters. For instance, Thomas Weaver, a slave trade agent, wrote officials of the Royal African Company that the spatial allotments on slave vessels were insufficient and that overcrowding contributed to unnecessary mortality during Middle Passage. On several occasions, Weaver sent letters of complaint about overcrowding. While there is no direct evidence that the Royal African Company agreed or took any substantive steps to address Weaver's concerns about sanitation aboard the company's slave vessels, the company did theoretically respond to other similar inquiries.

About the same time period that Weaver expressed concerns about the sanitation onboard slave vessels, Sir Dalby Thomas, a prominent English politician, thought the tight pack philosophy would illicit negative critiques based on moral concerns. He wrote officials of the Royal African Company to instruct their agents not to overcrowd slave vessels. However, agents being employed on a commission basis had a vested interest to maximize slave cargo. Therefore, the company had to find another means to get compliance with its wishes. Thus, company officials contacted factors, white men who bartered directly with African slave

traders. Factors were freelance businessmen of a sort. The Royal African Company issued instructions to factors to not overcrowd slave vessels. How responsive factors were to these sets of instructions remains an unanswered question. *See also:* Abolition, Slave Trade; Atlantic Slave Trade; Factor; Royal African Company; Tight Pack

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## Malaria

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Malaria derives its name from the Italian *mal-aria*, meaning “bad air.” Yet it is actually a Protozoan disease that is spread by the *Anopheles* mosquito. Centuries ago it was common in the marshy areas around Rome, hence the Italian origins of the name, and because of this connection, malaria was also called Roman Fever.

The minuscule Protozoa that causes the disease is of a parasitic variety known as *Plasmodium* and alternatively affects both human and insect hosts. The developmental age of the disease is unknown, but it is very ancient and is believed to have originated in Africa and spread over the centuries with human migration to the Mediterranean, India, and Southeast Asia. There are four types of malaria: *plasmodium vivax*, *plasmodium ovale*, *plasmodium malariae*, and *plasmodium falciparum*.

Malaria has a worldwide impact and is now endemic in Africa, South America, Southeast Asia, and India. It is currently estimated that some 500 million people in these areas are exposed to malaria. One estimate of the human cost is 2.5 million deaths a year with approximately 1 million children succumbing to the illness. The destruction of the *Anopheles* and their breeding grounds by pesticides remains the best control technique. Some critics challenge environmental policies that have limited pesticide use and specifically, DDT, which was an effective and cheap disease control agent.

Although generally seen as a tropical disease common to second and third world developing countries, malaria is sometimes found in developed and Northern Hemisphere countries. This migration of the disease labeled “airport malaria” is a cause for increased concern. In these instances infected mosquitoes are transported in airplanes from endemic areas such as Africa and then escape to infect the airport public, causing disease in those who have never traveled to malaria-infected areas. There is also some speculation that with global warming and globalization malaria might become more common in areas previously thought immune from the disease.

The *Anopheles* mosquito has been known for many years as the transmission agent for the disease, but it was only in 1948 that the full stages of the life cycle were uncovered. The female mosquito requires blood to mature her eggs and it is with the female that the parasite develops. Humans provide this blood supply. After biting its victim but before actually feeding, the mosquito injects her saliva, which contains malaria parasites called sporozoites. The sporozoites enter the bloodstream and come to reside in the human liver where they penetrate and grow rapidly. The liver cells rupture and parasites known as merozoites enter the red blood cells. Once in the red blood cells, the parasites develop into two cycle forms, sexual and asexual.

The sexual cycle produces male and female gametocytes that circulate in the blood and then enter the female mosquito when it takes a blood meal from its victim. The male and female gametocytes combine to form oocysts in the wall of the mosquito’s stomach. These oocysts develop over a few days and contain large numbers of sporozoites that take root in the mosquito’s saliva and are thus placed to repeat the cycle of infection.

In the asexual cycle the parasites form schizonts in the red blood cells that contain many merozoites. After a cell ruptures the merozoites are released to attack new red blood cells.

In order to combat all types of malaria there are various drug therapies currently in use. The best known was Quinine, which was used for centuries and until the 1930s, the only reliable treatment for the disease. Today drugs such as Malarone, Halofantrin (Halfan), and Metfloquine (Larium), among others, are in common use.

A particular evolutionary offshoot of malaria that affects the African American population is sickle cell disease. This inherited disease gained its name because the normally disc-shaped red blood cells become crescent or

sickle-shaped. The result is poor cell function and anemia caused by an abnormal type of hemoglobin referred to as hemoglobin S. This genetically aberrant hemoglobin evolved in Africa as a protective device against malaria outbreaks and is known as the sickle cell trait. The condition produces blood clots that cause recurrent pain known as sickle cell pain crises. Sickle cell disease can be a serious danger over time when frequent crises damage many bodily systems.

At present only bone marrow transplants offer a cure for sickle cell anemia. However, transplants are difficult. Drugs such as hydroxyurea, introduced in the 1990s, offer better management and can prevent complications.

Approximately 1 out of 12 African Americans has the sickle cell trait, a trait also found in other ethnic groups exposed over time to malarial conditions. A further 1 out of 500 African Americans are affected by actual sickle cell disease. The first description of sickle cell disease was by Dr. James B. Herrick of Chicago in 1910, following his treatment of a West Indian patient whose anemia was characterized by unusual red cells.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Chesapeake Colonies; Gulf of Guinea; Hispaniola

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## Mali

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The second great Sahelian kingdom was that of Mali. The Sahel is the savannah region south of the Sahara, which, after 750, became the center of culturally and politically dynamic cities and kingdoms because of the strategic importance of the Sahel for trade across north Africa.

The first great Sahelian kingdom was Ghana, but the Islamic revolution of the Almoravids, a Berber people living

north of Ghana, splintered that kingdom. The Almoravids did not succeed in building their own Islamic kingdom in the region. The Almoravid revolution, however, led to energetic Islamic proselytizing all throughout the Sahel. Many of the ruling families converted to Islam.

One of these ruling families, the Keita, forged the successor to the Ghanaian Kingdom, the Kingdom of Mali. As with Ghana, Mali was built off of the monopolization of the trade routes from western and southern Africa to eastern and northern Africa. The most lucrative of these monopolies was the gold trade. Mali was located farther south than Ghana; the Malians lived in an agriculturally fertile land. Mali was also located along the upper Niger River, while Ghana had been located to the west. The bulk of the gold trade proceeded up the Niger River, so this gave Mali a firmer grip on this lucrative monopoly. Furthermore, controlling the Niger River and the cities that lie on its banks were important for trade and travel. The Niger was a central artery of commerce for both west and north African trade routes. Mali's control of the Niger River helped it to grow and prosper.

Mali was not a true empire, but rather the center of a sphere of influence. The territory controlled by Mali comprised three distinct regions: the Senegal region with people speaking Niger-Kongo languages, the central Mande states occupied by Soninke and Mandinke, and the region of Gao occupied by people who spoke Songhay.

The historical founder of Mali was the magician Sundjata Keita, or Sundiata, one of the most legendary figures in African history. Sundjata, who ruled Mali between the years 1230–1255, began as a royal slave and magician among the Soso peoples who then ruled the Ghanaian empire. According to African oral histories, the small state of Kangaba, led by Sundjata, defeated the nearby kingdom of Soso at the Battle of Kirina in 1235. The clans of the heartland unified under Sundjata, beginning a period of expansion. The rulers of Mali nominally converted to Islam, but held strong ties with Mande religions.

Under Sundjata and his immediate successors, Mali expanded rapidly west to the Atlantic Ocean, south deep into the forest, east beyond the Niger River, and north to the salt and copper mines of the Sahara. The city of Niani



*Djinguereber Mosque in Timbuktu was built in the 14th century during Mansa Musa's reign as emperor of Mali. (Emilio Labrador)*

may have been the capital. At its height, Mali was a confederation of three independent, freely allied states (Mali, Mema, and Wagadou) and 12 garrisoned provinces.

The most significant of the Mali kings was Mansa Musa (1312–1337), who expanded Mali influence over the large Niger city-states of Timbuktu, Gao, and Djenne. Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim who built magnificent mosques all throughout the Mali sphere of influence. His gold-laden pilgrimage to Mecca made him an historical figure even in European history writing.

It was under Mansa Musa that Timbuktu became one of the major cultural centers not only of Africa, but of the entire world. Under Mansa Musa's patronage, vast libraries were built and *madrasas* (Islamic universities) were endowed. Timbuktu became a meeting place of the finest poets, scholars, and artists of Africa and the Middle East. Even after the power of Mali declined, Timbuktu remained the major Islamic center of sub-Saharan Africa.

After the death of Mansa Musa, the power of Mali began to decline. Mali had never been an empire proper, and subject states began to break off from the Mali sphere of influence. In 1430, the Tuareg Berbers in the north seized much of Mali's territory, including the city of Timbuktu, and the Mossi Kingdom to the south a decade later seized much of Mali's southern territories. Finally, the kingdom of Gao, which had been subjugated to Mali under Mansa Musa, gave rise to a Songhai Kingdom that finally eclipsed the power of Mali.

*See also:* Ghana; Musa, Mansa; Sahel; Senegambia; Songhai; Sudanic Empires; Sundiata: The Epic of Old Mali

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## Matrilineal Societies

Matrilineal societies are groups where descent is traced through mothers' rather than fathers' bloodlines. Distinguished from the concept of matriarchy that refers to female

power and control, matrilineality focuses on female relatedness, descent, and lineage. In matrilineal societies political titles, exchanges of wealth, goods, and services are passed down from mothers to daughters and/or men to their sisters' sons rather than their own biological sons. Daughter-based investment of family wealth, defined as exchanges between grandparents/parents and granddaughters/daughters, are also typically found in matrilineal societies. Anthropological studies report strong connections between societies in "horticultural" or farming stages of evolutionary development with low levels of paternal confidence and the occurrence of matrilineal culturally supported patterns. Although matrilineal societies occur less frequently than patrilineal ones (where descent is traced through fathers' bloodline), they are recurrent and found in all regions of the world, including Africa (e.g., Akan in Ghana, Toka in Zambia, and Chewa in Malawi).

Cultural experiences with matrilineal societies were undoubtedly part of the sociocultural experience of many enslaved African Americans. Contemporary scholars such as Nobles and Sudarkasa identified many similarities between African and African American cultural patterns in marriage, family and kinship structure and functioning. However, others like E. Franklin Frazier, maintained the vicissitudes of slavery, emancipation, and urbanization virtually destroyed any African cultural retentions. Further, whether due to cultural values and beliefs or large-scale social structural forces, characteristics of matrilineal societies are evident within African American life today.

African American mothers and daughters hold pivotal roles within families and kin networks that are fluid and often diverse. Exchanges of wealth, money, resources, emotional support, child care services, physical care, and so forth occur frequently over the life cycle between mothers, daughters, sisters, and other female kin. Even among African American elderly, adult daughters and elderly mothers have been found to exchange emotional, financial, and physical support to help maintain themselves and/or their households reflective of lifelong patterns of reciprocity over their life course. Generally, networks of African American women constitute the foundation or relatedness and stability within many families and kinship systems. These female interpersonal relationships of connectivity also appear to coexist with forms of social organization more patrilineal or patriarchal in nature.

Societies with mixed matrilineal and patrilineal characteristics are not uncommon when examining forms of social organization globally. Although some scholars and policy makers have suggested that matrilineal and matriarchal patterns contribute to family dysfunction and welfare dependency, others note their contributions to enhanced social functioning. Few quantitative studies have examined low levels of paternal confidence comparatively between patrilineal and matrilineal societies and any association this may have with family dysfunction and dependency.

Considering the persistence of current sociodemographic trends in modern times, specifically the economic disenfranchisement of African American males, high rates of never married, divorced, widowed, and separated African American females, high mortality and incarceration rates for African American males, and the historic higher demand for the labor of African American females, it is highly likely matrilineal social organizational patterns will endure in black life and culture.

*See also:* Coromantee; Gold Coast; Kingdom of Asante

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## Mbebma, Nzinga (Afonso I)

Born the son of King Nkuwu Nzinga, Mbemba (1460–1543), commonly referred to as Afonso I, ruled the Kingdom of the Kongo for 24 years from 1509 to 1543. His reign, during the first half of the 16th century, highlighted peaceful interactions with the kingdom and Prince Henry the Navigator's Portugal. Initially, relations were so amicable that he instituted Portuguese as the language of stately business.

Portuguese influence also existed with the legal system, feudal titles, and court procedures. Besides incorporating Portuguese culture and systems, Mbemba ruled his territory, which extended from present-day Angola to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with an iron gauntlet. As a ruler over the northern province of Nsundi, Mbemba extended the kingdom's borders north of the Congo River's natural boundary. Territorial expansion was a major feat, which gave the kingdom jurisdiction over another area plus allowed Mbemba to incorporate new inhabitants. Guiding his political leadership was his acceptance and adoption of Christianity.

As a devout Christian, Mbemba differed from his father, who renounced the religion, and grew quite skeptical of his son. For his convictions, Mbemba lost control over his province, and had to regain his father's trust, which he succeeded in doing. His allegiance to Christianity was not just an individual pledge, as he tried to convert his kingdom's people to his newfound faith and to marry Christianity with his indigenous religions. All Europeans with the exceptions of teachers and missionaries forcibly left the kingdom as he expelled them. Mbemba not only established the Catholic Church in the Kongo, he also provided for its financing. Subjects paid taxes. Schools also marked this religious transition and cultural infusion that occurred. All provinces had schools, however, only for persons of nobility; commoners received no educational training. He even enhanced his own education by studying theological books, and according to the Portuguese Royal Captain Rui d'Aguiar, Mbemba was so committed to learning that he fell asleep while reading the works. His insatiable appetite for education expanded to his brethren and subjects, whom he sent to study in Europe. His son Henrique Kinu a Mbemba, for example, earned the title of bishop of Utica, in North Africa; however, although the Vatican conferred him this position, he actually served the Kongo region from the early 1520s to his death in 1531.

Mbemba also became embroiled in international matters. Chief among them was the role of the Portuguese and the slave trade. He disapproved of the practice even though slavery predated the Europeans' arrival. Several letters penned, beginning in 1526, documented his complaints and accusations that the Portuguese illegally purchased slaves. Mbemba also mentioned visible signs of property ownership, manner of capture, and inference of travel from the interior to the coast. In providing a description

of Portuguese method of slave acquisition, Mbemba distinguishes between illegitimate and legitimate trade.

Amid his letter-writing campaign and slavery's documentation, Mbemba issued a threat. In no uncertain terms, he told the Portuguese that he would close the slave trade altogether, an idea that he later aborted for the establishment of an examination committee. The newly constituted examination committee had this charge: to determine the legality of all enslaved persons. Mbemba wanted to control the exchange of human chattel for Portuguese merchandise by mandating that any European wishing to purchase goods had to inform three Kongo noblemen and officials of the Kongo court. Failure to comply with the terms meant a loss of goods acquired by the Portuguese. Mbemba negotiated an agreement, which comprised two physicians, two apothecaries, and one surgeon, all medically qualified to treat the diseases that plagued the kingdom. Kongo inhabitants also received European firearms, horses, cattle, and goods from the Americas. For these inducements, Mbemba allowed slavery to continue. In fact, Mbemba retained his own supply of slaves.

Noted principally for his promotion of Christianity as the state religion, Mbemba left an impressionable legacy. His stance on slavery was admirable, although he contradicted his public convictions when he held his own slaves. The fact that he served as a barrier to Portuguese capitalism and mercenary goals was a testament to his character. His "reward" for this stalwartness was an unsuccessful assassination attempt. On Easter Day in 1540, eight Portuguese tried to shoot him. When he died, Mbemba was at least 80 years old in 1542 or 1543. His death, which was marred by a disintegrated state, in large part due to the Portuguese presence, sparked a succession battle. Grandchildren and heirs desiring his coveted position fought among themselves. One son Pedro emerged from the familial fray to succeed his father, but his term was short-lived. Mbemba's grandson Diogo overthrew Pedro in 1545, forcing him to seek refuge in a church. All other future leaders had Mbemba's blood, as descent flowed linearly. Three of his daughters, for example, gave birth to future kings. Mbemba reaped success as a leader, parent, politician, and pragmatist. His ideologies showcased his resolve and belief in the Christian faith.

See also: Kongo Kingdom; West-Central Africa

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## Middle Colonies

The middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey are bordered on their north by New England and on the south by the Chesapeake states of Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. Their geographic location allowed for the diffusion of ideas, customs, and economics from both north and south to collide to form a distinct colonial identity. The African American experience in the middle colonies began with slavery and eventually transformed to wage labor through emancipation programs that developed along with Enlightenment ideas during the American Revolution. However, even after Emancipation, African Americans experienced discrimination and restrictions on their movements, professions, and living arrangements.

The first African Americans in the middle colonies arrived from the West Indies in bondage. In 1626, members of the Dutch West India Company diverted a shipment of slaves from their colonial interests in the Caribbean to the new colony of New Netherland. The city of New Amsterdam (New York) desired these slaves because the colony was suffering a labor shortage. Low colonial migration as well as small numbers of indentured servants caused the Dutch to look toward slavery to provide them with the labor necessary for the colony to expand and survive. In New Netherland, slaves were used to build roads and forts for defense, as well as clear land for agriculture, providing the Dutch settlers with a constant supply of food and defenses against British and Indian incursions.

The presence of slaves in New Amsterdam soon spread across the Hudson River into New Jersey. Dutch settlers

used slaves for agriculture in the fertile fields of northeast New Jersey and established a slave-dominated East Jersey labor system that would endure until the beginning of the 19th century. In addition, Dutch traders soon began trading slaves to Dutch farmers who settled along both sides of the Delaware River as well as the colony of New Sweden. Slavery eventually moved into the Philadelphia area in the late 1600s when Quaker settlers arrived with William Penn to establish their “holy experiment.”

The experience of the early colonists in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey was repeated until Emancipation. Primarily, slavery in the middle colonies grew because of the lack of substantial white populations, the availability of cheap land, and the desire of white settlers to own and farm land. The combination of these factors made wage labor on larger farms or for the public good extremely unpopular. The dearth of wage labor in the middle colonies soon made slavery a popular and acceptable substitute measure. Therefore, to farm even the most modest of fields, slavery became a necessity.

Those colonists who could afford a large capital expenditure typically bought slaves after they arrived from the West Indies (very rarely were there direct shipments from Africa because it was felt that Africans not familiar with slavery were too dangerous). Those with larger farms or resources purchased slaves primarily for agricultural labor. However, slaves expanded their presence in colonial society by becoming coopers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, and other types of artisans. Slaves also worked in the iron industry along the New York–New Jersey border.

After the acceptance of slaves outside of their traditional agricultural roles, slave owners began to hire out slaves for wages. Owners received a constant income from their investment while simultaneously retaining access to the slave during harvest season. Hiring out slaves allowed farmers to recoup the losses they had previously been victim to when their slaves sat idle during off-peak growing times. This dilemma was especially felt in the middle colonies as compared to the South, since the crops slaves helped grow (wheat, millet, barley, flax, corn, vegetables, and apples) were not as valuable economically as the rice, cotton, or tobacco of the South. In addition, since a typical New York slave grew wheat on a medium-sized farm, his economic output was substantially smaller than slaves in the South, thus slave owners had to find a way for slaves to increase their income potential, therefore, the hiring-out system became popular.

Slavery, then, did not become associated with any one occupation and continued as a substitute system of wage labor. Since slavery never became associated with cash crop production, the slave population in the middle colonies never matched that of the South; however, the middle colonies possessed more slaves than New England during the same time period. In 1770, New York contained the most number of slaves with approximately 20,000 or about 12 percent of its total population. New Jersey had approximately 8,500 slaves or 7.0 percent of its total population classified as slave, while Pennsylvania had about 5,500 slaves or 2.3 percent of its total population.

Although the economic roles and numbers of slaves in the middle colonies were vastly different from Southern society, their treatment did not differ. State legislatures passed Black Codes that prescribed the legal basis of slavery and regulated that system. New Jersey became the first in 1704, while New York followed in 1706. Both of these codes mandated severe punishments for criminal offenses, legally defined who qualified as a slave under the law, and restricted black liberties and freedoms. Castration and burning at the stake were only two of the punishments that New Jersey courts used to punish slaves convicted of rape and murder, respectively. Additionally, the treatment at the level of master and slave mirrored the South. Whippings, separation of families, or increased work were frequently used mechanisms masters employed against disobedient slaves. However, it is important to recognize that the treatment of slaves differed widely based on individual masters, as it did in the South.

Maltreatment caused slaves to rebel through a variety of means: work stoppages, running away, or open revolt. Northern farmers noted that without constant supervision, slaves would not complete farm work while newspaper ads routinely advertised for the return of fugitive slaves. In regard to open revolt, organizing any structured rebellion was difficult in the North, since the average slave owner only owned one or two slaves. Large holdings that created an independent slave culture were largely nonexistent in the North. Therefore, the creation of culture and organizing a revolt usually occurred in an urban environment. Two rebellions of note occurred in New York City in 1712 and 1741. On April 1, 1712, slaves burned a house and shot the whites who were inside when they attempted to escape the fire. Eight whites died and twelve were wounded. Special courts prosecuted the slaves, and they were executed later



that year. The Conspiracy of 1741 revolved around blacks setting fire to various buildings in New York City, including Fort George. Several blacks were convicted and burned at the stake for allegedly setting fire to the city. In each case, the rebellions caused New York and its neighbors in New Jersey to reevaluate their slave codes and attempt to enforce tighter control on their slave populations.

The American Revolution dramatically changed the shape of slavery in the Northern colonies. The outbreak of war fueled abolitionist sentiment that had been present since the mid-1700s. Rhetoric touting that the relationship between slavery and freedom was the same as between the American Colonies and Great Britain soon galvanized a share of the population to question the suitability of fighting for freedom while at the same time enslaving another race. The largest group of antislavery supporters still remained the Quakers. Although the Quakers who originally settled in Pennsylvania had used slave labor, by 1761, Quakers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania had outlawed slaveholding among their own members and determined that they should help rid the United States of the evil institution. Quaker activism helped to introduce numerous bills into the colonial legislatures and began the attack on slavery. Quakers initially lobbied for better treatment for slaves, ending the importation of Africans into the colonies, and the end of stringent requirements for manumitting slaves, which in most colonies required a slave owner to post a bond as high as 200 pounds as well as pay a yearly supplement in order to free a slave, leading many slave owners to choose to keep their slaves instead of manumitting them.

Pennsylvania vied with Massachusetts as the leader in Northern abolition. Philadelphia, the largest center of Quaker activism in the United States, pressured Pennsylvania to support abolition. Coupled with the rhetoric of freedom stemming from the Revolution, the Pennsylvania legislature passed a gradual emancipation bill in 1780 that granted freedom to children born to slaves after they reached the age of 28 years old. Emancipation in Pennsylvania resulted from the support of Quakers and the Enlightenment idea of freedom, but also from an examination of the economic situation in the state. Since Pennsylvania possessed a large enough population of wage laborers, the abolition of slavery did not extremely hurt the state economically. However, those farmers along the Delaware River, coupled with racist tendencies of the population at large, led to the failure of achieving complete abolition by the state legislature in

1800. However, slavery met a quick death in Pennsylvania, since by 1820, only 211 slaves remained in the state, and by 1840, slavery completely disappeared within Pennsylvania's borders.

Abolition did not come as easily to New York and New Jersey as it did in Pennsylvania. The year 1784 saw the defeat of a New York abolition bill based primarily on economic grounds by Dutch planters in the lower Hudson Valley. After that defeat, New York Quakers allied with the newly formed New York Manumission Society to introduce another abolition bill in 1785. After another intense lobbying campaign, New York passed a gradual emancipation law that took effect on July 4, 1799. Any child born to a slave after that date would be free after 28 years of indenture for men and 25 for women. Key to the passage of the emancipation bill was a compensated abolition program that allowed slaveholders to abandon their slaves' newborn children to the care of the state. After the abolition of slavery across the North, New York emancipated all slaves born before July 4, 1799, as of July 4, 1827. On July 4, 1827, slavery in New York finally died.

New Jersey, the last Northern state to enact a gradual emancipation program, had, along with New York, the longest relationship with slaves. New Jersey passed a gradual emancipation law that took effect on July 4, 1804. The bill essentially provided the same provisions as the New York plan; however, New Jersey never passed a complete abolition program as New York did. Slavery existed in New Jersey until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment (which New Jersey initially rejected) in 1865, thus ending the slave experience in the North.

After Emancipation, free blacks took on many of the same jobs as they had when they were slaves. They competed for jobs as wage laborers in New York and Philadelphia or worked on farms across central New Jersey. Although they were free, blacks were refused the right to vote and suffered racism throughout the 19th century. After Emancipation, many whites who supported abolition turned to the colonization movement to help alleviate the large number of free blacks in the cities and towns of the middle colonies. Thus, the rhetoric of freedom that emanated from the Revolution neither freed all blacks from bondage nor eliminated racism.

*See also:* African Burial Ground, New York City; African Methodist Episcopal Church; Dutch New Netherland; Dutch West India Company; Gradual Emancipation; New England

Colonies; New York Conspiracy of 1741; New York Revolt of 1712; Northern Slavery; Patroonship; Pinkster Festival

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## Musa, Mansa

Mansa Musa (?–1337) is the best known of the emperors of Mali, largely because of his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1325 and the widespread fame of his visit to Cairo. The pilgrimage had important consequences for the subsequent history of the western Sudan, a region that haunted men's minds thereafter. Egypt, the Maghrib, Portugal, and the merchant cities of Italy took an increasing interest in Mali.

Once on the throne, Mansa Musa set about consolidating the achievements of his predecessors and making the central authority be obeyed. He was assisted by an eminent general, Saran Mandian, who strengthened the emperor's authority not only in the valley of the Niger as far as Gao and beyond, but also throughout the Sahel, winning the submission of the Saharan nomads, who were often robbers and rebels.

Mansa Musa made elaborate preparations for his pilgrimage. In accordance with tradition, he levied special contributions from every trading town and every province. Although the figures given by the Arab writers are probably exaggerated, they give some idea of the power of the Mali emperor. There were said to be 60,000 porters and

500 servants decked in gold, each carrying a golden staff. Mansa Musa was received in Cairo with the honors due to the great sultan he was, and created a great impression by his bearing and his generosity. The important thing is that he established sound economic and cultural relations with the countries he traveled through.

Some of this wealth and power directly relates to the unique position of his empire along the Niger River basin and the crossroads of many major trans-Saharan trade routes. Two of these traded commodities were salt and gold. These were so important that in the 14th century they were used as currency. Salt trade originated from the north of Mali in the mines of Taghaza. The gold mines of Bambuk, on the other hand, lay within Mali territory. This gold was the source of half of the world's supply and greatly contributed to Mansa Musa's wealth. During his life, Mansa Musa also gained control of Timbuktu, which stood at the crossroads of the Niger, an important means of transport, and the Saharan desert trade routes. This was the city where the Saharan salt merchants and the gold-laden caravans converged. This provided Mansa Musa control of these two major commodities, and with this control, his wealth increased.

Mansa Musa returned home from his pilgrimage with a famous architect, Isāḳ al-Tuedjin, who built the great mosque at Gao. In Timbuktu the architect built another great mosque and a royal palace. Mansa Musa attracted many men of letters to his court and was himself skilled in Arabic. After his pilgrimage, the Marinids of Fez and the merchant cities of the Maghrib began to take a lively interest in Mali, and the rulers exchanged gifts and ambassadors. Musa set up Koranic schools and had bought many books in Cairo and the holy places.

As a builder, Mansa Musa left an enduring mark on all the cities of the Sudan, with their characteristic buildings of beaten earth strengthened with wood. The mosques of Jenne and Timbuktu were the prototypes of what is called the Sudanic style. As a patron and friend of literature, Musa helped lay the foundations of the Arabic literature of blacks, which was to bear its finest fruit in the cities of Djénne and Timbuktu in the 14th and 15th centuries. Under his rule Timbuktu rose not only to become an important city in the trans-Saharan trade route but also the center of Islamic scholarship. Muslims came from distant countries to receive an education at Sankore University that he built in Timbuktu. Thus, these centers attracted Muslims from all

over the world, including some of the greatest poets, scholars, and artists of Africa and the Middle East. This greatly increased the fame of Mali.

Mali achieved the apex of its territorial expansion under Mansa Musa. The Mali Empire extended from the Atlantic coast in the west to Songhai far down the Niger bend to the east, from the salt mines of Taghaza in the north to the legendary gold mines of Wangara in the south. Mansa Musa died in 1337. He had brought stability and good government to Mali, spreading its name abroad.

In the long run, partly due to Musa's conspicuous flaunting of wealth, when ships of Portugal's Prince Henry captured Cueta in 1415, Moorish prisoners told more details of the gold trade. Henry sent his explorers down the African coast to find a route across sub-Saharan Africa in order to contain Islam.

*See also:* Mali; Sudanic Empires; Timbuktu

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## New England Colonies

Slavery in New England, more urban than rural, despite the presence of several large plantations, especially in Rhode Island and Connecticut, began as a colony-building measure before the middle of the 17th century. Slaves were called on to do whatever was needed, thus developing extensive expertise. Even though the slave population in New England was never huge, the colonialists took enormous profits from the trade, in ship-building; in brokering loans; in providing root vegetables, meat, and fish to feed slaves across a far-flung network; and by supplying wood and building materials for homes and other structures in the South and West Indies. In little more than a century, thanks to many streams of income, slavery spelled immense prosperity for New England. Thus, the region developed an enviable

standard of living and established itself as a political, educational, and cultural capital. It is worth considering if the financial significance that New England developed, which allowed it to launch a campaign for independence, could have happened minus the profit slavery consistently afforded.

In 1641, Massachusetts, which initially included Maine, was the first New England colony to legalize slavery. This occurred in the midst of declining immigration from England and Europe. Slaves, African and Native American, took up the slack, providing free labor from an early period. The exact date when the first African came to New England is shrouded, but a shipment carrying cotton, tobacco, salt, and slaves arrived in Salem in 1638. William Bradford, governor of the Bay Colony, so noted in his journal and also indicated that the ship had sailed from the Caribbean. Not long before, the same ship had taken to the islands some Pequot slaves, mostly men and boys, who were war captives. The February arrival that Bradford recorded was the return voyage for the *Desire*, which had been built in Salem expressly for the slave trade.

Some Africans came to New England with special aptitudes and knowledge. In 1721, Onesimus, who had a reputation for being a clever slave, convinced his master, Cotton Mather, that the only way to stop the spread of smallpox in Boston was to prick the skin and add a bit of infection to the body. Back home in Africa, he said, few ever died of the disease because it was understood that introducing it to the system in small amounts dulled its effect. Mather persuaded Zabdiel Boylston, a doctor, to test the remedy, which significantly cut the number of casualties. Three decades later, another exceptional slave arrived on the Boston wharf. A sickly girl, in time, she quickly grew stronger, and her intellect was undeniable and unmistakable. Phillis Wheatley mastered Latin and Greek and English in short order, becoming a published poet with a volume of verse to her credit while she was in her twenties.

Because some slaves fared better than others and since the concentration of slaves in colonial New England was less than in the agrarian South, never reaching more than 5 percent overall, which happened just prior to the American Revolution, it is assumed that slavery weighed lightly there. But slavery, the loss of ownership in the self, is never inconsequential. The colonists understood this because they argued that the British had enslaved them, robbing them of personhood, and this was the basis on which they

went to war. A number of slaves understood the irony, and used it to advantage, pushing for freedom. One such former slave was Prince Hall, who organized a chapter of black masons in Boston, with a mission of amassing political and social capital. Hall was contemporary with Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave of African and Native American background, who was the first to shed blood for liberty and independence in the incipient nation.

When the American Revolution began, more than 15,000 slaves lived in New England, with the highest percentage in Rhode Island and the greatest number in Massachusetts. In Boston, Africans constituted a 10th, but in Connecticut and in Massachusetts generally, they represented roughly 4 percent, some of whom were free, even though they did not necessarily fare better in freedom. After purchasing himself in 1760, Venture Smith continued to save, eventually buying liberty for his sons, daughters, and wife. Several decades before Smith documented his experience in a narrative, there emerged among the slave populations in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire a common cultural life expressed in Black Election Day festivities.

This social holiday brought blacks from far and wide to commune together with music, games, and spirits, assembling for the purpose of choosing a leader, either a black governor or king, who took on a governance role in the community, sitting in judgment over disputes. Africans saw themselves and were seen as a separate people, and they rallied to create their own institutions, drawing sustenance from the camaraderie of togetherness while they displayed their cultural stamp and sense of communal standing in their own eyes and in those of others.

*See also:* Attucks, Crispus; Election Day; Northern Slavery; Tituba; Wheatley, Phillis

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## New York Conspiracy of 1741

The New York Conspiracy of 1741, also called the Great Negro Plot, refers to the alleged plot by slaves, free blacks, and poor whites to rebel and burn colonial New York City. In a series of show trials and confessions, the New York Supreme Court elicited the details of the plot, with the final outcome being the execution of 34 people and the deportation of more than 70 others.

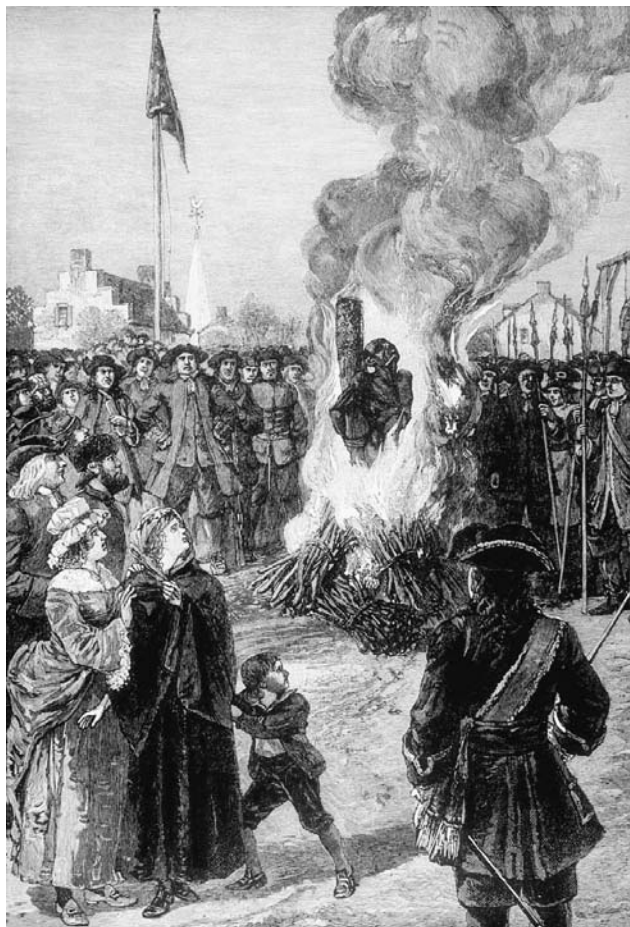
In the months before the string of fires broke out, the alleged conspirators, black and white, often met in Manhattan's waterfront taverns, like the one owned by John Hughson. Three frequent patrons of Hughson's tavern were the slaves Caesar, Prince, and Cuffee, collectively called the "Geneva Club." Caesar, Prince, Cuffee, and others regularly stole goods and exchanged them for money or alcohol at Hughson's. The Irish prostitute Margaret Kerry had a room at Hughson's paid for by Caesar, who was the father of the child Kerry was carrying. Mary Burton, also of Irish descent, was the 16-year-old indentured servant of John Hughson, who would become a critical witness in the later trials.

On March 2, 1741, more than two weeks before the first fires broke out and a conspiracy was suspected, the slaves Caesar and Prince were arrested for burglary. Shortly thereafter, on March 4, the servant Mary Burton was questioned by the undersheriff and confirmed that Caesar and Prince had stolen items and stored them at Hughson's. She also began to reveal details about the supposed plot by those who frequented Hughson's to rise up and destroy the city.

On March 18, 1741, several buildings within New York's Fort George were engulfed in flames. One of these buildings was the mansion of Lieutenant Governor George Clarke. From there the fire moved to the chapel and barracks within the fort. The fire eventually jumped the walls of Fort George, burning the adjacent Secretary's Office, where many important city documents were held. The documents were saved; the building was not.

The Fort George fires were the most destructive, but several other fires occurred in the following weeks. On March 25, Captain Peter Warren's house was ignited (but saved with little damage). April 4 and April 6 saw six more fires between them. In total, there were at least 13 fires of varying destructiveness between March 18 and April 6, 1741.

Between April 11 and April 17, government officials came to the conclusion that the fires were the result of arson



A slave plot in New York City results in the burning of two slaves at the stake in 1741. In all, 31 slaves were executed after the conspiracy. (Mary Evans Picture Library/The Image Works)

and were part of a larger conspiratorial plot by the city's slaves. Throughout April and May, they arrested several slaves they believed to be connected to the arsons, including Geneva Club member Cuffee and another slave named Quack. A series of trials in the New York Supreme Court commenced on April 21 and continued through August 31, 1741. City recorder and judge Daniel Horsmanden oversaw the trials and recorded the proceedings, later publishing a report.

On May 1, 1741, Caesar and Prince were tried and convicted of burglary. A week later, on May 8, they were sentenced to death. On May 11, both were publicly hanged, and Caesar's corpse was gibbeted and publicly displayed. Between Caesar and Prince's trial and their sentencing, on May 6, John Hughson and his wife, Sarah, along with Margaret Kerry, were tried and convicted of feloniously receiving stolen goods. All three were found guilty on June 8 and were publicly hanged on June 12, 1741.

As the months progressed, the accusations became more frequent and more widespread. On May 29, 1741, Cuffee and Quack were tried for arson, found guilty, and sentenced to death. They were burned at the stake the next day. The executions of the alleged ringleaders in the spring were followed by a number of trials in the summer that resulted in the execution and banishment of many other slaves. Some were hanged, some were burned at the stake, and others were transported out of the colony. In total, 13 black men were burned at the stake, 17 were hanged along with 4 whites, and more than 70 were sentenced to transport out of New York.

The reactions of white New Yorkers, particularly those of the Supreme Court judges and jury, were the product of a broader paranoia about slave rebellion. The New York Slave Revolt of 1712 and the Stono Rebellion of 1739 in South Carolina, among other acts of rebellion, remained in the memories of both free and enslaved New Yorkers. This memory provided a source of suspicion and antagonism toward slaves and slave gatherings (like the alleged gathering and plotting at Hughson's tavern).

There is considerable scholarly debate about who was actually responsible for the fires. Given the unfair nature of the trials and the seemingly coerced nature of many of the confessions, it is unclear who was telling the truth during the trial. Much like the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, paranoid accusations and coerced confessions served as adequate evidence of a broad conspiracy.

*See also:* New York Revolt of 1712; Northern Slavery; Slave Resistance

*Jerad Mulcare*

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## New York Revolt of 1712

One of the largest early revolts in North America occurred in New York City in 1712. On the first of January of that

year, a number of enslaved men and women met and performed a blood oath in preparation for a planned revolt to take place early in April. On April 7, 1712, at about two in the morning, more than two dozen enslaved men and women gathered in an orchard behind the house of a local cooper in New York City's east ward (near Wall Street on the east side of the city). They came armed—having stolen knives, guns, axes, and whatever weapons they could get their hands on. The slaves set fire to one of the cooper's outbuildings. When whites approached to put the fire out, the slaves killed nine men and wounded five or six others. Using this fire as a distraction to cover their escape from the city, the slaves fled the scene, running north through the woods toward freedom. Robert Hunter, the colonial governor of New York, immediately called out the militia to “drive the island” and through this method and through strict house-to-house searches in the town, 27 men and women were arrested. The militia found the bodies of six additional slaves who had killed themselves before they could be captured. The prisoners were quickly tried and convicted, and 21 of these men and women were immediately executed. One of the convicted women was pregnant, and her execution was stayed until after she gave birth. The punishment was brutal: some were burned at the stake, while others were broken on the wheel. One slave was suspended from chains until he died.

At the time of this revolt, New York City was a thriving British colony, its economy based in the booming slave trade and slave plantation system. Transatlantic slave traders ran their business from the city, and merchants became wealthy providing England's monocultural sugar-growing islands in the Caribbean with staple crops grown by settlers and their slaves in the fertile Hudson Valley. In addition to agricultural work in the city and in outlying farms, enslaved Africans worked the docks, served in homes, worked in a variety of skilled trades, and supplied provisions to local markets throughout the city. Many slaves were “rented” to work on city construction projects. The wounded skeletons of slaves found in New York City's African Burial Ground provided mute testimony to how hard they were worked. For example, several women buried there were found with skull collapse from being forced to carry huge burdens on their heads.

The institution of slavery preexisted English rule, beginning in 1626 shortly after the Dutch occupation and settlement of what was then called New Amsterdam. At the

time of the English takeover, in 1664, there were four times the number of slaves in New York as there were in the Virginia colony. The population of slaves continued to increase, and by the turn of the 18th century, slaves made up more than 30 percent of the total population of the city. The slave population included captives from western Africa, “seasoned” slaves born in the West Indies, and descendants of these born in New York. The slaves involved in the 1712 revolt were identified as “Coromantee,” from Akan-speaking nations of present-day Ghana, and “Paw Paw,” a term used for the Fon of Dahomey in present-day Togo. The names of those executed included Anglo-American names such as Sarah and Abigail, as well as Akan day-names such as Quaco and Quashi.

*See also:* African Burial Ground, New York City; Coromantee; New York Conspiracy of 1741; Northern Slavery; Slave Resistance; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

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## Newton, John

John Newton (1725–1807), slave trader, hymn writer, Church of England divine, was born in London on July 24, 1725. He was the only son of a captain in the merchant marine who traded in the Mediterranean, and was later appointed governor of York Fort in Hudson's Bay, British North America, where he died in 1750. Newton's mother was a devout Nonconformist. By his own account, after the death of his beloved mother, and his father's remarriage, Newton was emotionally and intellectually neglected both at home and the boarding school he attended at Stratford in Essex. When he turned 11 years of age, he made the first of five voyages on his father's ship to the Mediterranean. Later in life he reflected upon this time, writing that his

propensities for sin were increasing. Before the age of 16, despite a number of attempts at moral self-reform (the first time as a result of a serious riding accident, another time due to the drowning of a friend on a British man-of-war on which Newton was also supposed to have sailed), he fell into further moral decay.

During the next few years, Newton vacillated between nominal attempts at religious observance and licentious behavior. In 1743, after returning from a voyage in the Mediterranean, Newton's father was able, through connections, to procure for his son a promotion to midshipman aboard a naval vessel that was assigned to patrol the English coast just before the outbreak of hostilities between France and Britain during the War of the Austrian Succession. Newton deserted before HMS *Harwick* was to sail on a return voyage to the West Indies, but was captured by the military, returned to his vessel, and stripped of all vestiges of rank and privilege.

It was after arriving in Madeira that Newton first inadvertently entered the slave trade when he managed to talk his way into joining a slave-trading ship bound for Sierra Leone. His continued profligacy onboard led to a falling out with the captain, and instead of continuing on the second part of the voyage to the West Indies, he remained on the African coast, becoming a servant to a prosperous slave trader who lived with an African woman. Newton claimed that he suffered tremendous abuse and countless indignities at the hands of both the woman and the slave trader. Within a year, however, the master consented to release him from his employment, and Newton went to work for another slave trader under far better conditions. In later life, after Newton became an active leader in the fight for the abolition of African slavery throughout the British Empire, he looked back upon the 18 months that he spent in wretched servitude as an important firsthand experience of the tremendous physical and emotional dislocation and barbarity that resulted from his embrace of his role as a slave trader.

Soon after Newton's reversal of fortune, though, his father, upon hearing that his son was not well, sent a ship to the African coast with orders to find Newton and return him to England. After almost perishing in a violent storm on the return voyage to England aboard the *Greyhound*, Newton underwent his first conversion experience. He underwent a second conversion experience when, after marrying and then commanding a slave ship to the

African coast, he fell violently ill, but recovered. Newton returned to England in 1752, but then over the next few years made two more voyages to Africa as a participant in the slave trade. During the years from 1750–1754, Newton kept a detailed journal of his day-to-day participation in the slave trade, which consisted of purchasing slaves all along the west coast of Africa, then trafficking the human cargo to the West Indies or North America for sale. Throughout his journal Newton documented in extensive detail just how systemic, lucrative, and competitive as a commercial enterprise the African slave trade was. Despite the potential financial rewards involved, however, his entries reveal that the buying and selling of slaves was fraught with danger as well as disease, poor weather, and the constant threat of insurrection by both the ship's crew and African captives.

In 1754, due to a deterioration in health, Newton quit the slave trade and maritime work in general. After settling in Liverpool in 1755 to take up a civil service appointment as a tide surveyor, a post he held until 1760, he applied to become a clergyman in the Church of England, but was at first unsuccessful. After serving for a brief period as a Non-conformist minister, in 1763, he befriended the evangelical aristocrat Lord Dartmouth, who used his influence to enable Newton to be ordained as an Anglican clergyman. Over the course of his professional life as a minister, Newton served congregations in both Olney, Buckinghamshire, and later in London. More important, for the beginning of what later became the Anglo-American abolition movement, Newton's recollections of his years as a slave trader, published as *An Authentic Narrative* (1764), and *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* (1788), played a crucial role in convincing influential late-18th-century members of the British establishment, like William Wilberforce, Charles Simeon, and Hannah More, of their moral and religious obligations to convince the British public of the urgent need to support the passing of legislation that would make it a crime to participate in the international slave trade. In addition, Newton wrote the lyrics to "Amazing Grace" in 1772. The hymn became an anthem, of sorts, for advocates of human rights and justice even as late as the 21st century.

John Newton spent his final years serving his congregation at St. Mary Woolnoth in London, and died on December 21, 1807.

*See also:* Abolition, Slave Trade; Atlantic Slave Trade

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**Occupational Castes**

Occupational castes are specialized groups of skilled artists and artisans found within the hierarchal social structure of several West African ethnic groups. Originating in the empire of Ghana/Wagadu among the Soninke people, occupational castes emerged when individuals with specialized skills, who, in attempting to safeguard and perpetuate those skills among family members, formed endogamous marriage relationships with people of the same occupation. Not to be confused with the caste system in India that designates hundreds of castes from the highest to the lowest outcaste in accordance with their lineages, the occupational castes of Africa comprise one distinct group of usually four or five skilled occupations. While draconian rules and proscriptions often limit the freedom and human rights of the lower castes within the religious-based Hindu caste system, the occupational castes of Africa are totally free and have the same rights as other citizens.

There are, however, certain restrictive taboos associated with occupational castes: they are not allowed to marry outside of their caste, and in some cases there are specially prescribed funeral rites held only for caste groups. For example, in the past, the griot (historian/musician) caste could only be buried inside the trunks of trees, and although they may exert a tremendous influence on the political authorities, they are never permitted to be heads of state.

The Soninke social hierarchy is divided into three major branches:

1. *Horro/Horon* (Nobles)
2. *Nyaxamalo* (Occupational Castes)
  - a. *gesere* (historians/musicians/singers)
  - b. *tage* (blacksmiths)
  - c. *garanke* (leatherworkers)
  - d. *sake* (woodcarvers)
3. *Komo* (Slaves)

The *Nyaxamalo* became known as the *Nyamakala* among the Mandenka or Mandingo whose social divisions are:

1. *Horon* (Nobles)
2. *Nyamakala* (Occupational Castes)
  - a. *jeli/jeliyu* (historians/musicians/singers)
  - b. *numu* (blacksmiths/woodcarvers)
  - c. *garanke* (leatherworkers/weavers)
  - d. *fune/finah* (Islamic praise singers)
3. *Djon* (Slaves)

Also known as “the people of talent,” the *nyaxamalo* and *nyamakala* represent the occupational castes and were once highly respected for the indispensable skills and knowledge they contributed to the building and functioning of the society. Their eminent status gradually deteriorated, first, during the Age of Violence, the Islamic jihads of the late 18th and 19th centuries, and definitively with the compounding of European colonialism that subverted the preexisting political economy and modes of production. The slave class was eliminated under colonialism, but the occupational castes no longer enjoyed the prestige and esteem they were formerly accorded; they were relegated instead to a lowly status in the eyes of the nobles, though they were still feared for their extraordinary powers of *nyama*.

*Nyama* in Mandenka signifies “vital force,” a spiritual energy that has the power to exact uncontrollable vengeance on a victim. *Kala* means “handle” or “antidote.” People of talent are believed to be the possessors of an abundance of *nyama* who also have the ability to manipulate and control the *nyama*, thus they are called *nyamakala*.

The griots, masters of the *nyama* in the word, can honor or disgrace a person with their eloquent manipulation of speech. They were advisors to the king, mediators in national and international disputes, ambassadors, officiators of rites of passage ceremonies, historians, social and cultural anthropologists, philosophers, musicians, composers, singers. Blacksmiths and woodcarvers mastered the *nyama* of fire, metal, and wood; the leatherworkers controlled the *nyama* of animal hide, and so forth.

Occupational castes spread throughout West Africa with the migrations and political and cultural influence of the Mandenka and Soninke peoples. The nomadic Fula/Fulani and the Tukulor who initially had no occupational castes adopted the Mandenka caste system as late as the 17th century. Ethnic groups who branched from the Soninke and



Mandenka, such as the Serere, Wolof, Songhai, Khassonke, Dyula, and Wangara, among others, inherited the occupational caste system from their predecessors.

See also: Ghana; Senegambia; Sudanic Empires

Nubia Kai

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## Oral Culture

Ancient writing traditions do exist on the African continent, but most Africans today, as in the past, are primarily oral peoples, and their art forms are oral rather than literary. In contrast to written literature, “orature” is orally composed and transmitted, and African oral arts are verbally and communally performed as an integral part of their popular culture. The Oral Arts of Africa are rich and varied, developing with the beginnings of African cultures, and they remain living traditions that continue to evolve and flourish today.

The oral literatures, like the cultures that produce them, constantly develop and change across time, culture, place and regional style, performer, and audience for a variety of reasons. Everyone in most African societies participates in formal and informal storytelling as interactive oral performance—such participation is an essential part of African communal life. Basic training in a particular culture’s oral arts and skills is an essential part of children’s indigenous education on their way to initiation into full humanness. In many instances, ethical and educational values are taught to the children through oral literature at different stages of their lives to ensure that they grow with these values in order to enhance their contribution to the development of the society. African societies have developed high aesthetic and ethical standards for participating in and judging accomplished oral artistic expressions or performances—and audience members often feel free to interrupt less talented or respected secular performers to suggest improvements or voice criticisms. Critiquing oral performance takes place

at three different but connected stages—pre-performance, intra-performance, and post-performance—with a view to achieve genuine rendition and representation of the cultural values of the people.

African orature is a communal participatory experience where everyone in the society participates in both formal and informal oral performance that is an essential part of African social life. The orature of the people speaks in the communal voice of the collective wisdom and knowledge and carries demure social and ethical values. Various cultural ideas of the people are conserved memorably by employing various stylistic devices for easy recapitulation and rendition. In many instances, oral expressions deviate from the syntactic norms of the literate culture, and the language is lively and cryptic in nature. This attribute of oral culture enhances speaker-listener’s relationship in communication scenery. Although the oral artists in oral culture have rights to demonstrate dexterousness and adroitness in their performances, still they are culturally constrained and bound to ensure that their creativity fits into the ways of doing it in the society. For example, among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, it is the practice of the oral artists to pay homage to their masters and those artists who had performed in a similar genre prior to their own time of performances. This is usually encapsulated in the saying, “*Orin mi náà kó, orin ògá mi ni*,” meaning, “It is not my song but my master’s song.” The underlying factor in the above statement is that the oral artists must present their orature as fitting the traditions of the ancestors or the society that owns the lore.

Long after the incursion of writing culture in oral culture society, indispensable information on how to perform society’s social institutions was left unwritten, especially in the religious rites and ritual performances. When they are written, the “livingness” trait has been distorted as it is void of sound and inflection. Not only this, but the pragmatic essence that has to do with the context of performance is lost. This is because much of the poetry associated with the African deities is contextually performed; they cannot be performed in other contexts.

In preliterate societies and cultures, spoken words were highly revered and mastered by the people, as it used to be the community’s repertoire of collective wisdom, knowledge, and experiences; they could be likened to “human libraries,” “archives,” or walking sacred texts, capable of astonishing feats of remembering for the benefit and survival

of the people and their culture. Oral narratives are practical, flexible, and spiritual; these living “texts” have no particular definitive version, and they vary, acclimatize, and change with the performer, audience, time, place, space, and utility. But the magical, spiritual powers of the spoken word, and its skillful verbal performance, are devalued by the literate culture. One of the major features of oral culture is that literal translation cannot give us a full sense of what is being said due to the poetic nature of most orature because it involves a lot of foregrounding of standard language.

Specifically, the Yoruba people, like their African counterparts, believe that there are “Special Forces” that are released by the spoken or sung word in oral performances. This is sometimes regarded as the magical and spiritual powers of the spoken word. The belief about the powers embedded in the spoken word is a common phenomenon in Africa, even in the literate communities.

Due to the flexibility trait it has, the oral literature of the people lends itself to various changes in the society, especially in this era of globalization where there is a tendency for acculturation and interculturalization. Oral literatures are thus performed in diverse ways to accommodate contemporary happenings. Aside from this, the phenomenon of global migration also has a serious effect on the oral culture of the people in time’s perspective. The oral culture is lending itself to various Internet facilities in this global era as well.

See also: Griot; Sundiata: The Epic of Old Mali

Ajibade George Olusola

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## Patroonship

A patroonship was a private farming community on a vast estate in New Netherland that was granted to investors. The investors, contracting with the Dutch West India Company (WIC), promised to stimulate the population growth in

the area and expand trade. The investor was expected to import, at his own expense, at least 50 European colonists within four years of being granted the land and supply the land with agricultural animals and tools needed for the private farming community. In return for their passage to the New World, colonists agreed to bind themselves to serve the patroon for a period of 10 years, cultivate his land, pay him rent, grind grain at his mill, and offer him the option of purchasing their agricultural produce.

Patroonships were similar to Europe’s feudal kingdoms. The patroon furnished a pastor and schoolmaster, administered justice, established courts, collected rent from tenants, and was given approximately 10 percent of all the grain, fruit, and other products his tenants produced on the land. The system was not successful, partly because land in the colonies was free to those who wanted to settle it. Five patroonships along the Hudson River and Delaware Valley were originally registered with the WIC. Four of the five were not successful. The one moderately successful patroonship, Rensselaerswijck, was owned by a Dutch diamond merchant and director of the WIC and lay near the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers in the area of present-day Albany, New York. Its limited success can be attributed to the patroon’s successful negotiations with the WIC, which permitted him to keep fur pelts in return for a small payment to the company, participate in the fishing trade, and trade with other colonies. The Tin Horn rebellion in 1844 extinguished the patroonship system.

See also: Dutch New Netherland; Dutch West India Company; Headright System; Middle Colonies

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## Punch, John

John Punch (dates unknown) was at the center of a series of events, which, in many ways, led the colony of Virginia down the road to racialized slavery. In 1640, three indentured servants ran away together to Maryland from Virginia. They had the same owner, John Gwynn, a planter on the Chesapeake Bay. By name and ethnic origin, they were James Gregory, a Scotsman; Victor (no last name), a Dutchman; and John Punch, an African. Officials captured all three, returned them to Virginia, and placed them on trial. On July 9, 1640, members of the Virginia General Court handed down a landmark decision. They sentenced Gregory and Victor to receive 30 lashes each, and to complete their contracted time and an additional year with their master. Then Gregory and Victor were to serve the entire colony for another year. However, the court sentenced John Punch, the African, to serve Gwynn for the rest of his life. Thus, John Punch became the first African to be a slave for life, by law, in Virginia.

Before this, Africans were indentured servants, similar to whites. Both toiled in the fields equally oppressed. The crop in those fields was tobacco. Growing tobacco was very labor-intensive. Moreover, just like today's businesses, 17th-century planters wanted the greatest profit at the least expense.

Labor was the largest expense for tobacco planters in the Chesapeake. A captive labor force was the most cost-effective way to get the job done. Initially white planters had all white indentured servants. However, the less fortunate Europeans were ill suited to the climate and work, and servitude carried with it a time limit, an obligation to pay freedom dues or money and tools to compete against them. Next, the planters turned to Algonquians and other Native Americans in the region to cultivate cash crops. Native Americans were accustomed to the climate, and that contract carried no obligation of freedom. However, the Native Americans were at home, and in their culture, field-work was women's work. Men were hunters and anglers. Therefore, when white planters attempted to force Native American men to work the fields, they refused to do what they perceived to be women's work and many of them absconded. Finally, the planters turned to Africans to supply their labor force. Africans were, for a variety of reasons, seen as a more than suitable labor force. Both men and women

were accustomed to surplus agricultural production, they had built-in resistances to malaria and other tropical diseases that had been transplanted to the Chesapeake, and they had little knowledge of the lay of the land, which made escaping a bit more difficult—though Punch's case proved that they did seek to abscond quite often.

For all these reasons, the Virginia General Court set a precedent with John Punch. By making him a servant for life, they paved the way for lifetime and intergenerational servitude for all African Africans to furnish the colony with a permanent labor supply

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Freedom Dues; Indentured Servitude; Racialized Slavery

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## Queen Nzinga (Njinga Mbande)

Queen Nzinga, also known as Njinga Mbande or Dona Anna de Souza (1583–1663), was an African queen, diplomat, and warrior from Angola who challenged Portuguese control of her country in the 1600s through warfare and diplomacy. Queen Nzinga was born among the Mbundu of Ndongo of royal birth and seized power during the rise of European expansion and trade into Africa, also known as the time period of the Atlantic slave trade, roughly 1415 to 1807. Challenges from the Portuguese and other European powers such as the English and Dutch prompted a series of reactions from the Kingdom of Ndongo. The Portuguese arrived in the region ca. 1483 and managed to secure a coastal colony at Luanda by 1575. The Portuguese in particular exerted tremendous pressure on the Kingdom of Ndongo through the person of Portuguese official Bento Cardoso, who devised a system in 1608 that demanded the delivery

of slaves to the Portuguese through a Ndongo notable; in the event that the notable failed to deliver said slaves, the notable was in turn enslaved.

After 1608, dozens of notables were henceforth enslaved by the Portuguese. After 1611, Portuguese influence increased through contact with neighboring Africans. The Portuguese used the assistance of Imbangala warriors, a neighboring people to the Ndongo from central Africa, from 1612–1622 against the Ndongo, bringing the kingdom to the verge of collapse. Conflicts between Africans and the Portuguese intensified significantly in the 17th century. Nzinga came to power in dangerous times. The Mbundu people embraced strict constraints on female political power and generally resisted attempts to organize into larger confederations. It was in this climate that Queen Nzinga arose to power.

Nzinga was born to *ngola a kiluanje* Kia Samba and Guenguela Cakombe ca. 1583. The Portuguese mistakenly

referred to Ndongo as Angola based on the term “ngola,” a word used to refer to the king or ruler. Ndongo emerged as a regional kingdom as a result of direct trade with the Portuguese, but as the Portuguese established contacts with neighboring African societies (such as the Imbangala), the pressure to colonize Ndongo accelerated. This was a time of increased hostilities between the Portuguese and the kingdom they termed “Angola.” Queen Nzinga’s brother *ngola* Mbandi came to power in the 1620s and reportedly had Nzinga’s child murdered. Nzinga fled but returned to negotiate a treaty with the Portuguese at Luanda in 1622, claiming to represent the Kingdom of Ndongo. When the Portuguese diplomat at Luanda refused Nzinga a chair, she sat on the back of a kneeling servant as depicted in a drawing of the meeting by a Dutch artist. Before securing an audience with the Portuguese, Nzinga accepted the Catholic baptism. This was an act of political expediency that helped to establish Nzinga as the legitimate leader of Ndongo as supported



Queen Nzinga’s (Njinga) relations with the Portuguese were marked by conflict. When she went to Luanda, headquarters of the Portuguese in Angola, to negotiate with the governor he refused her a chair, a courtesy due one of equal rank. She is said to have sat down, as shown in this engraving from the 1620s. (Art Resource)

by the Portuguese. Her brother died under suspicious circumstances in 1623, and by 1624, Nzinga subsequently seized power in Ndongo ruling from 1624–1663.

Nzinga was a skillful diplomat, warrior, and politician in that she secured the support of major European powers by converting to Catholicism as well as the support of escaped slave communities to consolidate her power base in the region. Nzinga was surrounded by African rivals and European challengers to Portuguese power in the region while leader of Ndongo. She was able to find middle ground through a series of alliances with both her African rivals, such as the Imbangala, and European challengers, such as the Dutch. She offered escaped slaves their freedom in exchange for their loyalty and made an alliance with the Dutch to circumvent Portuguese demands. Confederations between Ndongo and neighboring African groups were created to gain control of slave routes. Nzinga also organized a guerrilla army and appointed her sisters as war leaders. She led troops into battle, dressed as a man, took the title of *ngola* or king, and kept male concubines.

Nzinga's quest for control of Ndongo was a constant struggle for legitimacy within Mbundu politics and against the Portuguese, along with other European powers. The Mbundu associated political power with males and held prohibitions against females holding positions of leadership amid an intricate network of local kinship and lineage factions. Customarily, the Mbundu *ngola* was drawn from one of many lineage groups. Therefore, Nzinga's seizure of power in Ndongo has been viewed as a *coup d'état*, as she had been forced to search beyond the Mbundu for political legitimacy, which she found through support of the Portuguese. When the Portuguese rescinded their support after 1624, Nzinga forged an alliance with the Imbangala and escaped slaves from Portuguese territories until she was forced to flee Ndongo for Matamba, located on the north-eastern border of her former Ndongo Kingdom in 1629. At Matamba, Nzinga created an entirely new government. Women held stature as rulers in Matamba lineage systems prior to the 17th century. Through the 1630s, Nzinga used her armies to block Portuguese influence in the region and by the 1640s, had forged an alliance with the Dutch. This enabled Nzinga to build up her base of power in Matamba and dominate areas previously controlled by the Portuguese. With the Dutch departure in 1648, Nzinga was eventually forced to subsequently make a series of concessions with the Portuguese until her death in 1663.

Queen Nzinga is one of the most documented rulers in colonial African history. She was unique in that, during a time of great crisis in African affairs, she was able to serve as warrior, diplomat, and politician. Her quest for power and legitimacy is unprecedented in history.

*See also:* Angolan/Kongolese; West-Central Africa

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## Racialized Slavery

Slavery, or the state of bondage in which one person is chattel to another for the purpose of extracting labor, has existed since the beginning of recorded human history. Racialized slavery, or slavery based on a person's perceived racial identity, emerged alongside the development of the concept of race. Historians have long been confounded by questions of race in the early modern world: how did early modern Europeans think about bodily difference? How did they employ visible physical and cultural differences to build the Atlantic system of race-based slavery? In conjunction with the expansion of trade and, specifically, the development of the Atlantic slave trade, race as a concept developed in the Western world between the 11th and 18th centuries. Racialized slavery, a system of permanent servitude based solely on color, became a legalized practice in the early 18th century.

When the first 20 Africans arrived in the Jamestown colony in 1619, it is evident that their status as servant or slave was anything but clear. There is some reason to believe that the colonists viewed them as indentured servants to be held for a term of years and then freed. For a time the use of African labor remained limited. Planters continued using

European indentured servants, even when Africans began to steadily arrive in the colonies. However, by 1670, slave traders began to directly import African slaves to North America. The movement of slaves remained small for a time as the Royal African Company of England dominated the trade.

In 1697, the Royal African Company's monopoly on the slave trade to North America ended. From that point forward, the black population in North America began to rise as the cost of slaves declined due to increased competition. By 1700, the slave population had reached 25,000 in British North America, with most living in the Southern colonies. Within 60 years the slave population had exploded to approximately 250,000, and generally African slaves had replaced the use of white indentured servants.

Early in the 17th century the legal status of African slaves remained fluid. In some areas white indentured servants and black slaves worked together on comparatively equal terms. As the 17th century came to an end, a firm distinction appeared between blacks and whites. Increasingly a situation developed in which blacks would remain in bondage permanently and their children would also be slaves. The system was reinforced by the ever-increasing belief by whites regarding the inferiority of the black race.

At the start of the 18th century colonial assemblies began to pass what were known as "slave codes." These codes granted masters nearly absolute authority over their slaves. The only factor that determined who was subject to the slave codes was color. Unlike the Spanish colonial governments where people of mixed race were granted a higher status than those of pure African ancestry, Anglo-America failed to recognize such distinctions.

These slave codes continued to evolve as the American colonies became the United States. Most Southern states had various forms of slave codes, which regulated most aspects of slave life. Slaves were forbidden from holding property and could not leave their master's property without permission. Nor could slaves be out after dark, and the law forbade them from congregating with other slaves except for church. Additionally, slave codes prohibited slaves from defending themselves against white aggression. Whites were not supposed to teach slaves to read or write and slaves could not testify in court. With regard to the slave family, the slave codes failed to recognize that they existed. Slaves could not marry or divorce, and had no legal right

to keep their children from being sold to another master. On the subject of race, the codes were also clear and very rigid. They followed the one-drop rule: If an individual had one drop of black blood or African ancestry, he or she was considered black. Often this could simply be the product of rumor, as there were cases of slaves appearing to be white who it was said had a single black great-grandparent. Whatever the case, by the antebellum period slavery in the southern United States was legally codified and fully based on a person's perceived race.

Any review of recent scientific literature on race will confirm that scientists conclude that race is not an actual category of human biology, but rather a social construct whose meanings and uses have changed over time. Nevertheless, few people believe these findings and even fewer act as if race does not exist. Therefore one must look to the social sciences (history, philosophy, theology, etc.) for an explanation of how this concept developed and how it was tied to slavery.

According to some scholars, the roots of modern, Western racism are based firmly in the Iberian Peninsula. They find the concept of race sprouting in the 11th century and developing throughout the Enlightenment; this ideology came to fruition in the 15th century. Modern racism has tried to develop justification for the superiority of one group over another, and to base this superiority on biological, psychological, and spiritual factors that may be permanent. Early "racial" views, such as those of the ancient Hebrews, the early Christians, and the Greeks, either proposed a way for overcoming alleged inferiority by conversion to the superior group, as the Jews and Christians did, or by allowing for a process of assimilation, as the Greeks did for those they called "barbarians."

The Muslims who dominated Iberia from the 8th to the 15th century shaped Spanish and Portuguese ideas of race. Muslims, Jews, and Christians of Iberian origin refined and sharpened language that suggested black inferiority. As these peoples traveled, traded, and enslaved those in sub-Saharan Africa, this concept of racial inferiority took shape. By the 15th century it was fully developed and accepted by many in the Muslim and Christian worlds. As the Spanish Christians began to regain control of the peninsula during the 1400s, racial thought began to include Jews. Large numbers of Jews had been forced to convert to Catholicism and two groups emerged: Old Christians and New Christians. Anyone who had a Jewish ancestor in the previous five

generations was still a New Christian and faced restrictions that barred that person from going to college, joining some religious orders, and holding government jobs. The Inquisition was established in part to control the situation and keep Jews apart, regardless of what they believed. In its new form, modern racism developed two new and important characteristics. First, modern racism differed from Ancient racism in that minority or conquered groups had no way to leave the discriminated group. No longer were religious conversions allowed or any legal means available to become part of the dominant group. The second change comes about as a result of the Enlightenment, through what David Hume referred to as the application of the experimental method to moral subjects, and produced the basic justification for modern racist theories with regard to people of color. This theory sees those non-European, dark peoples as inherently inferior. The theories offered first by the Spanish and Portuguese in the 16th century, mainly about Indians, and those offered in the 17th and 18th centuries, mainly by the English, English Americans, and the French about Africans, provide the basic structures of racist thought for the next centuries.

Scholars have also determined that religion played a key role in Western Europeans' ideas on race. Both Americans and Europeans saw notions of racial division in the Bible, debating whether Jesus was white or black, whether Moses provided a precedent for miscegenation by marrying an Ethiopian woman, whether Adam was white, black, or red, and other such topics. Initial encounters among early modern Europeans, Africans, and the inhabitants of the New World served to reinforce the biblical notion of common human descent among European Christians. European commentators almost universally accepted the notion of monogenesis, the idea that all human beings descended from Adam. Despite this firm attachment to the principle of the unity of mankind, some biblical interpretations pointed to a definite hierarchy among men. Of particular note was the supposed "Curse of Ham" or "Curse of Canaan," a remarkable reading of a passage of Genesis in which Noah supposedly cursed the descendants of his son Ham to be the servants of his son Japheth. By and large, Southern white Protestants claimed biblical sanction for slavery. They wanted to have their Bible and their slaves so they turned to the Curse of Ham/Canaan, Noah's utterance that the children of Ham/Canaan (blacks) would serve the children of Japheth (whites).

When investigating white attitudes about race during the centuries of American slavery, scholars have frequently written of change over time, but the suggested chronologies have shown a good deal of variety. For some, due to their reading of English cultural prejudices, American racism dated from the arrival of the first black people in the English colonies in the 17th century. For others, slavery only became consciously based on "racial" ideology in the era of the American Revolution. Still others, making connections between intensive abolitionist pressure against slavery from the 1830s onward and apparent increase in defensive slaveholder references to black biological inferiority, see explicit racialized slavery as a phenomenon of the antebellum period.

Numerous theoretical and ideological approaches have been used by scholars who have sought to date the racialization of American slavery. From studies using psychology, sociology, economics, and cultural history to those based on Marxist or Weberian ideologies, scholars provide varied explanations about the origins of "race" in America. Some scholars have used multiple disciplines together to further their research. A leading scholar of American attitudes about race, Winthrop Jordan, took what might be called a psycho-cultural approach in his research. He argued that English culture had for centuries been predisposed to weight "blackness" with negative associations (dirty, evil, sinister, fearful, deadly), and he felt that this cultural tradition, together with the "shock" of contact with Africans, led English colonists to see black people as natural slaves. Thus, from the beginning, American slavery was based on the idea of race.

Another historian, Edmund S. Morgan, took a broad socioeconomic approach. He saw the development of slavery as an institution based on race taking place as a planned class reaction by the Virginia elite following Bacon's Rebellion. The rebellion had uncovered perilous divisions between the elite landowners and white laborers. In turn, the landowners embraced a policy of emphasizing the privileges of freedom for the white laboring class, while fixing enslaved black people at the bottom of the property-based social structure.

Also taking a socioeconomic approach, Ira Berlin tackles slavery from the perspective of a labor historian. Berlin sees race as being more than just socially constructed; for him it is also "historically constructed," and reconstructed in the varying circumstances of labor struggle during

centuries of slavery. For Berlin, the cotton revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries represented a major period in the increasing pressure on slaves. He suggests that Southern whites solidified their image of blacks in these years. According to Berlin, slaveholders had in some earlier periods accepted a common humanity with African slaves, yet during the 19th century race was more rigidly defined, thus confining blacks to a place of perpetual inferiority.

Historian Barbara J. Fields, a Marxist scholar, has much in common with the broad socioeconomic approach but, because of her explicit interest in theorizing class and the interconnections between race and class, her work has been important in bringing about more theoretical accuracy in writing about race and slavery. Fields suggests that psycho-cultural writers incorrectly see racism, not as a social construction, but rather as an ancient, wide-ranging force that is inherent in all societies. She argues that racism arises out of class interests, is a historical product, and has a debatable beginning. Fields maintains race is an ideology that develops to legitimize patterns of class interests and grew out of a unique bourgeoisie relationship and interests that unfolded during the American Revolution.

George M. Fredrickson has reservations with Marxist determinism and about a singular class analysis. He asserts that class alone cannot continuously explain racism. Rather, following the ideas of sociologist Max Weber, he combines class with the concept of a sense of “ethnic status,” representing group traditions and identities, which, although produced by particular historical experiences, do not necessarily reflect current economic class interests.

Fredrickson suggests that, in investigating the links between American slavery and racism, we should distinguish between “societal” or implicit racism and explicit/rationalized or biological racism. He does not suggest that, in the first years of the colonial era, whites immediately responded to blacks with ideas of inbuilt racism. Rather, he contends that while societal racism developed from the late 17th century, it was only from the 1830s that explicit biological racism emerged. This resulted from the unique circumstances of the abolitionist attack on slavery and with pseudoscientific researches into race, along with class-conscious elite initiatives. Slaveholders consciously exploited new biological ideas in order to appeal to white tribalism. In Frederickson’s view, this new racism formed the basis for a highly aggressive white worldview, with planter interests promoting the notion of the “master

race.” Black slavery served the interests of all whites by shielding them from drudgery and servitude. Supposedly, slavery then joined all whites together in a sense of being members of a “*herrenvolk* democracy” (democracy for the “master race”).

Researchers have been attentive to questions concerning the development of biological racism and the nature of racialized slavery. Some historians imply a basic continuity in biological racism, while others see various discontinuities. Critics of psycho-cultural historians suggest a delay in the onset of biological racism, since they generally see racism as arising through a period of exploitation. Nonetheless, it may be that what actually happened did not fit with either the idea of an ancient racism or with the notion of delayed racism. It could be that for socioeconomic rather than for psycho-cultural reasons, there was a continuous pattern of biological racism among white Americans. Also it could be that there was, from the beginning, a pattern of whites seeing black people in a range of differing ways. Whatever the cause, by the 19th century American slavery had become racialized slavery in the minds of the people and the legal codes that governed the practice.

See also: Bacon’s Rebellion; Chesapeake Colonies; Punch, John

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## Reconquista

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“Reconquista” is a term that is traditionally used to describe the centuries-long struggle of Christian forces, beginning roughly 718 and ending in 1492, to reclaim land under Muslim domination in Spain. In 711, Muslim forces crossed the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco in North Africa into the territory now identified as Spain. This expeditionary army defeated the Visigoths, the Germanic rulers of Spain, at the decisive Battle of Guadalete. The capital of Toledo fell to the invaders before the end of 711. Within a decade the Muslims dominated most of the Iberian Peninsula. These conquerors would come to be identified in later literature as Moors, an inexact term that loosely described the Arab and North African invaders, as well as their later descendants.

With these new sovereigns came many changes. There was the introduction of a new state sponsored religion (Islam), new systems of government (the Emir, Caliphate, and Taifa kingdoms), a new capital (Córdoba), and a new title for the occupied land, al-Anadlus. This new designation was possibly a reference to the earlier Vandal inhabitants of Spain, or perhaps a reference to the Atlantic region.

Al Walid I of the Umayyad Caliphate Dynasty, which ruled the Muslim world, oversaw governing the occupied land. The Umayyad Caliphate suffered from internal and external dissent, and was unable to successfully expand the Muslim reach into Spain’s northern provinces. In 718 the standard of rebellion was raised under Pelagius or Pelayo, a Visigoth noble. Pelayo’s forces clashed with their Muslim adversaries multiple times over the years, culminating at the Battle of Covadonga, ca. 718–725. Although the Muslim forces were defeated, this defeat and the continued existence of Pelayo’s rebels was seen as of little significance to the reigning Caliph. Christian chroniclers, however, especially in the later centuries, placed great importance on the battle, and it is often marked as the beginning of the Christian reconquest, or *Reconquista*. Pelayo was crowned king in the independent kingdom of Asturias.

Approximately 20 governors were placed at the helm of Spain, in just 40 years after the initial conquest. This series of brief rules, some lasting just months, destabilized the region further. This internal strife limited expansion. Raids were conducted across the boundaries of Spain by 717, and into neighboring Frankish territory. These conflicts led to the Battle of Poitiers, also called the Battle of Tours in 732.

Muslim forces were defeated, and again it was treated as a skirmish, while Christian commentators invested great significance to the Frankish victory over the “infidels.” Although there is no clear consensus from modern historians, many argue that this battle is responsible for checking the Muslim advance across Europe.

In 740 Alfonso I, who followed Pelayo and was possibly his son-in-law, solidified the kingdom of Asturias. Berber troops revolted against the Caliph, abandoning the northern expanses of Spain. Alfonso incorporated some of these vacated lands into Austria. Unable to hold all of the abandoned area, he ordered the Duero River valley to the south devastated, turned into a barren region that separated Asturias and the rest of Spain.

In 750 the Abbasids, a rival Muslim dynasty, overthrew the Umayyads in a bloody revolt. One of the Umayyad royal family, Abd-ar-Rahman I, escaped and by exploiting existing dissent was able to reclaim power for his family in 756. In a political decision he appointed himself emir of the Emirate of Córdoba—although this was a lesser title, for all purposes ar-Rahman ruled Spain.

Disaffected Muslim nobles invited Charlemagne in 778 of the neighboring Frankish kingdom to take part of an expedition against ar-Rahman in exchange for fealty. This agreement quickly disintegrated with the factions fighting against each other, and Charlemagne’s forces retreated, the rearguard of his army destroyed at the action of the Battle of Roncesvalles Pass, an event that produced the famous epic *The Song of Roland*.

The separate Christian kingdoms did not always enjoy harmonious relationships with each other. There was substantial in-fighting, which led to interfaith alliances. One such example is the confrontation between Ramiro I, King of Aragon, a Christian king, against al-Muktadir, the king of Zaragoza. Another Christian kingdom, Castile, allied with al-Muktadir and took part in the battle. One of the Castilian participants was Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, better known to history as El Cid. Cid’s later exploits on behalf of the Reconquista cause would give the world another famous epic.

For the next several centuries the struggle between Christian rebels and Muslims continued. The Christian realms grew and multiplied. From the period of 970–1035, Sancho III the Great, King of Navarre, unified most of Christian Spain. The balance of power shifted sharply back toward the Muslim occupiers in the latter half of the 10th century. Recognizing that they were still not strong

enough to shake off Muslim rule entirely or continue costly multifront wars, with Islam and each other, the Christian kings of Spain pledged homage and paid tribute to the caliph at Córdoba.

The Caliph al-Mansur was especially aggressive, actively raiding the Christian lands for slaves and plunder. In 997, he sacked the venerated shrine of Santiago de Compostela. Al-Mansur died ca. 1002–1008; without his forceful leadership, the power shifted again from Córdoba.

In 1031, the Umayyad Dynasty, long beset with internal strife, came to an end. This centralized authority was replaced with a series of Tafia kingdoms, smaller regions ruled by individual Muslim emirs. Reunification of the fractured Muslim kingdoms was attempted by a successor of al-Mansur. The gains made by al-Mansur and the Almo-had Dynasty were reversed after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. This decisive victory paved the way for the capture of Córdoba in 1236. By 1248, only Granada remained as a Muslim outpost.

In 1469, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand were married. This union brought together the splintered Christian kingdoms, including Aragon and Castile. These rulers were dubbed “The Catholic Monarchs” for their devotion to the faith. In 1492, they successfully captured Granada, thus ending the Reconquista of Spain. Later that year, under their patronage, Christopher Columbus sailed to the New World.

The nearly eight centuries of Reconquista had a profound effect on the identity of the Iberian Peninsula, effects that rippled outward to impact Europe and even crossed the Atlantic to the New World. One of the first major effects was the rise of militarism. Numerous military orders, such as the Order of Santiago and the Order of Calatrava, sprung up in this time period. Orders such as these were often composed of knights from noble families, whose mission was mingled with religious ideals. The struggle of the Spanish Christians against Muslims was taken up by the rest of Christian Europe. During the medieval period several popes called for Crusaders to challenge the Muslims in Spain, and offered special indulgences to those who answered the call. The Muslim world viewed its cause as just and religious in nature as well. Many thousands of volunteers from Spain, North Africa, and farther abroad joined their crusade to protect and spread in Spain.

Extended exposure to differing religious ideologies had mixed effects. There were prolonged periods of peace

and tolerance between the differing faiths, Islam, Christian, and Judaism. In the Muslim kingdoms non-Muslims were permitted to worship in peace as long as certain conditions were met. These included such concessions as openly acknowledging the superiority of Islam, not proselytizing to Muslims, and paying special tributes or taxes. In an effort to assimilate, some Christians learned Arabic, adopted Muslim dress and names. This group was referred to as Mozarabs. Non-Muslims and even those who converted may have been tolerated, but were placed at the bottom rungs of the societal hierarchy.

The later Muslim dynasties were more fundamentalist in nature, and treatment of Jews and other Christians took on a harsher slant. Persecution was not just practiced by one faith. In 1478, the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella were granted permission to enact the Inquisition in Spain. With the Christian kingdoms coalescing into a unified whole, it was thought necessary to ferret out heretics and monitor the activities of the Jews who had converted to Christianity. In the early 16th century the Moriscos, Muslims who had converted to Christianity, were especially suspect, and eventually this resulted in a mass expulsion from Spain of all those who had ever been followers of Islam.

Growth and development did take place in the arts and sciences. The city of Córdoba became a cultural epicenter. Population estimates are as high as half-a-million inhabitants for this single city at a time when a Western Christian city had closer to 10,000. European libraries could boast a few hundred books, but the library at Córdoba reportedly contained several hundred thousand during the height of Muslim rule. The city contained numerous schools and universities. Muslim scholars actively translated and studied Greek works of philosophy, transmitting those ideas to Western Europe.

The arts flourished during periods of the Muslim rule. Ibn-Rushd, also known as Averroes, was one of the most famous scholars produced by Muslim Spain. Averroes was an accomplished doctor and astronomer who wrote a series of famous commentaries on the works of Aristotle. Ali Ibn Arabi, a religious scholar who also wrote works of influential poetry and prose, was educated in al-Anadlus. Ibn al-Arab, a philosopher, was also a product of Muslim Spain.

In the field of medicine, the surgeon Abulcasis wrote a multivolume medical encyclopedia called *Al-Tasrif*, which was translated into Latin and disseminated across Europe. The pioneering chemistry work of Jabir Ibn Haiyan was

made possible through an education in Córdoba. The botanist Ibn al-Baitar and his groundbreaking pharmaceutical works was also a product of Muslim Spain.

The field of architecture within Spain during the Reconquista period was greatly influenced by Muslim thought. Grand enduring works were constructed throughout occupied Spain. The Great Mosque of Córdoba, an impressive example of Islamic architecture, was erected in the late eighth century and still stands as a Christian church. In Granada the massive Alhambra was built to house the Muslim rulers in the 14th century. It too still stands today, as a popular tourist attraction. Certain signature elements of “Moorish” architecture, such as intersecting and multifoil arches, remain part of the Spanish tradition today.

Muslim occupation and the resulting population surge transformed whole areas of Spain from rural into high-population urban centers. This brought many different merchants and industries into Spain, including high-demand manufacturing such as paper making and textile production, which created a complex trading network with the rest of Europe. When all of these considerations are factored in, the term “Reconquista” takes on a much broader meaning; one that encompasses not just the centuries-long warfare between Muslims and Christians and the struggle for the possession of land and the hearts of the people, but one that also means a period of great change and growth in the civilization of Western Europe.

*See also:* John, Prester

*Michael Coker*

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## Rice Cultivation

A pamphlet of 1609 is the earliest evidence that farmers thought of introducing rice into North America. The pamphlet suggested Virginia rather than the Carolinas as ideal

for rice, and in 1648, Virginia governor William Berkeley grew 15 bushels of the grain. From Virginia, colonists may have brought rice to South Carolina. Alternatively, it may have reached South Carolina by ship sometime before 1680. Colonists struggled with the crop until they imported a variety from Madagascar, an island to the east of Africa, sometime between 1685 and 1696. This variety had a more recent Asian origin than the varieties grown in West Africa. Once in South Carolina, this variety hybridized, either naturally or by human aid, with other rice plants to produce a type of rice suitable for cultivation in the colony.

From the outset Africans were the prime movers of rice culture. The growth in their number paralleled the increase in rice production. By 1708, blacks edged out whites in South Carolina 4,100 to 3,500. By 1720, the planters of South Carolina were importing 600 slaves per year and by 1725, 1,000. By 1730, blacks outnumbered whites two to one. Between 1771 and 1775, slave owners imported nearly 20,000 Africans. Coincident with this growth, rice exports from South Carolina rose from 10,000 pounds in 1698 to 394,000 in 1700 to 81,476,325 in 1773. The planters intertwined labor and production by seeking slaves who knew how to grow rice. As early as 1700, ships from South Carolina rounded up Africans from Gambia, an area where they had grown rice for centuries. In the 18th century, 43 percent of slaves imported into South Carolina had lived in the rice-growing regions of West Africa or Madagascar.

These Africans brought to the New World the methods for cultivating rice. Because rice is a semiaquatic plant, much of its cultivation centers on the amassing and transporting of water to the fields upon which rice is sown. Rice is a variable plant, and although some varieties may be grown on land that receives periodic rain but is otherwise not saturated, most varieties must be grown on land inundated with water. This requirement necessitates the cultivation of rice on soil impervious to the percolation of water through it. Clay or a loam with clay subsoil is best. Once he had chosen suitable land, the farmer relied until roughly 1720 on rainfall to supply water, a practice that produced low yields. In this system the farmer broadcast seed on dry land and hoped for enough rain to nourish his crop. As they had for centuries, the African workers sought to augment rain with whatever freshwater (rice will not grow in saline soils) was close at hand. By situating farmland below the elevation of a pond or swamp and by digging trenches along the banks of these pools, laborers enabled gravity to bring water to a

field. To hold water on the land, they girdled it with an embankment of earth, creating an artificial pond. By placing a wooden gate at the point of lowest elevation along an embankment, laborers could release water in increments until they had a depth of two to eight inches, varying the depth of water with the height of rice plants. As a rule, laborers kept water at a depth just below the joint at the lowest panicle of rice. At harvest laborers drained the land to permit easy access to the crop. Rice cultivation in this manner was effective but limited by topography. Only land near an elevated pond lent itself to this system.

Around 1750, South Carolina planter Makewn Johnstone harnessed the tide to expand rice culture to land that had no topographical advantage. He understood that as the tide rises, it pushes freshwater up the rivers that snake through South Carolina. By enclosing a rectangle of land along a river with an embankment on all four sides, a planter could create a kind of freshwater reservoir. To control the flow of water, workers built a gate in the side of an embankment along a river such that it opened to admit water as the tide rose and closed as it receded to trap water in the reservoir. By abutting farms on the remaining three sides of the embankment and putting a gate in each side, workers could release water from the reservoir to land on which they had sown rice. A variant of this system was to enclose all land of the same elevation in a single embankment no matter its size. Depending on the slope of the land, laborers might divide a field into a series of enclosed rectangles, each of uniform elevation and each differing from an adjoining field by as little as a few inches. Each enclosed rectangle formed a paddy. The effect was akin to terracing the land and required much labor to level sections of ground so each held a uniform layer of water. Canals brought water from rivers to inland fields as well as connected fields that were not contiguous. The size of a field varied not only with the contour of the land but with the number of slaves. A planter enclosed only as much land as his slaves could hoe and plant in a week.

In 1747, South Carolina planter William Butler calculated that 22 slaves could hoe and plant 6 acres of land per day or roughly 40 acres per week. Of these, Butler assigned 8 to dig a trench for seed. Rather than broadcast seed, 2 sowers would plant seed in a trench at four- to five-inch intervals. Butler assigned the remaining 12 the task of covering a trench with earth. In a variant of this practice, a sower encased each seed in a ball of mud to prevent it from rising

out of the soil once inundated with water. Another variant, one common in the Sudan, was the planting of two or three seeds in a hole with holes in a row and at two- to five-inch intervals. In an address before the Carolina Plantation Society, Theodore D. Ravenel, who grew rice along the Cooper, Edisto, and Combahee rivers, recommended planting rice between March 10 and April 15.

As on the Caribbean sugar plantations, the hoe was the tool of cultivation on the paddy. Gangs of slaves hoed the ground at planting, after which the land was inundated for two to four days to saturate the seed. After this initial inundation, laborers drained the land to permit the seed to germinate. Workers allowed plants to grow several weeks, hoed a second time, then inundated the soil for the next four to six weeks, raising the water as the plants grew. The water not only nourished the plants but also formed a barrier against the germination of weeds after the second hoeing. Alternatively David Doar, owner of Harrietta Plantation in South Carolina, recommended weeding soon after rice germinated and 12 days thereafter to minimize the number of weeds prior to inundation. He recommended inundation when rice had grown to 1-1/2 inches. If weeds persisted, the laborers either drained the field so they could weed by hand or cut weeds just below the water surface so the weeds suffocated, a practice common in West Africa. Butler urged frequent drainage and inundation of a field for fear that stagnant water spread diseases.

Slaves cleared land after the harvest in autumn rather than waiting until spring, though the method of clearance varied by its African antecedent. The Bamana and Marka from the Macina were accustomed to clearing the land with great care, turning the soil to expose all roots and rhizomes, which they removed by hand. Other Africans from this region turned the soil to uproot weeds after harvest but did not remove weeds by the root with the result that some germinated in spring. The Africans from the region east of Timbuktu cleared land in a superficial way, simply by scraping the soil with a hoe, a practice that allowed still more weeds to germinate in spring. Ravenel recommended that workers burn crop residue after clearing the land of it. He cautioned against plowing under crop residue rather than burning it for fear that insects would overwinter in it. The practice of plowing under crop residue was more common upland than in the lowlands, according to Ravenel.

In the 19th century, the onus of cultivation began to shift from human to machine. Planters along the Mississippi



Slaves unloading rice barges in South Carolina. (North Wind Picture Archive)

River in the 1850s used the steam engine to pump water from the river to their fields. Rice cultivation, long the province of the Carolina coast, had swept west. In 1892, agricultural scientist Seaman A. Knapp emphasized that farmers could cultivate rice with the same machinery they used on wheat. That year Knapp estimated that mechanization had made rice farmers 300 percent more efficient than they had been only five years earlier. In 1894, engineers A. D. McFarlain and C. L. Shaw formed the first irrigation and canal company in Louisiana to bring water to rice farmers. By 1898, the McFarlain Irrigation Company and its competitors had dug 150 miles of canals that served 55,000 acres of paddy in Acadia Parish, Louisiana. By 1900, 25 canal companies operated in Louisiana. From Louisiana, rice spread to Arkansas and Texas. In 1903, the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station began to compare different methods of irrigating rice. By then scientists had begun to experiment with vacuum pumps to draw water from the surface or from an underground well.

During the 20th century, machines and chemicals pervaded all aspects of rice culture. Tractors equipped with disks and lasers can level soil at a slope of 2 vertical feet for every 1,000 feet of horizontal surface. Levee plows build embankments. Twenty-four-row planters drill seed into the soil. Herbicides keep weeds at bay. Technology

supplanted the drudgery that made rice cultivation onerous for centuries.

See also: Bunce Island; Carolinas; Gullah; Sierra Leone; Sweetgrass Baskets; Task System

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## Rolfé, John

John Rolfé (1585–1622) was born in Heacham, Norfolk, England, in 1585. Little is known about his early life, but it is known that he and his wife, in 1609, boarded the *Sea Adventure (or Venture)* to sail with approximately 100 other settlers to Jamestown, Virginia, the colony the Virginia Company had founded two years earlier. A hurricane off the coast of the Bermudas wrecked the ship on which the Rolfés were sailing, but the passengers reached shore safely and began constructing two smaller ships that would take them to Jamestown. The colonists were stranded on the island several months but they found the island's people hospitable and the food supply adequate.

During the time they were in Bermuda, Mrs. Rolfé gave birth to a daughter, but the baby girl died before the colonists left the island. In May 1610, the colonists left Bermuda and began a 10-day voyage to Virginia. Mrs. Rolfé died shortly after their arrival in Jamestown.

Jamestown had been financed and sponsored by the Virginia Company because the English government had wanted a permanent colony in North America to eliminate possible Spanish colonization of the area. The Virginia Company expected the Jamestown colonists to find valuable resources and initiate commercial endeavors that would return profits to the company and to England.

Tobacco was an indigenous plant in Virginia but the Virginia Company was not interested commercially in the native crop because of the tobacco's harsh taste. Rolfé began to plant the native tobacco seeds with some he had obtained from a Caribbean island, and he developed a plant with leaves that had a less harsh taste than the native crop. In addition to the tobacco leaves producing a more pleasing taste, the tobacco plants also grew well in the low marshy lands near Jamestown. When Rolfé shipped his first tobacco crop to England, tobacco became the colony's first marketable product and provided the English with an alternative to the sweeter tobacco known as "Spanish leaf," which was grown from West Indies plants by the Spaniards. The American

tobacco was less expensive than the Spanish product, and in England, Sir Walter Raleigh promoted its use as a medicine and a recreational drug.

In 1614, the widower Rolfé wrote to Sir Thomas Dale, governor of Virginia, to ask the governor's approval of his marriage to a young Indian woman, Pocahontas. Pocahontas, 20 years younger than Rolfé and the daughter of the Powhatan federation leader, Chief Powhatan, had been kidnapped a year earlier by English colonists and had been brought to Jamestown to be exchanged for weapons and English prisoners her father held. Before any exchange took place, Pocahontas had learned English, had converted to Christianity, and had been baptized and christened with the name Rebecca. In his letter to the governor, Rolfé explained that he was a devoutly religious person, that he loved Pocahontas, that he believed his marriage to Pocahontas would be for the betterment of the colony, and that the marriage would not compromise his standing in the church or in his community. Rolfé also asked Powhatan's permission to marry Pocahontas. Permission was granted and Rolfé married Pocahontas in the spring of 1614.

Rolfé's marriage to Pocahontas upset England's King James, who believed that Rolfé might want to become king of Virginia because he had married an Indian princess. However, the English settlers favored the marriage and expressed hopes that the marriage would promote and facilitate the transfer of Indian lands to the settlers. In 1616, the Rolfés left Jamestown with their infant son and several Powhatan Indians to travel to England to express support for the Virginia Company and to encourage further settlement in the colony. During their visit, the Rolfés traveled extensively, met important people, and raised money and attracted settlers for the Virginia colony, and were introduced at the court of King James I and Queen Anne.

As the Rolfés were preparing to return to Virginia in 1617, Rebecca and their son, Thomas, became ill. It is not clear whether Rebecca died of smallpox, tuberculosis, or pneumonia, but she died before the ship left England and was buried in Gravesend. Rolfé returned to Virginia but made provisions for his infant son to remain in England until his health would permit a return to Jamestown. Thomas remained in England to complete his education and returned to Jamestown after his father's death.

When Rolfé returned to Jamestown, he became actively involved in the colony's government, serving as secretary and recorder of the colony for five years and then

being appointed to the Council of State and serving in the House of Burgesses. He continued planting and farming tobacco on his plantation, and he married the daughter of an English colonist. To this marriage was born a daughter.

Powhatan died eight years after his daughter had married Rolfe. During that time relations between Powhatan's federation and the settlers remained peaceful and the Jamestown community expanded into a permanent settlement. After Powhatan's death, tensions increased between the settlers and the Powhatans and relations between the two groups deteriorated. In 1622, Rolfe died unexpectedly and suddenly. It is not clear whether his death was the result of an illness or of an Indian attack led by Pocahontas's uncle, Opechancanough.

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Jamestown, Virginia; Tobacco

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## Royal African Company

The Royal African Company, a slave-trading organization originally called "The Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa," was chartered in Great Britain in 1662. The Company has been attributed with providing for an increasing demand for laborers and expanding the number and trafficking of slaves to unprecedented levels. The market for sugar as well as other raw products and materials began to rise in Europe in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Labor became increasingly more difficult to supply to the growing and developing colonies. Individuals with a vested self-interest lobbied the British government for an exclusive charter that would grant them a virtual monopoly on the slave trade to North America. Prior to the creation of The Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa, there were three other commercial entities companies in operation. All three companies had exclusive Royal Charters that had been granted by the British Crown entitling them to a monopoly on the African markets. Those companies

operated under charters that had not been officially enacted by the British Parliament. Prior to the establishment of the Company, slavery scarcely existed in the colonies. As a result of the establishment of the Company, the British are credited with exporting millions of Africans to the colonies against their will. The Company was headed by the Duke of York, James II (the person whom New York is named for and who later became King of England). Ironically, the most famous of all its investors was the English philosopher John Locke. The king of Britain at the time was Charles II, who personally advocated and promoted slavery.

Even before Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean, occasionally sailors and pirates had profited from slave trafficking, but it was never that prevalent. It was regarded as a "dirty" business in those days. What might be considered as a "great English paradox" is that the society and culture of England in the early 1600s saw slavery as very immoral and unethical. In order to supply labor, the Royal African Company was established mostly through corrupt bargaining and by the British Crown under King Charles II, who encouraged slave trade. With no official policy as to its purpose, the original Royal charter granted by the king was to the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa, which would later become the Royal African Company. In the official charter granted in 1660, exclusive privileges were given to the Company for African trading. In 1662, slave trading privileges were granted to the Company.

The London merchants now had a monopoly over the trade, which, even in 1660, brought complaints of others who wanted access to the African trade. The first few years of the Company were unprofitable. The Company was restructured in 1663 and thereafter became very profitable. After 1663, the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa focused almost entirely on the slave trade. From 1663–1670, the Company's average profits were 100,000 British pounds annually. After 1670, the Company began to struggle with the emergence of other private traders who began to reduce the Company's profits. Adding to the Company's problems were the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1664–1667) and the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–1674). In 1667, the Company was in financial ruin, and the British Crown provided the financial resources to keep it functioning. Trading and commercial activity was also restricted in the period between the two wars from 1667 through 1672. For a brief period in 1672, it was forced to stop trading entirely.

In 1672, the Crown, along with additional resources, took the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa and formed the Royal African Company. Operating with the same basic policies, goals, resources, and monopoly that the previous organization had, the Royal African Company was basically the same organization with a different name. It was after 1672 and the next few decades that followed when most Africans were enslaved and brought to the colonies as a labor supply. The Company built walled structures on coastal Africa to hold Africans until they could be loaded and shipped. In effect, the resulting monopoly of the Company included all goods, slaves, ships, and plantation production involving Africans and ensured that they were controlled by the Royal African Company. After 1672, the quantity and the cost of slaves rose dramatically.

From 1680 and 1686, the Royal African Company enslaved and sold an average of more than 5,000 slaves per year and had sponsored more than 250 slave expeditions by 1688. By 1689, more than 100,000 Africans had been forcibly brought to the colonies. Most of the Company's stock was owned by businessmen who also had holdings in North America. The Company's outstanding debts rose gradually with every year it was in operation, and by 1690, it was indebted for more than 160,000 British pounds. As time went by, controversy surrounding the company arose from other English commercial entities and the plantation owners in the colonies. Both complained of inflation that had exacerbated since 1672. Other merchants wanted to get involved in the slave trade. Plantation owners complained that they needed more slaves and many of the ones they had received suffered from disease, starvation, and were weakened from being transported from Africa in inadequate ships. Commercial interests seized the opportunity by capitalizing on the interests of the plantation owners by insisting that opening up the markets to all traders would more adequately supply the needs of the plantations and would increase productivity in Britain by supplying more products. In addition, many argued that any benefits that the government derived from being able to regulate the trade were eliminated due to having only a select few that profited from trading. In July 1698, the British expelled King James II in the Glorious Revolution and halted the Company's exclusive African trading privileges.

As a result, the Company's profits were significantly reduced with competition. Any other merchant who now wished to become involved in the African trade had to

pay the Company a 10 percent tax on all goods and slaves shipped. The purpose of the tax was to maintain the Company's ports and facilities. Even with the revenue derived from the tax, the Company was struggling. Company officials still maintained for several years that the other merchants involved in the trade were intruders on their territory and attempted to persecute those individuals. The Company's stock value and profits continued to decline and the British government repealed the tax, but it was unable to win back exclusive privileges.

After the year 1700, the total average of slaves transported by British vessels annually grew to more than 20,000. The British, by far, now led the world in the slave trade. In addition, America had changed over the course of the rise of the Royal African Company from labor based upon indentured servants who could work in the Americas to pay off debt and to be relieved of criminal sentences to a labor force that was based on the enslavement of Africans. At its height, the Royal African Company had shipped in excess of 150,000 Africans, against their will, from freedom in Africa to slavery in the colonies. Politically, the Crown's efforts to regulate and control slave trafficking was never popular in England and was never really efficient. Some scholars challenge that slave trade overall was never really profitable. In the long run, most of the Company's profits were almost completely eliminated with the construction and maintenance of the ports and facilities needed to continue the trade. During the period that the Company maintained its monopoly of the slave trade, it shipped most of the healthier and more vibrant Africans to the Spanish colonies while at the same time transported the weaker and older slaves to the British colonies. The plantations in America were also charged the greatest prices for the slaves they imported.

After the turn of the 18th century, merchants involved in the slave trade increased dramatically. Before the year 1710, there were more than three times the number of non-Company vessels to Company vessels involved in slave trafficking. Also the market prices that plantation owners were paying for Africans had skyrocketed. Before the year 1700, the average price that plantation owners were paying for Africans amounted to approximately 3 British pounds in trade goods. By 1710, the price had increased to more than 12 British pounds. From 1700 to 1710, the major British merchant in Bristol, England, transported more than 160,000 Africans to the West Indies alone. The involvement of the Royal African Company in the slave trade had



a tremendous effect upon Britain's economy. Once the trading began in large numbers after 1660, both Bristol and Liverpool flourished and increased dramatically in population and in economic activity. Throughout its existence, although based in London, the ships of the Royal African Company sailed primarily out of the harbors of Bristol and Liverpool. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, around one-and-a-half million Africans were captured and transported to the colonies by the British. The Royal African Company was responsible for half that number. It is the Royal African Company who most historians and scholars attribute with transforming the colonies from a system of indentured servitude to a system of racial slavery.

Historians are able to discover much about the slave trade through records that were maintained by the Royal African Company. Its records contain detailed listings of trade and commerce of everything from humans to sugar. The firearm industry in Britain was primarily maintained through the slave trade. An average of 150,000 firearms were exchanged annually by the Royal African Company for humans. By 1712, though, the debts of the Royal African Company led it to lobby the British Parliament for additional funding or for debt relief. The British government did pass legislation that allowed for the Company to secure payment on some outstanding balances and to gain additional time to pay off some of its debts. By 1713, Britain had gained the exclusive privilege of transporting slaves to the Spanish Americas under the conditions of the Treaty of Utrecht. The treaty ended the fighting between Spain and the other countries of Europe after the death of the last Spanish Habsburg.

By 1730, the Royal African Company was suffering from so many financial difficulties that it had insufficient funds to keep up the maintenance on the ports and facilities needed to continue the trade. As a result, the British government allocated 10,000 pounds annually from that point on as upkeep on those constructions. The Royal African Company, after losing money for decades in the slave trade, finally discontinued slave trafficking in 1732. The Company sold the Africans it held in its facilities waiting to be shipped on the African coast to other companies. After 1732, the Company was only indirectly involved in slave trafficking. Most of its efforts were for African exploration, in which Africans were involved in moving inland in the search of special raw materials and gold. The Company's new adventures were even less successful in raising revenue

than before; it continued to lose money and went bankrupt in 1750. In 1750, the British Parliament dissolved the Company and its ports and facilities were donated to the merchants trading to Africa. The American Colonies by this time were heading toward the American Revolution. There were conflicting interests pushing for the abolishment of slave trafficking, but the British were more involved than ever overall with slave trading. In retrospect, the Royal African Company brought about increased regulation of the trade, but by doing so, it also brought about a tremendous increase in the number of Africans that were sold into slavery.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Cape Coast Castle; Factor; Gold Coast; Sierra Leone

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## Sahel

“Sahel,” an Arabic word for seashore, is used to describe a belt of land that expands from the west coast to the east coast across the continent of Africa. This land belt is directly below the desert region and directly above the forest region. Specifically, the Sahel is the area where the Sahara desert meets the grasslands and the savannah regions of Africa. This area is known as the “coastline” of the Sahara desert. The east and west borders of this region are the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Red Sea to the east. The modern-day countries that this land belt extends through are Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan. It is to be noted that although the belt may extend through these countries, the entire countries do not lie within the belt, only a portion. The area

below the Sahel is also known as the Bilad-al Sudan, or the “Land of the Blacks” in Arabic.

The Sahel had many trading posts that connected the salt trade from the north to the gold trade of western Africa. Therefore, the Sahel became the “coastline” that emerged after traversing the expansive, yet symbolic, sea of sand (the desert). This trade system existed during the time period when the ancient kingdoms of West Africa were forming and flourishing. The salt mines in the north were generally controlled by Berbers, who brought salt to trade from the mines such as those in Taghaza and Taoudenni to be traded for gold from the kingdoms of Takrur, Ghana, and Kanem, to name a few. This trade was essential to rise of the West African kingdoms. The Sahel itself included such places as Timbuktu, Djenne, and Gao.

The passage across the Sahara desert and into the Sahel was a journey that could take up to two months. The passage was grueling and many dangers were encountered along the way, some stemming from the lack of water available and others related to poisonous or pesky animals such

as scorpions and sand lice. The Berbers of northern Africa navigated the desert well, and eventually with the help of the camel, formed caravans that facilitated the trade for those involved. After surviving the dangers of the desert, one would reach the Sahel or the grasslands where some trade occurred and then continue to the forest region where additional trading posts were located.

During the trade of salt and gold, the religion Islam began to be spread through the Sahel and into the kingdoms of West Africa. The influx of Islam was directly related to trade, as many times the traders from the north were Muslim and would require that those they traded with would convert to Islam, thus facilitating the spread of Islam. With the spread of Islam came the erection of Islamic schools and learning centers, one of which, Sankore University of Timbuktu, is located within the Sahel (in modern-day Mali). These trans-Saharan trade routes brought along with them the Islamic slave trade, in which slave raids that occurred in West Africa would supply enslaved persons to be traded to northern Africa and the Mediterranean. In the Islamic slave



*Sahel region near Timbuktu, Mali, in West Africa. An important feature of the western Sudan, the sahelian region was the site of intense commercial activity which led to the rise of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. (Ian Nellist)*

trade, enslaved males were typically used as eunuchs and enslaved females were generally placed in harems. Many times, those persons traded were traded for horses brought down from the north.

Some of the people that inhabit the area known as the Sahel live nomadic lives as pastoralists. Many raise livestock, including sheep and goats. The livelihood of these people depends heavily on rainfall, as there have been many droughts over the years that have created devastating famines. The land area that the Sahel covers is vast, but the climate of that land area is fairly consistent. This consistency means that when one area is suffering from drought, all of the areas are normally suffering the same. During times of drought, some move farther south toward the forest region, where water may be in more abundance.

There is food cultivation in some areas of the Sahel. Rice is grown around the western coastline of the region, and sorghum along with other grains that require little moisture are grown throughout the Sahel. The soil throughout most of the Sahel is not conducive for agriculture, as it is very sandy and lacks the nutrients necessary for many large-scale crops. Weather conditions and rainfall affect the aspirations for productivity, and the Sahel has fallen victim to drought many times in the 20th century. These droughts created detrimental conditions for those who live in this region, and, unfortunately, during those times, many perished because of malnutrition and disease. Major droughts affected the Sahel in 1914, from 1968 to 1974, from 1982 to 1983, and again from 1984 to 1985.

See also: Ghana; Mali; Rice Cultivation; Senegambia; Songhai; Sudanic Empires; Timbuktu; Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

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## Seasoning

As part of the process of the Atlantic slave trade, seasoning would follow the sale of captives to owners in the Western Hemisphere. Throughout the Caribbean and coastal Brazil, owners normally separated slaves into two categories: Creoles and "Bozales" or salt-water Negroes. Creoles were slaves born in the Americas and were much more highly valued than newly enslaved and imported Africans due to their knowledge of a European language and the development of a useful skill set; they were, in this regard, "seasoned" slaves. Bozales, also referred to as salt-water Negroes, New Negroes, or Guinea-birds, were newly imported, had difficulties communicating with Creoles and white owners, and had to be "broken-in" in order to become effective and efficient laborers. Thus, seasoning was a process by which Bozales became more like Creoles.

In the process of seasoning, new Africans would serve as "apprentices" for Creoles in learning the work regimes and social norms of the plantation. In addition to the apprenticeship, seasoning also implied a process by which new Africans acclimated to the new disease environment and plantation discipline. Many, as a result, died during seasoning. In Brazil, 15 percent of all new Africans died during the first year of seasoning. On Caribbean sugar plantations, about half of all new arrivals died within the first three years of their arrival. Roughly, one in four of all slaves arriving in 18th-century Virginia died within their first year. Likewise, 33 percent died within a year in Carolina. Since seasoning sought to "create" a slave, it was intended as a mechanism of behavior modification. In some cases, new Africans would be worked until exhaustion and beaten with the intent of forcibly making them more pliable and less resistant. More typically, seasoning meant the creation of new names, the introduction to European languages and Christianity, and an attempt at complete creolization (or acculturation).

Despite overt attempts to force cultural changes through seasoning, new Africans did not completely forget their cultures of origin. Cultural mixing certainly occurred, both between African groups and between Africans and their new European host culture. However, new Africans viewed new cultural formulations through the lens of their cultural backgrounds. When they spoke European languages, they transformed and Africanized them, creating a number of Creole dialects that had distinctive African linguistic

features in grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics. Jamaican Patois, Papiamentu in Curacao, and Gullah in South Carolina are just a small handful of examples of this. In addition, when new Africans became familiar with the tenants of Euro-American Christianity, they Africanized that too—inserting spirit possession, music, expressive dance, and the belief of transmigration in the creation of new religious forms. Finally, the unique foodways, folklore, and healing traditions of new Africans found new and transformed expressions throughout the Western Hemisphere.

*See also:* Acculturation; Atlantic Slave Trade; Gullah; Salt-Water Negroes

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## Senegambia

Senegambia is the West African region that comprises portions of the Futa Jallon Plateau and the Senegal and Gambia river basins, corresponding to all or part of modern-day Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal, as well as portions of Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania. Due to its relative geographical proximity to both Europe and the Americas, Portuguese, Dutch, British, and French trading outfits fought for domination and the establishment of trade centers in the region. The Europeans developed coastal centers such as Gorée Island and Saint-Louis, both of which were used extensively to engage in the slave trade. As a consequence, Senegambia became a predominant source of slaves sent to the New World during the 15th and 16th centuries, supplying up to 40 percent of all slaves during some periods. By the early 17th century, Senegambia became less reliant on the slave trade by diversifying its exports to agriculture, animal products, and other natural resources, from then on supplying only 10 percent or less of total slaves.

Senegambia had long been in contact with and was influenced by surrounding Muslim peoples, and many Senegambian traders and social elite were Muslim. The greater population generally subscribed at least superficially to Islam. During various eras in the region’s history, Islamic revival movements sprang forth, particularly during the 19th century. The jihad of Umar Tal (1797–1864) in the mid-19th century resulted in the establishment of the Tukulor Empire, which encompassed the eastern portions of Senegambia. Tukulor and all of Senegambia were eventually folded into the colony of French West Africa in 1895.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Futa Jallon; Ghana; Gorée Island; Mali; Rice Cultivation; Sahel; Sierra Leone; Songhai

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## Signares

The signares were a group of primarily mixed-race women who lived on the islands of Saint-Louis and Gorée in Senegal, West Africa, during the 17th and 18th centuries. Saint-Louis is located in the Senegal River. Gorée is approximately one-half-mile long and only a few hundred yards wide and is located by the Cape Verde Peninsula. These islands had European settlements established by the French, Portuguese, and Dutch beginning in the mid-1600s. The signares were able to obtain great wealth and esteemed social status and became icons of beauty and fashion through the 18th century.

The European men who settled on these islands were typically sailors and soldiers from France. These men married the local women, who often were mixed-race women. The women who entered into these marriages were active in trade, as women tended to dominate the marketplaces of West Africa. The houses that the signares lived in were known for their beauty. Many of the houses were at least two stories; the first floor would contain the kitchen, storerooms, and holding cells for slaves that were for sale. The

signares would occupy the uppermost floor in the house, which had large rooms with windows that allowed for temperature control. The houses were typically surrounded by beautifully constructed walls. There were also smaller buildings surrounding the house for the signares' artisans to work, as they may employ carpenters, tailors, and blacksmiths, among others.

It was typical for the signares to marry more than once, such as in cases where her husband had to leave the island and would not be able to return, or if she became a widow, she was permitted to marry again while keeping all of her acquired goods and wealth. If it was the signare's first marriage, she was expected to be a virgin, and to ensure this when her marriage was consummated, it was done so on a white sheet that would be collected the next day and raised on a flagpole as evidence of her purity. This was not done for the following marriages.

The signares were able to acquire gold and gems by trading hogsheads filled with salt to the sailors who would

come to the islands. They would have the gold that they received melted and formed into lavish necklaces and bracelets that they would wear on a regular basis. The signares were also known for their dress, more significantly, the scarves that they wore on their heads that were decorated with bright colors. When going out, they would wear gold earrings, skirts and bodices made of taffeta, red Moroccan slippers, gold or silver anklets, and additional jewelry, depending on the occasion.

The signares also became well known for their dances, known as "folgares" that would last from night into the morning. The dances were meant for the signares to interact with the French men so that those who were single could mingle, and the younger women would attend to study how the signares interacted with the men so that they would be prepared when they became of age. There would be palm wine to drink and also imported wine from France. There was also a beer available for drink called *pitot*. Griots, or professional storytellers, were at the dances and would entertain by singing and dancing. The men at the parties would bring handkerchiefs that they would throw at the signares while they were dancing. Whoever had a handkerchief land on her would hand deliver it back to the owner and thank him with an exaggerated bow.

Signares, upon their arrival to the islands, would learn intricate sewing techniques and would quickly become fluent in French. Being trilingual, typically fluent in French, Wolof, and Crioula, these women were an asset to the French men as they were able to translate and negotiate trade deals with the people who only spoke Wolof. The French men who became the husbands of these women would provide the women with many servants and slaves. It was typical for a signare to have a European servant who worked as her chambermaid. The signare would also have a large number of slaves of African descent who assisted with domestic duties, trade, and artisanal work.

Signares had significant societal roles in the societies of Gorée Island and Saint-Louis, and they became the women that European men and local people wanted to be associated with. They were able to acquire great wealth, through marriages and through their participation in trade of goods to the French sailors who would frequent the islands. The children who were the products of these marriages were also able to gain recognition, and many were granted official government positions when they came of age. Signares were responsible for the social atmosphere of the islands



Signare from St. Louis Island accompanied by her servant, from *Encyclopédie des Voyages*, by Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, 1796. (Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France/Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library)

and set fashion trends that transcended the islands they inhabited.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Gorée Island; Senegambia

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## Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

King William III established the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) in response to concerns from his advisors over the religious welfare of colonists living in America. The 1701 SPG charter called on teachers and priests to enter the mission field and tend to the health of the Anglican church in America. Months later the mission was expanded to include Africans and Native Americans. For this, the SPG stands out as one of the first major Christian institutions that dedicated its efforts and resources to evangelizing enslaved Africans.

In 18th-century North America, SPG policies toward Africans were controversial; many whites believed Christian education and baptism would disrupt slavery. Those who objected to the Christianization of slaves were concerned about the threat of literacy, the development of slave religious institutions, and the possibility that Christianity might endorse liberty. It was the position of the SPG that Christianization did not undermine the system of slavery, but helped to create obedient slaves who understood that the reward for hard work and deference came in the afterlife. Although the policies of the SPG were not intended to liberate slaves or advocate abolition, missionaries generally encouraged masters to treat slaves with paternalistic kindness.

In 1703, the SPG appointed Elias Neau to missionize among the Native Americans in New York. Believing he

could be more successful converting African slaves, Neau requested that the church assign him to serve the black population. The first SPG missionary to specifically reach out to enslaved Africans, Neau spent much of this time convincing white masters to release their slaves for weekly Christian education. In classes Neau read from the Bible, taught slaves to read, led prayers, encouraged the memorization of creeds and psalms, and prepared individuals for baptism. Prompted by resistance and concern from slave masters that baptism would endanger slavery, Neau sponsored a 1706 New York law asserting that baptism did not change the civil status of slaves. A slave revolt in 1712 and continuing suspicion from slave masters complicated Neau's efforts at reaching blacks in New York, though he was consistently impressed by the willing, studious, and pious attitudes of his black students above all others.

Hearing about Neau's efforts, dozens of SPG missionaries began to seek out Africans for conversion. In the South, particularly South Carolina, missionaries met with limited success. Though dedicated to converting Africans, many SPG missionaries were still hesitant to baptize blacks or teach them to read and struggled fiercely with slave masters who were cruel and refused to send their slaves to classes. Throughout the colonies, missionaries overwhelmingly described antagonisms with slaveholders as the major impediment to wholesale conversion since they found slaves to be most amenable to instruction. To remedy this problem, the SPG supported legislation to make the Christianization and baptism of slaves compulsory. Despite obstacles, by 1717, South Carolina missionary Dr. Le Jau reported weekly meetings with 30 to 40 slaves and boasted that large numbers of whites were convinced that Christianity encouraged obedience and submission among their slaves.

By 1730, SPG funds had become limited and mission work was largely relegated to individual parish priests who continued to convert blacks on a much smaller scale. Neau's center in New York remained the Society's primary vehicle for black education and expanded its operations in 1743 to include a day school. The school educated about 40 children a year and offered night classes for adults. Society efforts waned throughout the second half of the 18th century and came to an end during the Revolutionary War when SPG missionaries, British loyalists, were driven out of the country and targeted because of their affiliations with the Church of England.

See also: Evangelism; Middle Colonies; New York Revolt of 1712

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## Songhai

Songhai, or Songhay, is the largest of the former empires in the western Sudan region of North Africa. The state was founded in ca. 700 by Berbers on the Middle Niger, in what is now central Mali. The rulers accepted Islam ca. 1000. Its power was much increased by Sunni Ali (1464–1492), who occupied Timbuktu in 1468. Songhai reached its greatest extent under Askia Muhammad I (ca. 1493–1528).

The Songhai originated in the Dendi region of northwestern Nigeria and ended up in western Sudan, centered on the Big Bend of the Niger River. There are two capitals in Songhai. The first capital is Kukiya, which is located north of the Falls of Labezanga (the present frontier between the republics of Mali and Niger). The second capital, Gao, developed north of Kukiya at the terminus of the Saharan tracks.

The Songhai Empire, regarded by scholars and laypersons alike as one of Africa's greatest empires, rose to prominence in the late 1400s during the rule of Sunni Ali. During his reign, most of what was formerly the Ghanaian and Mali empires was incorporated into the Songhai Empire.

Sunni Ali marched on Timbuktu and captured it along with its great University of Sankore, which had thousands of students from many parts of the world. During the waging of a seven-year war, Sunni Ali captured the city of Jenne; he then married the queen of Jenne, Queen Dara, and they reigned together. Sunni Ali eventually gained control over the entire middle Niger region.

Sunni Ali, in addition to restoring order to the Sudan (the Arabic expression for West Africa), was also a brilliant

administrator. He divided the Songhai Empire into separate provinces and placed each province under the control of its own governor. Sunni Ali developed new methods of farming and created for Songhai a professional navy. Sunni Ali embraced and respected the Islamic faith of his trading partners, which accounted for much of his success as a ruler. By the time of his death in 1492 the Songhai Empire surpassed the greatness of the other West African empires that preceded it.

Following the death of Sunni Ali, his son, Sunni Baru, ascended to the throne for a short time before he was overthrown by Askia Muhammad Toure. Askia Muhammad Toure had been a general under Sunni Ali and was successful as a ruler largely as a result of his acceptance of Islam. He appointed Muslim leaders to the larger districts of his empire and applied Islamic law in place of Songhai's original code of laws.

Askia Muhammad Toure greatly improved the learning centers of the Songhai by encouraging scholars to come from other parts of Africa as well as Europe and Asia to settle in Timbuktu and Jenne, and built as many as 180 Koranic schools in Timbuktu alone. The Sankore University in Timbuktu developed a reputation for scholarship in rhetoric, logic, Islamic law, grammar, astronomy, history, and geography.

During his reign, the Songhai Empire was characterized by order, stability, and prosperity. He opened up the ranks of government service. Previously, the status of the leaders of the empire was determined upon the basis of birth. Under Askia Muhammad Toure, however, men could achieve high office based upon their scholarship and intellect regardless of their social position. Askia Muhammad Toure also organized and established a permanent professional army that enabled him to expand the territory of Songhai and turn the Songhai Empire into the largest empire in western and central Sudan.

He was deposed by his son, and in the subsequent conflicts among his successors, the empire slowly began to decline. The break-up of the state was accelerated by a Moroccan invasion in 1591. The end of the Songhai Empire also meant the end of the region's history as a trading center.

See also: Ghana; Mali; Sudanic Empires; Timbuktu; Toure, Askia Muhammad

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## Stono Rebellion

As early as 1687, slaves in South Carolina were fleeing toward Spanish territory in Florida. They were responding to the King of Spain's decree, which said that any runaway slave of the British colonies was to be received at St. Augustine and given freedom and protection from the British. In 1733, the decree was repeated and Spanish emissaries were sent to try and incite a large slave rebellion within South Carolina. The trek from South Carolina through Georgia to St. Augustine was not easy. For this reason, slaves who planned their escape killed their masters, then took horses, food, and other items for the journey. These slaves usually ran away as individuals or in very small groups but no large groups had attempted the journey—until the Stono Rebellion.

On September 9, 1739, the brewing of conspiracy erupted in the Stono Rebellion when a group of 20 "Angolan" slaves carried out the largest and bloodiest insurrection of the 18th century. After gathering near South Carolina's Stono River, the rebels decided to first secure weapons and ammunition by robbing a storehouse. The rebels confronted and killed the storekeepers, severed their heads, then placed them on the stairs before leaving. Now armed, the rebels moved toward Mr. Godfrey's house and killed him, his daughter and son, then burned his house. By this time, more rebels joined the original group. They marched southward along the "Pons Pons" road shouting for liberty with flags displayed to the sound of two drums. They passed Wallace's Tavern toward daybreak but left without hurting him because he was a good man and kind to his slaves. However, when they came to Mr. Lemy's house, they plundered it and killed him, his wife, and his child. They continued on to Mr. Rose's and resolved to kill him but he was saved by a man who hid him.

While heading north, Lieutenant Governor Bull saw the rebels. He rushed toward the Willtown Presbyterian

Church to raise a militia. Already armed, according to the law, the men of the church formed a militia. At the same time Gov. Bull was raising the militia, the rebels continued southward. They burned Colonel Hext's house, killed his overseer and his wife. Consecutively, they burned Mr. Sprye's house, Mr. Sacheverell's, and Mr. Nash's house, also killing the whites found in them. Mr. Bullock escaped but his house was also burned.

After traveling between 10 and 15 miles, the rebels, now numbering almost 100, stopped in an open field and began celebrating, dancing, singing, and beating drums to draw more Negroes to them. While in the open field, the militia came on the warriors and a fight ensued. The rebels fired two shots with no results. The militia's return fire brought down 14 of the rebels. During the exchange, some rebels ran back to their respective plantations while others stayed and fought. One of the rebels came within point-blank range of his master, confronted him, then misfired; in return, his master shot him through the head. Many Negroes were shot on the spot while some were taken, questioned, then shot. Some rebels who tried to escape were captured by the planters who cut their heads off and placed them on every mile post they came to.

About 30 escaped from the initial confrontation and continued southward. Mounted on horseback, the planters caught up to this group and another battle took place in which the rebels fought boldly but again were taken by the planters and killed on the spot; some were hanged and others were gibbeted. While there is no record of any of the rebels reaching St. Augustine, a few of the remnants eluded capture for nearly a year. In all, approximately 40 blacks and 20 whites were killed.

For many of South Carolina's colonists, the Stono Rebellion was a nightmare come true. By 1730, South Carolina's economy had become so dependent on African slaves the ratio of blacks to whites was 2 to 1. Attempts were made to entice more whites to settle there; however, the response was slow. Planters and colonists were aware of the growing danger of importing too many African slaves; however, rice had become a cash crop and required intense labor. With the number of slaves increasing and Spanish conspiracy on the rise, the time for rebellion had come. The Stono rebels struck with a force unknown to South Carolinians. As a result, many rural colonists left the area.

The Stono rebels were previously warriors in Africa. They knew how to use guns and designed their rebellion



appropriately. Their experience as warriors gave them the courage and willingness to take on a colony. This was not flight—it was open defiance that expressed a collective yearning for freedom. Although their strike for freedom was quelled before it could come to fruition, it sent a message to South Carolinians that their slaves were not to be underestimated.

The legal response to the Stono Rebellion was swift and damaging. Among the most important changes to the law was the status of the slaves. Whereas previously considered freehold property (slaves of an estate), slaves were now relegated to “chattel” (the personal property of their owners). In addition to a change in status, slaves were prohibited from gathering in groups, and in direct response to specific actions taken during the Stono Rebellion, taking part in rebellion, coercing others to rebel, and acts of arson were considered felonies punishable by death; drums and horns were also prohibited. After the Stono Rebellion, the slaves in South Carolina were rendered nearly immobile; however, their flights toward freedom continued.

See also: Angolan/Kongolese; Carolinas; Destination, Florida; Slave Resistance

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## Sudanic Empires

The Sudanic empires is the name given by Western historians to the West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai that spanned the period from the first century CE to the end of the 16th century in a politically hegemonic continuum. The earliest, the Empire of Ghana, was the imperial model for the succeeding empires of Mali and Songhai, inheriting similar social hierarchies, political and economic organization, cultural and religious practices, and ethnic groups.

Ghana, or as it was called by its inhabitants, Wagadu/Wagadou, was founded around CE 100 by the Soninke, who according to their tradition, migrated from the city of Sonin/Aswan in upper Egypt to the region of southeastern Mauritania. Fleeing the domination and racial discrimination of their Greco-Roman colonizers, these Nubians heard of a Bilad-al Sudan or “Land of the Blacks” where they could settle comfortably among their own, and because of their advanced knowledge and military skills, become a powerful nation in the West. True to the prophecy of the Bida, the serpent-djinn who became the guardian spirit of Wagadu, the empire did become great, expanding its territorial authority according to oral history, from the Atlantic coast all the way to Lake Chad.

Mama Dinga, the legendary founder and hero of Wagadu, was a general of a massive army in southern Egypt (Nubia) who migrated with his army to the Western Sahel where he established political hegemony. Mama Dinga, however, did not remain in Wagadu; he left his empire to his son Djabe Cisse and returned to Nubia. The *Tarikh Al-Fettash*, one of the few surviving texts of the Songhay Empire, states that 22 kings had ruled Wagadu before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, which places the inception of the empire around CE 100. A land rich in gold, copper, iron, and diamonds, Wagadu was a center of trade entering North and West Africa through bridges of caravans traversing the Sahara. The tran-Saharan trade was a lucrative market economy whose network spread across the Mediterranean into Europe and eastward across North Africa into Asia. The gold of ancient Ghana was inexhaustibly plentiful and well known in the international trade world.

Arab historian Al-Bakri, who wrote a detailed ethnography of Ghana during the mid-11th century, describes the capital of Ghana, Kumbi Saleh, as a densely populated city with a vibrant commercial center and houses made of stone and acacia wood. Excavations carried out by archaeologists since 1904 confirm the existence of a populous commercial city with an international trade network. Wealth that was based at that time on the gold standard put Ghana in the echelon of one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

By the late 11th century, the Sahara-dwelling Sanhaja, Lamtuna, and Massufa groups coming under the unifying military influence of Umar Ibn Yasin merged into the imperial army of the Almoravids and attacked the Soninke rulers of Ghana in 1076. This was the first blow of a series of disasters that led to the demise of a great empire. Though

the Soninke recaptured the lands taken by the Almoravids 12 years later, the government was weakened politically and financially. The definitive disaster told in the Soninke legend of Wagadu was a seven-year drought that destroyed all the cultivable lands and dried up the rich gold reserves produced from the gold-bearing rains. These phenomenal rains were the special gift of Wagadu's protective deity, the Bida of Wagadu, who demanded in exchange the annual sacrifice of the most beautiful virgin of the empire. When the Bida was killed by Mamadou Sahko Dekote, the outraged fiancé of a chosen sacrificial virgin, the empire was cursed with drought for seven years, seven months and seven days. The famine that ensued decimated the population and forced millions to seek greener pastures in other parts of West Africa. The people scattered north, south, east, and west, leaving a once-great populous empire to the anonymity of the encroaching sands.

Many of the Soninke and Kakolo groups migrated and settled southeast of Kumbi-Saleh along the Niger Bend, renamed their country Mande, and called themselves the *Mandenka* ("People of Mande"). *Malinke*, which is the Fula's term for "People of Mali," has a slightly different nuance in that it includes not only the Mandenka but Soninke, Fula, and Songhai lineages that were incorporated into Malian society under Sundiata. *Malinke* is used here as the postimperial name, while Mande refers to the small warring kingdoms that existed prior to the rise of Sundiata. Such was the status of Mande before Sumanguru/Soumaoro Kante, king of the Mande kingdom of Sosso/Susu, waged war against the other Mande states and brought them under his dominion.

Sundiata Keita, son of Nare Maghan Kon Fatta Konate, the king of Niani, was a child of a miraculous birth and a disadvantaged childhood who overcame his physical and social limitations to become an exceptional warrior and king. Diviners had predicted even before the marriage of his parents that Sundiata would be the successor to his father, but Sassouma Berete, the first wife of Maghan Kon Fatta, conspired to put her son, Dankaran Touman, on the throne by first attempting to kill Sundiata and then sending him and his mother, Sogolon Conde, into exile. It was during Sundiata's exile that Sumanguru Kante attacked Niani, plundering and subjugating its peoples and launching a reign of terror against any who opposed him.

Determined to take back his country from the Sosso, Sundiata formed a formidable army along with other

kings vanquished by Sumanguru and defeated the Sosso. He then restored the sovereignty of the conquered kingdoms and reorganized them into the empire of Mali. Niani became the capital of the empire and a great political and commercial center. Al-Umari and Ibn Khaldun, who wrote about Mali during the 14th century, reported that Niani was highly populated, well watered, and financially stabilized with an affluent market where caravans from the Magrib, Ifriqiya, and Egypt frequently exchanged goods brought from every country. The nations that were part of the empire were guaranteed their autonomy as well as the protection and support of the empire so long as they paid tribute and adhered to the principles of the constitution.

Sundiata's military conquests were extended under the leadership of his brilliant generals Tira Maghan Tarawele (Traore), Fran Camara, and Fakoli Koroma, who conquered all the lands that had been under the control of Ghana, then moved westward, conquering the kingdom of Jaloff and establishing several kingdoms in Senegambia, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau, the largest of which was Kaabu.

Sundiata's son and successor, Mansa Wulin, and his general succeeded in capturing Gao and Tekrur. Stretching from the Atlantic coast to Gao, the empire inherited the flexible federation structure of the empire of Ghana. Each country retained its institutions and authorities that ruled alongside the *farin* or governor representing the imperial authority of Mali. Only the *Malinke* military maintained garrisons throughout the regions to ensure the security of the territory against invaders and brigands.

There were four major structural changes in the *Malinke* government that distinguished it from the government of Ghana. One was a 44-article constitution defining social and political relationships, hierarchies, customs, terms of succession, and the fundamental human rights of women, men, and children. Sundiata proclaimed an end to the institution of slavery and all the nations of Mali took an oath to abolish slavery and the slave trade in their territories. A law requiring all able-bodied men and women to cultivate the land regardless of their occupation greatly expanded Mali's agricultural output, and a law granting ownership to those who cleared the land initiated a national incentive for collective work, production, and distribution of goods and services. Far from the feudal system generally designated to a medieval Sudanese economy, the government of early Mali spawned an economic structure that resembled an African

communal economy; every citizen of Mali was given access to tools, cultivable land and its production.

Lastly, Sundiata codified the 33 clans of the Malinke, designating their relationships (*sana-khu*), and sworn alliances that served as an internal fortress of solidarity. Furthermore, he elevated and formalized the art of the griot (historian) when he declared that the griot represents “the head, the eyes, ears, mouth, and soul of Mali.” Art, music, architecture, religion, metaphysics, science, trade, history, every minute and indispensable element of culture was augmented by ennobling, first, the individual human being, and by extension, all the knowledge and practices that foster human development. An empathetic humanism anchored Sundiata’s enormous span of ideas that ushered in a new epoch of artistic innovation and sociopolitical probity.

The *mansas* who succeeded Sundiata, though never historically capable of matching the legendary role of founder/culture hero, were nevertheless exceptional leaders in their own right. Mansa Wulin, the son and first successor to Sundiata, was a great king who followed in his father’s footsteps, expanding Mali’s territories and enforcing the laws Sundiata had instituted. His brother, Wati, who succeeded him, was less successful. Khalifa, another brother of Wulin and Wati, was mentally disturbed and would kill Malinke people for sport. Sundiata’s grandson succeeded Khalifa but was usurped by Sakura, a powerful slave of the royal court, whose political and cultural expansion of the empire impacted North and West Africa. After Sakura died, the kingship reverted to the traditional Keita lineage of Sundiata. Mansu Ku, the son of Mansa Wulin, succeeded Sakura and Mansa Muhammad succeeded his father.

The royal lineages that followed were legitimate Keita heirs descending from Sundiata’s younger brother, Manding Bori. Fraternal inheritance of the throne was customary in Mali’s system of succession, and the dynasty of Manding Bori reinvented the empire in its own image of exploration and magnificence. Manding Bori/Bokari, known in written Arabic texts as Abubakr Muhammad II, ascended the throne in 1311 but shortly afterward abdicated his position and led a mass expedition of about 2,000 ships into the Atlantic. Kanku Musa, the younger brother of Manding Bokari, became the emperor of Mali in 1312 after Manding Bokari did not return to Mali. During his reign, Mali reached the height of its political power, prosperity, intellectual development, and trade relations, and Mansa Kanku Musa’s famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1325 placed Mali on

the world map as a great empire rich in gold, ivory, copper, iron, and other resources exchanged in an international market. Mansa Musa distributed so much gold to countries he passed on his way to Mecca that the gold standard in Egypt suffered from severe deflation for years afterward.

It was during Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage that his generals annexed Gao, the seat of Songhai power and influence, extending the imperial territory to the farthest eastern region. The son of Mansa Musa, Maghan II, reigned for a short time after Mansa Musa’s death, then the legitimate heir according to Mande tradition, the brother of Musa, Mansa Sulayman (1336–1358), took the throne.

During the reigns of Mansa Musa and Mansa Sulayman, Mali’s territorial domain comprised the entire Sahel-Sudan region, thus bringing many diverse peoples and cultures under the same imperial authority. The confederated political organization remained the archetypal model for the empire’s new acquisitions; each country’s autonomy was maintained and protected.

The biggest threat to Mali’s continuous hegemony came from the eastern provinces of Gao and Timbuktu that had originally belonged to Songhai but was annexed by the Mandenka under Mansu Kanku Musa’s rule. Having a different ethnicity, a civilization that predated Mali by several centuries, an ancient oral and written tradition, and a long history of autonomy, material wealth, and military power, the proud, independent people of Songhai were never comfortable under foreign rule. The Songhai rebellion began in the very womb of Mali at the Niani royal court of Mansu Musa where Ali Kolon, the founder of the Dia (Shi/So) dynasty and grandfather of Sunni Ali Ber, was raised and educated. Ali Kolon and his younger brother, Sulayman Nare, were kidnapped when they were boys after Mansa Musa’s generals conquered Gao, and though they were accorded the same royal treatment of Mande princes, they never renounced their loyalty to Songhai and fled Niani after Musa’s death determined to recapture Gao and Timbuktu. By the end of the 14th century, Ali Kolon’s armies ousted the Mandenka from Gao and reclaimed their independence, setting off a series of military offenses that gradually supplanted Mali’s imperial power.

The greatest of the Dia (Shi/So) emperors was Sunni Ali Ber who led his armies on a mission of expansion, conquering Djenné and recapturing Timbuktu in 1468, only two years after his enthronement. As a ruler Sunni Ali Ber was charismatic, clever, ambitious, militarily adept, extending the territorial horizon and building the economy

through his construction of towns, schools, dykes, canals, markets, and trading centers. He forced the Tuaregs back to the northern Sahel and led attacks against the Mossi, Dogon, and Bariba. At the time of his ill-fated death in 1492, Sunni Ali had gained control of the vast empire of Songhai that extended from Dendi to Macina along the Niger Bend and surpassed Mali in territorial acquisitions, economic affluence, and political authority. Mali persisted alongside Songhai until the end of the 16th century, mainly because the western Mandenka's profitable trade with the Europeans financed the empire's operations, but it was no longer the dominant power of the Sahel.

Completing the imperial concatenation of the three great West Sudanic empires, Songhai's Dia dynasty developed in the royal court of Mali in the same way the Mande had developed in the womb of Ghana, and within this contextual space they unravel like a historical trilogy. Sunni Ali Ber organized the empire on the Ghana-Mande model, establishing new provinces called *koi* that were the equivalent of the Mandenka *farin* and appointing *qadis* (judges, nobility) to the predominately Muslim towns, but instead of adopting the loose-knit Mande federational system, Songhai centralized the imperial political structure, making each *koi* directly responsible to the monarchal authorities at Gao. Songhai's political economy with its complex hierarchal structure and absolute central authority had a modern appearance and represented a break with the confederated states of the former Sudanic empires.

From the 11th century onward when Islam significantly penetrated the region, the Songhai dynasties were persuaded to construct their government on the legal structure of an Islamic theocracy. When a king or emperor was inaugurated, he was given a signet ring, a sword, and a copy of the Qur'an, symbolizing the spiritual ethical constitution on which the laws of the empire are allegedly based. Songhai had a distinctly Sahelian Islamic flavor and officially required that every head of state must profess the Muslim religion. Sunni Ali inherited the faith of his foreparents but had little loyalty to the orthodoxy and narrow interpretation of the Muslim clerics, openly practicing the esoteric tradition and mystical sciences for which the Shi/So were famous.

Ali's insistence on practicing the occult traditions brought him into deep ideological conflict with the Muslim intelligentsia and jurists of Timbuktu. Refusing to be a pawn of the Muslim jurists, Sunni Ali declared himself the premier and absolute priest of the land who believed

his metaphysical knowledge far excelled the pedagogical knowledge of Muslim scholars. He had many of the Muslim clerics killed, and upon his death, civil war broke out between the Dia dynasty and the Muslims.

Muhammad Toure, who was Sunni Ali's close confidante, protégé, and lieutenant of the Hombori region, revered the emperor like a father but was disturbed by his persecution of the Muslim scholars and eventually broke ties with him. Upon Sunni Ali's death, Muhammad Toure seized power and started a new dynasty of *Askias* that lasted 100 years. A devout Muslim, brilliant militarist and politician, Askia Muhammad was an enlightened emperor who carefully supervised the administration of the empire in an effort to root out corruption; he introduced an accurate system of weights and measurements, increased market inspectors, and encouraged fair trade that brought great wealth to the empire. Extending Sunni Ali's territorial acquisitions on all frontiers, he annexed Macina, Zara, and Agades, controlled the Sahara as far north as the salt mines of Teghazza, and conquered the prosperous Hausa towns of Kano, Katsina, and Zaria. The national council and judiciary system were reorganized and government officials were replaced with Askia Muhammad's supporters, but he continued to build Songhai around the centralized, bureaucratic system instituted by Sunni Ali. Songhai reached a peak of intellectual and religious activity under the Askia dynasty and came to an abrupt end with the sacking of Songhai by the Moroccans in 1591.

*See also:* Ghana; Mali; Sahel; Senegambia; Songhai; Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

*Nubia Kai*

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## Sugar Plantations

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Sugar was the basis of the first plantations in the New World. The Portuguese, who had established sugar plantations on Madeira Island in the mid-15th century, began growing sugar in Brazil in 1516 with exports to Europe no later than 1519. At first, the Portuguese enslaved the Tupi-Guarani—the major Native American group residing in coastal Brazil—to labor in the cane fields. As late as 1560, few Africans supplemented this labor. By the 1580s, plantations in Pernambuco had 2,000 African slaves, roughly one-third the labor force. One plantation in Bahia tallied 38 African slaves of its 103 laborers in 1591, but all its slaves were African by 1638, mirroring the transition to African labor throughout Brazil in the early 17th century. Biology and culture shaped this transition. The Native Americans, separate from the people of Eurasia and Africa for millennia, had no immunity to the diseases of these regions and so died of smallpox and other Old World diseases once in contact with Europeans. Africans, on the other hand, lived in the same disease environment as Europeans and had greater immunity than did the Amerindians. An African slave who survived his first year in Brazil, the period of seasoning, was likely to survive longer than a Native American field hand. Moreover, agriculture had sunk deeper roots in Atlantic Africa, the point of origin of many slaves, than in pre-Columbian Brazil. The Portuguese could more easily superimpose the grind of the plantation on Africans than on the Amerindians. With labor secure and the demand for sugar high in Europe, Brazilian production rose from 10,150 metric tons of sugar in 1614 to nearly 19,000 metric tons in 1710. By 1737, however, production slipped to 13,600 metric tons, underscoring that the industry had fallen on hard times. Between 1650 and 1710, Brazilian sugar lost 40 percent of its share of the European market. By 1690, Brazilian sugar totaled only 10 percent of the market.

The Caribbean planters had risen to challenge the early supremacy of Brazil. As early as 1493, Christopher Columbus had introduced sugar into the Caribbean. In the scramble to control the islands, the British, by the early 17th century, claimed Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands. In 1663, Parliament granted a monopoly to the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa, and in 1672, to its successor, the Royal African Company, to provision the planters with slaves. Between 1640 and 1700,

the sugar barons of Barbados imported 134,500 slaves, of Jamaica 85,000, and of the Leeward Islands 44,100. From 8,176 tons in 1663, sugar exports from the British Caribbean rose to 50,000 tons by 1750, and 75,000 tons by 1775.

From the Caribbean, sugar spread to Louisiana. In 1795, Frenchman Jean Etienne de Bore exported the colony's first sugar crop. Planters flocked to the region after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and in 1812, Louisiana entered the union as a slave state. Between 1810 and 1860, the number of slaves in the cane fields grew from fewer than 10,000 to 88,439. The planters concentrated production south of Baton Rouge. By the mid-1830s, production reached 55,000 tons of sugar, by 1849 137,000 tons, and by 1861 253,000 tons. Sugar concentrated wealth in a few hands. In 1860, 525 planters, 12.5 percent of Louisiana's slave owners, owned two-thirds of the slaves. These planters owned on average 110 slaves, 730 acres of land and equipment worth \$14,500, and produced 77 percent of Louisiana's sugar crop. The richest planter, John Burnside, owned 940 slaves and \$2.6 million in assets. By the Civil War, sugar cultivation had spread to Texas, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.

The Civil War replaced slavery with wage labor. In 1862, Union General Benjamin Butler decreed that planters pay male laborers \$7 a month plus a \$3 allowance for clothing. Butler did not specify a wage for female laborers, though one may suppose that planters paid women less than men. If this system was not slavery, it was akin to serfdom, for Butler dispatched army patrols to keep workers on the same plantation. Intent on preserving planters' access to labor, Butler nonetheless limited their authority by forbidding corporal punishment. The sugar crop was a casualty of war. The 1862 harvest totaled only 47,850 tons. Planters blamed the Union Army and the indolence of workers for their woes. At issue was the pace of work. Sugar must be milled within 48 hours of harvest to avoid spoilage. This narrow window of opportunity required coordination between field and mill and 24-hour operation of the mill. Laborers unhappy with their white overseers slackened pace during harvest and refused to work the mill at night. Labor sought an advantage by bargaining with planters for better wages, a practice the Union Army condoned in 1864. Planters reacted by colluding to keep wages low and by pledging not to hire workers from another plantation. The most effective tactic was the withholding of half wages until the end of harvest.

The tussle between worker and planter persisted after the Civil War. Sure of the planter's vulnerability during harvest, workers struck then for higher wages and full payment the first Saturday of each month. Some planters relented, whereas others sought to reduce wages by increasing the supply of labor. They hired agents to recruit workers from other states. In the 1870s, planters experimented with Chinese, Scandinavian, Italian, Dutch, Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese labor, all without restoring the subservient workforce of the antebellum era.

Planters fretted over more than labor. In 1898, an epidemic of sugarcane mosaic virus swept the cane fields and only the introduction of virus-resistant sugar varieties saved the plantations. The use of a mechanical harvester after 1935 diminished the need for labor. Since World War II, plantations have concentrated in a few hands. Between 1957 and 1995, the number of plantations in Louisiana declined from 10,260 to 690. These plantations encompass 364,000 acres along the Mississippi River and the bayous. In 1996, Louisiana produced a record crop of 1,058,000 tons. That year Louisiana produced 30 percent of the U.S. sugar crop. Florida, which produced its first crop in 1931, had by 1996 surpassed Louisiana, growing 40 percent of the country's sugar. In Florida, the plantations lie south of Lake Okeechobee. The soft soil confines mechanical harvest to one-quarter of the land. Men from the Caribbean cut the rest by hand as they have in the Caribbean for nearly four centuries.

See also: Hispaniola; Royal African Company

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## Sundiata: The Epic of Old Mali

“The Epic of Sundiata” is the tale of Sundiata Keita (literally “lion king”), the 13th-century exiled West African prince who, called by his people to return and lead them, liberated the Mande people from the oppressive rule of the Susu King Sumanguru Kante and became *Mansa* or king. This victory against the Susu marked the beginning of the great Mali Empire, which occupied much of present-day Mali and Guinea. The Mali Empire existed, although in a declining state at the end, until 1546 when it fell to Songhai forces. The epic is a celebration of Sundiata's victory and serves as a foundational narrative for the many people—such as the Malinke, Mandingo, and Dyula—who claim Mande ancestry.

Because of its widespread dissemination throughout many regions of West Africa, Sundiata is also known as Soundiata, Sunjata, and Sunjara. Likewise, the Sundiata epic itself has many variations. The core of the story nonetheless remains the same: Sundiata's birth to an ugly woman; his frailty as a child; his mastery of his physical frailty; his exile, return, defeat of Sumanguru Kante using his superior knowledge of sorcery; and Sundiata's ascendancy as king.

The epic, a privileged form within Mande culture, is transmitted orally and told by a griot or *jeli*, a master oral performer who occupies a unique position in the world of the Mande. Despite his inherited position in the *nyamakala* or artisan class, he also inherits membership into a highly specialized group of men who are the sole disseminators of the Sundiata epic. Apprenticed by a father or relative, the griot is well versed in the history, genealogies, and cultural traditions of the Mande. He plays the balafon and kora; he knows verbal and nonverbal communicative traditions of the culture. The griot serves as a reference and advisor to leaders. In addition to commemorating and reifying Sundiata, his job is to use each performance of Sundiata to moralize, teach, and reinforce cultural values. In this way, the griot renders “The Epic of Sundiata” into a living text; each telling is different and situational. Also, the griot's role in the epic is self-reflexive insofar as the griot usually plays a significant role in the exploits of Sundiata. In the Niane version, for example, Sumanguru Kante kidnaps Balla Fasseké, Sundiata's griot, so that Sundiata's motivation is, in large part, an attempt to get his griot and by extension, his legacy, back.

“The Epic of Sundiata” has become standard academic reading in the United States, particularly in college courses where it has become a seminal tenet of humanities curricula. Specifically, the Niane version has become somewhat canonized as the most popular version, owing in part to its literary form. The inclusion of “The Epic of Sundiata” in American university courses has done much to revise Eurocentric notions about epic traditions in particular and African primitivism more generally.

*See also:* Mali; Oral Culture; Sudanic Empires

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## Task System

The task system was one of the two distinct types of labor that were practiced during the era of slavery in British North America. In this system, slaves would be assigned a particular amount of work that came to be called a task to be completed in a particular day, and then once they were through with it, they were free to do anything with their time. The task system was primarily practiced in Lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia. It evolved between the late 17th century and the early 18th century. The task system coexisted with the gang system where slaves would wake up at the crack of dawn and toil together in a group until sunset.

Several explanations have been provided to explain the emergence of the task system. First, the absenteeism of the slave owners may have necessitated the creation of a system that required less white supervision. For slave owners in the Lowcountry South, the prevalence of malaria made it necessary for them to be absent from their plantations at certain times of the year. However, this argument by itself is not completely convincing since it does not explain why the planters in the Caribbean did not fully adopt the system

despite the fact that absenteeism started relatively earlier in that region. A more satisfactory explanation stems from considering the staple crop requirements. Unlike in areas where crops like tobacco required meticulous and year-round care, rice growing in the Lowcountry provided different circumstances. Rice growing did not require direct supervision but rather a few straightforward steps to ensure successful growth.

What exactly constituted a task came to be redefined over time and also varied according to the locations and the work at hand. For example, between 1750 and 1860, in turning up land the task size was one-quarter of an acre, for second hoeing the task varied from half an acre to three-quarters of an acre over the years. When it came to ginning cotton, a task consisted of ginning 90–100 pounds of cotton. If slaves completed their daily assigned tasks, they would be allowed to plant crops on the pieces of land that their masters gave them. They planted corn, rice, beans, and kept animals as a means of subsistence.

The use of the task system definitely elicited mixed reactions from the various players. There are some who considered it dangerous as it gave too much free time to the slaves. This was considered dangerous because slaves could then have time to plot rebellions. Those who felt it was not appropriate to use the task system had several issues in mind. One issue was that since the slaves now had time to plant their own crops and sell them, they proved to be competition for white farmers.

Soon the white slave owners started using legislation to curb the spread and strength of slaves’ entrepreneurship. One of the earliest pieces of legislation was passed in 1684, which forbade exchange of any goods between slaves or between slaves and free men unless their masters consented to it. In essence, slaves were allowed to sell their products to their masters only. However, subsequent laws passed showed that earlier ones had proved ineffective. By 1714, another law that prohibited slaves from planting any corn or peas or rice was passed. But in 1734, having realized the ineffectiveness of the former act, slave owners passed another act stipulating that slaves could not sell any produce to anyone but their masters.

For many adherents of the task system, there was a shared belief that if a slave owned property, he was less likely to run away. Therefore, since the task system allowed for time to accumulate wealth, they felt it was the best system to use. For others, it was advantageous because they

believed it gave slaves the morale to work extra hard on their masters' plantation knowing they could work at their own plots of land.

Some scholars have felt that it was a system that was more benevolent to the slave as opposed to the gang system. While it is true that once slaves completed their task, they could do whatever they pleased, sometimes the plantation owners deliberately increased the task size so that slaves would not have any time of their own. This turned out to be a major source of exploitation for many slaves.

*See also:* Carolinas; Gang System; Gullah; Rice Cultivation

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## Tight Pack

Throughout the Atlantic slave trade a debate raged over the merits of loose pack and tight pack in storing African slaves aboard slave vessels during Middle Passage. Advocates of tight pack argued that wholesale loss of life was inevitable. Therefore, storing as many Africans on vessels as possible paid a better profit than loose pack. Supporters of tight pack were not convinced that better nutrition, sanitation, and space for slaves guaranteed a greater return of profit. Contemporaries of the Atlantic slave trade and scholars who studied the era concluded that after 1750, the overwhelming majority of captains of slave vessels were practitioners of tight pack. Some captains even devised charts for their vessels to maximize the slaves they stored. Without question, practitioners of tight pack operated a macabre business.

Slaves held on tight pack slave vessels typically found themselves in the bottom of the hold with hundreds of

other captives. Conditions in the holds of slave vessels were appalling. The crew of slave vessels forced the captives to lay prone in a space about the size of a coffin. In fact, for many captives, this space came to be their final "resting" place on this earth.

On many vessels, owners of the ships built an additional shelf to cram even more slave cargo onboard. A few European societies grew increasingly uncomfortable with the slave trade. Great Britain attempted to limit the extent of slaves by regulating so many captives per tonnage of vessels. These regulations did not deter enterprising slave traffickers from illegally maximizing the captives destined for Middle Passage.

The evident human cruelty led John Newton, a slave ship captain, to resign from participation in the Atlantic slave trade and become a minister. Newton wrote the famous hymn "Amazing Grace." African slaves destined for the New World via slave vessels suffered the highest mortality rate of any group, civilian or military, traveling the Atlantic Ocean. During the course of the Atlantic slave trade, well in excess of 10 percent of human beings shackled in the holds of slave ships did not survive Middle Passage.

The grotesque aspects of the Atlantic slave trade influenced the English Parliament to enact laws to regulate English slave vessels. Members of the Parliament argued that overcrowding contributed to excessive mortality of African captives. Parliament in the late 18th century passed two acts in an effort to improve living conditions during Middle Passage. Nevertheless, the English Parliament expressed no interest in abolishing English participation in the Atlantic slave trade. Parliament primarily acted out of concern for public relations rather than human compassion.

The Dolben Act of 1788 championed by Sir William Dolben was the first of two Parliamentary measures designed to give the appearance of improving conditions during Middle Passage aboard English-flag vessels. The Dolben Act restricted the number of slaves-per-ton in the expectation that mortality rates of slave and crew would be substantially reduced during Middle Passage. Parliament in 1799 enacted a law that decreased the legal limits of slave cargo by measuring permissible space belowdecks. Parliament sought to abandon the use of mere ship tonnage and concentrated instead on usable space. The net effect of these two reforms did decrease the slaves-per-ton ratio from 2.6 to 1 slave per ton.



Notwithstanding efforts to legislate loose pack on slave companies and white entrepreneurs bent on practicing tight pack, recent historical studies indicate that there is no statistical correlation between ships with less slave captives and those with more. Mortality statistics support this interesting hypothesis. Regardless what European slave trade is studied, the findings are consistent. Revisionist historians have concluded that other variables affected mortality in a more profound way than loose or tight pack. Inoculation of captives, faster-sailing vessels, and shorter sailing times somewhat negated the effect of crowding aboard slave vessels.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Loose Pack; Newton, John

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## Timbuktu

Timbuktu, the city of knowledge and the capital of Islamic Mali, was established by Tureq nomads in the early 12th century as a camp for traders. Timbuktu earns its name from a well, owned by a woman, Bouctou. The well, salt, and gold attracted many travelers to the area. Timbuktu, located in southern Sahara adjacent to the Niger River, is part of the Republic of Mali. As Timbuktu grew in population and importance, it became the subject of occupation by neighboring West Africans, Portuguese, and French. The invasion was to control sub-Saharan trade—the salt and gold industry as well as the slave trade. Timbuktu became part of the Mali Empire in CE 1330. Before that, it enjoyed a great reputation during the reign of King Mansa Musa. West Africans perceived Timbuktu as the economic and cultural capital

equal to Rome, Fez, and Mecca. As a center of learning and scholarship, it drew visitors, merchants, traders, students, and great scholars from the Muslim world.

Timbuktu became prosperous when its inhabitants became Muslims and established trade with Muslims from Morocco. Even though Timbuktu was famous for its Islamic heritage, education in Timbuktu was not limited to Islamic studies; it included natural sciences, geography, and medicine as attested to by the manuscripts written by Timbuktu scholars. In 2003, the Library of Congress displayed Arabic manuscripts from Timbuktu, among which are books on medicine. Timbuktu reached its peak of intellectual reputation during the reign of Mandingo Askia's Empire (1493–1591).

In the 16th century and before the arrival of the Portuguese, Timbuktu had more than 100,000 inhabitants with great schools, colleges, universities, and well-funded public and private libraries. Timbuktu had three great mosques that were centers of learning—Djingareyber, Sankore, and Sidi Yahia—whose designs and buildings represent African Islamic architecture. Timbuktu also became prosperous with thriving trade in gold, salt, and ivory. This shows the high level of civilization attained in Timbuktu in the Middle Ages. The glory and fame of Timbuktu declined in 1591 when the Moroccans invaded and destroyed it. Later, the Portuguese came and established trade with West African coasts and thus limited Timbuktu's trade with its neighbors. This cut-off inflicted a devastating blow to Timbuktu's advancement in trade and learning. Merchants and scholars moved out of Timbuktu gradually due to this decline.

In 1893, the French occupied Mali and took Timbuktu. Hence, Timbuktu lost its remaining strategic trade routes and wealth. The French occupiers despised Islamic institutions. The study of Arabic and Islamic sciences lost their prime positions as the French language was introduced. Timbuktu's valuable and classic Islamic books were kept in private libraries, which limited their usage by the public. Timbuktu became a lost city; its population dropped drastically. It was abandoned politically and commercially. Neither modern roads nor trains were built by the French to connect Timbuktu with big cities or with the capital. Boats and camels remain the common means of transportation today to reach Timbuktu.

At present, 33,000 to 40,000 people live in Timbuktu, which reflects ancient mud-building as if it had never witnessed any civilization. Foreign tourists visit Timbuktu



*Sankore Mosque housed an Islamic madrassa which was at the center of the great Islamic scholarly community at Timbuktu during the 15th century. (David Kerkhoff)*

occasionally on camels and boats; more awareness has been raised about the city's Islamic past. The Mali government has appealed to the international community and UNESCO to assist it to restore Timbuktu's ancient mosques and its Islamic libraries. Most people remember Mali today because of Timbuktu and its legendary king, Mansa Musa. Timbuktu, the "Pearl" of medieval Mali, one of the most radiant seats of culture and civilization in West Africa, has now become a city of sand and dust.

*See also:* Mali; Musa, Mansa; Songhai; Sudanic Empires; Toure, Askia Muhammad

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## **Tobacco**

Tobacco is native to Virginia. Native Americans grew it as part of their religious traditions. They believed that in smoking tobacco, they inhaled the smoke into their very souls. Once exhaled, the smoke carried their prayers up to the gods. The European settlers of Jamestown, Virginia, adopted the habit of smoking tobacco, though it was devoid of any religious contexts. In 1612, Englishman John Rolfe planted a variety of tobacco from the Caribbean island of Trinidad that yielded a leaf superior in aroma to the indigenous varieties of Virginia and, beginning in the 1620s, tobacco was the leading export of the colony. In 1627, Virginia exported to England 500,000 pounds of tobacco, in 1635 1 million pounds, and in 1670 15 million pounds. Exports followed demand, which increased in Europe 20 times between 1617 and 1640 and 100 times by 1780.

The craving for tobacco drove both production and the demand for labor. Unlike sugar, tobacco is not inherently a plantation crop and did not benefit from an economy

of scale. Small farmers relied on their families and hired labor, but free labor in colonial Virginia was too scarce to meet the needs of the large planters. Instead they imported indentured servants from England. Demographic and economic conditions in England created surplus labor for tobacco growers in the colonies. Until roughly 1650, the birthrate in England outpaced the growth in the number of jobs. Wages fell, driving the urban poor to indenture themselves in exchange for passage to America and the promise of freedom at the end of their term. After roughly 1650, the birthrate stabilized and the pool of indentured servants began to shrink in the 1680s. By then the sugar barons of the Caribbean had demonstrated the profitability of slave labor and the planters of the Chesapeake switched from indentured servant to African slave. In 1660, Virginia and Maryland totaled 1,700 slaves and in 1680, 4,000. Between 1695 and 1700, the planters imported 3,000 new slaves, as many as they had bought the previous two decades. Setting aside hired help, by 1690, four-fifths of labor in York County, Virginia, was slave and only one-fifth indentured. Tobacco was the first crop in North America to use slave labor, establishing the labor system that the rice plantations of the Carolinas, the sugar plantations of Louisiana, and the cotton plantations of the Lower South would replicate.

Tobacco depleted the soil of minerals. Plentiful land led farmers to cultivate new land on the margin of the frontier rather than to restore fertility to depleted soils. They converted old tobacco fields to grain and pasture, and the cultivation of new land spread tobacco to North Carolina after 1670 and as far north as the Ohio River by 1800. Into the 20th century, farmers in southern Ohio grew tobacco for cigars. There, tobacco farms used free labor. In the South, slavery persisted until 1865. As was true of cotton, many postbellum tobacco farms were a mix of tenant and sharecropper. As in the colonial period, small farms relied on hired labor. In the second half of the 19th century, scientists urged tobacco farmers to restore soil fertility by adding fertilizers to their soil and the U.S. Department of Agriculture established a program to breed new varieties of tobacco. After World War II, soybeans rivaled tobacco on the clay soils of the South, bringing diversity to lands that otherwise depended on tobacco monoculture. Since the 1960s, physicians and scientists have publicized the hazards of tobacco. Conversely, popular culture makes tobacco seductive to youth.

*See also:* Chesapeake Colonies; Indentured Servitude; Jamestown, Virginia; Johnson, Anthony

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## Toure, Askia Muhammad

Askia Muhamamd Toure (1442–1538), variously known as Askia al-hajj Muhammad b. Abi Bakr and Askia Muhammad the Great, ruled the Songhai Empire from 1493 to 1529 and is considered one of the great West African rulers. Under his rule, the borders of the empire expanded to encompass nearly 500,000 square miles of the West African Sahel (arid strip of land south of the Sahara) and savannah regions, including much of modern-day Mali and Niger, as well as the northern portions of Burkina Faso and Nigeria. After serving as a general to two of his predecessors, Askia Muhammad came to power in a coup, deposing Abu Bakr b. Ali, the son of Sunni Ali Ber (r. 1464–1492), after two decisive military battles. He ruled the empire from the ancient city of Gao along the Niger River, but also had control of Timbuktu, the semiautonomous scholarly center of medieval West Africa. His dynasty lasted for a century, overseeing the golden age of Timbuktu and Songhai.

Askia Muhammad was from the Soninke ethnic group and was a devout adherent to Islam, making a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1497–1498. In Cairo, he received the authority to act as a deputy of the Caliph, the overall leader of Muslims, which gave him legitimacy in the eyes of local Islamic scholars who looked upon him as a pious patron. Askia Muhammad’s affable relationship with the scholarly elite in both Gao and Timbuktu helped secure his place in the documented history of the region. This was in contrast to his predecessor, Sunni Ali, who was lukewarm to Islamic practices at best and often hostile toward the Islamic scholars.



*Tomb of Askia Muhammad Toure, ruler of the Songhai Empire from 1493 to 1528, at Gao in present-day Mali. (Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY)*

As a result, the two most important historical chronicles of Timbuktu, *Tarikh al-Fattah* and *Tarikh al-Sudan*, portray Sunni Ali as a ruthless tyrant and show nothing but adoration for the enlightened Askia Muhammad. The support of religious leadership further solidified the legitimacy of both

his rule and plans for expanding the empire to surrounding non-Muslim regions.

Through a series of wars with Songhai's neighbors, Askia Muhammad was able to conquer territory and create tributary relationships as far away as the Saharan city

Taghaza to the north, Air in the east, the edge of Borgu in the south, and the Senegal River in the west. His superior tactics and troop numbers often secured victory, but he was thwarted in Borgu and the Mossi States, and had limited success in Hausaland. As a consequence of the warfare, Songhai captured many prisoners and enslaved them under the auspices of the Songhai state or sold them to North African traders. Large numbers of slaves were taken during many of the campaigns; some accounts reveal that large parts of cities had to be set aside to house the captives. Only non-Muslims could be enslaved according to religious law; however, Muslim states could be and were forced into a tributary relation with Songhai. Ironically, most of the soldiers of Songhai were themselves more or less servile to the state.

Askia Muhammad inherited a strong central government from Sunni Ali, but Muhammad strengthened it even further, adding new positions and functions to oversee the governance of the enlarged territory. He also consulted with prominent Muslim scholars on how to rule his empire, men such as Egyptian Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili of Tlemcen (in modern Algeria), and local scholars from Timbuktu. The advice ranged from the mundane to the permissibility of forcing leaderless local Muslim peoples under his authority and deposing tyrannical Muslim rulers for the greater good of Muslims. Although al-Maghili's advice had contemporaneous impact, his work would also be cited and acted upon more than three centuries later by 19th-century jihadists such as Umar Tal and Shaykh Usuman dan Fodio. The latter's military campaigns, legitimized largely by al-Maghili's rulings, led to enslaved captives on all sides of the conflict being sold into slavery and sent to the Americas.

Askia Muhammad's son Musa deposed him in 1529. He was banished for a period and then returned to live the rest of his life restricted to the royal palace before dying in 1538. The succeeding 50 years would bring internal struggles and revolts as Askia Muhammad's descendents vied for power, all of which allowed for the Moroccan invasion in 1591 and an end to the Songhai Empire, Askia dynasty rule, and the fortunes of Timbuktu as a scholarly center. *See also:* Songhai; Sudanic Empires; Timbuktu

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## Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

Trans-Saharan slave trade refers to the capture, enslavement, and transport of human beings, originating mostly from south of the Sahara Desert in North Africa, to areas both within the desert and points north and east. While it was at its peak between the 8th and 19th centuries of the common era, the trade spanned much of the first millennium CE. Despite its longevity, only relatively modest academic attention has been paid to the trans-Saharan slave trade and the African Diaspora it spawned in the Mediterranean region as well as in West and South Asia.

Long-distance trade networks across the Sahara Desert existed as early as 800 BCE. The camel was introduced to North Africa in the first century CE and was in widespread use among Berbers, nomads inhabiting North Africa, by CE 400. Its relative hardiness and ability to travel long distances with little water expanded desert trade capacity significantly. Although salt mined in the desert was the primary commodity and driver of the trade, slavery was indeed an early part of the trans-Saharan trade. As the trade developed, slavery and salt were quite related to one another in the Saharan context, as captives were sometimes put to work in the desert salt mines. Much later, by the mid-1800s, merchants often found it impossible to purchase salt unless they had slaves to trade in return.

While slavery was a element of the early trade across the Sahara, slave trading in the region grew most rapidly after CE 600–700, with the emergence of an Islamic empire spanning much of what is now West Asia, parts of Europe, and North and West Africa. The spread of Islam created a greater demand for slaves. Initially, many slaves in Muslim societies were obtained as a result of conquest under the expanding Islamic empire. However, as many of the conquered peoples converted to Islam, Muslims

began to seek out other populations for the purposes of enslavement.

Most of the people who were captured, enslaved, and transported during the trans-Saharan trade originated in the Sahel region south of the Sahara, stretching from the area that is now Chad and Sudan, west to what is now Senegal and Gambia. Most slaves were transported north, across the Sahara desert to Muslim-controlled areas along the Mediterranean coast, both in North Africa and in southern Europe and points east. Slaves transported during the trade were usually obtained via raids or kidnapping, often by the Tuareg, a nomadic Saharan people. Slaves transported along these routes endured excruciatingly long journeys with little water, in one of the earth's most extreme climates. The mortality rate among enslaved persons during these journeys was high, and the physical and emotional consequences experienced by slaves as a result of their forced departure from home, their strenuous voyage across a vast desert, and their introduction to a strange new world would have been intensely painful.

The people transported north across the desert and into slavery during the trans-Saharan slave trade were largely women. Women were highly valued in the slave trade because of the relatively wider range of roles they were able to fulfill when compared to men. Many of them were employed in domestic labor positions, and as concubines and sex workers when they arrived at their destination. Thus, sexual exploitation was a salient feature of the trans-Saharan slave trade.

In Islamic societies, slaves were not necessarily enslaved for life, though many certainly were, but sometimes had the possibility of freedom if manumitted by their masters. Enslaved women who gave birth to children fathered by their masters were sometimes freed, and children born under such circumstances were free. However, children fathered by an enslaved man and born to enslaved women generally inherited the condition of slavery. Other means of manumission included the purchase of one's own freedom, and in a few cases, conversion to Islam.

Trade in slaves, salt, and gold continued to flourish in the Saharan for centuries, expanding trading networks in multiple directions, many of which eventually linked the Saharan slave trade to Atlantic ports where European demand for slaves developed beginning in the 15th century and growing significantly in the years that followed. Although the Atlantic slave trade officially ended in the early 19th century, the trans-Saharan slave trade persisted for nearly another century afterward.

Despite the large number of Sahelian African people—possibly millions—transported across the Saharan desert during the first millennium CE, there does not exist today an African Diaspora in the Mediterranean region or in West Asia that rivals the size and visibility of that created in the Americas and the Caribbean by the transatlantic slave trade. Scholars speculate that the relatively lower number of men transported out of Africa during the Saharan slave trade, the isolation of African slaves from one another, high rates of disease and mortality among Africans enslaved in the Muslim world, and a history of social and marital integration is what has prevented the proliferation of African diasporic communities in Mediterranean regions. However, the apparent absence of a visible African Diaspora, particularly in the Mediterranean world, is a question that historians continue to pursue.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Sahel

*Lindsay Sumner*

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## Tribute

Tribute was the practice among Atlantic African kingdoms and city-states of demanding payment in form of labor or produce from the kingdoms, city-states, or rural villages and other territories or polities they conquered or extended their political and economic influence. This payment of tribute—whether in kind of specie—has come to be closely associated with the Atlantic slave trade as surplus urban labor—derived in part from individuals forced to pay off tribute obligations owed by their polity—was siphoned off and sold to Europeans. It was also a principal means by which kingdoms and smaller polities generated their wealth since it meant owning or controlling one of the few truly valuable commodities in Atlantic Africa—human labor.

The concept of tribute may have evolved from the need to create wealth from the land. For most agricultural-based polities, wealth lay not in the abundance of land, but rather

in the ability of people to make that land productive. Thus the acquisition of labor became the most primary objective in the expansion of many African states and kingdoms. By conquering a particular territory, the conquering polity was in essence earning control over a source of labor as surplus agricultural products would be sent as a portion of tribute payments to politically and militarily dominate states. In addition to agricultural surplus (or tribute in kind), tribute payments could also include currency in the form of cowrie shells or gold dust (specie) or slaves. These slaves would be put to work in the land owned by the king and other ruling elite.

Sometimes the territories offering tribute were not necessarily conquered people but rather those who decided to submit themselves under a particular kingdom to gain its protection from other enemies. One way in which these kingdoms would show their submission would be through the payment of tribute, by giving a number of slaves to work in the king's land or to serve in the army. In return, the more powerful king would offer protection to the submitting kings against other invaders.

In terms of wealth production, the only legally recognized way of producing wealth was the ownership of slaves who provided labor. This was because, unlike the plantations in the New World owned by private hands, in Atlantic Africa the concept of private land ownership was never fully developed. Therefore, unlike in Europe where land taxation was more generally employed, in Atlantic Africa tribute payments were determined by population size of the tribute-paying state (also referred to as a tributary). Tribute systems were also used in conjunction with labor conscription for the construction of state projects or the creation of mass armies during times of war. Again, the size of the tributary would determine the number of conscripts to be sent in service of the state.

Ownership of slaves and land was not restricted to the king only. There were those considered "nobles" who were mainly of the ruling class. They too owned land that was cultivated by slave labor. Their land ownership was mainly sanctioned by the king, since they were given this land while holding a particular office under the domain of a particular king. On conquering a particular territory, the king would appoint several people to rule over these territories in his behalf. Such appointments came with benefits like having land and slaves at their disposal. These benefits were considered as payment of tribute to the conquering king.

It is important to note, however, that although the slave system existed in Africa, it cannot be wholly compared to what came to be known as the transatlantic slave trade. In the case of the transatlantic slave trade where plantation owners had nothing in their minds but profit, slaves were overworked, mistreated, and degraded in order to maximize profit. But in transatlantic Africa, slaves were more or less treated like peasant cultivators. Since land was available to whoever wanted to cultivate it, slaves in Africa had an opportunity to own wealth that could be produced from cultivating the land. Slaves also had an opportunity to own wealth, rise through ranks, even becoming kings, as was the case of King Osei Tutu who founded the Ashanti Empire, and be integrated into the community they were enslaved in.

Regarding the use of the term "slavery," it is true that because of what it came to mean thanks to the transatlantic slave trade, it is not possible to remove the negative connotation it carries. However, as shown above, the form of slavery practiced in Atlantic Africa was not similar in terms of its motives. In Atlantic Africa, slavery as an institution was a system placed by law as a means of wealth production as land could not be owned. Furthermore, the development of commerce and of social mobility even in trade relied heavily on slavery, since porters and agricultural work required labor. This labor was readily supplied in the form of slaves.

It was therefore not surprising that when Europeans came in to look for slaves, they were able to succeed since slavery was not a foreign concept. Atlantic Africa, just like any society that has ever existed, was not egalitarian, and this meant the existence of the elite who exploited the common people. The ruling class, who from the start had access to slaves who worked on their land, began selling them off to Europeans, who in turn sent them to the New World. In time, when a certain kingdom conquered another, there was a capturing of prisoners of war who would be sold off as slaves to Europeans, unlike earlier times when they would work for the conquering kings. Such was the case in the West-Central African Kingdom of Kongo and the various kingdoms in the Angola region. In essence, the presence of the tribute system fed significantly into the transatlantic slave trade.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade

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## Vita, Dona Beatriz Kimpa

Kimpa Vita (1684–1706) was baptized as Beatriz and was therefore also known under her Christian name, Dona Beatriz. She was a Congolese prophet and the founder of a Christian movement that became known as Antonianism. Her teaching was rooted in the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church in Kongo. Her movement recognized the papal primate but was hostile against the European missionaries in Congo. Due to the great number of documents found in the archives of Italian Capuchin missionaries, the years of Kimpa Vita's life are some of the best documented in Kongo's history. The missionaries in the eastern part of Congo produced detailed diaries about their lives in Africa in general and about Donna Beatriz.

She was born around 1684 in a small provincial town near Mount Kibangu at the banks of the Mbidizi River in the eastern end of the Kingdom of Kongo (today part of Angola). As all Kongolese, who had been Catholics for nearly two centuries, she was baptized as soon as a priest passed her town. She was given the Christian name Beatriz by her parents, and as a local feature the Portuguese title "Dona" was given to every female. Her name in Kikongo was Kimpa (her given name) Vita (her father's name). Dona Beatriz's family were members of the highest group of Kongolese nobility, the Mwana Kongo or "Child of Kongo." This circumstance was a source of pride but it implied neither wealth nor political power. The Mwana Kongo clans were those who claim a king of Kongo somewhere in their past.

At the time of Kimpa Vita's birth, the Kingdom of Kongo was torn by armed turbulences. A period of civil war followed the death of King Antonio I at the battle of Mbwila (1665). As a result, the former capital of São Salvador (today Mbanza Kongo) was abandoned in 1678, and

the country was divided into major factions ruled by rival pretenders to the throne. The Capuchin missionary Fra Bernardo da Gallo reports that Dona Beatriz had her first vision when she was about eight years old. In her vision, two *nkitas* (white children from the Other World) played with her and gave her a beautiful glass rosary. She started to get a strong inclination toward religion.

As Kimpa Vita grew older, her interest in the spiritual side of life increased, and it became obvious that she was specially gifted. She was trained to become a *nganga* (meaning "knowledge" or "skill" in Kikongo), a person said to be able to communicate with the Other World. Dona Beatriz became a particular kind of medium called *nganga marinda*, whose special ability was to address social problems as well as individual ones. This very respected office involved helping people who had problems originating from the Other World. As a *miranda nganga*, she was also linked to the so-called Kimpasi society (*kimpasi* means "suffering" in Kikongo). Young initiates were chosen from the community, like in the case of Kimpa Vita, and put inside a secret and isolated enclosure. They were taught new languages as well as occult knowledge and had to swear an oath of secrecy. The Capuchin missionaries considered the Kimpasi societies as devils incarnate and declared all initiates excommunicated. Around 1699, Dona Beatriz concluded that her practice as *nganga marinda* was too close to evil *kindoki* (meaning "religious power"). She renounced her office and focused more on the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

After leaving her life as *nganga* behind, Dona Beatriz got married, but she could not adjust to married life. It was hard for someone who had lived the life of spiritual freedom and independence to adapt to a husband. Her first marriage did not last long, to be followed by a second one that did not survive the initial phase of living together. Both times, she moved back to her parents' house and refunded the bride wealth.

In 1703, Dona Beatriz and her neighbors left the Mbidizi Valley and joined the new colonists dedicated to restoring the former capital, São Salvador. King Pedro IV, one of the rival rulers of Kongo, encouraged the restoration of the abandoned city, together with his vows about the restoration of Saint James's Day and the involvement of the Capuchins in the peace process. The colonists were tired of the endless civil wars in the country and were full of religious fervor. Many had become followers of an old woman, Apollonia Mafuta, who had visions of the Virgin Mary. The



Virgin told Mafuta that Jesus was particularly angry with the people of Kibangu for not coming down to restore the old city of São Salvador and God would punish the Kongoleses for their wickedness. Jesus's anger, so learned Mafuta in her visions, was specially directed toward King Pedro IV.

In August 1704, as Apollonia Mafuta's ministry went on, Dona Beatriz fell ill with a mysterious sickness. She later reported to Fra Bernardo da Gallo that she died and that she was reborn as Saint Anthony. The Saint had entered her dead body, and she received the divine commandment to go and preach. She followed the example of the Capuchins and distributed her personal property. She set off to preach to the king in Kibangu, but Pedro IV refused to see her. She argued that neither the king nor the Capuchin priest Fra Bernardo were determined enough to restore the kingdom and therefore she would do it herself. Apollonia Mafuta supported her, claiming that she was the real voice of God. Both women preached against greed and jealousy and the misuse of *kindoki*.

Dona Beatriz claimed that she died each Friday and spent two days in Heaven talking to God, just to return to earth on Mondays. While in this state, she learned that Kongo must reunite under a new king. The civil war that had plagued Kongo since the battle of Mbwila in 1665 had angered Christ. God ordered her to build a specific Kongoleses Catholicism and to unite the country under one king. She destroyed the Kongoleses *nkisi* (charms inhabited by spiritual entities), as well as Christian paraphernalia.

Much of Dona Beatriz's teaching is known from her prayer, "Salve Antoniana," that converted the Catholic prayer "Salve Regina" into an anthem of her movement. It taught that God was only concerned with believers' intentions and not with actual sacraments or good works. She continued her teaching through several sermons. These sermons focused on three important issues. First, that Saint Anthony, the patron of Portugal, was the most important saint of all, in fact, a "second God." Together with Saint James Major, he was also the patron of Kongo. She demanded to her followers that they should only pray to him. Specially, infertile women should devote themselves to him, since he can relieve them from sterility. Second, she reconfirmed Mafuta's vision, saying that Jesus was angry with the Kongoleses people and they have to expect severe punishment. She urged that her followers should pray and ask for mercy. Third, she told the Kongoleses to be happy. Saint Anthony would protect them and good things would

happen to his devotees. She convinced them that her arrival meant that the Kongoleses could have saints of their own, just as the Europeans did. So far, the Capuchines insisted that the Catholic Church had its origins outside Kongo and that the most important saints of the country, Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Francis, were Italians, just like them. Therefore, black Kongoleses saints do not exist.

In Dona Beatriz's visions, God revealed to her the real church history that the Capuchin missionaries were hiding from the Kongoleses. Jesus had been born in São Salvador. He had been baptized in Nazareth, but this was only a fake name for his real place of baptism, which was located in the northern Kongoleses province of Nsundi. Also, Mary was Kongoleses and her mother, Anna, was a slave of the Marquis Nzimba Mpangi. Saint Francis was also of Kongoleses origin and Saint Anthony was now present within her body.

Father Bernardo da Gallo witnessed one of Dona Beatriz's possessions by Saint Anthony. Although Kongoleses regarded possession as an acceptable form of revelation, the Catholic priest considered the practice as diabolic. Furthermore, the European Christian tradition does not accept that a divine revelation comes from a possession. Only the devil can possess the human body and a rite of exorcism is the remedy. So Dona Beatriz was most likely possessed by the devil or a demon, not by Saint Anthony.

Since Pedro IV refused to see her in Kibangu, she decided to visit his rival King João II at Bula (near the Kongo River close to Matadi) in October 1704. But João II chased Dona Beatriz and her followers away. Her experiences in Bula and Kibangu showed her that the Kongoleses nobility was not interested in her vision of restoring and reuniting the country, while the common people were eager to support her. They saw in her the ideal ruler, a social revolutionary and a peacemaker. She would use her *kindoki* to fight against the greed and violence of the ruling kings.

In 1705, Dona Beatriz and thousands of her mostly peasant followers returned to São Salvador. She was now the undisputed mistress of the royal capital and determined to fulfill her mission of restoration. Rumors of her powers had spread throughout the country. She built herself a small house behind the ruins of the cathedral and started preaching from there. To help her with her work, she began to commission her "Little Anthonys," who were to become Saint Anthony's missionaries all over the country. Each of the Little Anthonys would be as much possessed by the saint as Dona Beatriz herself, but keeping a lower status.

After 1705, they mostly traveled in pairs to the provinces. They were expelled out of the coastal province of Soyo, but they were much more successful in the dissident southern part of Soyo and Mbamba Lovata. There, they won many converts, especially among partisans of the old queen Suzana de Nóbrega. Their preaching was linked to Dona Beatriz's, but it soon took local patterns that altered her message. While the Kongolese nobility rejected the Little Anthonys, they were able to win over masses of common people. In one case, two Little Anthonys had persuaded a whole district to stop baptizing their children. Dona Beatriz said in her famous preaching *Salve Antoniana* that baptism was not necessary, as God would know the intention in their hearts.

Dona Beatriz started to preach a new era of wealth in her sermons and her noble followers started to see her movement as a potential to gain political power. The Antonian movement was becoming involved in the politics of the kingdom and the political authorities were no longer able to control the forces that had been unleashed by her preaching.

In 1704, Dona Beatriz started a close relationship with a man named João Barro, who became her Guardian Angel, also known as Saint John. She became pregnant twice, but aborted with herbal medicine. In 1705, she became pregnant a third time and the medicine failed to work. Since she preached that her followers and the Little Anthonys should lead a life in chastity, her pregnancy became a problem and she began to doubt her mission. To keep her pregnancy secret, she left São Salvador until she gave birth to a boy called Antonio.

In 1706, shortly after she gave birth, Dona Beatriz together with Apollonia Mafuta, João Barro, and their newborn son were captured and brought to the temporary capital of Evululu. There they were condemned as heretic to death by burning. She was tried under Kongolese law (not the law of the Church) by a council of the Capuchin friars Bernardo da Gallo, Lorenzo da Lucca, and Manuel da Cruz Barbosa. The execution took place on July 2, 1706. The life of Antonio, her child, was spared.

The Antonians had a strong local organization and could outlive Dona Beatriz. Many of her followers believed that she was still alive. It was only in 1709 when the military forces of Pedro IV took São Salvador that the political force of her movement vanished. Most of her noble followers returned to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

In 1739, some of her followers who were sold as slaves to America carried out a revolt known as the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina. More recently, some see present-day Kimbanguism as a successor to Dona Beatriz's teaching. Its followers claim that she came back in September 12, 1887, in the body of Simon Kimbangu. Traditions circulating in Mbanza Kongo today also place great significance in the role of Dona Beatriz's mother as a source of inspiration for her and also as a key figure in the continuation of the movement, but contemporary sources make no mention of this. Even though some see her as an "African Joan of Arc," Pope Paul VI had rejected a request of her rehabilitation in 1966.

*See also:* Kongo Kingdom; Stono Rebellion; West-Central Africa

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## West-Central Africa

The region referred to as West-Central Africa is at times discussed as a lower, coastal extension of West Africa. The region comprises the countries of Angola, Benin, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, and Nigeria. From the tropical rainforests of Equatorial Guinea to the Congo River basin and the desert landscapes of the Sudan, the region is geographically diverse.

The region was colonized during the 16th through 19th centuries by various European powers, including France, Belgium, Portugal, and Britain. European languages still used for commerce and education in these areas include French, Portuguese, and English. Major exports of the region include coffee, cocoa, rubber, and timber. In addition, this west-central region of Africa contains some of Africa's richest areas for unlicensed oil (petroleum) and mineral exploration (namely iron ore).

Many slaves who ended up in the United States were from West-Central Africa. Others came from Mozambique and Madagascar (formerly French and Portuguese colonies). Slaves were captured from certain areas more than

others. Nearly one-third of all slaves were taken from the Congo region. Another third came from the area that is now known as Benin and Nigeria.

Over the last two decades, many countries in the west-central region have experienced political difficulties resulting in major armed conflict and the displacement of thousands of people. As a result, even the countries with the most functional governments are burdened by poverty, lack of education, and high external debt.

See also: Angolan/Kongolese; Kongo Cosmogram; Kongo Kingdom

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## Wheatley, Phillis

Phillis Wheatley (1754–1783) was the first African American to publish a book and the second published female poet in what would become the United States. Thought to have been born in Gambia in West Africa and enslaved and transported to Massachusetts in bondage, Phillis Wheatley is known as the first African American published poet. However, Wheatley's significance in the African American literary tradition has been contested for almost 100 years.

During the Harlem Renaissance, literary historian Arthur Schomburg, while praising Wheatley, noted that her poetry cannot be considered great. James Weldon Johnson complained that Wheatley's poetry never spoke out against slavery and that she showed "smug" contentment regarding her escape from Africa. This criticism of Wheatley's so-called color blindness continued during the Black Arts Movement associated with the reclamation of black poets in the 1960s. In 1962, Rosey Poole lamented Wheatley's lack of strength and explained that rather than being an important literary figure, she was a "literary curio." In 1964, Vernon Loggins called her a mere imitator. By 1972, R. Lynn Mason argued that while Wheatley's poetry may not establish her as a "Soul Sister," she must at least be considered as an

important part of the African American literary canon. It was June Jordan, in an essay entitled "The Difficult Miracle of Black Poetry in America: Or Something like a Sonnet for Phillis Wheatley" in 1985, who fully reclaimed Wheatley as an important literary figure and pointed out the revolutionary potential of her poems.

Phillis Wheatley was purchased as an enslaved maid-servant by John and Susanna Wheatley on July 11, 1761, when she was seven or eight years old. In the Wheatley household, where unlike many enslaved children, she was allowed to read, Wheatley demonstrated her prodigious intellect. By the age of 12, she had published her first poem, "On Messrs Hussey and Coffin" in the *Newport Mercury* in 1767. And Selena Hastings, Countess of Huffington and a friend of the Wheatleys, helped Phillis Wheatley to publish her collection *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral* in 1773. Wheatley's publication of a book on religious and moral subjects directly contradicted the prevailing racist logic of the time, which insisted that enslaved people, particularly enslaved women, were morally corrupt, and thus required the controlling framework of slavery. The publication of *Poems* was met with a variety of reactions. Many critics, including Thomas Jefferson, claimed that she could not have written the poems (despite the prefatory "attestation" of 17 men of the Boston elite that she had) and dismissed it as a simple act of imitation. However, Phillis Wheatley toured the American Colonies and Britain with her poems, and it was her acclaim as a poet that eventually won her freedom from slavery on October 18, 1773.

After the death of Mary Wheatley, the daughter of the people who had purchased Phillis Wheatley, Phillis Wheatley married John Peters, a free black grocer. Peters and Wheatley had three children but two of them died during the marriage. Peters left Wheatley, who returned to work as a servant and died at the age of 31 during childbirth in a boarding house and her third child died as well. Wheatley had written a second manuscript of poems during this part of her life, but it has never been found. June Jordan points out the poems of a "free black woman" would not have been marketable in those times and reminds critical readers of her work that what she was able to publish with white support in the 18th century may not have reflected her desires or opinions, but rather the limits of her enslaved situation.

Wheatley wrote poems about the importance of Christianity, elegies for prominent members of Boston Society, a poem in praise of King George when he repealed the Stamp



*Phillis Wheatley, born in West Africa and brought to colonial Massachusetts as a slave, became an accomplished poet in Boston and traveled to London to publish her work. (Library of Congress)*

Act, and poems in support of the freedom of the colonists. In 1776, she wrote a poem "To His Excellency George Washington" in celebration of the American Revolution. R. Lynn Matson points out that in Wheatley's many elegies, she represents death as a journey across water, a metaphor also found in many spirituals developed and sung by enslaved people.

June Jordan points out that in her poem "To the University of Cambridge," Wheatley attributes her writing to an "intrinsic ardor," not to the generosity or tutoring of the Wheatley family, and applauds Wheatley for creating herself as a poet in an incredibly unlikely circumstance. Wheatley's most relevant and remembered poem within African American studies is her poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America," which is thought to deal most explicitly with the situation of slavery from which the poet wrote at the time. Many critics complain that Wheatley depicts her enslavement as a good thing when she writes that mercy was what brought her from a "pagan land," but others celebrate the fact that Wheatley used her tenuous position as prodigy poet to argue against racism. Wheatley states that

Africans are children of God and therefore equally likely to become angelic as their white counterparts.

Despite or due to the many opinions on the significance of Wheatley's poetic work, her publication succeeds in bringing the discussion of the African American women's literary production in America into the 18th century. *See also:* American Revolution; Hammon, Jupiter; Senegambia

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## Woolman, John

John Woolman (1720–1772) was born October 19, 1720, into a rural Quaker community in Burlington County, West Jersey. Abandoning lucrative business opportunities in favor of a more balanced life, he became an influential itinerant Quaker minister, and was instrumental in that church's adoption of a strong antislavery position. Although abolitionism was not new in Woolman's era, his persistence, genuine commitment to the Quaker doctrine of universal love for both slaves and slaveholders, and persuasive writing is often credited as a driving force behind the Quaker Church's commitment to abolitionism.

John Woolman, son of Samuel Woolman and Elizabeth Burr Woolman, grew up on his father's farm on the Ranco-cas Creek, six miles south of its juncture with the Delaware River. He attended the local Quaker school. At 21 Woolman went to work for a local merchant in the nearby town of Mount Holly. During his apprenticeship, in the winter of 1742, his employer asked Woolman to draw up a bill of sale for a female slave. Although Woolman completed the task, the uneasiness he felt crystallized his belief that keeping

slaves was inconsistent with the teachings of his faith. In 1749, Woolman married Sarah Ellis. The couple had two children, but only their daughter Mary survived infancy.

At the age of 23, John Woolman was recorded as a minister by his local meeting, or Quaker congregation. Although the Quakers had no paid clergy, those people recognized by their peers as ministers were recorded in the minutes and issued a certificate that recognized their gift and facilitated missionary work, which was a priority for Woolman. In 1746, a trip through Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia increased his commitment to his antislavery ideals. This experience, and another in 1757, led him to write his most notable antislavery treatises. The first, *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes, Part I*, published in 1754, focused primarily on slaveholders rather than slaves, and claimed that the institution constituted a denial of God's commandment to love all people equally. In *Part II*, published in 1762 by Benjamin Franklin's press, Woolman looked more deeply into the harm done to slaves. Additionally, using examples from history and the law, Woolman pointed to flaws in many arguments used to justify slavery and demonstrated that the practice perpetrated a grievous wrong against innocent people. In time, Woolman's thoughtful arguments became important abolitionist texts.

At the 1758 Quaker meeting in Philadelphia, Woolman galvanized those in attendance and helped establish a committee to expand his work of ministering to slaveholding Quakers. Although he made attempts to affect public policy, Woolman worked for change primarily on a personal level, successfully convincing Quaker slaveholders to free their slaves through gentle persuasion and with a message of universal love. Woolman's message did not reach the many slaveholders outside the Quaker community.

Woolman's *Journal* is a classic of American literature, often considered on par with Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. Woolman's spiritual and social theories were admired by Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson, influential British intellectuals such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Charles Lamb, and later by John Greenleaf Whittier, who produced an edition of the journal in 1871.

In the 20th century, Woolman's views on wealth and poverty inspired muckraking author Theodore Dreiser. Woolman's published work combines Quaker spirituality and mysticism with an interest in social justice dedicated to antipoverty, pacifism, and justice for Native Americans, as well as abolition.

At the heart of Woolman's critique was the belief that God ordered the universe, and provided every person on earth with a living to which they were entitled. Most clearly in his essay titled, "A Plea for the Poor; or, A Word of Remembrance and Caution for the Rich," Woolman argued that greed for wealth or status drove some to neglect their families and spiritual lives in favor of profitable labor, or, more problematically, to exploit the labor of others. The world would retain God's felicitous design if people moderated their desires, pursuing only their true needs. Breaking with many theorists of his time, Woolman traced the cause of society's evils, including slavery, war, and poverty, to greed and concentration of wealth. Throughout his life he did his best to avoid participating in the oppression of others. Woolman avoided products produced by any form of exploitative labor. He wore undyed clothes in consideration of the slave labor used to manufacture dyes. During his travels he paid slaves in silver for any work done on his behalf. Woolman lived according to his ideals to the last. In 1772, he journeyed to England, and although he was not in good health, traveled in steerage in empathy for the sailors who worked on the ship. He died of smallpox in York on October 7, 1772.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Quakers (Society of Friends)

Jennifer Eckel

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# Culture, Identity, and Community: From Slavery to the Present

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**F**rom the early 17th century to the mid-19th century, more than a half-million Africans were enslaved and brought to the shores of North America to primarily engage in cash crop cultivation. Scholars, activists, and others have written extensively about the implications of the process by which human beings were intentionally taken from their homes, separated from family and friends, raped and tortured, and forced into a permanent and servile status. One of the most remarkable and tragic eras in human history, the Atlantic Slave trade—despite its destructive and dislocating tendencies—did not have the power to completely obliterate the lives of enslaved Africans. Instead the resiliency of their collective spirit allowed them to continue or create new cultures, identities, and communities in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, this story is far from a narrative of destruction, defeat, and death; it is ultimately a chronicle of human triumph against seemingly impossible odds.

Feeding the growing labor demands of rice, sugar, tobacco, and cotton plantations during the era of slavery, enslaved Africans and their Creole or American-born descendants forged distinctive communities out of a complex set of Atlantic African cultural, political, and social pasts. In many instances, they even adopted or assumed group identities in the Western Hemisphere such as “Coroman-tee,” “Amina,” “Eboe,” “Chamba,” “Canga,” or “Lucumí,” which harkened back to their African past. Although these

enslaved communities were also shaped by European and Native American values—as well as the socially limiting institution of plantation slavery—the foundations of these cultures, identities, and communities were and continue to be solidly African. The result of this mixture of Atlantic African social and cultural mores shaped the creation of such uniquely African American forms and traditions as jazz, blues, gospel, and rap music; John Henry, High John the Conqueror, and Brer Rabbit folk tales; the Charleston, the ring shout, and break dancing; Gullah, Geechee, and other Africanized variants of English; and even the preparation and use of certain foods (e.g., collard greens, rice, black-eyed peas, okra, and gumbo). Clearly then, African cultural practices not only influenced African American culture, but also were a shaping feature of American culture.

The notion that enslaved Africans and their descendants successfully managed to maintain active cultural links to their African past has been debated for decades. Scholars, from a wide range of disciplines, have contributed their perspectives on multiple sides of this issue. As a result of such attention, four schools of thought have emerged during the course of the 20th and 21st centuries—the Annihilationist, the Africanist, the Creolization, and the Diasporic schools. Sociologist Robert E. Park, the father of the Annihilationist school, wrote in 1919 that American slavery destroyed all vestiges of African culture and that nothing in the culture of African Americans living in the U.S. South

was from their African backgrounds. This approach was later championed by E. Franklin Frazier—a former student of Park and a fellow sociologist. As one of the first black scholars to contribute to this debate, Frazier contended in the 1930s that slavery obliterated the black family and that this facilitated the Americanization of slaves and the utter annihilation of African culture in the United States. Given the context in which his works were written, Frazier was seeking to de-emphasize any African elements in African American culture in order to promote such goals as integration, social equality, and voting rights. If it could be proven that African American culture was influenced by the African past, this would potentially support the claims of white supremacists, who argued that African Americans were inherently different or inferior and should be separated from whites as a result.

More recently, historian Jon Butler has made a contribution to the Annihilationist school in his 1990 work titled *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*. In a chapter titled “The African Spiritual Holocaust,” Butler contends that African religious systems were completely destroyed in North America and that this facilitated the conversion of enslaved Africans to Christianity. Butler does allow for certain African cultural continuities, particularly in burial practices and conjuration. However, his focus is on the destruction of African religious systems as opposed to disjointed ritual acts and beliefs. Butler’s argument, in part, rests on the fact that very few contemporary whites wrote about the practice of African religion among slaves. This invisibility of the practice of slave religion may have been a result of purposeful acts on the part of the enslaved community, which had good reason to prevent whites from knowing the inner workings of their spiritual worldview. Butler does not account for this possibility, and his interpretation has added additional fuel to an already heated debate.

The pioneering efforts of anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits effectively addressed the claims of the Annihilationist school. In the 1940s, Herskovits published *The Myth of the Negro Past*, which focused attention on the topic of African cultural transmissions and continuities in the Americas. He was among the first in the Africanist school, and his work sought to counter a number of myths about Africa and the Africans residing throughout the Western Hemisphere, in an attempt to undermine racial prejudice in the United States. By demonstrating tangible cultural links between Africa and diasporic communities,

Herskovits took full aim at the myth that African Americans essentially have no history. In addition, he addressed the misconception that Africans were brought to America from diverse cultures and were distributed in a manner that destroyed their cultures. Another myth Herskovits sought to dispel was the notion that African cultures were so savage that European customs were actively preferred by enslaved Africans. The lasting importance of his research is in highlighting numerous examples of Africanisms—or African cultural retentions—in both the secular and sacred dimensions of African American culture. Herskovits’s argument was not that African Americans were Africans culturally, but that they maintained key aspects of their African heritage. This research helped put to rest various racist myths and misperceptions while forwarding the notion that African American culture was something worthy of serious scholarly consideration.

The middle ground between the Annihilationist and the Africanist schools, what has been referred to as the Creolization school, is epitomized in the work of anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price. When Mintz and Price published *The Birth of African-American Culture*, it was intended to critique Herskovits’s earlier findings regarding the presence of Africanisms in African American culture. They argued that enslaved Africans shipped to the Americas developed and created cultures and societies that could not be characterized simply as “African.” Essentially, the nature of the slave trade and enslavement made the direct continuity of African culture impossible. Although African culture may have been crucial in the creation of African American culture, Mintz and Price contend that it was neither central nor independent of European influences or new cultural developments in the Americas.

Mintz and Price opposed several aspects of Herskovits’s interpretations, from his claim of West African cultural homogeneity to his argument that specific African cultural groupings formed in the Americas. Mintz and Price contend that West African culture was not monolithic and that purposeful ethnic “randomization” actively was engaged in by slave traders, ship captains, and plantation owners in the Americas. Many of their conclusions are based on the premise that Atlantic Africa had vastly numerous and diverse cultures. Although there is little doubt that cultural differences existed in Atlantic Africa, what has been contested by a number of scholars is the degree of this diversity. On one end of the debate, the works of Herskovits and Joseph

Holloway support ideas of cultural homogeneity. Holloway asserts that because most North American slaves originated from West-Central Africa, the idea of a monolithic Bantu cultural heritage and its links to the birth of African American cultures would be quite applicable. Although there are clearly flaws in this sort of approach, the idea of a monolithic Bantu culture or its significant contribution to African American culture finds support in the works of a number of scholars. On the other end of the spectrum, Mintz and Price likely exaggerate the amount of diversity using African languages as a tool of measurement. The truth lies between the two extremes, and ample evidence for this conclusion can be found in recent scholarship.

The fourth school, known as the Diasporic approach, combines the best elements of the Africanist and Creolization schools. Championed principally by Atlantic African historians, this school traces cultural continuities and discontinuities by tracing specific groups in their journeys across the Atlantic through the establishment of African American communities. By starting the historical analysis in Africa, these scholars have attempted to track coherent groups of people in order to see the many ways that they either maintained their cultural identities or adopted new ones. This has been the focus, for example, of the scholars working on the Nigerian Hinterland Project and has been part of the interpretive approaches of a number of recent historians, including John Thornton, Michael Gomez, and Douglas Chambers among many others.

More than anything else, the Diasporic school focuses specific attention on Atlantic African history as a means of correcting many of the interpretive mistakes made by advocates of the Africanist and Creolization schools. For example, John Thornton in *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* demonstrates that researchers have tended to overestimate the amount of cultural diversity in Atlantic Africa because they ascribe ethnic identities to every distinct language and regional dialectic. The problem is that Atlantic Africans were multilingual, and certain languages and regional dialects were so related that they could be mutually understood. Thornton further concludes that Atlantic Africa was not nearly as diverse as other scholars have assumed and that, in fact, the region can be divided into just three distinct cultural zones and seven subzones: Upper Guinea, which included the Mande language family and two variants of the West Atlantic language family; Lower Guinea, which included two variants of the Kwa

language family; and the Angola zone, which included two variants of the western Bantu language family. Because Atlantic Africans were multilingual and were not as culturally diverse as previously claimed, then it is entirely possible that the cultures, identities, and communities they forged in the Americas had a great deal of structure and order.

Another issue of importance in Thornton's assessment is the claim that European traders, slave ship captains, and plantation owners engaged in active and conscious efforts to ethnically randomize enslaved Africans. If practiced, this measure could effectively undermine the ability of enslaved Africans to foment rebellion on slave ships or plantations in the Americas because they would not have an effective means of communication. It would also hinder the creation of a more unified culture and identity among enslaved Africans. According to Thornton, however, cultural randomization was not a significant aspect of the slave trade. In sociological terminology, he contends that the enslaved Africans on a typical slave ship were groups as opposed to crowds. In other words, they had some significant links to each other before they were brought onboard ships and were not just randomly and haphazardly selected. This, in addition to other points raised by Thornton, has obvious implications for the maintenance of particular Atlantic African cultural practices and for the development of African American identity.

Michael Gomez, in *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, expands on Thornton's conclusions by showing that significant African cultural enclaves developed in the Americas as a result of a number of factors. One of these factors, he argues, was the lack of cultural diversity in Atlantic Africa. Whereas Thornton contends that Atlantic Africa could be divided into three culturally distinct zones, Gomez demonstrates that there were six cultural zones in this region: Senegambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, the Bight of Biafra, and West-Central Africa. In addition, Africans from certain regions shared cultural affinities that facilitated the process of hybridization or mixing between African groups. In discussing the ways in which Africans borrowed from each other, Gomez, like others in the Diasporic school, can demonstrate and even explain cultural discontinuities. Unlike scholars in the Creolization school, who mainly focus on the African adoption of European culture, advocates of the Diasporic approach are much more interested in explaining how African ethnic groups borrowed from each other.



While still clinging to their ethnic identities, enslaved Africans shaped a new set of cultures in the Americas. As shown by advocates of the Diasporic school, these new cultures were not simply a combination of European and African cultures. Instead, Gomez and others in this school make convincing claims that the first step toward the birth of an African American culture was intra-African cultural mixing. In other words, in the process of becoming African American, Igbos, Mandes, Akans, Angolans, and others borrowed from each other and, over time, became one people. In this way, scholars in the Diasporic school can demonstrate a significant amount of cultural discontinuity. Because various enslaved African groups borrowed from each other's cultures, then clearly these cultures changed over time and represent a discontinuity and disconnection with the African past. However, the Diasporic school also explains cultural continuity and connection, but in ways slightly different from advocates of the Africanist school.

For example, one significant trend among scholars in the Diasporic school has been to move away from generalizations about "African" cultural continuities, to emphasizing instead the contributions that specific African ethnic groups (e.g., Igbo, Yoruba, Fon, Mande, Akan) made to development of African American culture.

Exported from the factories and slave castles along the Atlantic coast of Africa, enslaved Africans boarded ships and suffered through the so-called Middle Passage—one of the most horrifying experiences in human history. In the midst of this tragic story, historian Sterling Stuckey contends that the slave ships crossing the Middle Passage were melting pots that forged a single people out of numerous African ethnicities. Even if ethnic randomization occurred, the horrors of the Middle Passage and enslavement helped forge a cultural, social, and political unity among enslaved Africans. This was an ongoing process, beginning with the enslavement experience in Atlantic Africa and continuing in certain regions of the Americas well into the 19th century. Both Gomez and Douglas Chambers demonstrate that, throughout the Americas, enslaved Africans created ethnic enclave communities and saw themselves as members of African-derived named groups. They readily identified themselves as members of separate "nations" initially until a more unified identity was created as a result of the circumstances and conditions of enslavement.

This initial sense of national identity was a direct result of import patterns in the Atlantic slave trade. As Daniel

Littlefield notes, European planters developed a number of ethnic preferences based on perceptions of traits that certain enslaved African groups supposedly had. Thus, Europeans created shifting and alternating hierarchies of ethnic and regional preferences that were employed and gave some shape to import patterns in locales throughout the Americas. In colonies such as Jamaica, Barbados, and South Carolina, Gold Coast Akan-speakers were coveted by some planters for their alleged propensity for loyalty and hard work; in other colonies, or even among other planters in colonies that seemingly coveted Gold Coast Africans, these slaves were considered unruly and rebellious. Igbos and others from Calabar or the Bight of Biafra were reviled because of an alleged propensity for suicide. Angolans were supposedly paradoxically prone to docility and flight.

European preferences for certain African ethnic groups were likely due to a range of factors—the cost of importing enslaved Africans from certain regions; limited access to certain slave markets on the Atlantic African coast; or the demand for Africans from regions with expertise in the cultivation of certain crops and other skills. Certainly among slave traders and plantation owners, there was no clear consensus on the behavioral characteristics of any African group. This reflects what seems obvious from the vantage point of hindsight; the reason African groups do not fit into generalized behavioral categories is that, like the rest of humanity, Africans can and will display a broad spectrum of behavior. Whether real or imagined, these perceptions of African behavioral characteristics did contribute to the formation of ethnic enclave communities in North America as well as elsewhere.

Harvard University's Du Bois Institute slave trade database bears out this conclusion. This important and exhaustive project provides an accurate picture of the Atlantic slave trade and includes information for roughly 60 percent of all slave-trading voyages. The Du Bois database demonstrates that of the 101,925 enslaved Africans from identifiable locations sent to Virginia, 45 percent came from the Bight of Biafra. In South Carolina, enslaved Africans from the Bight of Biafra accounted for just 10 percent of identifiable imports; in the United States as a whole, Bight of Biafra exports were 19 percent of the 317,748 enslaved Africans recorded in the Du Bois database. So we can discuss a Bight of Biafra or Igbo enclave in Virginia as a circumstance unique in North America. Not only does this database corroborate many

of the findings of Stuckey, Gomez, Margaret Washington, Douglas Chambers, and others, but it also opens new possibilities in the study of the formation of African American culture.

Although the nature of African ethnic enclaves varied over time, it is now possible to pinpoint the nature of these concentrations and track specific cultural influences. Between 1701 and 1800, 26 percent of enslaved Africans from identifiable regions and embarking on ships to the Carolinas came from West-Central Africa. The 1739 Stono Revolt, initiated principally by enslaved Angolans from West-Central Africa, forced the proprietors and slave owners of South Carolina to reduce their reliance on Africans from this region. Also, because of the emphasis on rice cultivation in the South Carolina Lowcountry and sea islands, Africans from rice-producing regions of Upper Guinea—Senegambia (25 percent) and Sierra Leone (9 percent)—became important demographic factors and largely replaced the earlier West-Central African import stream. These three cultural contingents played active roles in the formation of Gullah and Geechee culture. Elements of the West-Central African, Senegambian, and Biafran (11 percent) contingents of South Carolina's slave population apparently created an alliance in 1822, under the leadership of Denmark Vesey, in an attempt to foment a rebellion. Although the details of this conspiracy are currently in dispute, it is clear that separate bands of Gullahs, Igbos, Mande-speakers, French-speaking Saint-Dominguans, and American-born slaves had formed and found between them areas of commonality. In some ways, this could have been an early expression of Pan-Africanism.

Many dance forms in the United States were influenced by West-Central Africans, particularly in regions in which they were heavily concentrated. The Charleston—formerly known as the Juba—was a dance that in form and timing had analogues in the martial dance styles of the Kongo Kingdom. Charleston, South Carolina, the final destination of thousands of West-Central Africans, was so associated with this dance that the Juba became known as the “Charleston” by the early 20th century. Even the word “Juba” has a West-Central African origin, meaning “to beat time in a rhythmic pattern.” In a typical performance, older black men would rhythmically “pat juba” by slapping their hands on their thighs—in imitation of the drum—while others would perform the dance. Both the patters and the dancers would sing as an integral part of the Juba dance.

By combining “drumming,” singing, and elaborate and competitive dances, the Juba/Charleston resembled West-Central African military dances and derivative martial arts. The Juba/Charleston was also characteristic of the various dance styles—inspired by West-Central African cultural elements—performed at the aptly named “Congo Square” in New Orleans during the early 19th century. Interestingly, many of the Congolese from West-Central Africa arriving in Louisiana after 1800 were transported there from South Carolina, which demonstrates the remarkable amount of interconnection in the African Diaspora. In addition to the Juba/Charleston, West-Central Africans were important in the development of baton-twirling, jazz music, and break dancing—an art likely derived from a West-Central African-inspired Brazil martial dance known as *capoeira*.

Between 1701 and 1800, 45 percent of Africans entering Virginia from identifiable regions were embarked on ships leaving ports in the Bight of Biafra. Thus, Virginia imported a disproportionately large number of Igbo-speakers and others from Calabar and surrounding regions. As Lorena Walsh, James Sidbury, and Douglas Chambers contend, this emphasis on Igbo imports played a significant factor in the rise of Afro-Virginian culture. One cultural implication of the presence of so many Igbo-speakers was the proliferation of Igbo terms and concepts—*okra*, *buckra*, *obia*—or discrete Igbo cultural practices (e.g., the Jonkonu celebration, funerary customs, and spiritual beliefs) in Jamaica, Virginia, and other regions of the Anglophone Americas that imported significant numbers of Africans from the Bight of Biafra. Another implication, discussed by Sidbury, was the possibility that Gabriel Prosser—leader of a failed Richmond slave revolt in 1800—was accorded a great deal of respect and veneration because of his blacksmithing skills and the spiritual powers associated with this trade among the peoples living near the Niger River delta and Senegambia. In fact, three separate blacksmiths were claimed to have been part of the leadership core of this attempt to capture and raze the capital of Virginia.

Information regarding imports into areas such as North Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, the Middle Colonies (with the exception of New York), and the New England colonies is scanty at best, and scholars can detail the slave trade in these regions only through inference and suggestive evidence. As the principal port of entry for enslaved Africans,

Charleston satisfied most of the demand for forced labor in North Carolina and Georgia. The result of this commercial connection meant that both colonies/states likely had demographic patterns and ethnic enclaves similar to those found in South Carolina. Maryland imported a large number of Africans from Senegambia (49%) and did not mirror the reliance on imports from the Bight of Biafra found in its Chesapeake neighbor, Virginia. For the remainder of the slaveholding regions of North America, Gomez contends that Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia supplied enslaved Africans to places such as Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Although there has been a major problem in tracking African imports into certain regions, the Du Bois Institute database and other sources reveal much about imports in colonial New York and Louisiana. The Dutch colony of New Netherland—later to become New York—witnessed two different waves of African immigrants. The first, lasting for the initial few decades of Dutch rule, was dominated by the importation of West-Central Africans. The second wave focused on Africans from the Gold Coast. Combined, both of these contingents may have contributed to such cultural formations as the Pinkster festivals, the “Congo” dances in Albany, and specific funerary practices associated with the African Burial Ground in New York City (e.g., carved symbols on coffins, the use of burial shrouds, and internment with earthenware, beads, and other objects). A definite Gold Coast presence is noted in both the 1712 New York City revolt and the alleged conspiracy of 1741; in both instances, enslaved Africans with Akan names predominated among the leadership core.

Though Louisiana shifted from French to Spanish and finally to American control after 1803, the demographics of the slave trade are relatively easy to trace. The principal import groups into Louisiana were Africans from Senegambia, the Bight of Benin, and West-Central Africa. As the most numerically significant African group in Louisiana, the Congolese and other West-Central Africans contributed to expressive culture (e.g., dance contests in New Orleans’ Congo Square and baton twirling), cuisine (e.g., gumbo and jambalaya), and even body gestures (e.g., standing with arms akimbo) in Louisiana. The significant African contingent from the Bight of Benin, as well as enslaved Santo Domingans arriving in New Orleans in the wake of the 1791 revolution, brought with them spiritual beliefs that became Voodoo and Hoodoo in Louisiana. The Voodoo/

Hoodoo complex is a syncretic blend of Fon, Yoruba, and West-Central African metaphysical and religious concepts, and in Louisiana, it likely incorporated Catholic icons and elements from West-Central African and Senegambian belief systems.

During her reign as “Voodoo queen” in New Orleans from 1830 to 1869, Marie Laveau routinely evoked the names of Fon and Yoruba deities—Legba and Damballa—in her ritual ceremonies. In addition, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall shows that spiritual beliefs, the knowledge of “herblore,” the production of poisons and curatives, and the creation of charms in Louisiana were brought to the region with the earliest slave imports. The Bambara from Senegambia played an important role in these areas. Although the term “Bambara” has a number of meanings and ethnic connotations, in the context of Louisiana, it referred specifically to non-Muslim Africans from Senegambia who were captured in jihads and sold to European merchants. However defined, this group significantly influenced the nature of slave culture in Louisiana. For example, *zinzin*—the word for an amulet of power in Louisiana Creole—has the same meaning and name in Bambara. *Gris-gris* and *wanga* were other Bambara or Mande words for charms referred to in colonial and antebellum Louisiana. Even the Arabic-derived Mande word for spiritual advisor or teacher—*marabout*—appears in the records of colonial Louisiana.

Based on the reality of ethnic enclaves and the information regarding the pattern and structure of the Atlantic slave trade revealed by the Du Bois Institute database, we can conclude that ethnic mixing was never achieved by European shippers and slaveholders. The fact is that randomization was not feasible on either side of the Atlantic, and patterns of ethnic concentration that emerged in the Caribbean and South America also emerged in North American colonies/states. In spite of this mounting evidence, however, a number of scholars remain skeptical about the close cultural connections between Africa and the Americas. Among the many critics of the notion of cultural continuities is Philip D. Morgan. In seeming agreement with the interpretations of Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, he forwards the notion of ethnic randomization on both sides of the Atlantic, which, in turn, served as a facilitating factor for creolization and acculturation. Using the preliminary results of the Du Bois Institute database, Morgan claims that unlike Brazil and certain portions of the Caribbean, North America received a much more heterogeneous

African population than previously assumed. The difference between Morgan's conclusion and those forwarded by Gomez, Chambers, and others might be due to the geographic scale on which they focus. By looking at the slave trade on a continental scale (e.g., all of North America), Morgan sees a very mixed group of African imports; however, by focusing on smaller regional units, such as states or colonies, other scholars have seen much more pattern to the slave trade and much less ethnic randomization.

These regional patterns and concentrations meant that full-fledged language communities of specific African ethnic groups probably emerged throughout North America. These language communities contributed to the rise of Africanized regional dialects in the United States and even the infusion of a number of African words. The Gullah and Geechee of the South Carolina and Georgia coastline are the most studied example of this phenomenon. As anthropologist Sheila Walker and ethnohistorian David Dalby illustrate, African American speech—even in the late 20th century—continues to bear the marks of this level of linguistic connection to Africa. Such common words and expressions as “hip” (as something “in” or “cool”), “cat” (as a hip or cool person), “dig” (as in “do you understand?”), “jive,” “wow,” “jazz,” “OK,” and “tote” have roots among the Wolof, the Bantu, and the Gola of Atlantic Africa. Likewise, even some common grammatical constructions, such as double negatives or the expression “he been gone,” have strong analogues in the languages of Atlantic African peoples.

It was, perhaps, from these early African language communities that other African-derived forms and practices emerged. For example, the African American notion of eating black-eyed peas for luck on New Year's Eve has direct analogues throughout the African Diaspora, including similar beliefs and practices in the Danish Virgin Islands, Senegal, Brazil, and Martinique. Spirit possession, as an intrinsic element of African diasporic ritual practice, can be found in any number of black religions and religious institutions, including African American Christianity (in the guise of “catching the ghost”), Haitian Vodun, Cuban Santería, Brazilian Candomblé, and a large number of Atlantic African systems. In addition to these ritual beliefs, African Americans continue to employ other African-derived practices and expressive modes, including musical improvisation (e.g., rap freestyles and jazz music), call and response, blue notes, and vocal instrumentation (e.g., the beat box

and the jazz scat). Combined, these examples point to a rich and ever-evolving culture with tangible and continuing links to Africa and its Diaspora.

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## Amalgamation

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"Amalgamation" was the first term used to describe interracial sexual contact. Early colonists believed that sexual relations between people of different races was disgraceful behavior that shamed not only the English man or woman but also the Christian Church. This was especially true with respect to white–black sexual unions, which would obscure cultural differences and undermine ideas of racial superiority.

To be sure, laws enacted to prohibit amalgamation were less concerned about white male offenses against black women than they were about black men cohabitating with white women. Although all acts of illicit sexual behavior out of wedlock were severely punished before 1662, the Virginia legislature made heritable bondage certain and illicit sexual behavior race-based when they ruled that the child of a black woman would always follow the status of its mother. Because mixed-race people

became black in the colonial era, economic advantage was given to the master class, enabling the sexual promiscuity of white males and the sexual oppression of black women while normalizing the ownership of black women's reproductive labor.

In 1691, Virginia banned interracial sexual contact of any kind, yet interracial sex between blacks and whites and blacks and Native Americans was commonplace in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Native American population had drastically declined by the time Africans were imported in any significant number, and over time interracial relationships with them would decline also. There is extensive evidence, however, of mixed-race children of Native American and African descent in the 18th century, with many of the early plantation estates established near or on well-worked Indian lands. And much to the concern of the European community, African Americans and Native Americans did form alliances across racial boundaries, given that many Native Americans were also enslaved. During and after the 18th century, laws concerning the enslavement of Native Americans changed several times. Many states adopted laws forbidding the enslavement of Native Americans, which led many African Americans with Native American forbearers to file freedom suits in court in the hopes of achieving their liberation.

After the American Revolution, racial prejudice against blacks began to harden. The universal rejection of black emancipation by Thomas Jefferson, for example, was sustained by the belief that if blacks were freed, an unacceptable blurring of racial definitions would occur in a society of superior and inferior people. In 1787, Jefferson wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that these differences were a complete obstacle to the black slave's emancipation unless they were "removed beyond the reach of mixture" so as not to pollute the purity of the Anglo-Saxon origins of the American people. Additionally, Americans in the North and the South believed that if blacks were emancipated, a race war would occur that would lead to the extermination of the inferior race.

Proslavery advocates used fears of racial mixing to justify keeping slaves in bondage. By the 1830s they used the word "amalgamation" extensively against abolitionists, calling them "amalgamationists"; they claimed that abolitionists encouraged the mixing of the races by promoting social equality and freedom for the enslaved. They used

print culture extensively, delineating extreme caricatures of African American physical features and dress to influence white rejection of abolitionism and to heighten anti-black sentiment in the North and the South.

American fascination with aggressive Anglo-Saxonism and the racial nationalism that the Revolutionary generation transmitted to future generations would lead to the negrophobia and intensive racial theories that emerged in the 19th century. The rise of scientific racialism in Europe in the 1830s spread to the United States by the 1840s and 1850s. American race scientists such as Samuel George Morton, Josiah Mott, and Louis Agassiz produced studies that were concerned with proving that apparent differences in people were biological and that African Americans were actually a different species. The quasi-scientific assessments in these publications would play a large part in the growing belief over the 19th century that differences in color meant black intellectual and physical inferiority and that these differences were fixed in nature. Thus, by the Civil War, racial purity became a moral imperative because amalgamation would ultimately lead to the extinction of the white race. Egypt and Carthage were cited as examples of how mongrelization had ruined past great civilizations.

David Goodman Croly coined the word “miscegenation” in 1863 to describe the intermarrying of blacks and whites in a pamphlet he anonymously wrote titled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro* to exacerbate the already existing racial fears of white Americans and to hopefully derail Abraham Lincoln’s second run for presidency.

*See also:* Acculturation; Miscegenation

Kay Wright Lewis

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## Anansi the Spider

Anansi the Spider is a folk hero, originating among the Ashanti people of West Africa. Enslaved Africans brought Anansi the Spider stories to the plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas and narrated the Anansi tales as a reminder of their African heritage. A trickster with human qualities, Anansi tries to outwit his rivals, sometimes winning and other times not. Anansi is usually a likable character who gets into troubled or funny situations. Some tales depict Anansi as a bad character. Either way, the Anansi tales provide the listening audience with an important moral, or life lesson, at the end of each story.

Anansi’s tales vary by region, including through variations in the spider’s name (such as Ananse and Nanci) or through the spider being replaced by a rabbit or another animal figure in a local tale. A popular children’s tale in North America is Gerald McDermott’s *Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti*, first published in 1972. A lovable spider with whom children can sympathize, Anansi leaves home for a journey but gets into trouble. Anansi’s sons quickly mobilize to save their father. Sky God decides the Sun should remain in the Sky and not be given to Anansi as a reward for one of his sons. The telling of this tale allows children to learn about the Ashanti folk hero, West African colors and designs, and the Ashanti language rhythms.

*See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Gold Coast

Margaret Prentice Hecker

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## Ancestral Spirits

The belief in ancestors, or the "living dead," is deeply rooted in many African religions and spiritual philosophies. In most cases, the central belief is that death is not final, but merely a transformation from one world to another. Although the concept is often misunderstood by academics and those in various religious communities, the omnipresence of the ancestor cannot be disputed among those who believe.

Whether an African is an Akan, a Yoruba, a Wolof, or a member of some other ethnic group, the ancestors, although deceased, are linked to their living descendants and communicate consistently with the living to guide and instruct them throughout their lives. Furthermore, the ancestors, by virtue of their status in the spiritual world, guide the living with a certain moral authority. When people are obedient and respectful of the ancestors, they are rewarded. In contrast, when the ancestors are forgotten or treated with disdain, the living are punished. This principle reflects the fundamental belief that to forget the ancestors is to disregard self; an ancestor is merely an extension of self because the living are descendants of the ancestors.

Respect for the ancestors can be expressed in admiration for tradition; consequently, the living celebrate the memories of their ancestors through rituals including offerings of food and drinks and prayers. It is a rule within most African religious systems that not every ancestor is revered; instead, only those ancestors who lived an exemplary life are celebrated.

The Akan refer to the ancestors as *nsamanfo*, whereas the Yoruba people annually celebrate *Egungun* (the spirit of the ancestors materialized) in a festival usually marking the beginning of the new yam season. The Yoruba believed that the ancestors who farmed the land for many years should share in the fruits of the harvest.

When the enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas, they brought their culture with them, which manifested in several different religions: for example, Santería in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Vodoun in Haiti, Candomble

in Brazil, and Voodoo in New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana. In most instances, Christian slave owners demonized African religious beliefs; therefore, the enslaved had to disguise their practices, and that included their connection with their ancestors. Quickly, the enslaved Africans learned to adapt their African religious rituals. Many of the enslaved believed that upon death they would return to Africa or that when the ancestors were properly remembered, they would return as children newly born into the family.

During the Black Power movement in the United States, there was a resurgence of African cultural practices, and many African Americans began to practice African religions. One such example would be the Oyotunji African Village in Sheldon, South Carolina, which was founded in 1970 by Oba Efuntola Oseijeman Adelabu Adefunmi I. The village is dedicated to preserving Yoruba culture and religion, and special celebrations in memory of the ancestors are held in the village annually.

Even today, some European and American scholars believe that practitioners of African religion do not relate to a Supreme Being; furthermore, these academicians relegate all African religion to mere ancestor worship, failing to realize that the ancestors—being closest to one's family—serve as intermediaries to the Supreme Being.

*See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Slave Religion; Transmigration

Nancy J. Dawson

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## Anderson, Marian

Marian Anderson (1897–1993), internationally acclaimed operatic contralto, was born in the "Negro Quarter" of South Philadelphia and was recognized at an early age for her musical talents. By the age of six she was singing at her family church—the Union Baptist Church on Fitzwater and Martin

Streets—and her earliest musical education and voice lessons, as a teenager, were provided through the generosity of her church and members of her community. Studying first under local contraltos, by 1920 Anderson began to study under Giuseppe Boghetti, benefiting from a fundraising concert sponsored by the Union Baptist Church.

In the 1920s, Anderson established her career singing in African American communities around the United States, making her first recording of spirituals in 1924, winning a contest to sing with the New York Philharmonic in 1925, and performing at Carnegie Hall in 1928. By the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, she performed at concert halls and with opera companies across Europe and Asia. Anderson, like her mentor Roland Hayes, valued the legacy of African American music and established a repertoire in excess of 100 African American spirituals from which she would choose closing numbers for her recitals. This element, which became a signature of her concert performances, has become a tradition continued since by many well-versed African American classical singers, including Jessye Norman, William Warfield, and Kathleen Battle.

Anderson returned from performing and studying around the globe with a newfound fame and recognition of her talent. In 1938, she made an intensive tour of the Southern states, with over 70 concert dates and was awarded an honorary doctorate of music from Howard University. In 1939, her manager booked Anderson to perform in concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. When the management of Constitution Hall reported that the original concert date was previously booked and that the hall was unable to make another booking for Ms. Anderson, it became publicly known that the owner of the concert hall, the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.), held a policy that did not allow African American artists to perform on its stage. The D.A.R.'s public discrimination against the world-renowned singer drew widespread criticism. The public resignation of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt from the D.A.R. and her comments about the group's policy in her weekly newspaper column elevated awareness of the slight against Anderson to an international level. Through the secretary of the interior, the Roosevelt administration invited Anderson to give a concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. On April 9, 1939, Easter Sunday, Anderson performed live from the Lincoln Memorial for 75,000 people, with an audience of 1 million plus watching the live televised broadcast. Anderson was a recipient of the Spingarn Medal that same year.



*Marian Anderson, internationally celebrated opera singer, performed at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939; an event viewed as symbolic in the Civil Rights movement. (Library of Congress)*

For the balance of her career, Anderson was a prominent figure performing around the world and representing the United States as a sort of “good will” ambassador. That role became official in 1958 when Anderson was officially designated as a delegate to the United Nations. Throughout the Cold War, though, Anderson's strong beliefs and work as a civil rights and peace activist sometimes put her at odds with the U.S. government and African American community leaders. Signing the World Peace Appeal (Stockholm Appeal) of 1950, an antinuclear movement from the Eastern Bloc countries, was highly suspect during the Cold War. Even while carrying out her UN duties or speaking on U.S. policy, Anderson made her personal views known as well. For example, after delivering a policy statement in 1955 on her delegation's position to the General Assembly concerning the U.S. position on the newly formed Nigeria's claim on the Cameroons, Anderson did not hesitate to publicize her opposition to that policy. She also broke ranks by speaking publicly about race relations in America while on a concert tour in Asia.

Anderson broke many race barriers in the United States. She became the first African American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1955. In 1961, Anderson



once again sang in Washington, D.C., when she performed the National Anthem at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy. In 1963, President Kennedy presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She began her farewell tour the next year—with her starting venue at Constitution Hall—and retired from singing in 1965. In 1972, she received a Peace Prize from the United Nations. Marian Anderson passed away in 1993 at the age of 96 and is buried in Eden Cemetery in Philadelphia.

*See also:* Cold War and Civil Rights; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Roosevelt, Eleanor

Jane M. Aldrich

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## Angolan/Kongolese

Angolan and Kongolese are often used in reference to persons belonging to the ancient kingdom of the Kongo, whose influence stretched well beyond its modern boundaries. Spelling Kongo with a “K” distinguishes inhabitants of the old Kongo kingdom from the modern-day “Congo.” The Kongo kingdom stretched from present-day Gabon, in the north, eastward to the Kwango River and southward to northern Angola. The sovereignty of the Kongo kingdom lasted from the early 15th century to the late 18th century. One of its major chieftainships was in modern-day Angola. As a result, Angolans and Kongolese shared many cultural traits. Both Angola and the Kongo receive their names from the Portuguese.

As the Portuguese gradually took control of the Atlantic coastal strip throughout the 16th century by a series of treaties and wars, they eventually formed the colony of

Angola. Slave traders during the 1500s first used the name “Kongo” in reference to the BaKongo people. As the Atlantic slave trade increased, the term was used to describe any person brought from the Atlantic coast of Central Africa to the Americas. The meaning of “Angola” also broadened with the intensification of the Atlantic slave trade. “Ngola” referred specifically to the ruler of the Ndongo part of modern-day northern Angola, but by the mid-18th century, it was used almost interchangeably with Kongolese.

When Angolans were enslaved and brought to the New World, they were known for their warrior skills and their conjuring powers. These attributes played an important part of group resistance to slavery in the Americas; not only were Angolans leaders in the Stono rebellion of South Carolina, but it was also “Gullah” Jack, a conjurer, who provided the conspirators in the Denmark Vesey plot with special powers. The descriptors “Gulla,” “Gullah,” and “Gola” usually referred to Africans in the Americas who were from Angola. The “Gullah” islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia have a language and culture that is a product of their Angolan origins and American residency.

Angolan and Kongolese presence can be found in many places of the Atlantic world. In the Maroon communities of Brazil, Angolan presence was noted by observers, and symbols, such as the Kongo cosmogram, suggest an equally influential presence of Kongolese. In both Puerto Rico and Cuba, Kongo priests still practice the rituals of their African ancestors.

*See also:* Gullah; Kongo Cosmogram; Stono Rebellion

Jarett M. Fields

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## Animal Trickster Stories

“Trickster” literally means cheater, or joker. It evokes a buffoon-like image but also involves a mythical dimension.

The very notion of the trickster comes from ancestral beliefs, manifested within African American folklore. The trickster is an archetypal representation gifted with magical powers and personified by a tripartite entity, partly divine, partly human, and partly animal. Plus, this protean figure embodies a transitional status and has the power to cross boundaries; for instance, a trickster such as Esu (in the Fon mythology) is talented with the knowledge of all languages and therefore stands as the ubiquitous figure of mediation.

The theme of trickster stories puts forward a double topic. First, it brings out the notions of African mythology and of oral transmission of a folkloric heritage. Trickster stories convey riddles and morals but have also provided the tools for survival. Tales are intended to soothe the mind of an uprooted people through the transmission of these pieces of folkloric legacy. Historically, animal trickster stories symbolize the projection of the dominating/dominant relationship that existed between masters and slaves—hence, both the allegorical meaning of the possibility of extirpating oneself out of traps thanks to clever tricks and the recurring theme of revenge in folktales. What is more, the trickster tale partakes of a contrapuntal answer addressed to the dominating culture.

Second, it hints at the rhetorical device that consists of concealing meaning and misleading the trickster's target, a concept named the "signifying monkey" by Henry Louis Gates Jr. This transposition of an underlying meaning through symbolic protagonists echoes the linguistic process of codification that characterizes African American Vernacular English.

Traditionally, animal trickster tales feature at least two protagonists, the prankster and his stooge. The former stands in a position ahead of the latter insofar as he retains knowledge that he aims to deliver to the gullible, but in an indirect way and not without making fun of him first. The trickster deploys crafty actions in order to achieve his trick or to overcome the hindrance. Thus, a range of winding paths unfold before him, such as the exploitation of superstitious creeds, the use of flattery, the invention of pretexts, the blurring of his target's perspective and vision, the transformation of his own appearance, and the power to become invisible. Despite the multiplicity of subterfuges available to him, the trickster never veers from his original purpose, and his strategy is somehow equivalent to the device of irony.

The animal trickster tale is the most famous type of folk tale. In the African American tradition, the trickster may be embodied by a rabbit, a fox, a hare, a bear, a wolf, a coyote, a whale, a hyena, and a monkey. "The False Message, Take My Place" and "Some are Going, and Some are Coming" constitute illustrations of the misleading message and the blurred vision, respectively. The former tale includes the Rabbit and the Wolf, the first of whom was trapped by a man and is hanging in a sack at the end of a tree branch, waiting to be slain. The Rabbit offers the Wolf the chance to go to heaven, and the Wolf credulously accepts without understanding that the Rabbit intends for them to exchange places. In "Some Are Going, and Some Are Coming," the Rabbit traps the Fox by passing on to the Fox the blurring vision by which the Rabbit himself was just trapped. After jumping into a bucket in order to reach a piece of cheese at the bottom of a well, he invites the Fox to jump into the other bucket to share the food with him, and thanks to the Fox's weight and naiveté, the Rabbit is able to come back to the surface; the cheese was actually a reflection of the moon. It is interesting to notice that in these two tales, the Rabbit was not clever enough to avoid being trapped himself but was cunning enough to bounce back by himself and at another's expense.

To sum up, the general function of a trickster tale is similar to that of a fable, during which a character may suffer temporarily, but ultimately acquires a new awareness. However, the purpose of the trickster's maneuver is not to produce a scapegoat. The deceiving and upsetting phases that the "temporary victim" undergoes as a result of the trickster's antics are necessary steps for the former's spiritual improvement toward knowledge and awareness. The outcome of the stories usually involves the victim discovering that he has been duped. The trickster tale consists of the depiction of an initiation, a rite of passage, undergone by the trickster's victim, a binary pattern that reminds us of the meta-diegetic level of the writer-reader relationship. *See also:* Africanisms; Anansi the Spider; Black Folk Culture; Brer Rabbit

Valerie Caruana-Loisel

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## Armstrong, Louis

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Louis Armstrong (1901–1971), more than any other single figure, took jazz, the music of his New Orleans childhood, and made it into an internationally recognized art form, in part by pioneering the improvisational solo. A cornet player who later switched to trumpet, Armstrong also influenced generations of singers with his gravelly voice and early use of scat singing. His style exemplified the 1920s, known as the “Jazz Age,” when many jazz critics thought he peaked. He went by colorful nicknames—Dippermouth, Gatemouth, Pops, Satchelmouth (shortened to Satchmo by a British journalist)—and invented or popularized jazz terms such as “jive,” “chops,” and “mellow.”

The New Orleans of Armstrong’s youth was a place saturated with cultural influences—French, Spanish, Canadian, British, Caribbean, and African—and the innovative styles of music springing from that interaction. Before the Civil War, black musicians were already combining European and African traditions in the music they played for dancers at Congo Square (now Louis Armstrong Park). At the turn of the century, band leaders competed for predominance in nightclubs, and early jazz pianists such as Jelly Roll Morton honed their skills providing musical entertainment in New Orleans’ Storyville, the vice district.

Into this milieu, Armstrong was born to Mayann Albert, a 15- or 16-year-old girl who had come to the city from rural Louisiana seeking opportunity, and Willie Armstrong, whom she had met there. Armstrong always maintained his birthday was July 4, 1900, a patriotic coincidence for a man who also liked to say he and jazz grew up together. After his death, the discovery of a Catholic baptismal record showed he was born August 4, 1901. Willie left soon after his son’s birth, though he later reunited with Mayann, who then gave birth to Louis’s sister Beatrice, known as Mama Lucy. Mayann left the two children with their grandmother until Louis was five. He later strongly hinted that his mother probably turned to prostitution at this time, though she carefully hid such work from her children.

After a few years with his grandmother, a time that he remembered as idyllic, Louis went to live with his mother, sister, and a succession of “stepfathers” in Back O’ Town, New Orleans’ poorest neighborhood. At age seven, Louis began working for the Karnofskys, Jewish immigrants who had emerged from poverty and worked their way up in the world buying and selling junk. Louis relished eating dinner with them and listening to their Russian lullabies. For much of his life, Armstrong let people think the Colored Waifs’ Home gave him his start playing cornet. But in his private writings, he wrote extensively about the Karnofskys and the way they had helped him buy a used cornet as an upgrade from the tin horn he blew driving their rag wagon. He began singing and playing the cornet with a quartet on street corners for spare change.

On January 1, 1913, celebrating the New Year, Louis fired a gun and was arrested and sent to the Colored Waifs’ Home. There he received his first formal musical training, from Peter Davis, who ran the school’s brass band. Louis became the student leader of the band. Unbeknownst to him, his biological father took a keen interest in getting him released from the home, even though Louis wanted to stay. When he left at age 13, at least a hundred establishments in the city featured jazz. Louis chose to hang around the one featuring Joe “King” Oliver. He played with Oliver, whom he credited with most of his musical education, until the older man’s move to Chicago. Also during this period, Louis informally adopted his cousin’s son, Clarence, after her death. Clarence, mildly retarded from an accident, remained Armstrong’s only child.

At 17, Armstrong entered into the first of four marriages, with a prostitute named Daisy Parker. For most of the six-year marriage, Armstrong was playing jazz elsewhere. For two years, he played with Fate Marable’s orchestra on a riverboat. At a stop in Davenport, Iowa, he met and influenced Bix Beiderbecke, an aspiring white musician who also became a 1920s jazz standout.

After his riverboat stint, Armstrong received a summons to join King Oliver’s band in Chicago. There he married the pianist Lil Hardin. Lil had studied music at Fisk University and led Armstrong to believe she had been valedictorian. Actually, she had dropped out after a year because of frustration over her lack of proper training. Though Armstrong was later less than complimentary about Lil’s playing, she became a sensation in Chicago when she took a job playing piano for a music store and was picked up by

the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band, which through personnel changes became Oliver's outfit.

Armstrong recorded 37 performances, including "Chimes Blues," with King Oliver. The records are in the polyphonic New Orleans style, which still did not accommodate solo work by individual standouts. Over time, Lil became convinced that Oliver was holding her husband back. She surprised Oliver by persuading Armstrong to quit and take work with Fletcher Henderson's band in New York City while she stayed with the band. When Armstrong returned from his stint in New York, Lil arranged for him to play under the billing "World's Greatest Trumpet Player," embarrassing him greatly. She left the Oliver band to lead a band featuring Armstrong. During the late 1920s, Armstrong solidified his reputation as history's most influential jazz musician with his recordings with the Hot 5 and Hot 7—bands put together for the sole purpose of recording in studios—including "Heebie Jeebies," in which he sang scat. Legend had it that this was the first recorded scat singing and that it had come about when Armstrong dropped the music. However, it is not the first recorded scat singing and seems too purposeful to have been caused by dropped music. These sessions also yielded "West End Blues," which opened with a nine-measure Armstrong cadenza that is possibly the most famous solo in jazz.

In 1931, Armstrong made a triumphant return to New Orleans. Eight jazz bands and a large crowd greeted him at the train station. He visited the Waifs' Home, sponsored a baseball team, and had an honorary cigar named for him. When a racially charged misunderstanding led to the cancellation of a free concert for blacks, Armstrong vowed to come back to give a secret concert for blacks only, which he did in 1935.

For years, while still married to Lil, Armstrong lived with a girlfriend, Alpha Smith. He finally obtained a divorce from Lil in 1938, just in time to marry Alpha as their relationship began to disintegrate. Shortly afterward, he met a dancer named Lucille Wilson, known as "Brown Sugar," at the reconstituted Cotton Club in New York. In contrast to Alpha, who Armstrong later complained had an insatiable thirst for fine things he could barely afford, Lucille was a grounding influence. She bought them a home in Corona, Queens, creating the kind of home base Armstrong had done without for years. They remained married for the rest of his life.

Many jazz critics saw Armstrong's 1930s swing period as inferior. In the 1940s, Armstrong criticized the innovative

harmonies and purposeful elitism of bop musicians, who in turn denounced his stage show and movie appearances as "Uncle Tomming." In the same decade, Armstrong benefited from a "purist" revival of interest in 1920s jazz. Impatient, though, with such purists' efforts to categorize music, Armstrong continued to record and perform any type of music that appealed to him. His rendition of "What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue," originally a song about a dark-skinned woman losing a lover to a lighter rival, became for Armstrong a commentary on race; Ralph Ellison's main character in *Invisible Man* goes into a reverie listening to Armstrong's recording. As a trumpet player, and especially as one formerly known for such superhuman feats as playing two hundred high Cs in a row, Armstrong struggled at times to keep his lip in shape for performances, and for weeks or months, he would rely more on singing than on trumpet playing. In the 1950s, he recorded three landmark albums of duets with Ella Fitzgerald. For decades his concert repertoire remained steady, characterized by the inclusion of "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," "Indiana," and a selection of Armstrong's biggest hits.

Armstrong developed a lifelong love of writing from the time he moved to Chicago and acquired a typewriter. He wrote hundreds of chatty letters to friends, tossed off autobiographical sketches, and contributed occasional pieces to magazines, such as "Why I Like Dark Women" (1954) for *Ebony*. A ghostwritten autobiography appeared, but unhappy with it because it used unbelievable dialect and ignored material Armstrong had provided, he wrote the widely read *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* in 1955. He planned a second volume named *Gage*, a slang term for the marijuana he smoked almost every day, but manager Joe Glaser intervened.

Armstrong made another memorable appearance in his hometown in 1949 when he served as King of the Zulus for his New Orleans burial society, the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. Armstrong was deeply honored to serve in the position, though many not familiar with Mardi Gras traditions were shocked to see Armstrong, who had denounced blackface, wearing wildly exaggerated blackface for the role. Many African Americans were embarrassed by Armstrong's antics, not only as King of the Zulus but also in his onstage act and in occasionally questionable movie roles. But scat, praised as an art form, had origins in minstrel shows, and entertainment was a part of jazz back in New Orleans. When Armstrong toured Britain in 1932, crowds who had fallen in love with his records grew



*Louis Armstrong was one of the 20th century's most important jazz innovators and performers. (Library of Congress)*

horrified when they saw the comedic aspects of his stage show. The British music press called him barbaric and gorilla-like, and night after night, audience members walked out in disgust. For his part, Armstrong pointed to the legacy of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, perhaps mainly remembered for two movie roles as a jolly tap-dancing servant to Shirley Temple. Armstrong considered Robinson a deeply talented artist in his stage performances.

The ambivalence many younger blacks saw in Armstrong made his mid-1950s stances against the racial status quo all the more shocking. In 1957, not long after someone threw a stick of dynamite at a theater where he was playing to a mixed Southern crowd, Armstrong saw television coverage of the school desegregation situation in Little Rock, Arkansas. Incensed at the sight of whites heckling black schoolchildren, Armstrong called President Dwight

Eisenhower “two-faced,” with “no guts,” and proclaimed that the government would go to hell for its treatment of African Americans. The comments were just enough ahead of their time that Armstrong was denounced publicly by Sammy Davis Jr. and Adam Clayton Powell, not to mention banned from many radio stations. Soon after, Armstrong decided not to perform in Louisiana, which had instituted a ban on integrated bands—including Armstrong’s All Stars—even though the practice was ruled unconstitutional.

Armstrong made musical history in 1964 when he knocked the Beatles off the top of the charts with a recording of “Hello, Dolly!” to promote the new musical of the same name. Among his 1967 recordings was “What a Wonderful World,” a ballad that sold well in England but not the United States. The song subsequently charted in the 1980s when released as a single from the movie *Good Morning*,

*Vietnam*. Perhaps one of his most incongruous later recordings was the 1968 album *Disney Songs the Satchmo Way*, with performances of “When You Wish Upon a Star” and “Chim Chim Cher-ee.”

Armstrong slowed down in his final three years, often under doctor’s orders not to play trumpet. Celebrating his birthday on July 4, 1971, he told reporters he would soon resume performing. He died in his sleep two days later.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Jazz

Brooke Sherrard

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## Bailey, Pearl

Pearl Bailey (1918–1990) was a well-respected 20th-century singer, actress, comedienne, and author. She is most famous for her screen roles in *Carmen Jones* (1954) and *Porgy and Bess* (1959), as well as a 1975 stage production of *Hello, Dolly*, all of which featured predominantly African American casts.

Bailey was born in Southampton County, Virginia, on March 29, 1918, and raised in Newport News, Virginia, by her parents, Joseph and Ella Bailey. She was the youngest of four children. Joseph Bailey served as a pastor at the local House of Prayer, and by the age of three, Pearl was singing and dancing in her father’s church. In 1922, the Baileys moved to Washington, D.C., and the parents divorced soon after. Bailey moved with her mother to Philadelphia, where, at the age of 15, she sang in public for the first time, winning an amateur talent contest at the Pearl Theater, where her older brother Bill was a featured performer. The theater gave her a five-dollar prize and an offer of two weeks of work. The theater had promised to pay her 30 dollars for each week, but she never received pay for her work because the theater closed before the end of her run. Bailey left school and went on to win an amateur contest at the Apollo

Theatre in New York and continued to secure singing and dancing parts in productions around the Philadelphia area, before touring as a club singer in coal-mining towns across Pennsylvania during the Great Depression. While touring, Bailey had a short-lived marriage to a fellow performer that lasted only 18 months.

Bailey gradually worked her way into larger and more prestigious clubs, eventually performing at the Savoy in Washington, D.C., and the Blue Angel in New York City. During World War II, she traveled with the USO, entertaining troops with her singing and dancing. Her work with the USO, combined with her increasing following as a club performer, led her to work with some of the biggest jazz musicians and big band leaders of the era, including Count Basie, Huddie Ledbetter, and Cab Calloway. Bailey’s popularity as a club act led to other opportunities on the stage and screen. In 1946, she was cast in *St. Louis Woman*, her first role on Broadway. In 1948, Bailey married for a second time, to John Randolph Pinkett. The marriage lasted until 1952, when she divorced Pinkett and married jazz drummer Louie Bellson, with whom she remained until her death.

Although Bailey was featured in a number of films in the late 1940s and early 1950s, she received her first chance at movie stardom when she was cast in *Carmen Jones* (1954). Her performance was a hit and opened up many more acting opportunities for her. Bailey took roles that allowed her to work with some of the biggest names in acting at that time, including Sammy Davis Jr. and Bob Hope. In 1959, she was cast in the film adaptation of the George Gershwin musical *Porgy and Bess*, costarring Sidney Poitier and Dorothy Dandridge. Bailey performed in a number of plays and movies and consistently received good reviews but never achieved movie star status. In 1967, she starred in a production of *Hello, Dolly* that featured an all African American cast. In the early 1970s, she had her own television show and later starred in a series of Duncan Hines commercials, in addition to voicing characters for animated feature films such as *The Fox and the Hound*.

Bailey was an avid Republican and a favorite of President Richard Nixon, who often asked her to perform at the White House. In 1970, Nixon appointed her America’s “Ambassador of Love.” In 1975, Nixon’s successor, Gerald Ford, appointed Bailey as a special representative to the United Nations, and she attended several meetings. Bailey also appeared in a number of advertisements endorsing Ford’s 1976 election campaign.

In the late 1960s, Bailey turned her attention toward writing. She published two autobiographical books, *The Raw Pearl* (1968) and *Talking to Myself* (1971). She also wrote *Pearl's Kitchen* (1973), *Hurry Up America*, and *Spit* (1989), and *Between You and Me* (1990). Later in life, Bailey decided to complete the education she had given up in order to become a performer. She finished her high school degree and enrolled in Georgetown University and, in 1985, earned a BA degree in theology.

Bailey won a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1988 for her contributions to American cultural life. She died less than two years later on August 17, 1990, in Philadelphia, of heart disease at the age of 72. Pearl Bailey is buried in Rolling Green Memorial Park in Westchester, Pennsylvania.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Poitier, Sidney

Sara K. Eskridge

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## Basie, Count

William "Count" Basie (1904–1984) was born in Red Bank, New Jersey, to Harvey and Lilly Ann Basie. During his formative years, Basie expressed a deep interest in music and began studying the organ and piano. He was particularly influenced by stride piano, a virtuosic genre that is characterized by intricate melodic embellishments and complex syncopation. In the mid-1920s, Basie traveled to New York to take organ lessons from Fat Waller, an important exponent of stride. Waller, who had an engagement at Harlem's Lincoln Theater, occasionally invited his young student to play the organ.

Kansas City, however, became the pivotal place where Basie would realize his aspirations of becoming a professional musician. He became the organist for singer Gonzelle

White and played regularly for silent films at the Eblon Theater. Basie gained further experience when he moved to Oklahoma to play with the Blue Devils, led by bassist Walter Page. The Blue Devils, with their incomparable style of blues, left a profound impression on Basie. In 1929, Basie returned to Kansas City to join one of the most popular bands in the area, the Bennie Moten Orchestra. Although Moten was the band's pianist, he gradually brought Basie into the band as a substitute and staff arranger. Basie eventually became the band's pianist and worked diligently to perfect his musical skills.

After the unexpected death of Moten in 1935, Basie formed his own ensemble that included former members of the Moten band. He accepted an extended engagement at the Reno Club in Kansas City, an important decision that would affect his career both musically and professionally. In addition to performing weekly at the Reno Club, the band was broadcast to several parts of the nation, including Chicago and New York. It was during the nightly broadcasts that musicians, promoters, and the public became aware of this remarkable band out of Kansas City. New York promoter and entrepreneur John Hammond, while in Chicago, heard Basie's band and subsequently traveled to Kansas City. Other music executives visited Basie, and consequently, he signed with Decca Records and became the headliner at New York's Roseland Ballroom.

Count Basie's rise in jazz continued during the swing era of the 1930s and 1940s. Jazz became a national phenomenon because of the emergence of big bands, outstanding soloists, big-band arrangements, improvisation, and popular icons. Basie's ensemble epitomized the very essence of swing with their blend of blues, improvisation, and sophisticated arrangements. Exceptional musicianship, especially the musicians' imaginative improvisational skills, accounted for the band's classic and distinct style. Most notable among the group were trumpeters Buck Clayton and Harry "Sweets" Edison and saxophonists Hershel Evans and Lester Young. Undoubtedly, Basie's most enduring accomplishment was the assemblage of his incomparable rhythm section, featuring guitarist Freddie Green, bassist Walter Page, and drummer Jo Jones. As a tightly knit section, these musicians established a steady tempo through the use of walking bass patterns, a seamless flow of chord changes, and recurring ride rhythms. "One O'Clock Jump," "9:20 Special," and "Jumping at the Woodside" are typical examples of the kinds of complex and sparse arrangements

and recurring riffs that defined the orchestra's unmatched style. Basie's unique pianistic style would also characterize the band's approach to jazz performance and composition. Basie's style exhibited simplicity in thematic material and improvisation and the influences of blues and boogie-woogie. This approach is exemplified in his solos, which are unified through the use of simple melodic ideas, the spontaneous use of space, and the restatement of the main theme. By the early 1940s, the Count Basie Orchestra had received numerous accolades from the public, executives, and musicians and was lauded as one of the best bands of the Swing Era.

After the decline of swing in the mid-1940s, Basie continued to perform with his orchestra and sextets. In the 1950s, the Count Basie Orchestra embarked on its first of several international tours. With new musicians and arrangers Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Thad Jones, and Neal Hefti, the orchestra took a diverse repertory of music to Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, and Munich. The orchestra's style had evolved to produce a rich library of compositions that were modern but that did not replace the fundamental Basie style. Hefti's composition *Li'l Darlin'* retained the sparseness that characterized the early Basie style, whereas Foster's *Shiny Stockings* represented a more modern sound.

In addition to concerts, Basie recorded with countless premier vocalists and musicians, including Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra. *Ella and Basie* and *Sinatra-Basie* are two representative recordings that received auspicious reviews for their popular songs, well-crafted arrangements, and remarkable musicianship.

In the 1970s, Basie continued to perform at colleges, high schools, jazz festivals, and other important venues, despite being slowed by a heart attack and other physical problems. Count Basie was undoubtedly one of America's most eminent bandleaders. He was partly responsible for developing and evolving the jazz idiom and for making it a substantial part of American popular culture. Count Basie died of pancreatic cancer on April 26, 1984.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Jazz

Ralph A. Russell

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## Bebop

Developed primarily by black musicians working in New York City in the late 1930s and early 1940s, bebop is the basis for most modern jazz. Unlike swing, bebop is not dance-oriented; it is a passionate but cerebral form of jazz played primarily by small groups. Its practitioners often see it more as an art form than as a type of entertainment.

Bebop did not develop in a vacuum. It grew out of existing jazz forms, particularly swing, which had become popular in the 1930s. Swing was big band-oriented and was often performed in large ballrooms where patrons danced the jitterbug to the music. During this swing era, jazz musicians such as Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, and Duke Ellington began to experiment with bebop-style chord progressions. There were also alterations in the way instruments kept time; for instance, drummer Jo Jones began to develop the new jazz style of drum playing.

Then, in the early 1940s, some of the younger jazz musicians working in New York City began to extend these experiments with the elements of rhythm and harmony during jam sessions in Harlem and on 52nd Street. Their creative experimentation led to a radically new sound. Unfortunately, there were a series of music industry strikes between 1942 and 1944. This kept them from recording this new music, and it was not until 1945 that the wider public, via recordings, was introduced to bebop.

Key to the development of bebop was Minton's Playhouse in Harlem and Monroe's Uptown House on 52nd Street in Manhattan and, to a lesser extent, a number of other clubs on 52nd Street. Here, in after-hours jam sessions, such musicians as Kenny Clarke and Max Roach on drums, Dizzy Gillespie on trumpet, Charlie Christian on electric guitar, Charlie Parker on alto sax, Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell on piano, and Oscar Pettiford on double bass would play into the morning hours, developing the new bebop sound.

Minton's Playhouse was a tiny club at 118th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue in Harlem. It had originally been part of the kitchen area of the Cecil Hotel when clarinetist



Henry Minton opened it as a jazz club. He put former big band leader Teddy Hill in charge of running it. It provided an amiable place—with plenty of down-home Southern cooking—for musicians to stretch out musically after performing at other clubs in the New York area.

The house band at Minton's included Nick Fenton on bass, Joe Guy on trumpet, Thelonious Monk on piano, and Kenny Clarke on drums. After a few sets by the house band, musicians would take turns sitting in, improvising and experimenting. Two of these house band members are considered founding fathers of bebop. Thelonious Monk, born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, in 1917 (but raised in Manhattan), became famous for his radical piano playing and for his great jazz compositions, such as "Round Midnight." He was a musical prodigy and dropped out of high school after his sophomore year to go on the road as a professional musician. Kenny Clarke, born in 1914 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, extended the drum-playing innovations of Jo Jones by moving the timekeeping to the ride cymbal. He used the snare drum and the bass drum for "dropping bombs"—rhythmic comments on the melody.

Another of the prime developers of bebop and frequent guests at Minton's was trumpeter, arranger, and composer Dizzy Gillespie. Born in 1917 in Cheraw, South Carolina, he attended high school in North Carolina at the private, all-black Laurinburg Institute, where he studied music theory. Musical historians have tagged him as the "teacher." Aside from his inventive, brilliant playing, he would often explain the workings of bebop to younger or less experienced musicians, thus helping to disseminate bebop theory. Unlike most of the beboppers, he enjoyed the entertainment side of performing, and his trademark beret, goatee, and horn-rimmed glasses became the public image of the hip bebop musician. Many of his compositions, such as "A Night in Tunisia" and "Salt Peanuts," have become jazz standards.

Finally, alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, nicknamed "Bird," jammed at Minton's and is also considered one of the founding fathers of bebop. Born in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1920, he was a brilliant soloist who demonstrated with his unsurpassed technical skill the beauty and possibilities of bebop. A tragic figure, he fought most of his life against alcohol and drug addiction and died at the age of 34.

This new bebop sound was in stark contrast to the sound of big band and swing. The size of the band was part of the difference, given that most of the bebop bands had between four and six players. This facilitated one of other aspects of

bebop: everyone in the band did improvisational solos. The music used unexpected chord changes, often relying on a chromatic scale. The speed of the playing demanded great technical skill and often used difficult eighth-note runs. As has already been mentioned, the role of the drum and the piano changed with bebop. Pianists were more likely to "comp" than to use a stride style of playing. Instead of using his left hand to keep time by alternating between the bass notes and the chords (the stride style), the bebop pianist used the left hand to play chords at intermittent and irregular times to comment on the soloist ("comping"). The drummer, in addition to keeping time with the ride cymbal instead of the bass drum and "dropping" bombs, played the drum as if were an instrument rather than just a time keeper. The bass players became increasingly important for keeping the beat.

Bebop was commercially popular between 1945 and 1949. During the 1950s, variations on bebop, known as West Coast cool jazz (a smoother, softer version of bebop) and hard bop (which added soul and gospel music), became popular. The bebop influence and its innovations continue today.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Ellington, Duke; Jazz; Parker, Charlie

William P. Toth

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## Black Atlantic

The term "Black Atlantic" was first penned by black British/African Caribbean sociologist Paul Gilroy. A major premise of this concept is that black culture is global, multifaceted, and international, particularly from a diasporic perspective. This presence of black people (due in part to the slave trade) has created an intercultural space that allows participants to connect the historical connections between

Africa, western Europe, and America. Simultaneously, the Black Atlantic describes the development of black identity as an ongoing process that is stimulated by travel and the exchange of artistic endeavor. These same identities have been compared to the histories of Europe and their places within modern history. Furthermore, black people are, like those in European cultures, firmly connected to notions of modernity. The notion of the Black Atlantic also examines how the abduction of blacks from Africa and subsequent notions of racism and oppression have inspired various artists to develop expressions that help express ideologies of freedom. Although some early expressions of self were forbidden for slaves, music was often allowed as a means of expression, thereby influencing other forms of art and expression. Visual culture also helped to push the limits of black expression, forming a subcultural or countercultural presence within the Western world.

The premise also argues that it is important to move beyond the confines of nationality and ethnicity. Each is considered too constraining to the endless possibilities of self-definition. Although many black cultures from around the Atlantic Ocean in Europe, the Caribbean, and America have been constructed as a part of national cultures, creating such identities as African American, Gilroy posits the notion that black intellectuals have examined the Western world on a more transnational basis, considering their countries of origin as unimportant by comparison. Understanding the impact of slavery on the West is essential to understanding Gilroy's notions of double consciousness, first discussed by W. E. B. Du Bois. Many of this same black intelligentsia have not only defended aspects of the West; they have also been its harshest critics. Gilroy argues that modernity must not only acknowledge the subjugation of slavery, but also understand how this phenomenon creates the need for a double consciousness, a consciousness that was characteristic of those black intellectuals seeking to explore the Diaspora. Gilroy also argues that the development of black culture has depended on music as a binding mechanism for black people everywhere. Gospel, rock and roll, rap, and hip-hop all expose how multiple cultures of blackness draw artistic and intrinsic value from each other, making the notion of blackness all the more complex and engaging. However, Gilroy would argue that these notions of diasporic identity are never static or "pure"; instead there are hybrid and fluid, always reforming. He also argues that the very notion of diasporic thinking was adopted into

Pan-African political discourse by way of Jewish notions of identity. Ultimately, he maintains that discussions and exchanges of ideas between both groups must be cherished and upheld.

*See also:* African Diaspora; Atlantic Creoles; Atlantic Slave Trade

Darrell Newton

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## Black Churches

The expression "black churches," also referred to as "the black church," has been used to refer to four groups of organizations: denominations founded by, formed of, and led by blacks; black congregations that belong to white denominations; independent congregations; and loose fellowships of black churches. This entry makes reference only to the major black denominations: Methodist, Baptist, Holiness, and Pentecostal.

During enslavement, Africans were forced to worship with their masters. Blacks were segregated within the white churches and were not free to worship God according to their culture. In time, however, enslaved people began worshipping in secret prayer meetings, escaping the supervision of their masters.

Between 1773 and 1775, Southern slaves founded the first black (Baptist) church in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. Similarly, in 1794, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, in opposition to mistreatment at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, organized St. Thomas African Episcopal Church and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Twenty-two years later, Allen organized other Methodist congregations into the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), the first black denomination in America. Black Methodists in New York also became weary of prejudice; Peter Williams Sr. and James Varick, among others, organized the African Methodist

Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ), a new denomination, in New York City in 1796. In the South, blacks remained in the white Methodist fold until 1870, when they left to form the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CME). In 1954, the word “colored” was removed, and the CME became the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

From the very beginning, black churches reflected black political thought. For example, Bethel AME, pastored by Richard Allen, was a center of black emigration to Haiti. Denmark Vesey, Rev. Morris Brown, and Nat Turner all used religion in planning armed slave revolts. The abolitionist movement was also deeply connected to the black church; it was in the basement of a black church that the New England Antislavery Society, the first such society, was organized in Boston in 1832. In 1843, black Ohio Baptists organized the Union Antislavery Baptist Society, the first black abolitionist society. Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, two Christian women among others, also participated in the abolitionist movement.

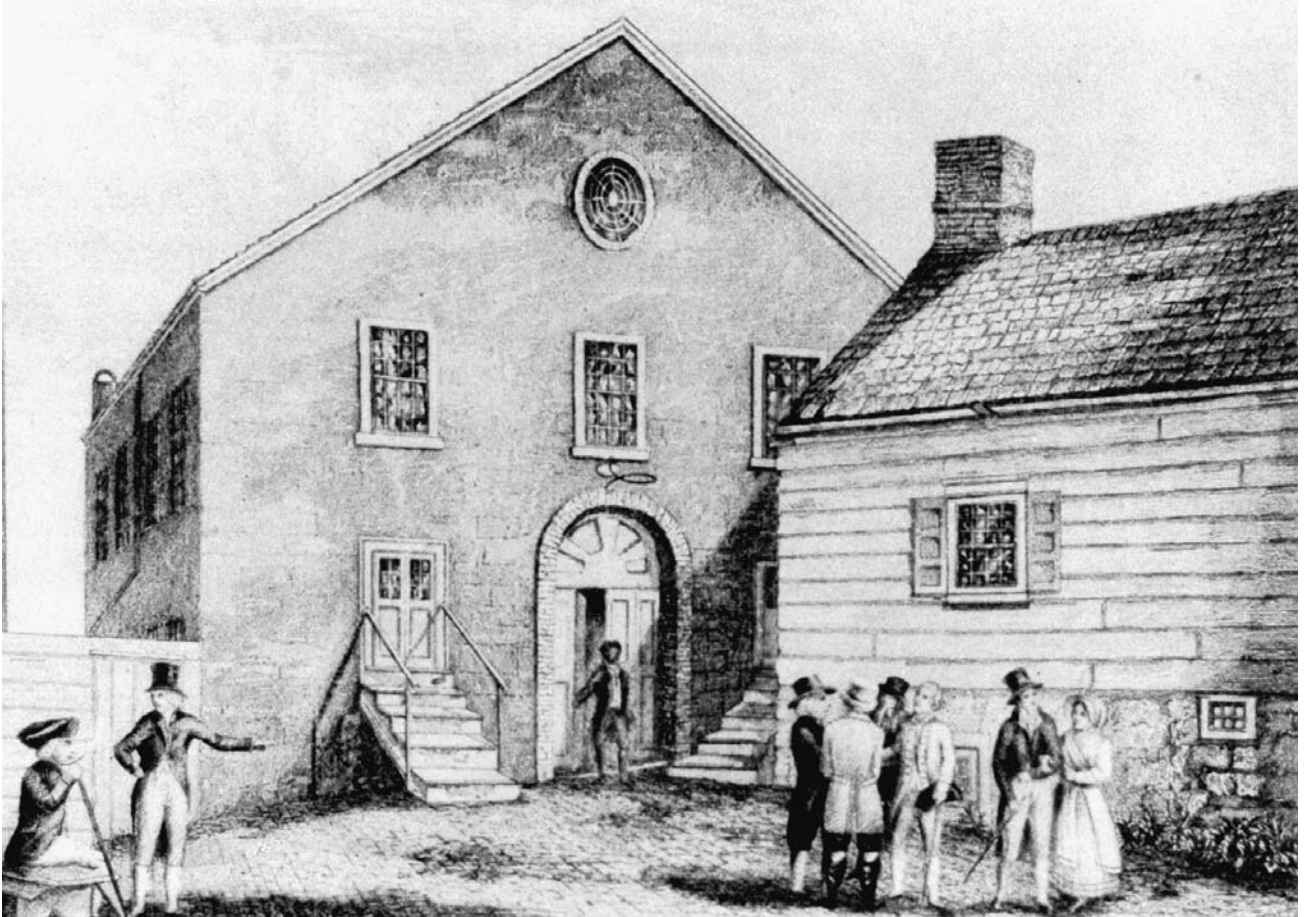
During and after Reconstruction (1866–1877), blacks founded many schools to help freed people get a higher level of literacy and education. American blacks also developed a sense of responsibility toward foreign missions in Africa. In 1897, the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention was founded as an independent organization whose aim was to focus on missions in Africa. Black missionaries built numerous churches, schools, and orphanages in Africa with African American donations. Concern for African missions, however, did not diminish the black Church’s prophetic voice. Frederick Douglass, Rev. Henry Garnet, and Bishop Henry Turner made clarion calls for justice as segregation continued after emancipation.

Black Baptists tried several forms of organization before forming a single convention. By 1894, most black Baptists were concentrated in the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, the American National Baptist Convention, and the National Baptist Educational Convention. In 1895, these conventions consolidated into the National Baptist Convention of the United States (NBCUSA). Twenty years later, the leaders of the National Baptist Publishing Board (NBPB) severed their connections with the NBCUSA and formed the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA). During the Civil Rights movement, some clergy disagreed with Dr. Joseph Jackson over his long tenure as president of the NBCUSA and his gradual approach to civil rights. Because Jackson was not willing to change his views,

Gardner Taylor, L. V. Booth, Martin Luther King Jr., and others withdrew and formed the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) in 1961. But this was not the last Baptist split. In 1988, another group left the NBCA because of differences over the governance of the NBPB. The new split called itself the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.

Holiness organizations arose in late 19th century against what was perceived as the worldliness of the mainline denominations. The holiness movement first entered the white Methodist Episcopal Church before the Civil War and spread widely during the postbellum era. Basically, the holiness movement claimed that sanctification, another divine work, must take place in the life of the believer after conversion/salvation. Scores of Baptists and Methodists chose to associate themselves with “holiness” and thus were excommunicated from their home churches or chose to leave on their own. In 1886, Isaac Cheshier pioneered the United Holy Church of America (UHCA), the earliest black holiness group, in Method, North Carolina. Eleven years later, Charles Price Jones, a prominent Baptist preacher, founded a holiness convention in Jackson, Mississippi. Jones’s convention was informally organized as the Church of God of in Christ in 1897. In 1920, Jones reorganized his group as the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA. Most holiness churches have granted much freedom to women to work as evangelists and ordained pastors and have not required educational achievements as a requirement for ordination.

Charles Parham and William Seymour were the major promoters of what has become the Pentecostal movement. They promoted another work of grace, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which they claimed was subsequent to salvation and evidenced by speaking in tongues. Parham, a white preacher, founded the Pentecostal movement in 1901, and Seymour, a black pastor, led the Azusa Revival (1906–1922), an international revival based in Los Angeles. Many black organizations added the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to their list of doctrines. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) was organized as an interracial group in 1907, but issues of power and racism forced most white ministers to leave, thus making the PAW a predominantly black Pentecostal denomination. In late 1907, Charles Mason, a holiness leader who had endorsed speaking in tongues, left Jones’s organization and legally retained the name “the Church of God in Christ” (COGIC) for his new Pentecostal



*Wesley Chapel on John Street, New York City, is home to the oldest Methodist congregation. The chapel was dedicated in 1768. Peter Williams, the black sexton, stands in doorway. (Library of Congress)*

organization. In 1908, Magdalena Tate, a female holiness preacher, pioneered the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. This same year, she was made bishop, the first black woman to claim such title in America. In 1924, Ida Robinson, formerly associated with the UHCA, chartered Mt. Sinai Holy Church of America, a new Pentecostal group that encouraged women to pursue the ordained ministry. Robinson also ordained men as pastors, but women clergy dominated Mt. Sinai for many decades.

During the Great Migration, Northern churches provided shelter, financial assistance, and employment to Southern migrants. Nannie Burroughs, a women's leader in the NBCUSA, followed the black prophetic tradition by speaking against black oppression in America. In 1934, Bishop Ransom led other church leaders in founding the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, an ecumenical group designed to make a united front in tackling the social problems of the African American community.

During the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the black church made a sterling contribution to the social and political advancement of the race. Local congregations served as meeting places for countless rallies and fund-raisers. Scores of local churches got involved in voter education and voter registration drives. In 1957, King and other ministers formed the powerful Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Nine years later, another group of ministers pioneered the National Conference of Black Churchmen in support of the Black Power movement. Among the prominent ministers who led the national Civil Rights movement were King, Adam Clayton Powell, Ralph Abernathy, and Jesse Jackson. Christian women also contributed as marchers, secretaries, activists, and fund-raisers. Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer were the most famous female activists. Gospel stars Mahalia Jackson and Ernestine Washington sang in fund-raising concerts for the civil rights cause. Black churches later provided

strong support to black presidential candidate Jesse Jackson (1984, 1988).

Any study of the black church must include those congregations that belong to white denominations. Because whites introduced the gospel to the African slaves, the early black churches either were pastored by white ministers or found themselves under white control. Nevertheless, the founding of black denominations did not mean that all blacks would leave white denominations. Today, thousands of blacks are found in the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Churches, the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church, and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Blacks can also be found in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Presbyterian Church USA, the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), the Church of the Nazarene, and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). Many black Baptist churches claim double affiliation, with both a black convention and a white group. Black clergy in white denominations, like their peers in the black denominations, also supported the Civil Rights movement. Andrew Young (UCC) and James Lawson (UMC) are the most well known among them. Also within the ranks of these white denominations must be noted the presence of large numbers of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.

A good number of blacks also belong to independent churches and loose fellowships. Independent churches are found in rural, urban, and suburban areas and are led by ministers who prefer independence because of personality or financial factors. Many urban storefronts and mega churches are independent. In recent years, some ministers have preferred to organize themselves as “fellowships” instead of joining the more established denominations. These fellowships do not report standards of denominationalism, such as publishing houses, Bible schools and Christian colleges, and strong foreign missions. Nonetheless, they do ordain ministers and organize national conferences. Today, the most well-known fellowship is the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, founded in 1992 and still led by its founder, Bishop Paul Morton. Another phenomenon worth mentioning is the acceptance of Pentecostal/charismatic worship styles in the more established and older denominations.

The black church has made other significant contributions to American society during the 20th century. It heavily contributed to the development of black and American

Christian music. Gospel music and singing pioneers included Charles Tindley, Lucy Campbell, Thomas Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, and others. Later, Andrae Crouch, Mattie Moss Clark, and James Cleveland were among those who developed and promoted contemporary gospel music and singing. In the area of ecumenism, blacks founded the National Black Evangelical Association (1964) and the Congress of National Black Churches (1978) and worked with the National Council of the Churches of Christ, the World Baptist Alliance, the World Methodist Council, and the World Council of Churches. It was probably this kind of ecumenism that influenced the AME (1948) and the CME (1954) to ordain women. Another interesting form of ecumenism shows in the Interdenominational Theological Center, founded in 1958, which is now a consortium of six black seminaries. In addition, black churches have built thousands of housing units for low-income and senior citizens, chartered credit unions and banks, and developed vocational programs. In the 21st century, the black church continues to receive the support of the African American community. As of 2008, the major denominations report the following memberships: AME, 1.8 million; AMEZ, 1.2 million; CME, 850,000; NBCUSA, 7.5 million; NBCA, 5 million; PNBC, 2.5 million; COGIC, 5.5 million; and PAW, 1.5 million. Overall, it must be understood that the black church is more than just Christian people who are black. It is a spiritual center, a prophetic voice, and a medium for economic empowerment.

*See also:* African Methodist Episcopal Church; First African Baptist Church; Slave Religion

David Michel

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## Black English

Black English is a dialect or language variety of American English. Also known as Black Vernacular English (BVE), African American English (AAE), African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Ebonics, Black English is spoken by many but not all African Americans. Approximately 80–90 percent of African Americans speak Black English as least some of the time. Because of the social nature of language development and use, Black English is also spoken by many non-African Americans who live among or identify with speakers of Black English.

There are several theories posited about the origins of Black English. One of the most widely accepted theories is the creolist theory. This theory maintains that modern Black English is the result of a hybrid derived from contact between speakers of European languages and various West African languages. Slaves came in contact with Europeans, and needing to find ways to communicate, they developed an informal, simplistic way of communicating called a pidgin. This pidgin eventually became a Creole when it was the primary language of a future generation. Over time, Black English has gone through the process of decreolization, with the features of the dialect moving toward the standard form (the form used by the majority population or the population of power).

The English language includes many variations, including American dialects (varieties) such as Black English, Appalachian English, and Southern English. These dialects, including Black English, are systematically governed by linguistic rules that cross all language parameters, including the rules governing the form of language—phonology (speech sounds), morphology (word structure), and syntax (sentence structure); the rules governing word meaning—semantics (vocabulary/lexicon); and the rules governing language use—pragmatics (social rules). Each of these dialects has its own set of distinguishing features and patterns. However, a majority of the linguistic features of English are common among each of the varieties.

Common features of Black English are generally described based on phonology (those affecting pronunciation) and morphosyntax (those affecting grammar). Some phonological features of Black English include the following: changes to consonant clusters, most often seen in the final position of words, where final consonant blends such

as *-st*, *-sk*, *-ft*, and *-ld* are reduced to a single consonant such as *tes'* (test), *des'* (desk), *lef'* (left), and *col'* (cold); changes to “th” sounds, where words with a medial or final “th” are produced as the “v” or “f” sounds, as in “birfday” (birthday); changes to the “r” sound, where the “r” is not present after “o” and “u,” as in “foe” (four) and “doe” (door), or is absent after consonants, as in “thoigh” (through); changes to *str-* words (string, street), which may become *skr-* words (*skring*, *skreet*); and metathesis, where the order of sounds in words is changed as in “aksed” (asked).

Some morphosyntactic features of Black English include the following: changes in tense, including the past tense, where the *-ed* at the end of regular verbs is not produced (“she finish\_ eating fast”), or where the *-ed* is added to irregular verbs (“he dranked it all”); remote time construction of “been,” where “been” represents an action in the distant past (“I been had one of those”); invariant use of “be,” where “be” is used for “is,” “are,” and “am” (“he be busy all the time”); subject-verb agreement, where the subject and verb are non-complimentary (“they was walking home together”); and variable use of the copula (*is/are*), “they happy.”

The use of dialects, including Black English, is influenced by a number of different variables. Black English is developmental. Younger and older speakers differ in the types (features) and amount (density) of dialect used, with both features and density decreasing with age and education. The exception to this observation is among adolescent males, who tend to demonstrate an increase in use of the dialect. Black English use varies between speakers from low socioeconomic and more affluent environments, with speakers from less affluent communities using a greater variety of features and more frequently. Linguistic context affects Black English use. Features are produced more frequently in natural discourse settings such as conversation than in more formal or structured contexts such as oral reading or delivering a speech. The features of Black English are not obligatory. Speakers may or may not use Black English features all the time. Features may be variable, including based on the setting (formal versus informal) and conversational partner (peer versus non-peer). Code-switching is the ability to switch between language variations, such as between Black English and more standard forms (those spoken by the majority). Some Black English speakers are more fluent at code-switching than others. Greater contact with other varieties of English, usually through school experience and

mobility (close proximity to other varieties), increases the ability and likelihood of code-switching. Code-switching may also be a choice where speakers decide whether to switch based on personal choices of inclusion or exclusion (from the majority).

Black English is socially stigmatized. Individuals, whether consciously or not, elevate the language of the perceived dominant group simply because it is dominant. Given that Black English is the language of a historically, socially subordinated group in the United States, it is often negatively viewed. Negative judgments about intelligence, personal character, and status are often inaccurately made about speakers of Black English. These negative perceptions about speakers of Black English are frequently used punitively in educational and professional settings, with speakers of Black English receiving negative consequence for using the dialect.

See also: Africanisms; Gullah; Turner, Lorenzo Dow

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## Black Folk Culture

While blacks in America long struggled against white society's efforts to keep them powerless, black folk culture—from the days of slavery through the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras—offered blacks a vehicle by which to confront the white power structure. For instance, African American ballads and tales portrayed human heroes (such as John Henry or Shine) who challenged or resisted—and antiheroes (such as the slave John in the “John and the Master” story cycle) who outsmarted—white authority. Modeling

themselves on those folk characters, blacks deepened their sense of expectation that they might eventually surmount their social marginalization.

Historically, white scholars acknowledged the British and Anglo-American influences on African American culture and yet ignored the enduring power of African and Caribbean culture on African Americans. In 1941, scholar Melville J. Herskovits asserted that this oversight (which he termed “the myth of the Negro past”) was a major factor in the continuation of racial prejudice. To counter that perspective, Herskovits identified a significant number of Africanisms (African cultural survivals) in African American culture. Subsequent scholarly studies advanced general understanding of the considerable extent to which black folk culture has influenced mainstream American culture.

African American culture can be divided into three main categories: oral (verbal) folklore, customary (behavioral) folklore, and material (physical) folklore. The most renowned aspect of black folk culture is the African American oral tradition, particularly folk tales and songs. Blacks have told sacred and supernatural tales (creation legends, ghost stories, folk sermons, testimonials, and preacher tales) and secular tales (morality tales, trickster tales, and jokes). Rural as well as urban blacks have favored two types of tales: trickster tales and jokes.

The trickster figure long held a crucial if ambivalent role in African American oral tradition. Borrowing from the trickster traditions of Africa (where tricksters took on human, divine, or animal form), blacks especially valued tales involving animal trickster figures. The ultimate goal of the trickster was to subvert the corrupt and divisive moral conventions and the established order that originally enforced those morals. Fearing reprisal if they freely conveyed their grievances, slaves told tales that employed animal characters in substitution for human characters. Trickster animals, such as Brer Rabbit, symbolizing blacks, ultimately prevailed in interactions with more powerful animal characters (which, of course, represented whites). A cycle of related non-animal trickster tales, told in the years after the Civil War, concerned the ambivalent relationship between a fictional slave named John and his master. In these stories, John struggles to overcome his subservient position in racist plantation society by covertly subverting the stereotypes thrust on him by his white master.

African American jokes often took the form of competitive verbal games, which tested an individual's verbal

dexterity. In these games, players leveled “sounds” (direct insults) or “signifying: (indirect insults) against an opponent, who could then respond in kind. Woofing, Signifying, and Sounding were various names for a game in which a player humorously teased his opponent. “The Dozens” referred to a game in which a player creatively poked fun at his opponent’s mother. The loser of these strictly structured verbal contests was the person who allowed his verbal responses to stray from the ritualized impersonal insult expected of all players into mere personal insult.

Another type of folk tale, the toast, was a dramatic traditional narrative performed in rhymed couplets. Most frequently found in urban neighborhoods and prisons, the toast was commonly multi-episodic, chronicling the deeds of such antiheroic figures as badmen, pimps, and street people. Some well-known toasts included “The Signifying Monkey,” “Stackolee,” and “The Freaks Ball.” By mastering the toast, one of the most complex forms within African American oral tradition, the teller gained power and prestige within black communities.

Jive is another form of traditional African American verbal communication. Historically, when they jived, blacks were engaging in playful conversations utilizing strongly African American vernacular speech. An exclusive mode of communication, jive was generally indecipherable to whites. Blacks introduced into the English language numerous words, some with clear African origins (such as *boogie*, *gumbo*, *cooter*, *okra*, and *goober*). Also from African sources are two familiar expressions, the affirmative phrase “uh-huh” and the negative phrase “unh-uh.”

In folk tales and traditional story-songs (narrative African American songs are often referred to as “blues ballads”), blacks boasted about a host of heroes and antiheroes, both real and mythical. African American folk tales and story-songs depict mythical figures (such as the Devil and Moses), human heroes (such as John Henry, Jack Johnson, and Joe Louis), and “badmen” (such as John Hardy, Staggerlee, and Railroad Bill).

In the pre-emancipation South, slaves played traditional instrumental music at dances and sang field hollers, work songs, and spirituals (because of their power to uplift, the latter were sung during worship services and also during work). In spirituals, affirmation outweighed sorrow; confidence outweighed despair. Through singing spirituals, slaves reinforced positive beliefs (such as transcendence, ultimate justice, and personal worth) and

rejected negative beliefs (such as feelings of depravity and unworthiness).

By the 1890s, these early forms of African American musical expression were influencing the development of a new folk music: the blues. Emerging as a highly localized music in the rural areas and small towns of the Deep South, particularly on large plantations and at industrial sites, the blues eventually revolutionized American music. Blues lyrics, which evoked the African American experience of social alienation in an era of restrictive Jim Crow laws, set a new standard for lyrical creativity and directness, and the music of the blues introduced new possibilities for improvisation and individual expression.

A melding of African American and white musical forms, jazz first emerged as a distinctive musical form in the late 19th century. Musicians in New Orleans—such as legendary cornet player Buddy Bolden—created jazz out of an amalgam of African American, Creole, Caribbean, and Cajun secular folk music; African American and Anglo-American sacred music; brass marching band music; and popular parlor music. The word “jazz,” which in the African American vernacular originally referred to sexual intercourse, reflected the sensuality of this new style of music.

Other 20th-century musical styles first emerged in African American environments, later finding wide reception among mainstream audiences. Unlike 19th-century spirituals, which were a folk phenomenon, modern African American gospel music was commercial from the beginning, in that popular gospel music songwriters—who united religious texts with secular musical forms borrowed from blues and ragtime—earned considerable royalties by formally publishing their work.

Solo and group gospel singing influenced two later African American musical developments: (1) rhythm and blues and (2) soul. Although many performers of these related musical styles rejected the didactic spiritual messages of gospel music in order to obtain crossover popularity, instead singing secular songs about love’s travails and about social issues, rhythm and blues and soul performances nonetheless retained many of the musical qualities of gospel music, including the individuality and sincerity of the singer’s persona, vocal emotionalism, and vocal interaction between the lead singer and the background singers (often termed “call-and-response”). Pioneer African American rock ’n’ roll musicians likewise felt the overpowering presence of gospel music.



One recent musical style, rap, is an urban version of an African American verbal tradition dating back to the pre-emancipation era. Historically, a rap was a partly spoken, partly sung poetic statement, characterized by rhymed couplets, verbal wit, and rhythmic brilliancy. Within African American society, rappers have been respected for their powerful verbal gifts and feared for their extraordinary insights into human experience.

African American customary folklore includes, among other traditional rituals and activities, behavioral expressions of religious belief (the verbal components of such expressions are part of the oral tradition). Many aspects of African American folk belief can be traced back to African sources, including the conviction that, in the realm of the supernatural, there is no dichotomy between good and evil, both being attributes of the same powers. Also African were some of the spiritual rituals of the slaves. When black conjurers attempted to arouse the spirits of dead ancestors, they sometimes used goofer—grave dirt. This term was derived from the Ki-Kongo verb *kufwa*, which meant “to die.” According to a Kongo tradition, earth from a person’s grave was considered to be at one with that person’s spirit.

Another Africanism was the emphasis on revelation among African American folk medicine practitioners in their quest for useful plant remedies. In order to manufacture and administer folk remedies, medicine practitioners, who generally were women, collected roots, leaves, herbs, barks, and teas. These women became medicine practitioners either by apprenticeship or by being “called” to practice medicine. Some practitioners claimed that in times of crisis, they heard a voice informing them about medicines that would help people.

Black men practiced with magic as well. Generally, men became conjurers by inheritance—a man might be the son of a conjure man, obligating him to accept inherited powers or face misfortune or illness. A man could also become a conjurer voluntarily, such as if he were his father’s seventh son (assuming that the father and his mate had not produced a girl).

Several types of African American folk belief involved the occult: hoodoo, a magical charm practiced by a relatively small number of people, mostly by men; signs, a more popular magical belief practiced largely by women (hoodoo was more exclusive and complex than signs); and voodoo, which developed principally in Louisiana because of that

region’s confluence of French, Catholic, and Haitian influences. In annual ceremonies featuring elaborate decorations (with altars surrounded by hundreds of lighted candles), the cult of voodoo invoked, among other deities, Legba, a trickster of West African and Haitian origination. Initiation into the voodoo cult involved rites of passage (seclusion, fasting, special wardrobes, dancing and possession, animal sacrifices) that closely paralleled various religious rites practiced in West Africa and Haiti. One figure associated with voodoo was Marie Laveau, whose legendary initiation into the cult involved being coaxed to join the New Orleans cult by a rattlesnake. The African American fascination with snakes can be traced back to Africa, where the serpent was an important supernatural being. For instance, in Dahomey, two rainbow-serpents (named Aido Hwedo and Damballa Hwedo) were believed to have been present at the creation of the world; similar myths concerning serpent-spirits were found in Haiti.

Another Africanism was the African American belief in *haints* (ghosts). According to many West African cultures, haints were spirits at one stage of their being. Haints could be beneficent, such as the spirits of loved ones returning from the dead to help, protect, and counsel the living. Haints could also be evil, such as the spirits of masters who returned to renew their abuse of slaves. To protect themselves from such evil spirits, slaves practiced various rituals, including putting heavy rocks on top of their masters’ coffins to keep them weighted down, placing a Bible by a door to prevent spirits from entering the house, and chanting magical charms to keep evil spirits away. Believing that they were not safe from their masters even in death, slaves requested for their burial to be as far as possible from their masters.

As the slaves became Christianized, African American religious services began to combine African/Caribbean and Judeo-Christian elements. One manifestation of this fusion was the ring shout, a religious, highly ritualized dance that, in the pre-emancipation South, served as an acceptable substitute for secular dancing. After the Civil War, ring shouts increasingly came under the scrutiny of African American ministers, who judged them to be uncivilized, if not anti-Christian.

A secular African American dance originating during the days of slavery was the cakewalk, a stylized caricature of the Anglo American waltz. By 1895, the dance had become a mass cultural phenomenon and was appearing in

Broadway productions. Soon, the cakewalk was being incorporated into the high-culture musical compositions of Debussy, Sousa, and Stravinsky.

One example of African American material culture is the banjo. Slaves brought from Africa a prototype version of the banjo. By the 1840s, white audiences had been widely exposed to the banjo through the use of that instrument in minstrel shows, a new form of popular entertainment. At minstrel shows, white musicians in blackface (minstrels) imitated African American musicians by singing ersatz African American folk songs. Far from traditional (they were written commercially for the minstrel shows), minstrel songs romanticized the lives of plantation slaves. Anchoring their singing with banjo accompaniment and also performing instrumental numbers on the banjo, white minstrel performers borrowed the African American style of down-stroking across the banjo strings and utilizing the fifth (thumb) string of slave banjos.

African Americans have long constructed a variety of material objects. From Africa, slaves brought skills—especially ironworking, woodworking, and building with earth and stone—which plantation owners exploited in the New World; thus, plantation households were full of tools, furniture, quilts, pottery, and jewelry made by slaves. Similarly, plantation houses soon featured such African architectural designs as central fireplaces, steeply sloping hip roofs, wide porches with overhanging roofs, and the use of moss and earth within walls.

Another important example of African American material culture is the shotgun house. First built in New Orleans in the early 19th century by people of color (most of whom were political refugees from Haiti), the shotgun house combined African, Caribbean, and French architectural concepts. Small and rectangular—one room wide by three rooms deep, with doors at each end, and the gable end toward the street—the shotgun house is a common house design in the South today, utilized by whites as well as blacks.

Over time, African Americans developed distinctive foodways. This they accomplished by combining foodstuffs introduced from Africa (such as yams, okra, black-eyed peas, and sorghum), with Old World tastes and recipes involving African techniques of cooking and spicing, with New World foodstuffs and food preparation techniques. This fusion of foodways led to the emergence of such distinctively African American dishes as gumbo and barbecue.

A moniker often applied to African American cooking is “soul food.”

Combined, all of these practices and rituals form a uniquely black folk culture.

*See also:* Africanisms; Animal Trickster Stories; Blues Music; Field Hollers; Goofer Dust; Grave Dirt; Hoodoo; Jazz; Laveau, Marie; Ragtime; Ring Shout; Slave Culture; Soul Food; Work Songs

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## Black Fraternal Societies

In contemporary society, the term “fraternal societies” conjures up images of university-based fraternities. Yet in the 19th century, fraternal societies constituted the most popular form of African American voluntary association. There were black fraternal societies as early as the 18th century, and ritual and regalia helped distinguish them from non-fraternal benevolent societies and social clubs. Such associations continue to exist today, but the heyday for the black lodge was in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries.

Although fraternalism also appealed to whites in that period, fraternal societies played a larger role in African American life. Blacks were enthusiastic joiners, and many

of them affiliated with more than a single fraternal order. Deprived of opportunities for civic participation and often coping with degrading poverty, black men and women learned racial pride in their lodges, and their families could look there for material assistance at times of crisis. Despite their rhetoric about brotherhood, fraternal societies, both black and white, were notorious for quarrels, schisms, and “big men” who ruled autocratically.

Racial discrimination imposed by whites forced African Americans to organize their own segregated lodges. After the Civil War, innumerable black fraternal societies sprang up, many of them brief-lived local organizations. Fraternal societies enjoyed broad popularity in both Southern and Northern states. When they migrated to the North, Southern blacks sometimes brought their distinctive lodges with them. A great variety of lodges existed: rural lodges, urban lodges, for men only, for women only, for men and women meeting together, and for children. Although the African American elite preferred their own exclusive clubs, the lodges were cross-class organizations in which laborers, domestics, skilled workers, shopkeepers, and professionals called each other brother or sister. For instance, preachers and business entrepreneurs from Birmingham provided the leadership for lodges of Alabama coal miners.

Black lodges typically were smaller than their white counterparts. This made them financially less stable, but it also provided greater opportunity for election to office. Where else could African Americans aspire to election to numerous offices dignified by impressive titles? Deprived of political rights, blacks acquired leadership skills; they learned how to preside at meetings, keep minutes and financial accounts, and manage the activities of their societies. Fraternal societies often published their own newspapers and owned meeting halls. A few also operated retail stores, hotels or boarding houses, and farms and also established hospitals and old age homes.

Lodges' elaborate secret rituals contrasted with the simplicity of Baptist and Methodist liturgies. Ritual dominated lodge meetings, particularly for initiation ceremonies. Often they told the story of a moral pilgrimage. The fraternal societies that borrowed least from white organizations emphasized personal equality and collective service. Colorful fraternal society parades, with marchers wearing regalia or other ceremonial dress and waving lodge banners, and fraternal society funeral processions were a conspicuous part of black community life.

Black fraternal societies differed from white ones in some respects. The importance of religion and of women in the African American community help explain why, in contrast with white organizations, black fraternal societies often bore biblical names and frequently accepted men and women as members in the same lodges. The Galilean Fishermen (founded 1856) is an example of the former, the American Woodmen (founded 1901) of the latter.

The poverty of blacks encouraged their fraternal societies to emphasize mutual insurance, at first burial policies and later life insurance to support survivors. For instance, a few years before World War I, 37 fraternal societies in Virginia carried insurance policies with a face value of \$4,500,000.

As an exception to the general rule of racial separation, a few partially integrated fraternal temperance societies existed in the 19th century. Typically they combined segregated local lodges with multiracial state grand lodges or national organizations. The novelist William Wells Brown waged an unsuccessful fight for racial equality first in the Sons of Temperance and later in the Good Templar fraternal order. The Independent Order of Good Samaritans and Daughters of Samaria began in 1847 as a largely white organization that admitted a few blacks. After emancipation, blacks became more numerous than whites, and the whites departed, making the Good Samaritans a black fraternal society.

The largest black fraternal societies bore names similar to that of white organizations: the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Elks. Of these parallel orders, the Prince Hall Masons were by far the oldest. In 1775, a Masonic lodge attached to a British regiment stationed at Boston initiated a group of African Americans whose West Indian leader was named Prince Hall. In 1784, the Grand Lodge of England issued the black Masons in Massachusetts an official charter, and they organized their first lodge in 1787. At first, the Prince Hall Masons could recruit only among the small number of free blacks in the Northern states. After the Civil War, they spread to the Southern states where most African Americans lived. By that time, no overall Prince Hall organization existed, so each state grand lodge was independent. Not the largest of the black fraternal societies, the Prince Hall Masons were nevertheless the most prestigious, with many middle-class members, including the first African American elected to the U.S. Senate and the first to serve on the U.S. Supreme

Court. Much of the growth in Prince Hall membership occurred in the 20th century. The related Shiner philanthropic group, founded in 1892, attracted a membership much smaller than its white counterpart. In contrast, the Prince Hall women's auxiliary, founded in 1874, was larger and more important than white Masonry's Eastern Star. At present, the Prince Hall Masons claim more than 300,000 members, including those in lodges outside the United States.

The second major parallel order, the Odd Fellows, also was organized by free blacks in the North with the help of a charter from an English grand lodge. Founded in 1843, the Odd Fellows for many years stood out as the largest black fraternal society. At its peak early in the 20th century, it claimed 300,000 members, about twice the Prince Hall membership at the time, and its lodges owned about 2 million dollars in real estate. The Odd Fellows had a sizable women's auxiliary, the Daughters of Ruth, founded in 1857. Today the Odd Fellows claim 100,000 members.

The third major parallel order, the Knights of Pythias, came into existence after the Civil War without the benefit of an English charter. Founded in 1880 in Mississippi, the Colored Knights of Pythias offered military-style formations for younger members who took the "uniform rank." Like other parallel organizations, it admitted only men, with women restricted to an auxiliary. At one time, the Pythians were a quarter-million strong, but by the beginning of the 21st century, few if any Pythian lodges survived.

The fourth major parallel order, the Elks, was founded much later, in 1898. African American women organized their own Elks society four years later. Like the Prince Hall Masons, the Elks strongly appealed to the black middle class. J. Finley Wilson, elected Grand Exalted Ruler in 1922, and holding his high office until 1953, exemplifies the "big man" who often dominated black fraternal societies. The Elks played a leading role in organizing fraternal society support for black civil rights. The Elks continue into the present day with a large membership. In the mid-1970s, there were 450,000 African American men in the Elks order, or 7 percent of all black men.

Whites resented the similar names borne by black parallel orders and their related insignia, regalia, secret handshakes, and the like. Court suits and state laws attacked in particular the black Pythians, Elks, and Shriners. The

African American organizations fought back. At considerable expense they created a network of black lawyers that foreshadowed the subsequent work of the NAACP. In 1912, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Pythians in their fight that had begun in Georgia, and in 1929, the high court ruled in favor of the Shriners in their struggle that had begun in Georgia and Texas. The attack on the Elks that had begun in New York State ended when the white Elks, tired of an expensive legal battle, accepted the existence of a parallel African American organization.

Many black fraternal societies had distinctive and often religious names, unrelated to those of white organizations. These black lodges typically were organized in the South. They included the United Brothers of Friendship (founded 1861, reorganized 1868) and their female partner, the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten (1878), the Mosaic Templars (1883), and the Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor (1871). Although few non-parallel African American societies have survived, in their prime they demonstrated the originality of black fraternalists. For instance, the True Reformers, founded in 1873 and reorganized in 1881, helped pioneer life insurance that went beyond provision for burial. Women eventually dominated the Independent Order of St. Luke, founded in 1867, with Maggie Lena Walker in charge from 1899 until her death in 1934. Both the True Reformers and the St. Luke society operated banks in Richmond, Virginia. The True Reformer bank collapsed in 1910, but the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank survived the Great Depression, and after a merger with two other black banks, it continues today as the Consolidated Bank and Trust Company. In the early 20th century, the True Reformers claimed 100,000 members, and in the mid-1920s, St. Luke claimed a similar number. None of these societies exists today.

The Knights of Peter Claver, a Roman Catholic organization founded in 1909, has a distinctive name but can be considered a society parallel to that of a white fraternal order, the Knights of Columbus. Although never large, the Knights of Peter Claver and its women's auxiliary, founded in 1922, still exist.

By the start of the 21st century, fraternal societies had gone out of fashion, and most of their members, black and white, were elderly or in late middle age. Most of the societies have become purely social organizations that patronize community philanthropies such as education and health. Embarrassed by now unfashionably flamboyant titles and

costumes, most historians have neglected fraternal societies despite their historic importance.

See also: Benevolent Societies; Prince Hall Masonry

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## Black Seminoles

The term Black Seminoles refers to escaped black slaves and free Africans in the antebellum American South who fled plantation slavery and joined indigenous Seminole communities in Florida. Independent communities composed of fugitives were known as maroons. The maroons that produced Black Seminole people began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as fugitive slaves headed south to Florida in greater numbers.

There were several ways in which Africans became incorporated into Seminole communities. Initially, Seminole people, particularly those in powerful political positions within the community, purchased black slaves. Seminole slavery was quite different from the plantation slavery in the American South. Blacks enslaved by Seminoles owed relatively little to their masters and often had infrequent interactions with them. Generally, Seminoles who owned slaves expected only a yearly tribute from them. Enslaved people were also sometimes captured from plantations. This happened frequently during times of conflict, when the Seminoles needed to increase their fighting forces. Finally, runaway slaves from white plantations also formed alliances with the Seminoles.

African maroon communities existed alongside Seminole communities, and cooperation developed between them. Cultural syncretism occurred between Africans and the Seminoles in this context, as Africans adopted such

cultural aspects as the dress, food, and shelter style of the Seminoles. Further, there is evidence of West African influences on Seminole artwork. However, although marooned slaves did become incorporated into some aspects of Seminole communities and maroons, and Seminoles did have cultural influences on each other, this incorporation did not always occur via the creation of kinship ties. In fact, maroons often did not actually become members of indigenous Seminole communities or kinship circles. Inter-marriage occurred, but infrequently. Seminole kinship is based on matrilineality, which would have meant, for instance, that babies born to black women would have been outside the bounds of Seminole kinship.

The relationship between the African maroons and the Seminoles was strengthened by their shared conflict with white Southerners and the U.S. government. Conflict between the Seminoles and Africans and the United States coalesced in the early 19th century, after proposals arose that threatened to force the removal of the Seminoles from Florida. After 1812, white Southerners, who saw the Afro-Seminole communities as threats to the slaveholding South, were determined to try to remove the Seminoles from the region. As a result, politicians conspired to relocate Native Americans to "Indian Territory," in what is now Oklahoma. This conflict resulted in the destruction of two Seminole settlements in Florida and many Seminoles and Africans fleeing into the swamplands. Other conflicts resulting from white interference ensued in the years that followed, including battles against Andrew Jackson during the First Seminole War, which occurred from 1817 to 1819.

On May 28, 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which sought to address the concerns of white Southerners in Florida who felt that the presence of the Seminole communities encouraged slaves to abscond and that the maroons and Seminoles threatened their livelihood. Kevin Mulroy argues that the cooperative resistance mounted by Seminoles and Africans was based on two fears. First, black maroons became concerned that their freedom would be threatened by this removal, and second, indigenous Seminoles feared the loss of tributaries from their slaves if they were to be moved.

The Second Seminole War began in 1835, following the proposed Indian Removal Act. The U.S. army employed divide-and-conquer tactics that initially worked but ultimately backfired, given that whites were unsure what to do with the black Seminole maroons. It was feared that if they

were returned to plantations, their knowledge of the Florida countryside would facilitate their renewed escapes, and whites were also apprehensive of their military abilities. In the end, U.S. general Thomas Jessup recommended sending the maroons west with the indigenous Seminoles.

After the removal of the Seminoles to Oklahoma, tensions grew between the indigenous groups and the maroons. In “Indian Territory,” Seminoles were subject to the laws of the Creek nation, which was particularly devastating for both free and enslaved blacks in Seminole communities. Creek laws made blacks vulnerable to recapture and re-enslavement under white plantation slavery. Further, Creek laws institutionalized inequality between Native Americans and blacks, stripping blacks of some of the privileges they had previously enjoyed in Seminole society in Florida. This period gave rise to a leader among the maroons, John Horse, whose primary goal was to maintain the autonomy of Black Seminole maroons.

Separate Black Seminole maroon communities continued to exist throughout the 19th century, as did slaves and tributaries within indigenous Seminole communities. The end of the American Civil War signaled freedom for those blacks still “owned” by Seminoles. Emancipation eliminated the annual tribute they had been required to

pay Seminole masters and also eliminated the constant fear of kidnap and sale into slavery outside of the Seminole community.

In the postbellum period, “freedmen” and Seminoles continued their practice of residing in separate settlements. Although the black communities were officially part of the Seminole nation, and under its governance, blacks did not culturally incorporate into indigenous Seminole clans. Relations between the two groups in the 20th century were characterized by some tension and some attempts by indigenous Seminoles to exclude Black Seminoles from the Seminole Nation’s politics. Yet in contemporary society, some efforts are being made, both by scholars and by Black Seminoles themselves, to fully acknowledge the history of the Black Seminoles and to mend the relationship between them and indigenous Seminole people.

*See also:* Destination, Florida; Seminole Wars

*Lindsay Sumner*

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## Black Wedding Traditions

Black wedding traditions are as varied and as diverse as the individuals who adapt them. African Americans sometimes choose to incorporate religious, spiritual, and cultural rituals and symbols that honor their African ancestors and heritage. Black wedding traditions can be said to foster a sense of connectedness among wedding participants, as well as provide continuity between past and present circumstances.

In many world cultures, marriage is considered a union between two families who may share different wedding traditions. These might include consulting with family elders for permission to marry; exchanging dowry, livestock, or property rights; participating in a prerequisite period of supervised courtship; or a combination of these. In the United States, bridal showers, bachelor parties, and engagement



*A black Seminole named Abraham, one of many escaped black slaves absorbed into the Seminole nation. (Library of Congress)*

parties provide occasions for family and friends to prepare the couple for marriage.

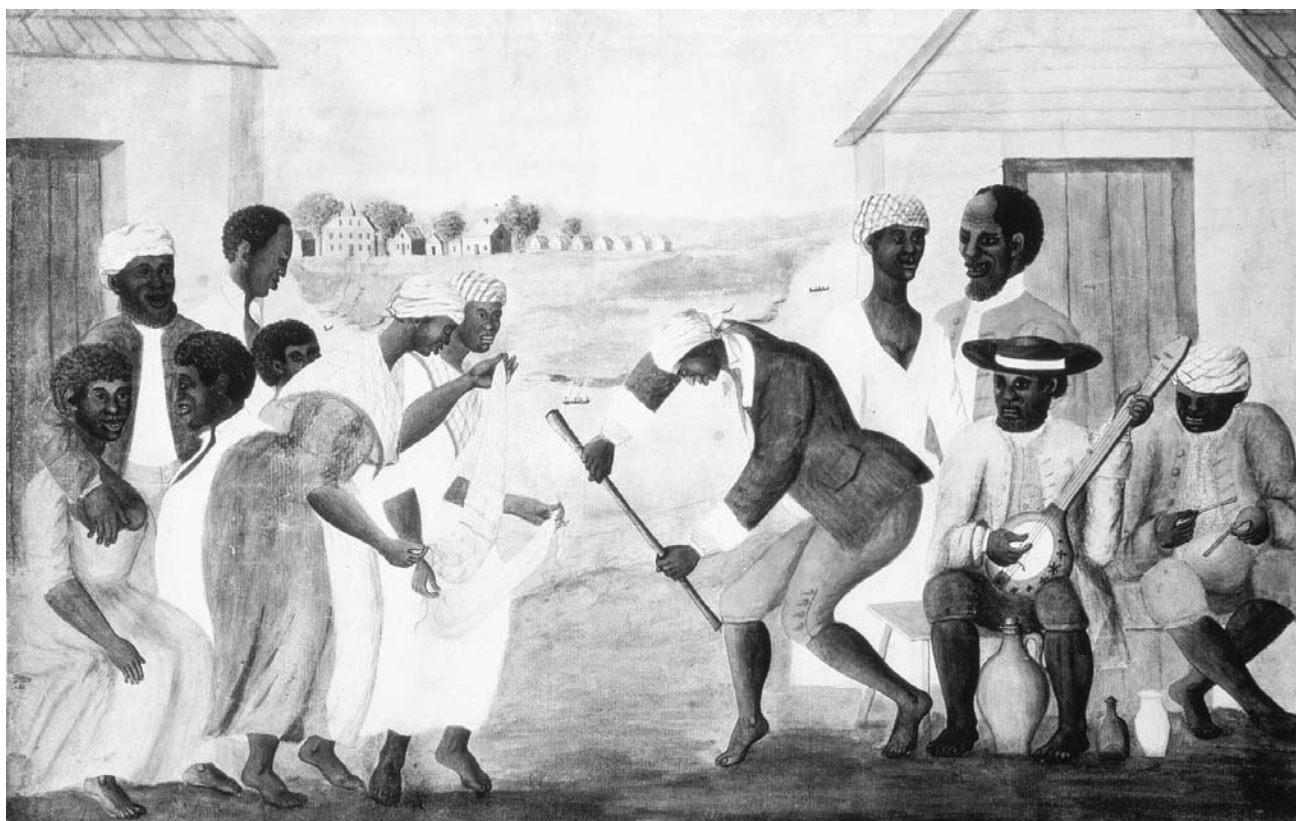
Jumping the broom is arguably the most well-known African American wedding tradition. In a number of African cultures, the broom symbolizes the beginnings of shared domestic life. During slavery, African American couples were denied the right to legally marry. The practice of jumping the broom emerged as a symbolic means of entering into marriage. In these instances, slaves would gather either in secret or with the permission of the slave owner to witness a couple's pledge of devotion. At the conclusion of the pledge, a broom would be placed on the ground in front of them, and they would jump over it to mark their transition into married life.

This custom was highly publicized in the made-for-television adaptation of Alex Haley's *Roots* and has gained in popularity since the Afrocentric cultural movements of the 1970s. Oftentimes, the broom is decorated by bridesmaids, family members, or friends. In many contemporary African American wedding ceremonies, the bride and groom may opt to jump the broom following the exchange of wedding vows or their legal pronouncement as man and

wife, just prior to the recessional at the end of their wedding ceremony.

African Americans have also borrowed a number of rituals from throughout the African Diaspora. Some of the lesser known include crossing two sticks as a sign of commitment and pouring out libations in honor of the couple's ancestors. Contemporary brides and grooms often decorate the venue where their ceremony is held with flowers; those who marry in spiritual venues tend to place flowers on the altar as an offering. Elaborate hairstyles, African-inspired headpieces and fabrics (such as kente, mudcloth, or aso-oke prints) are sometimes integrated with Western attire and/or family heirlooms. African American couples may also choose to fuse Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or other religious ceremonial elements with spiritual and performative practices such as West African drumming and dance. Members of black fraternities and sororities sometimes incorporate the symbols, colors, mottos, flowers, mission, and members of their organizations into their weddings.

The wedding feast is one of the most time-honored links between peoples of African descent in the Diaspora. Wedding receptions provide opportunities for family



*Jumping the broom at a slave wedding, about 1820. (Art Media)*

members and friends to gather together and celebrate the festive occasion with food, drink, entertainment, and merriment. Depending on the preferences of the bride and groom, any number of ethnic and familial specialties may make their way onto African American wedding reception tables. Banquet menus may include regional specialties as diverse as Maryland crab cakes, Caribbean-inspired black cake, seafood gumbo, okra and tomatoes, red velvet cake, or palm wine. Although the wedding ceremony may have a more subdued, religious, or spiritual theme, the reception may include a live band, drummers, or DJ playing songs by black artists.

See also: Africanisms; Black Churches; Black Folk Culture

Lori Baptista

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## Blackface Minstrelsy

Blackface minstrelsy was one of the central cultural forces in America from the early 19th century through the mid-20th century. It was arguably the most popular form of entertainment in the nation throughout most of the 19th century, appealing primarily to audiences that were as vast and diverse as America itself. Its primary agents were individual white performers and later troupes of four to five “Ethiopian delineators” who blackened their skin with burnt cork and performed dances, songs, and skits that they claimed were representative of genuine slave culture. In essence, minstrel shows constituted America’s first national theater. It is also the source of damaging racial stereotypes that have had a devastating impact on American attitudes about African Americans and other ethnic populations.

The practice of white performers darkening their faces with makeup to perform as black characters was initially sparked by necessity in the early years of the 19th-century; black actors were not allowed to perform in white productions. The early practice of blackface also harkened back to

the European traditions of the theater of misrule and festival revelry, events where clowns with blackened faces often offered parodies of and against standing social hierarchies. In early 19th-century America, white actors also had occasion to blacken their faces to perform in stage parodies of European opera. More a form of burlesque than of what would later become minstrel shows, these opera parodies might offer such fare as *Lo, Som am de Beauties* (based on Bellini’s *La Sonnambula*) and *Lucy Did Sham a Moor* (based on Donizetti’s *Lucia du Lammermoor*). The thrust of productions such as these was less to imitate or represent black behavior and culture than to lampoon the latest popular opera—a tradition long popular on both sides of the Atlantic. But it was an independent (and generally deeply flawed) imitation of black culture that formed the central conceit of blackface minstrelsy and sustained the tradition well into the 20th century.

The trend of distinct blackface performance was well established by the late 1820s, as musicians began to capitalize on the growing interest among Northern audiences in black culture and music. Performers such as George Washington Dixon and J. W. Sweeney found notoriety by performing musical numbers in blackface between the acts of more mainstream entertainments. Notably, it was not uncommon for street performers who actually were black to offer their routines in the byways of most Northern cities, but because white people were commonly uncomfortable about direct contact with “negroes,” white performers in blackface posed a more acceptable option. Some of these earlier performers did have direct experience of black culture, either through association with free blacks or through youths spent in the slaveholding South. But many simply used blackface as a guise and offered as the music of blacks what were in fact versions and adaptations of British melodies.

Although this brand of itinerant blackface minstrelsy was a common diversion, it was the work of minstrel showman T. D. Rice that would propel the medium to a cultural phenomenon. While on tour in 1828, Rice happened to see an old, crippled black man performing for money in the street, dancing a strange step and singing, “Weel about to turn about and do jus so / Ebery time I weel about, I jump Jim Crow.” Rice, a particularly capable dancer, was so taken by the routine that he resolved to learn the song and dance himself and offer it as part of a performance he was to do that night. After learning the song and the steps



from the old black man (and according to some accounts, even borrowing the old man's clothes to wear as the evening's costume), Rice rushed to the theater to "blacken up." That evening, the song "Jim Crow" and the dance routine that Rice performed sparked a sensation that would quickly propel the actor from obscurity to stardom.

Rice brought to the performance a level of physicality that audiences responded to with fascination and delight; his popularity led to tours of major venues in both America and Britain. As James Kennard Jr. reported in 1845 "From the nobility in gentry, down to the lowest chimney-sweep in Great Britain, from the member of Congress, down to the young apprentice or school-boy in America, it was all: 'Turn about and wheel about and do just so / And every time I turn about I jump Jim Crow'" (James Kennard Jr. quoted in Lott, *Love and Theft*, 56). Although blackface performance in America before the Jim Crow phenomenon was generally offered as a between-act diversion, Rice's popularity established the material as a central entertainment worthy of a full evening's venue.

What seemed to capture the audience's fascination was the dance. There was something about the odd and exaggerated step—something about Rice's apt execution of the movements—that thrilled the crowd as the routine of no other blackface performer ever had. Rather than simply offering music and dance aligned with British folk forms, as had been the standard, Rice offered a routine based on an actual slave song and imitative of black dance. That he captured the kind of hitch and swagger the audience perceived as an embodiment of black-seeming corporality marked the routine not just as a masquerade but also as means of transgression. The song and dance were nothing new, as evidenced by the black performer Rice studied on the street. What was new was that Rice, a white man, was performing the material with startling accuracy. In effect, he made the dance visible in ways that it could not be when performed by blacks in the street; he could bring the curious and exotic dance to a white audience without bringing them into direct proximity with a "troubling" black body.

This new mode of blackface performance marked a seismic shift in the attitudes that showmen and audiences brought to minstrelsy. In an era when Americans were expected to observe a dizzying number of rules of comportment and etiquette, the flamboyance of this new variety of blackface performance offered much-needed release to white audiences. Rice (and the bevy of white performers

who followed in his wake) was generally bound by the same standards of behavior that the audience was, but the pretense of performing black identity licensed him to flap his arms wildly and hoot and jump. Thus blackface became a screen on which white audiences could project their suppressed urges and repressed behavior. Unchallenged by the viable presence of black performers, minstrel performance resulted in representations of black culture that became increasingly distorted and increasingly disparaging of black people.

The transition of minstrelsy from an innocuous folk form to a transgressive cultural phenomenon was signaled by performances that became increasingly rowdy and raucous. Blackface showmen knew how to play to the crowd, dancing wildly (often suggestively) to the stomping syncopation of songs full of double entendres. The songs were sometime based on tunes from actual black folk traditions, but they were more regularly melodies created by the performers themselves and presented as authentic. With the accompaniment of the fiddle or the banjo (a new instrument derived from African musical forms), the blackface performers offered a boisterous mode of entertainment that seemed, to an often-uninformed audience, to be utterly new and exotically reckless. Performances were often so boisterous that overenthusiastic audience members routinely rushed onto the stage in spontaneous participation with the minstrel performer.

Although women had in the past been among the audiences who enjoyed earlier between-act varieties of blackface performance, the enthusiasm of crowd response quickly established this new mode as an entertainment that was too rough for proper ladies. As a result, the Jim Crow phenomenon resituated the medium as one that initially catered to an all-male crowd. Liberated from codes of propriety generally upheld in mixed company, male performers and audiences could indulge the full freedom and flamboyance the blackened guise afforded. Using the black cork as a screen of sorts, white male performers could offer their white male audiences uncensored projections of their own repressed physicality cast upon imaginary black male identity.

The effect was not lost on opportunistic printers, who cranked out the lyrics of versions and improvisations of the most popular melodies almost as quickly as performers gave them voice. Indeed, the sudden rise in the popularity of minstrelsy was in part due to print traffic of minstrel music in the form of broadsides (cheaply produced,

individual pages of minstrel song lyrics that were sold on the streets for pennies per page) and later in sheet music (rough transcriptions of minstrel songs arranged for those able to play the tunes on the piano in their homes). It was in the form of sheet music, removed from the antics of the minstrel hall, that many Americans learned what to make of the images and messages of the blackface tradition.

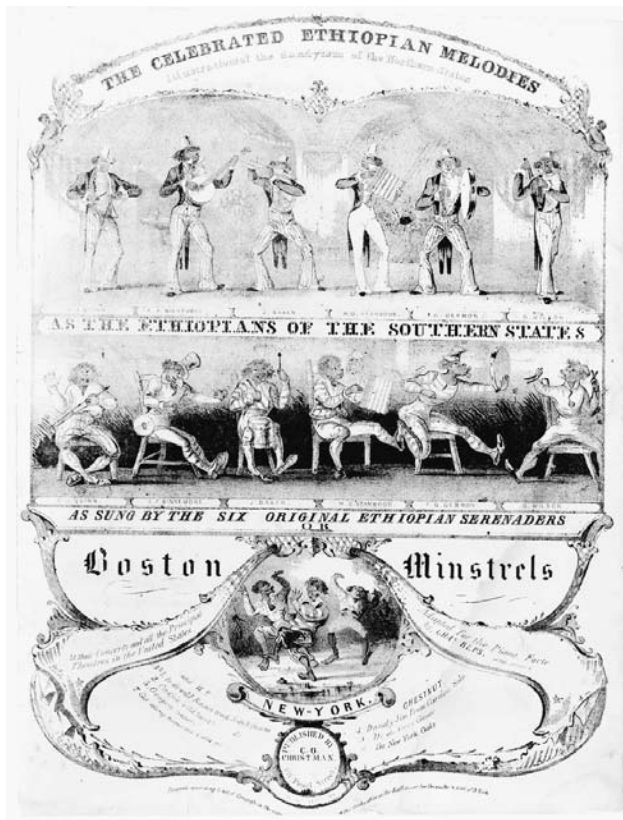
Within a few years, blackface minstrelsy began to suffer from its initial notoriety and from its increasingly bawdy reputation. The narrowing of the audience for live performances and the increasing availability of minstrel sheet music weakened a medium that only a few years earlier had been a vibrant force. But it was the waning of the popularity of one-man minstrel shows that inspired the next shift in the evolution of minstrel performance. In the winter of 1842, a season where a weakened economy was having an ill effect on ticket sales, four individual performers decided to pool their resources and perform as a group. It was in this way that Dan Emmett, Billy Whitlock, Dick Pelham, and Frank Brower formed the Virginia Minstrels, the first minstrel troupe. Their idea for offering a full evening's

entertainment featuring songs, dancing, and skits soon set the standard for what would become the fully realized minstrel show.

The variety of performance proved instantly popular with audiences. Previously, blackface shows had involved one man offering dances and songs, perhaps with an additional player providing music on the banjo or fiddle. But the Virginia Minstrels offered an evening of three-fold entertainment. For the first part of the show, the entire troupe sat in chairs arranged on the stage in a semicircle to play, sing, joke, and interact with each other and the audience. In addition to serving as part of the ensemble, each member of the troupe played a particular role. The “interlocutor,” sitting at the center of the troupe, played banjo or fiddle and served as the comically pompous master of ceremonies and straight man to the more impish members of the team. Although he acted as the butt of many of the jokes, the actor who played the part actually served the central function of reading the reactions and energy of each audience so that he could best set up the largely improvised jokes and set the pacing of the show. To his side sat the balladeer—generally the most skilled musician of the troupe, who commonly sang lead and amazed the audience with his banjo virtuosity. In the outside chairs sat the end men (commonly named “Tambo” and “Bones”), who played percussion and served as the main jokesters of the troupe. Turning jokes and riddles against the interlocutor and each other, as well as improvising exchanges with the audience, these two players mugged and contorted to the music to assure that the performance generated a particularly high grade of frenetic energy.

The second part of the show (known as “the olio”) consisted of variety acts, including acrobatics, individual song and dance routines, novelty acts (commonly featuring magicians, circus players, and drag queens), instrumental solos, and—the most central feature—the stump speech. Always a crowd favorite, the stump speech presented the interlocutor in the comic guise of a preacher, lawyer, mock politician, or quack doctor who in attempting to sound learned would offer a sermon, speech, or lecture riddled with malapropisms and inaccuracies.

The third and final part of the show offered a one-act skit, generally set on a Southern plantation. Here the troupe might offer a parody of a popular play, historical event, or opera. Often featuring elaborate sets, props, and costumes, the final act gave each member of the troupe the



Music cover illustrated with caricatures of six minstrels in two scenes, 1830–1860. (Library of Congress)

opportunity to show his full talents in the broadest possible context. Whatever the story or setting, the final act was punctuated with a major song-and-dance number offering a favorite melody (commonly the song “Miss Lucy Long”) that the troupe and the audience might all sing together.

The success of the Virginia Minstrels not only reinvented minstrelsy but also reinvigorated it, and with the format they originated, the minstrel show came to its full realization. The new venue also provided promoters with an opportunity to expand the audience base for blackface performance. Realizing that broadening the appeal of live minstrel performance only increased sales, enterprising troupes took great efforts to clean up their acts. By the end of the 1840s, women and more refined classes began to rejoin the audience for blackface shows in increasing numbers. Although to some degree the shift can be attributed to the efforts of troupes that refashioned the traditional material to meet the exacting standards of more sensitive theatergoers, much of the change in the composition of minstrel show audiences can also be traced to the marketing of the medium through the sheet music trade.

As early as 1840, music publishers began to appreciate that by softening the suggestive edge of the lyrics and standardizing the more exotic and unfamiliar musical elements that characterized live performance of minstrel musicians, they might find among the uncertain and restricted confines of the parlor a willing and steady market. Potential consumers among the parlor set had ready income and would pay more for elegantly produced sheet music than working-class lads might pay for cheaply produced lyric sheets sold by street vendors. Also, those striving to meet the exacting standards of parlor posture and propriety appreciated the opportunity for fun and modest abandon offered by carefully recalibrated minstrel songs.

The readjustment of the market for minstrel music is reflected in a shift in the composition of minstrel sheet music covers in the early 1840s—a shift that suggests that publishers of the material had designs on parlor commerce. In the early years of the blackface show, cover art for minstrel sheet music usually offered images of the actual performers who popularized the tunes on the minstrel stage. Cover illustrations from the 1830s and early 1840s often depict an individual performer: T. D. Rice, Peter Whitlock, or any of the other artists who flocked to reproduce the wildly popular Jim Crow routine. In these early years, music publishers undoubtedly targeted male consumers,

who were more likely to have frequented performances and thus were familiar with the players who performed the rowdy, sometimes bawdy routines. To draw on that audience, publishers depended on portraits of the most popular performers in poses that suggested the dance that had become all the rage. In contrast, later in the decade, when the blackface tradition broadened, and the fully realized minstrel show became the standard, cover illustration reflected the change by offering depictions of full minstrel troupes—four or five blackened figures splayed ridiculously (often suggestively) in their chairs, instruments prominently displayed. These kinds of shows still catered primarily to male audiences, and so publishers offered sheet music covers that simply reflected the central image associated with the performances—the absurdly contorted figures of the “interlocutor,” “end men,” musicians, and balladeer.

However, by the mid-1840s and throughout the 1850s, a notable shift in the representation of minstrel performers occurred in the design of sheet music cover art. Depictions of upstanding, well-groomed white performers began to appear along with the grotesque, black characters they portrayed. The upright gents presented an element of elegance, of prestige, even as they perpetuated base parodies of black identity. Cover illustrations seemed to position the dapper entertainers as gentlemen callers, politely awaiting introduction into the refined space of the family parlor, or as handsome escorts inviting women to potentially join in actually attending the fun and spectacle of a performance. The white figures ushered the rollicking minstrel show into the intimate confines of the American home, and sheet music offered the means for every parlor to be transformed into a minstrel stage, every family gathering a potential opportunity to metaphorically “blacken up” and step into the limelight. Simultaneously, the potentially threatening atmosphere of the minstrel theater was neutralized even as gaudy racial misrepresentations remained in tact.

The material marks a reciprocal relationship in the latter years of the 1840s between the refined aesthetics of the parlor and the playful antics of blackface performance of the stage. This “cross pollination” between the stage and parlor (an exchange that both legitimized race parody and licensed release in refined contexts) not only expanded the market for blackface material but also broadened acceptance of pervasive racial stereotypes across the full spectrum of American society. Minstrel troupes such as E. P. Christy’s Minstrels and the Virginia Serenaders

performed to the most elite of mid-century society in their own lavish “Ethiopian Opera Houses.” In addition to more playful (but respectful) tunes, these high-class minstrels offered beautiful love songs and sentimental ballads in four-part harmony. Master songsmith Stephen Foster composed some of his most popular (and most enduring) melodies for the minstrel stage. Even the venerated *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was absorbed into the minstrel tradition. Although some were beginning to perceive the blackface tradition as damaging and racially insulting (most notably ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass), most audiences failed to see minstrel shows as anything other than harmless entertainment. Few would have acknowledged that the satisfaction of laughing at comedic incongruity came from its power to assure audience members of their superiority over the focus of the humor—black characters. Regardless of the artistry of the performers or the cleverness of the renditions, the central comedic paradigm positioned racial superiority as the pivotal theme. But the parodies themselves were leveraged on what had already become pervasive assumptions of the racial inferiority of blacks. Paradoxically, even as white audiences indulged their sense of superiority over the representations of blacks in these productions, they were also deeply invested in the cultural practice of (un)seeing black identity. That white performers and audiences accepted that black peoples’ skin served as a vacant area for playing out fantasies demonstrates again that the persistent process of blackface in America depended upon denying black identity.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the decades between the Civil War and World War I. African American performers found more opportunity to occupy the stage, but restricted by the warped perceptions of white audiences, black performers were pressured to perform the same kinds of minstrel stereotypes their white predecessors had invented. Their success depended on their own brilliant self-ridicule and their ability to assure their white audience of the validity of their own stereotypes. White audiences did not want to see black culture as it actually was and were generally not empathetic toward or interested in black issues and identity. What they wanted were songs and routines that reinforced their nostalgia for absurdly simplistic images of blacks generated decade after decade on the antebellum minstrel stage. In addition to trying to infuse more humanity into their own representations, African Americans in the post-Civil War era had to compete against

more established troupes of white performers—groups that generally monopolized the major performance stages and venues. The minstrel show in postbellum America began to expand to full-scale extravaganzas, sometimes involving as many as a hundred minstrels, sideshow acts, acrobats, circus acts, and dancing girls. These shows would by the 1880s evolve into Vaudeville.

In print music, songs from the minstrel stage continued to be popular. But in the years after the war and particularly in the post-Reconstruction era, whether songs about black figures originated from minstrelsy or not, they regularly presented the domestic lives of African Americans as woefully inadequate. Indeed, throughout the end of the 19th century, the sheet music presented and portrayed a black population incapable of maintaining the respectable bonds that were otherwise projected as bringing American families together. Even as the sanctity of family ties was being most strongly asserted as central to national identity, and even as those messages were being perpetuated in the broader-sweep popular sheet music being consumed in the domestic sphere, blacks were being denied access, excluded from the fantasy of comfort and care indulged by the rest of the population. Rather, black identity was presented as base, absurd, inferior, and uncivilized—all that was antithetical to the idealized aesthetics and aptitudes of the rest of the nation.

That sheet music offering images of failed black families became so common in post-Reconstruction America reflects a national atmosphere dubious of African Americans. Undeniably, images and messages of antebellum minstrel sheet music helped to drive into the psyche of Americans the idea that blacks were foolish, hypersexual, and (unless carefully monitored) dangerous: these were the assumptions about black behavior that Americans in the North were trying to reconcile with the behavior and attitudes of blacks now living among them in increasing numbers in urban centers. The assumptions that shaped these attitudes about black behavior were anchored to parlor culture’s embrace of minstrel material in mid-century America. On the covers and in the music of antebellum sheet music, the blackface tradition had offered an endless stream of images of blacks as buffoons; as careless and carefree braggarts; as wanton women; as hot-tempered, ill-tempered, and intemperate lovers; as thieves; and as fops. Repeatedly presented as unable to maintain even the most basic standards of decorum and dignity, comic

black figures amused parlor-dwelling Americans and eased middle-class uncertainty by marking the woeful extremes of social failure. Unchecked and unchallenged for decades, these images informed and influenced attitudes about black identity by importing devastatingly racist ideology into the American home in the guise of harmless entertainment.

Still, there were some ways black characters did figure into idyllic and nostalgic domestic scenes. Consider such pieces as “Old Uncle Ned,” “The Old Piney Woods,” or “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny”—songs that are among the most enduring melodies from the minstrel stage. In songs such as these, black characters are depicted tenderly, even lovingly, as they pine away for lost homes or absent loved ones. But in the songs, almost without exception, images of home in domestic peace are conflated with mythic plantation life—that happier time and place where the now world-weary black characters had supposedly led carefree lives under the tender care of their kindly white masters. The cover art often depicts woeful black figures who cast their longing gazes at gracious plantation scenes that seem to shimmer in the distance. The dynamic was also reproduced in sheet music covers and melodies that depict white families who have lost their beloved slaves—the dear “aunts” and “uncles” who once graced the family circle. In both situations, the domestic ideal *could* be realized for black figures, not through their own autonomous family ties but rather through filling their defined role in the completion of the idyllic domestic scenes of their white masters. The message is that blacks can be upstanding, dignified, and loyal, but only when brought into the perfecting orbit of the white family circle—that the idealized domestic atmosphere of white American families can even serve to domesticate blacks and tame their otherwise wild and unruly temperaments.

Although vaudeville would eclipse the minstrel show in the late 19th century, minstrel performance would continue to play a part in the form of virulently racist coon songs. Commonly performed by whites in blackface (but occasionally performed by African Americans), these routines presented unabashedly racist depictions of blacks as violent, oversexed, shiftless, and ignorant. This image of blacks as buffoons, braggarts, and brawlers was the distillation of minstrelsy’s half-century of cultural slander and misrepresentation. Minstrelsy also played a role in many of the evolving modes of mass media. Some of Thomas Edison’s earliest recordings for the phonograph were of

minstrel shows. One of the most popular shows in early radio was *Amos and Andy*, a comedy show where two white men voiced black characters drawn from the minstrel tradition. Early producers of mass-produced food products populated their labels with figures such as Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben, carryovers from the blackface tradition. Blackface played a central part in landmark films of the early 20th century; white performers in blackface are central features of movies such as D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* and Al Jolson’s *The Jazz Singer*; blackface routines appeared regularly in Hollywood films as late as 1954 (notably, in the classic *White Christmas*).

Equally indicative of the influence of minstrelsy, roles played by African Americans throughout the mid-20th century on the stage, in films, and on the radio were commonly drawn from stereotypes from the blackface tradition. At one point, African American actor Bert Williams was one of the highest-paid performers in the Ziegfeld Follies, but the role he played (generally in blackface) was one derived from the minstrel tradition. Hattie McDaniel was the first African American to win an Academy Award (1940), but it was for playing the role of Mammy in the film *Gone With the Wind*, a character closely connected to the blackface tradition. The first television shows that featured African American characters where *Beulah* (starring Hattie McDaniel as the housekeeper for a white family) and *Amos and Andy* (starring Alvin Childress and Spencer Williams, two African American actors playing the characters originating from the earlier radio show). Although the actors playing these roles brought their very real talent to bear, the roles were undeniably tied to characters rooted in blackface minstrelsy.

During the first half of the century, the traditional minstrel show experienced a second life through countless amateur productions. Classic scripts and routines from the 19th century were mainstays for church bazaars, community theater, and school productions throughout the country. But by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, blackface minstrelsy was generally a stigmatized form, though stereotypes born from the tradition persist.

In the 2000 satire *Bamboozled*, filmmaker Spike Lee directly addressed the legacy of blackface minstrelsy in American culture. The plot follows the exploits of a black man who works as a writer for a major television network. Having had no luck drawing an audience for shows

depicting black characters as successful members of the upper-middle-class, the writer is pressured by his superiors to generate a script about black characters that will have broad appeal. In frustration, the writer develops a pilot for what he describes as a “new millennium minstrel show,” his expectation being that the courageously racist script will assure his dismissal and free him from his contract with the network. But to his surprise, not only is the pilot accepted by the network, but the show goes into production, ultimately becoming the most popular program on television. In the film, Lee explores many complex, even contradictory themes: the power of modern media, the considerable currency stereotypes of blacks still hold in American society, the ways that blacks are constrained by these stereotypes, and the ways that blacks themselves are complicit in perpetuating them. A parallel theme implicit in the film is the main character’s own pantomime—a black man who strictly “performs” white behavior, speech, and mannerisms; he willingly sacrifices his own identity to assure his success in white society. In some ways the film can be read as a modern morality play in which Lee offers an important lesson about the modes and machinery of blackface that are still in operation in American culture. These stereotypes, he seems to argue, are not mere paranoid imagining of African Americans; the fantasies the minstrel tradition has etched upon our social consciousness are still present and continue to influence our attitudes about race and identity.

See also: Jim Crow; Lee, Spike; *The Birth of a Nation*; White Supremacy

Stephanie Dunson

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## Blue Notes

Blues notes are tones in African American music performed at a different pitch from notes on the major scale for expressive purposes. The most commonly lowered scale degrees include the third, seventh, and fifth (by order of frequency), although any note could be lowered to produce a “bluesy” feeling in specific contexts. The pitches usually do not remain stable and frequently rise and fall, making notation within Western musical conventions difficult. The notes will usually be lowered by a quarter tone to a semitone. Blue notes have been observed in nearly all forms of African American music, including the blues, jazz, rock, gospel, work songs, spirituals, R&B, soul, and funk.

Many cite origins in sub-Saharan African music, brought over by slaves to North America, but recent studies cannot point to a single definitive source. Europeans imported slaves from many different regions and of Africa, all with very different musical traditions, making musicological detective work difficult. Further complicating research is the presence of lowered quarter and semitones in much folk music around the world, including that of Muslim and European folk music. However, it is only over a European harmonic system that the inflected notes lead to a blues tonality or feeling. Thus, all lowered thirds and sevenths are not necessarily blue notes.

Some musical theorists argue that inserting “blue notes” into a Western major/minor musical framework oversimplifies the harmonies inherent in African American music. Instead, they argue, genres such as jazz and blues should be discussed with a unique conception of harmony divorced from Western musical theory. Regardless of their origin, blue notes provide an anchoring concept in African American music that appropriately takes influences from European and African sources.

See also: Africanisms; Blues Music

Peter Carr Jones

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**Blues Music**

During the 1890s, a new form of secular African American folk music—blues music—emerged among blacks in the rural areas and small towns of the Deep South, particularly on large plantations and at industrial sites in the Mississippi River valley. Initially, the blues was a highly localized music that served blacks in the aforementioned areas as a means of expressing, and possibly curtailing, their "blue" feelings as well as a mode of protest against their social marginalization during the most restrictive period of Jim Crow laws. Eventually, the blues would revolutionize American music, inspiring commercial forms of the blues and fundamentally influencing such 20th-century popular music genres as jazz, country music, rhythm and blues, and rock 'n' roll.

Uninitiated listeners have sometimes characterized blues music as possessing a predictable, simple structure, yet the genre is in fact subtly complex; performances of the blues generally balance musical articulation that is both improvisational and idiosyncratic with lyrics that exhibit a high degree of verbal creativity, individuality, emotional directness, and realism. Historically, an important component of blues music was the "blue note" (a musical note expressed with a slight deviation from its standard temperament), a distinctive musical element that would have a profound impact on virtually every genre of American music, whether traditional, popular, or classical.

The originators of blues music were blacks born shortly after emancipation. Many first-generation blues musicians had left small, family-owned, agriculturally underproducing plots of land to take temporary jobs as paid laborers on large cotton farms or as industrial workers. To express their feelings of alienation and frustration from living an insecure, nomadic existence, these musicians wrote lyrics that reflected the everyday experiences of blacks in the South, exploring such themes as the

vagaries of interpersonal relationships and the predicament of being socially marginalized (i.e., as outcasts and outlaws). Incorporating musical elements from traditional African American music genres (especially from field hollers and spirituals), blues music was performed informally in public settings (i.e., on the street for tip money from passersby or at neighborhood gatherings) or more formally as entertainment in more exclusive social gatherings (for instance, in small clubs known as "juke joints" or at private parties).

Before World War I, blacks traveling across the South usually performed the blues as solo musicians, singing their interpretations of locally traditional or self-composed blues lyrics to variations of the blues tune form; such performances were generally self-accompanied on one of several instruments—initially on the fiddle, the banjo, or the one-stringed diddley bow (an Africa-derived instrument) and, with increasing frequency by the World War I years, on the piano, the harmonica, and especially the guitar. With its flexibility and portability, the guitar by the 1920s became the instrument most commonly associated with the blues. Guitar techniques utilized by blues players included finger-picking the strings in various tunings (often minor-keyed with unfretted "drone" strings); "bending" strings to produce blue notes; and using a slide (usually a bottleneck or a knife) on the strings to create a whining sound. The instrumental part on the blues guitar was often performed to sound like a second vocal.

In the early 20th century, blues musicians migrating across the Deep South transported the genre to new settings, ultimately yielding several subregional traditions of rural blues (later termed by scholars "country blues"). In east Texas, for instance, blues performed on guitar combined accentuated notes on the bass strings with floating, improvised note patterns on the high strings, whereas the blues that proliferated in the piedmont areas of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia emphasized a highly syncopated, intricate finger-picking style on the guitar and a more upbeat and harmonic approach to singing than found elsewhere in the South.

By World War I, several professional black musicians in the South had begun to compose new songs influenced by the blues. The most noteworthy among such musicians was bandleader and composer W. C. Handy, a native of Florence, Alabama, who achieved considerable commercial success through publishing his original blues compositions. After

World War I, rural blues began to be overshadowed by the more sophisticated approach to blues associated with blacks who had migrated to urban areas. At various venues (such as theaters and places selling liquor) in Southern and Northern cities, musicians performed commercial blues songs containing self-consciously urbane lyrics set to standardized rhythmic structures (especially in the popular 12-bar blues form, which incorporated the three-line A-A-B rhyme pattern). Blues singers at such venues tended to be females, several of whom—such as Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, and Ma Rainey—committed part of their blues repertoire for release on commercial records during the first half of the 1920s, attracting new audiences to the blues, including white listeners who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to hear the blues.

By the late 1920s, numerous rural blues performers were likewise making records, including “Mississippi” John Hurt, Nehemiah “Skip” James, Charlie Patton, Henry Thomas, Furry Lewis, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, and Thomas A. “Georgia Tom” Dorsey. Records featuring rural blues at this time rarely sold as widely as overtly commercial urban blues records, and most of the aforementioned musicians ceased performing blues by the 1930s (some—including Patton and Jefferson—died young; others—Hurt and James—gave up music entirely for decades, only to be “rediscovered” by white blues fans in the 1960s; Dorsey gravitated toward sacred music, inventing black gospel music). During the Depression, both urban and rural blues fell out of favor. Testament to the music’s comparative obscurity during the 1930s was the fact that Robert Johnson—who today is arguably the most acclaimed rural blues musician of all time—recorded in the mid-1930s for a major label (Columbia), and his biggest hit record then sold only a few thousand copies.

The sound and feeling of the blues remained alive and widely heard, however, during the Depression within another black music genre, as jazz musicians—including such acclaimed instrumentalists as Louis Armstrong, Charlie Christian, Coleman Hawkins, and Charlie Parker and such jazz composers/arrangers as Duke Ellington—turned to the blues for inspiration and thus kept the genre at the forefront of musical experimentation within the United States. Similarly, the blues had a profound impact in the 1920s and 1930s on classical music composers (such as George Gershwin and Aaron Copland). Several white musicians in 1930s-era country music—particularly Jimmie Rodgers,

the Delmore Brothers, and Bob Wills—incorporated into their recordings stylistic techniques and song themes freely interpreted from the blues.

Although the blues had fallen into public neglect nationally, several blues musicians of future importance within the music genre (including Son House, McKinley “Muddy Waters” Morganfield, and Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter) were “discovered” by—and made their first recordings for—folklorist Alan Lomax, who traveled through the rural South to make “field” recordings of various traditional musicians in their home locales. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the blues experienced a surge in popularity, as a number of recording companies—primarily small labels, such as Chess, Sun, and King—released singles and albums by various practitioners of the new urban blues then being performed in cities in the North (especially in Chicago, the adopted home of such musicians as Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf [Chester Burnett], but also in Detroit, where John Lee Hooker was first based); in the South (principally in Memphis, home of Riley “B. B.” King, and in Houston, the home location of Sam “Lightnin’” Hopkins); and in the West (for instance, in Oakland, the base for Lowell Fulson).

During the 1940s and 1950s, the blues served as a significant influence on three other emerging American musical genres: gospel, rhythm and blues, and rock ‘n’ roll. In the early 1960s, the rural blues received a major revival when young white music fans embraced the recordings of an older generation of black blues musicians (such as the forgotten recordings by Robert Johnson), and white entrepreneurs located several still-living rural bluesmen (including Hurt, James, House, and “Mississippi” Fred McDowell) and brought them into the international spotlight. Other black blues musicians soon became widely popular among young whites—urban blues musicians such as B. B. King, Albert King, and Junior Wells and acoustic rural blues acts such as the duo Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry.

As a result of this new popularity, a generation of rock musicians—including such American acts as Jimi Hendrix, the Lovin’ Spoonful, and the Doors and British acts such as Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, and Van Morrison—cited the blues as their favorite genre of music and lauded blues musicians as their main sources of inspiration. Meanwhile, emerging to considerable popularity at this time were numerous white blues interpreters—such American musicians as John Hammond Jr., Paul Butterfield, and Johnny



Winter and such British musicians as Alexis Korner and John Mayall. Although the blues' presence on the world music scene diminished somewhat in the 1970s and 1980s, a number of popular musicians—such black musicians as Taj Mahal and Robert Cray and such white musicians as Duane and Gregg Allman, Bonnie Raitt, and Stevie Ray Vaughan—continued to incorporate into their repertoires both blues compositions and blues feeling.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the blues reach new audiences. Older black performers (B. B. King, Buddy Guy, Albert Collins, Ruth Brown, and Koko Taylor, among others) and new blues interpreters (whites such as Rory Block, Roy Book Binder, and Paul Geremia and blacks such as Keb' Mo', Corey Harris, Shemekia Copeland, and Alvin Youngblood Hart) performed blues music to older as well as younger music fans. Recording companies (for instance, Alligator Records and Bullseye Blues) and magazines (most notably, *Living Blues*) were established during this period to showcase the lives and music of both living and deceased blues acts and to promote the blues as a vital, enduring art form. Visibility of the blues increased with the arrival of the new century, with the music genre serving as the subject of several major documentary productions (including *The Blues—A Musical Journey*, a 2003 series of films, with a range of accompanying CD soundtracks, produced by filmmaker Martin Scorsese). The blues as an African American music tradition was also portrayed in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), a popular movie and best-selling soundtrack. It is evident that the blues—though emerging within black culture during an earlier era of extreme discrimination—holds significance for people of all walks of life in all eras of human history.

See also: Africanisms; Armstrong, Louis; Blue Notes; Ellington, Duke; Parker, Charlie

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## Bottle Trees

The unique practice of placing colored glass bottles and other luminous objects on the ends of tree limbs is a concept that ethnographers and historians link to enslaved Africans originating from the Kongo/Angola coast of West-Central Africa. Instead of glass bottles, it is likely that items such as conch shells and terra cotta pots were used in pre-colonial West-Central Africa, in association with gravesites as a means of both honoring and protecting ancestral spirits. In the American South, this practice went through a significant transformation, and in all likelihood, the introduction of Christianity and other cultural forces played a role in alterations in meanings and practices.

As early as the 18th century, this practice of placing bottles on trees specifically served a protective function—they were to trap evil spirits and prevent them from entering the user's abode. In the syncretic spiritual system that



A bottle tree, at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama. (Jeff Greenberg/The Image Works)

accompanied the use of bottle trees, adherents believed that evil spirits would become entranced by the spectrum of colors and lights reflected on and inside the bottles by the sun, thus trapping the spirit for eternity. The howling noise the bottles created in the wind were said to be from the tormented and trapped spirits. Even the colors used for the bottles conveyed symbolic meanings. Cobalt blue bottles were noted as being particularly potent in repelling or trapping spirits.

In some cases, bottles were eventually corked and thrown into bodies of water to excise the evil spirit. In others, the bottles were exposed to sunlight as a mechanism of destroying the spirits. The very notions of “evil” spirits and spirits that could be destroyed represent significant departures from Kongo conceptualizations of the afterlife. Through the 19th century, adherents of indigenous Kongo religions in West-Central Africa believed that spirits were, at best, neutral and that ancestral spirits were immortal. Epitomized by the Kongo cosmogram and its various cognate forms (e.g., the ring shout, Capoeira, Vodun iconography), pre-colonial religions in Kongo and other regions of West-Central Africa certainly embraced the notion that spirits were invulnerable and eternal. Thus, the belief systems that undergird the creation and use of bottle trees in the American South represent notable transformations over time. However, what was once a ubiquitous practice in the black South as recently as the mid-20th century in such places as South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi has largely disappeared with a handful of exceptions. As of the beginning of the 21st century, there is a lively amount of Internet commerce in which metal bottle “trees” using LED lights are crafted and sold—though this manifestation is largely divorced from the diverse spiritual backgrounds of this practice by slaves and their descendants.

See also: Africanisms; Slave Culture; Slave Religion

Walter C. Rucker

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## Brer Rabbit

Brer Rabbit (or Brother Rabbit) is one of the most famous figures that appear in African American folktales. He embodies a well-known trickster character. Usually, trickster tales convey narratives of tricks played by a trickster at the expense of one (or several) of his peers. The latter usually outweigh him, but Brer Rabbit almost always outsmarts his bigger counterparts anyway. These stories constitute mimetic transpositions of a search for hope and survival, a will to find one’s way out of a tricky situation or a quandary. Brer Rabbit was made notorious through the collection of stories by Joel Chandler Harris titled *Uncle Remus and Other Stories*. The first tale that casts Brer Rabbit is “Tar Baby.” The tar baby is a widespread figure in African folklore. In folktales, it is known as an item made of some sticky material with a carved face, which is used to literally ensnare a person; this obviously echoes the metaphorical representations of trapping Africans. Among other meanings, the term “tar baby” has come to designate a situation or a difficulty from which it is virtually impossible to extricate oneself.

More than the quest for spiritual and physical freedom, the stories in which Brer Rabbit appears convey three types of impulse on the trickster’s part. First of all, Brer Rabbit, who is lazy and whimsical, is eager to fulfill the least of his most venal needs and envies (“Brer Rabbit and the Mosquitoes?” and “Brer Rabbit Fools Sis Cow”). Second, Brer Rabbit aims at getting out of a trap. It is interesting to notice that this escaping process immutably implies the trapping of another character. This pattern may lead us to believe that Brer Rabbit, although cunning enough to think out a plan to deceive his peers, is not smart enough to avoid the ambush altogether. However, this preliminary step is inevitable in order to complete the process through which the trickster overwhelms the obstacle. There exists a correlation between the significance of achievement and the difficulties to cope with before succeeding. Third, Brer Rabbit sometimes plays tricks for the mere satisfaction of having his “compairs” look foolish (“The Elephant and the Whale”) or to demonstrate that his tiny appearance is inversely proportional to his cleverness and slyness.

Brer Rabbit is very often, with just cause, held responsible for any harm done. But in spite of this, he comes up with tactics so as not to get caught. This pragmatic and protean

character is indeed able to change his appearance or his voice or even become invisible in order either to mislead others or to protect himself. Brer Rabbit can also take another's identity and pretend to be someone else. The trickster tale can be considered as a contrapuntal type of answer to the quandary of invisibility and of nonrepresentation. Indeed, Brer Rabbit precisely illustrates the way one might use prejudices' face values such as symbolic invisibility and nonrepresentation in order to achieve one's goals. Brer Rabbit also relies on his victims' vices in order to lure them.

For instance, in "Some Are Going, and Some Are Coming," the Rabbit traps the Fox by revisiting on him the blurring vision he was just trapped by at the bottom of a well. He targets the Fox's gluttony. In "Brer Rabbit Earns a Dollar a Minute," the trickster bets on the Bear's belief in getting money effortlessly. In "Brer Rabbit Falls Down the Well," the eponymous character's laziness leads him to act as if he had been hurt by a briar in order to be able to take

a nap. He jumps into a bucket pretending to soothe his paw but falls down the well, and Brer Fox, convinced that Brer Rabbit is playing another ruse, and sure to find out that he is hiding some treasure, wants to join Brer Rabbit; the latter pretends to be fishing, Brer Fox jumps into the bucket, falls down into the well, and both his inquisitiveness and weight extirpate Brer Rabbit from the gap. In "The False Message, Take My Place," the Rabbit was caught by a man and is hanging in a small bag at the end of a tree branch. But he soon convinces the Wolf to take his place so that the latter may reach Heaven faster. The message here is that access to Heaven has to be deserved.

According to Michael P. Carroll, the binary personality of the trickster oscillates between the image of "clever hero" and the one of "selfish buffoon." This association of antagonistic characteristics illustrates the ambivalent behavior that the trickster is liable to opt for. This is a contrasting but seemingly complementary binary pattern. Brer Rabbit invalidates social prejudices, such as negation toward African American culture, a process that is already embodied and launched by the tale itself.

*See also:* Africanisms; Animal Trickster Stories; Black Folk Culture

Valerie Caruana-Loisel



Artist's rendition of Brer Rabbit of Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories, 1899. (Library of Congress)

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## Brooks, Gwendolyn

Gwendolyn Elizabeth Brooks (1917-2000) was born on June 17, 1917, in Topeka, Kansas, to a former schoolteacher and the son of a runaway slave. When she was a young child, her family moved to the South Side of Chicago, the city that influenced Brooks's work throughout her career. By the age of 13, she had published her first poem, and as a young adult, Brooks corresponded with some of the most

prominent poets of the Harlem Renaissance, such as James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes, who encouraged her writing and lauded her poetry.

In 1943, Brooks received an award from the Midwestern Writer's Conference, and in 1945, she published her first book of poetry, *A Street in Bronzeville*. Shortly thereafter, she received the Guggenheim Fellowship. In *Bronzeville*, Brooks presented, expertly, the sights and sounds of life for African Americans in her Chicago suburb. In 1949, she published another collection of poems, *Annie Allen*, for which she was the first African American to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, and she followed it with her only novel, *Maud Martha* (1953). *In the Mecca* (1968) featured Brooks's musings on Black Power as an alternative form of black activism and considered the importance of such figures as Malcolm X and the Chicago gang, the Blackstone Rangers. After *In the Mecca*, Brooks's personal engagement with Black Power developed, and she left her longtime publisher, Harper & Row, and thereafter published only with black-owned presses for the rest of her career. Also in 1968, Brooks was named the Poet Laureate of Illinois. And in 1972 and 1996, Brooks published her two-part autobiography, *Report from Part One* and *Report from Part Two*.

From the beginning of her career, Brooks refused to shy away from complicated issues. In "The Mother," she tackled the emotional trauma of abortion. Rather than take a side on the controversy, Brooks handles the personal repercussions for the mother of making a decision that she will never be able to forget because of "the children you got that you did not get." She also illustrated her engagement with the changing realities of African American life. In her most famous poem, "We Real Cool" (1960), Brooks considers the problems of alcohol, drugs, and violence as contributors to the deaths of so many young black men. Through her use of plain language and bold line breaks, Brooks posits the premature deaths of these boys as a community epidemic. And in "Gay Chaps at the Bar" and "The Progress," Brooks muses on the troubles faced by black World War II veterans upon their return home.

Gwendolyn Brooks's poems serve as a touchstone of African American history throughout the 20th century. Brooks documented the changing tenor of black activism from the Harlem Renaissance to Black Power, to begin to understand the importance of these movements for social change. In "Malcolm X," Brooks considers the significance of the former Nation of Islam leader as an enigmatic figure



Poet Gwendolyn Brooks, holding a copy of her book *A Street in Bronzeville*, published in 1945, was the first African American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize. (Library of Congress)

of black resistance and hope. In "Paul Robeson," she remembers the man, singer, and activist and the magnitude of his message for Black fraternity. And in "I Am a Black," Brooks ponders the rhetorical switch from black to African American, refusing to relinquish the importance of the term "black" as a connection to people of African descent around the world and as a powerful statement against negative stereotypes.

Although there are many recurrent themes in Gwendolyn Brooks's work, one of the most predominant is her discussion of the lives of everyday African American women. From *A Street in Bronzeville* to *In Montgomery and Other Poems*, published posthumously in 2003, Brooks considers the often-overlooked position of ordinary black women and the lives they live. She has a way of never judging her subjects and is the ultimate observer. In "Sadie and Maud,"

she discusses two women who, though once close, took two very divergent paths in their lives. Although the reader is supposed to feel bad about Sadie's hard life as a single mother, Brooks feels that Sadie's perseverance is commendable and leaves a legacy with her children that Maud, who went to college but lives alone, does not. These simple portraits are actually complex discussions of the black women whom Brooks encountered and knew intimately.

On December 3, 2000, Gwendolyn Brooks died at her home at the age of 83 after battling cancer. In many ways, Brooks's death spelled the end of an era. Her life and work spanned the majority of the 20th century, and she witnessed some of the most important legal, social, and cultural changes for black people in the United States. But her legacy as an artist and social critic are immense. Her innovative poetry and prose are inspiring, and all of the themes and observations in her poetry remain salient. Gwendolyn Brooks left a voluminous endowment to African American literature and history that are unmatched.

*See also:* *Chicago Defender*; Harlem Renaissance

Nicole Jackson

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## Brown, James

Singer, dancer, songwriter, entrepreneur, and performer extraordinaire James Brown (1933–2006) appeared on *Billboard's* Top 40 R&B chart a total of 98 times—more than

any other artist; of his hits, 17 reached the top spot, and 43 charted on Pop's Top 40. His many honors include induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and a special lifetime achievement Grammy. The "Godfather of Soul," as Brown was known to millions, frequently appeared on TV talk and variety shows and made celebrated cameo appearances in several popular movies. His music has had a worldwide impact.

James Joseph Brown Jr. was born into extreme poverty in Barnwell County, South Carolina, on May 3, 1933. Deserted by his mother Susan when he was quite young, his father Joe Brown left him in Augusta, Georgia, with his aunt Handsome "Honey" Stevenson. Stevenson ran a brothel while James hustled change: shining shoes, washing cars, racking pool balls, dancing and singing for tips, leading soldiers to his aunt's brothel, and so on. Brown's training to become the "hardest-working man in show business" started early.

Arrested for breaking into cars at the age of 16, Brown was sentenced on June 3, 1949, to 8 to 16 years at the Georgia Juvenile Training Institute, a segregated reform school/prison located in Rome in northwest Georgia. In November 1951, this reform school was renamed Georgia Boys Industrial Institute and moved to Camp Toccoa, a former paratrooper training facility on Currahee Mountain near Toccoa in northeast Georgia.

Fellow inmates named him "Music Box" because he was always singing and knew all the popular songs. Through his singing, athletic ability, and reputation as a hard worker, Brown became known to the townspeople, both black and white, who helped secure his release on June 14, 1952. Brown was paroled to the family of singer and band leader Bobby Byrd (1934–2007). Brown joined Byrd's gospel group, the Ever-Ready Gospel Singers, and soon was alternating lead vocals with Byrd's sister Sarah. Byrd and Brown later featured the same alternating lead vocals on some of their biggest hits.

Brown also performed with Byrd's secular group. They sang nonstop, keeping time by clapping hands and stomping feet—a technique learned from a local gospel quartet, the MellowTones. Supplementing the guitar and piano, Byrd sang the bass part, and he and Brown sang horn parts. Eventually they added drums and bass guitar. The Flames included a number of vocalists who switched off lead and backup singing in gospel call-and-response fashion; Brown assumed the role of featured dancer. In 1953, Byrd enrolled

at North Carolina A&T University, where he learned to re-conceptualize and rearrange the Flames' voices.

On February 4, 1956, the Flames first recorded for Cincinnati's King/Federal. "Please, Please, Please" (adapted from doo-wop renditions of Big Joe Williams's blues "Baby, Please Don't Go") reached the number 5 slot on the R&B chart. Brown sang lead and soon assumed permanent leadership of the band. This song eventually reflected an important event in Brown's career and in the development of black musical forms. The Africanized musical foundation Brown absorbed in South Carolina and Augusta was enhanced through the incorporation of more Euro-American concepts, preparing Brown to become a soul music pioneer, a primary creator of funk, and an essential predecessor to rap and hip-hop. "Please" began the re-Africanization of popular music through its renewed emphasis on call-and-response, the relentless repetition of words and phrases as cross-rhythm, and Brown's attention to nuanced variations in vocal tone and frenzied gospel-influenced performance.

Although the Flames fell apart, Byrd eventually returned and worked with Brown off-and-on for the rest of his career—writing songs, orchestrating arrangements, managing the band, and singing and playing keyboards. Brown charted again in 1958 when "Try Me" reached the top position on the R&B chart. Brown charted 24 more times before his first crossover hit (no. 1 R&B, no. 8 Pop), "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" in 1965. Featuring Maceo Parker on saxophone and Jimmy Nolen on guitar, "Papa's" changed popular music's emphasis on the two/four beat to a beat on the first and third, using the instruments and voices primarily as percussion in maintaining a polyrhythmic groove, with irresistible, protofunk forever changing popular music.

In 1963, Brown financed the radically innovative recording *Live at the Apollo* (the first of several of Brown's live Apollo recordings). This LP featured extended versions, complete with audience shrieks and applause; it spent an unheard-of 66 weeks on the charts. Brown and Byrd continued to refine and distill funk in subsequent hits, including "Cold Sweat" (1967), "Licking Stick" (1968), "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine" (1970), "Hot Pants" (1971), "Get on the Good Foot" (1972), and others. His band, the JB's, included Parker, Byrd, and Nolen but also Fred Wesley on trombone, drummers Clyde Stubblefield and John "Jabo" Starks, and William "Bootsy" Collins on bass guitar, among



James Brown, known as the Godfather of Soul, during a live performance in 1964. (Photofest)

other superb musicians. After 1976, Brown continued to have R&B hits but not another pop hit until 1985's "Living in America."

As a spokesperson for black America, Brown met with Vice President Humphrey and controversially endorsed Nixon for president. His music also had a profound impact on black political activism; "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud" (1968), with children chanting the title and Brown declaring, "We'd rather die on our feet than living on our knees," became an anthem for the Black Power movement.

Brown re-Africanized African American music by wryly sliding his sound on a scale between ragtime's syncopation and Africa's cross-rhythms, incorporating ideas from jazz, blues, gospel, and country and western and repeatedly sampling diverse sources from the *Petticoat Junction* theme to Elmore James to Byrd and himself, serving a role in maintaining the groove analogous to the African master drummer. Brown put on show business's most energetic performance; his dancing influenced all who followed.

In December 1988, Brown received a six-year prison sentence for illegal drug use in South Carolina; he was released in February 1991. He died of pneumonia and congestive heart failure in Atlanta on Christmas Day in 2006. Several funerals for the 20th century's greatest performer—culminating in the horse-drawn procession to Harlem's Apollo Theater—were orchestrated like Brown's stage shows, with frequent wardrobe changes and much flamboyance.

See also: Black Folk Culture

Fred J. Hay

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## Buckra

Of Igbo and Ibibio derivation, "buckra" and "buckraman" were terms employed by slaves to denote poor or non-slaveholding whites. Used as an expression of derision, "buckra" appears to be the only anti-white epithet created originally by enslaved Africans. Others, specifically "cracker" and "redneck," were created by the white elite to deride and ridicule poor whites. What makes the widespread adoption of "buckra" quite odd is that, given the limited number of Igbo and others from the Bight of Biafra imported into mainland North America, it would seem that other terms of derision would have been preferred. Parallel terms among numerically significant and widely distributed import groups, such as the Akan (*obruni*), the Mande (*toubab*), and the Western Bantu (*mundele*), were not adopted by African Americans in the United States. This is especially curious

in the case of South Carolina, where the Igbo and others from the Bight of Biafra represented just 11 percent of all enslaved African imports during the last century of the Atlantic slave trade. Yet, it was in South Carolina that "buckra" became one of the most widely used African words.

The most likely etymology of "buckra" would be that it derives from the Ibibio term *mbakara*. Among the Ibibio and the Igbo of the Bight of Biafra, the term specifically denotes a human with the power to command others or a demon capable of wielding supernatural forces. In the assessment of historian Monica Schuler, the Igbo of Jamaica who frequently used "buckra" as a term encompassing all whites may have viewed Europeans as evil sorcerers. This concept of understanding enslavement in spiritual terms and viewing Europeans as evil spirits or demons resonates in the narratives of a number of enslaved Igbos, including Olaudah Equiano and John Jea. Thus, the Ibibio and Igbo who first used this word may have adopted it as a term of choice because of a shared belief that Europeans were essentially malevolent spirits.

In addition to its use in South Carolina and other parts of British North America, it appears that "buckra" was adopted throughout the Anglophone Americas. Specific references to the term appear in 18th-century Philadelphia, the Chesapeake, Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Caribbean Islands. As Douglas Chambers contends, its widespread use throughout the Anglophone Americas represents a significant degree of Igboization among non-Igbo enslaved Africans. In addition to the use of "buckra," other significant Igboisms include the use of other Igbo-derived terms (e.g., *Obeah*, *okra*, *jonkonu*), the perseverance of discrete Igbo religious customs and beliefs (e.g., Obeah conjuration, Igbo funerary customs, the Christmas-time John Konnu masquerade), and elements of Igbo cuisine (e.g., yams, black-eyed peas, watermelon, eggplant).

See also: Igbo; Slave Culture

Walter C. Rucker

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## Call-and-Response

The call-and-response characteristic of sub-Saharan African music is expressed both vocally and instrumentally. This call-and-response characteristic manifests the communal and dialogic nature of African music, a music whose integration into daily life and whose spiritual qualities blur distinctions between the sacred and the secular. Although all music is an important cultural expression, African music is remarkably intertwined with the maintenance, adjustment, and vitality of life on not only daily but also yearly and generational time frames. These characteristics of African music also exist in the call-and-response tradition of African American music.

In Africa, the conversational nature of call-and-response promotes group interaction and a respect for the individual, acknowledged through the attention given to the singer, the musician, and the dancer who "responds" to what came before. That dancing needs inclusion in the call-and-response tradition is not merely because people dance to music but because of the inseparability of African dance and music as indicated by *ngoma*, a word that occurs in many African languages and means both "song" and "dance" and in, for instance, Swahili, also signifies "drum." Thus, call-and-response is an essential expression of an art that brings together singing, instrumentation, and bodily movement in multigenerational ensembles whose interactions promote community while respecting individuality.

Expressions of call-and-response in Africa include the following: circular dances (ring dances) with drumming, percussive foot stomping, and the movement of individuals into the circle to dance responses to the dominant themes; the singing of songs whose cyclic tempos facilitate vocal participations that respond to previous singers; improvised songs that comment on current events and evoke responses; call-and-response Christian church ceremonies and songs; weddings, funerals, and other "life span events"; and poems in call-and-response form. In addition, much of

the instrumental music of sub-Saharan Africa is composed of instruments responding to each other.

Manifestations of call-and-response in North America are equally wide-ranging. Work songs between a lead singer and a responding group not only allowed slaves to sustain energy and optimism but also allowed communication (typically using words that had multiple meanings) in the maintenance of African traditions, histories, and values. As early as the 18th century, African American church singing of hymns included improvisation, choral responses to psalms, and singing that alternated between men and women. The shout—essentially a New World version of the African ring dance—took varying forms in church, at dances, at camp singings, and in children's games (e.g., song games and jump-rope rhymes), each manifesting elements of call-and-response.

From the shout version known as "ring spiritual" derived African American spirituals, which then mixed with blues and jazz to form gospel. Gospel included call-and-response elements especially at churches that emphasized congregational spoken responses to the preacher.

Outside church, in the blues, black folk music's use of chorus refrains found expression in the call-and-response of singer and audience, of instrument and voice, and of spoken asides. Call-and-response later found musical expression not only in rhythm and blues and rap but also in the more oral and literary expressions of signifying, performance poetry (e.g., poetry slams), speeches (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X), and the percussive rhythms and structures of much African American prose.

Jazz also manifests the call-and-response of the "talking instrument" from Africa and of instrumental communication during slavery (thus the prohibition on slaves owning "loud instruments"). This "communicative" (and inherently democratic) characteristic of jazz occurs with antiphonal instrumental solos that respond to other soloists or to the group, or with section responding to section in big band music. A revealing literary expression of instrumental call-and-response is at the end of James Baldwin's short story "Sonny's Blues."

Call-and-response remains one of the characteristic elements of African music and, more generally, of African American culture. The protean manifestations of call-and-response attest to its continuing value in promoting vitality



through the give-and-take between spiritual and physical, oral and instrumental, prescribed and improvised, society and individual.

See also: Africanisms; Black Churches; Ring Shout; Slave Culture; Slave Religion; Work Songs

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## Caul

The caul, or veil, is a membrane or amniotic sac covering the face of a child at birth. Although the caul has various meanings in a number of cultures, according to the folk traditions of enslaved Africans throughout the Americas, it was typically a sign that an infant would eventually be able to communicate with ghosts, predict future events, and have other uncanny abilities. The nearly identical meaning of the caul among Africans in the Kingdom of Dahomey, the Gold Coast, Dutch Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, and the American South as a sign of otherworldly wisdom and an innate ability to commune with spiritual forces demonstrates that enduring African spiritual concepts permeated communities throughout the African Diaspora. According to noted anthropologist Melville Herskovits, there were certain aspects of abnormal births, including the caul, that predisposed certain children to be seen as developing the ability to manipulate spiritual forces. Indeed, being born with certain birthmarks, a caul, or other distinguishing congenital features often made certain children likely candidates to be future root doctors or conjurers. These notions were ubiquitous features of African American culture in the South as late as the 1930s and beyond.

The numerous interviews performed by the Georgia Writers' Project during the Great Depression illuminate the continuing significance of the caul in communities across the American South. Martha Page of Yamacraw, Georgia—an early 20th-century community of ex-slaves from both coastal South Carolina and Georgia—claimed that she

could see and interact with ghosts and other spirits because of being born with a caul. From the same community, Carrie Hamilton revealed that she also could see ghosts as a result of the veil of skin covering her face at birth. Those born with this gift believe they can see the unseeable because of their direct connection to a spirit world defined by distinctly West and West-Central African parameters.

See also: Africanisms; Black Folk Culture

Walter C. Rucker

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## Charms

Also known as amulets, *gris-gris*, *juju* bags, jacks, and protective hands, these devices formed a unique category of spiritual implements employed by African- and American-born conjurers, root doctors, and diviners throughout North American history. Typically worn around the neck, wrist, or ankle and utilized for a variety of purposes, charms played an important role in the lives of enslaved and free blacks from the 17th through the 20th centuries. Because of specific African beliefs regarding causality in which "accidents" or bad fortune were understood to be caused by malevolent actions on the part of the living or the dead, protective charms became a central element in the folk culture that developed among African Americans. Notably, the use of protective charms in slave conspiracies, revolts, and other modes of resistance created a significant amount of concern among colonial- and antebellum-era whites.

Perhaps the best-documented example of charms employed in an act of slave resistance would be the 1822 Charleston, South Carolina, plot initiated and led by Denmark Vesey. His plan to destroy Charleston was greatly bolstered by an African-born conjurer named Gullah Jack. Having served as a "doctor" in Charleston for 15 years, Jack's renown as a mystic allowed him to sway enslaved Africans

of all multiple ethnic backgrounds who respected him as both conjurer and “general” of the plot. Not only was Jack claimed to have a “charmed invulnerability” that would prevent him from being harmed at the hands of whites, but he also produced and distributed charms to slave combatants that were said to render them invincible. For Gullah Jack’s protective charms to work, conspirators had to first fast the night before the planned revolt. The following morning, they were to place the charms, consisting of crab claws, in their mouths to be fully protected from harm. The fact that not one slave questioned the validity of Jack’s powers during the course of the trials is singular testament to the continuing connection they had to African spiritual beliefs and values.

Another example of the use of protective charms in an act of slave resistance is recounted in the story of William Webb. In this case, Webb—a conjurer living in Kentucky during the 1840s—became concerned about the abusive treatment faced by slaves on a neighboring plantation. After secretly meeting with this group, he urged them to gather roots that were then placed into bags. The slaves were then instructed to walk around their own quarters a few times and to position the conjure bags in front of their owner’s house during the early morning hours. These steps were taken to induce their owner to have disturbing nightmares about the slaves gaining retribution for past wrongs. In the following weeks, the owner reportedly began to treat the slaves decidedly better, and Webb’s influence over them increased dramatically as a direct result.

Bags that held special items and used as protective charms were generally known as “hands” or “jacks” and were either worn or buried to work properly. A hand or jack would typically contain a variety of objects, including roots, tree bark, human hair and fingernail clippings, graveyard dirt, horseshoe nails, hog bristles, animal and insect parts, red pepper, gunpowder, and other substances. In this regard, the finding of a “conjure’s cache” in an Annapolis, Maryland, house in 1996 proves instructive. Buried sometime during the 18th century in the northeast corner of this home, the items in this cache included beads, pins, buttons, a coin with a hole in it, rock crystals, a piece of crab claw, a brass ring and bell, and pieces of bone and glass. This was one of 11 such findings in Virginia and Maryland, which indicates a clear pattern—especially given the fact that the caches were always buried in the northeast corner of rooms or slave quarters. In all likelihood, these items were

protective jacks buried by enslaved blacks in order to elicit the aid of powerful spiritual forces.

According to a number of African spiritual systems, certain items found in nature were imbued with an innate amount of spiritual force that could become even more potent when prepared by a conjurer. The frequent presence of charms in enslaved and free African American communities from as early as the 17th century exemplifies the perseverance of important African religious concepts. It should be mentioned that charms were not always used for benevolent purposes. A charm could also be employed to harm, inhibit, or kill others, particularly if it contained the intended victim’s hair or nail clippings. In this case, “frizzled” chickens were often employed to find evil charms and *gris-gris* that were buried by conjurers. In addition to frizzled chickens, a number of counter-charms were utilized to ward off the effects of evil. Red pepper, salt, grave dirt or goofer powder, and strips of red flannel cloth were frequently used in counter-charms for a variety of reasons. In this manner, counter-charms were believed to prevent anything from insanity to death caused by evil charms. *See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Slave Culture

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## Coltrane, John

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John William Coltrane (1926–1967), a saxophonist and composer, was most famous for playing and writing highly textured and fluid music with rapid tempos and lengthy arrhythmic phrasings. He was committed to bringing jazz, an original American music form created and influenced by African American artists, into innovative areas

of composition and sound. Coltrane primarily employed the alto, tenor, and soprano saxophones to play a range of music throughout his career, including rhythm and blues, bebop, and hard bop. He also incorporated Middle Eastern instruments, Indian melodies, and African percussive rhythms into his arrangements, which firmly placed him as a major figure in the mid- to late 1960s experimental improvisational jazz movement known as “The New Thing.”

Coltrane was born on September 23, 1926, in Hamlet, North Carolina, to John Robert Coltrane, a tailor, and Alice Blair Coltrane, a homemaker. He grew up with his parents, uncle, aunt, and first cousin in the home of his maternal grandparents, Reverend Walter Blair, an African Methodist Episcopal minister, and Alice Leary Blair, a homemaker. The family lived in a middle-class African American neighborhood in High Point, North Carolina. Although music was a part of his early life, with his father playing violin and ukulele recreationally and his mother playing piano and singing in the church choir, Coltrane did not begin formal musical training until playing the alto horn and clarinet in a community band that he joined at the age of 13.

Between the ages of 12 and 14, Coltrane experienced the deaths of his grandparents, father, and uncle, and by the time he reached his senior year in high school, his mother had moved to the Philadelphia area to pursue employment opportunities. However, Coltrane remained in High Point, where he joined the William Penn High School band in the first clarinetist chair. Though his band experience mostly involved the performance of marching compositions, Coltrane began exposing himself to the jazz music of alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges, who was playing with Duke Ellington’s Orchestra at the time. He borrowed an alto saxophone and became remarkably adept at replicating the music of the saxophonists he admired.

In 1943, at the age of 16, Coltrane graduated from high school and moved to Philadelphia. He began working at a sugar refinery and studying saxophone at the Ornstein School of Music. Two years later, Coltrane was drafted into the U.S. Navy and stationed in Hawaii during World War II, where he played clarinet in the navy band and applied his musical skills to marching and dance music. After being released from the navy in 1946, Coltrane returned to Philadelphia, where he accepted bookings with rhythm and blues bands. However, his musical interests were focused on the jazz styles of Hodges, tenor saxophonist Lester “Pres” Young, clarinetist Artie Shaw, and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie.



*John Coltrane (photographed in 1960) possessed astonishing technical mastery, spiritual tone, and multicultural influences that stretched the boundaries of jazz and enriched its vocabulary. (Library of Congress)*

In 1947, Coltrane began playing tenor saxophone in the band of alto saxophonist Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson, a musician he greatly admired. During his tour with Vinson, Coltrane had the opportunity to connect with another idol, Charlie Parker. While meeting with Parker, he heard new melodic jazz forms that challenged him to play with the rapidity that would later inform his sound. After leaving Vinson’s band, Coltrane played with trumpeter Mel Melvin’s band and then in 1948 joined a group formed by the Heath brothers: saxophonist Jimmy, drummer Al, and bassist Percy. Later in the year, trumpeter Howard McGhee recruited Coltrane and Jimmy Heath to play in his band. However, Coltrane was dropped from the band after the first tour.

Coltrane joined Gillespie’s band in 1949, an experience that included his introduction to Eastern music and philosophy through the guidance of tenor saxophonist Yusef Lateef. Additionally, his playing on the Afro-Cuban song “Manteca” and the Caribbean-inspired “Cubana Be Cubana Bop” presented Coltrane with insight into new ways of bringing jazz music into the realm of what is contemporarily considered “world music.”

In 1951, as big bands became less economically viable, Gillespie reduced his 16-piece band to a sextet. After a short stint with the sextet, Coltrane returned to Philadelphia to study music theory and tenor saxophone at the Granoff School of Music. His music theory instructor, Dennis Sandole, advised him to listen to classical compositions and apply the multiplicity of instrumentation he heard to his single instrument. This exploration later inspired Coltrane to work toward replicating a variety of tones that were not normally associated with the saxophone's sound.

At the beginning of 1952, Coltrane joined alto saxophonist Earl Bostic's band and the following year joined the band of his idol, Johnny Hodges. However, Hodges fired him in 1954 because of Coltrane's heroin addiction, a condition that implicated the jazz culture of the time as well as Coltrane's attempt to self-medicate his chronic dental problems.

During 1954–1955, Coltrane played a regular Monday night jam session at New York's Birdland. He also continued playing rhythm and blues gigs in Philadelphia and other cities to supplement his income, performing with Daisy Mae and the Hepcats, King Kolax, and Moose Jackson, among others. Even though rhythm and blues did not reflect the musical complexity that Coltrane valued, he appreciated the means in which the form inspired a connection with its listeners.

On October 3, 1955, Coltrane married Juanita "Naima" Grubbs. Her background in music, Muslim spirituality, and daughter from a previous relationship, Syeeda, had a significant impact on Coltrane's personal life and the trajectory of his musical vocation. Throughout their relationship, he moved the family between Philadelphia and New York, depending on the circumstances of his career.

From 1955 to 1956 and then 1957 to 1960, Coltrane played alto saxophone and later tenor saxophone with the Miles Davis Quintet. During late 1955–1956 Coltrane played an incomparable solo during "Bye Bye Blackbird" and a critically acclaimed solo on Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" on trumpeter Davis's album, *'Round About Midnight*. Coltrane experienced the freedom to explore new areas of his music with the flexibility facilitated by Davis's approach to performance.

Miles Davis fired Coltrane in 1956, most likely due to a combination of Davis's impatience with Coltrane's drug addiction and Coltrane's discontent with Davis's unpredictable band leadership. Coltrane returned home to Philadelphia and, at the beginning of 1957, commenced a spiritual

quest that involved quitting drug usage, drinking, and, for a while, smoking. He also became a vegetarian.

Later in 1957, Coltrane began playing a well-received gig at New York's Five Spot with the Thelonious Monk Quartet. Coltrane had worked with pianist Monk while still with the Davis Quintet and was keen when he was asked to join him at the Five Spot. His work with Monk offered him a level of freedom not fully realized with Davis as he explored the pianist's improvisational techniques, which inspired him to experiment with his own style in new ways. Coltrane also began composing on a piano in his family's Manhattan apartment during his period with Monk.

Additionally in 1957, Bob Weinstock of the Prestige label signed Coltrane to a two-year contract. However, that same year, Coltrane obtained a special release from Prestige to record *Blue Train*, an album that showcased his style and strengths as a composer. A month earlier, Coltrane had been asked to rejoin Miles Davis in a sextet with alto saxophonist Julian "Cannonball" Adderley. By the end of 1958, Coltrane had started accepting bookings as a bandleader when not playing with the Davis sextet. In April 1959, Coltrane signed a two-year contract with Atlantic Records and released the classic *Giant Steps*, which includes "Syeeda's Song Flute" and "Naima," written for his wife and daughter, respectively. The album strengthened Coltrane's reputation as a bandleader.

In April 1960, Coltrane left Davis's band to form the John Coltrane Quartet, which, after a few personnel changes, eventually included pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison, and drummer Elvin Jones. In 1960, Coltrane recorded *My Favorite Things*. The title piece, the critically and popularly acclaimed arrangement of the Broadway show song by Rodgers and Hammerstein, introduced Coltrane on the soprano saxophone and included a repetitive bass line played by Steve Davis that exemplified Coltrane's growing interest in Indian music. Davis was eventually replaced by bassist Reggie Workman in the quartet. Coltrane later attempted to use two bassists to capture Indian percussive sounds by adding bassist Art Davis to the group. Finally, there was Garrison on bass. In 1961, Coltrane added flutist, alto saxophonist, and bass clarinetist Eric Dolphy in the band, making it a quintet.

By 1961, Coltrane, known to be rather prolific in the studio, recorded *Coltrane Plays the Blues* and *Coltrane's Sound*. Additionally, he signed a contract with Impulse Records and recorded his first live album at the Village

Vanguard in New York City. In 1962, Coltrane recorded three albums: *Coltrane, Ballads*, and the acclaimed *Duke Ellington and John Coltrane*. During this period, Coltrane became further interested in the music of sitar player Ravi Shankar, as evidenced in “My Favorite Things,” and the improvisational styles of avant-garde alto-saxophonist Ornette Coleman, an artist who inspired Coltrane’s ventures into “The New Thing.”

Coltrane separated from Naima Coltrane in 1963, subsequently divorcing in 1966 and marrying Alice McLeod, a pianist with whom he resided beginning in 1964. Coltrane and McLeod lived in Huntington, Long Island, with their three children: John Jr., Ravi, and Oran.

Coltrane recorded *A Love Supreme* in 1964. The album, considered a musical manifestation of Coltrane’s spirituality, consists of a four-part suite with sections titled “Acknowledgments,” “Resolution,” “Pursuance,” and “Psalm.” In 1965, the album was awarded “Album of the Year” by the influential magazines *Down Beat* and *Jazz*. As well, he was entered into the *Down Beat* Hall of Fame and voted as “Jazzman of the Year” and best tenor saxophonist in the magazine’s reader poll. Additionally, the album fortified Coltrane’s mystical popular image, notably inspiring the creation of an eponymous church in San Francisco.

With *A Love Supreme* representing Coltrane’s movement into new realms of musical experimentation, further exploration was evidenced in June 1965, when he assembled 10 emergent avant-garde musicians to record the album *Ascension*. By the time Coltrane recorded the five-part suite *Meditations*, he had added tenor saxophonist Farrell “Pharoah” Sanders and a second drummer, Rashied Ali, to his band. Elvin Jones, a strong drummer in his own right, eventually left the band in 1966. Further exemplifying Coltrane’s musical direction, the piece “Om,” recorded while the band experimented with LSD, featured Hindu chanting. As well, when McCoy Tyner left the band in 1965, Alice Coltrane replaced him as pianist.

Coltrane recorded his second live album at the Village Vanguard in May 1966. The album included only two songs: “Naima” and “My Favorite Things.” In July 1966, the John Coltrane Quintet experienced a well-received tour of Japan, in which Coltrane became acquainted with his popularity when he was greeted at the airport by a crowd of Japanese fans.

Upon returning from the Japan tour, between late 1966 and early 1967, Coltrane worked in the recording studio

but was inhibited by headaches and stomach pains. In 1967, he recorded the albums *Expression* and *Interstellar Space*. In March of that year, he also performed at the opening of the “Center of African Culture” in Harlem, a project developed by Nigerian percussionist Michael Babatunde Olatunji, an artist significantly influenced Coltrane’s interest in African music. That same month, he renewed his contract with Impulse Records.

In April 1967, Coltrane became ill while visiting his mother’s home in Philadelphia. John Coltrane died in Huntington, Long Island, from liver cancer on July 17, 1967.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Davis, Miles; Jazz; Parker, Charlie

Elisa Joy White

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## Congo Square, New Orleans

For over a hundred years, New Orleans’ Congo Square was the only venue in North America where the public performance of African drumming, music, and dance was officially sanctioned. The fusion of African and European rhythms and instrumentation that developed over the course of the square’s history has led to its designation as the “birthplace of jazz.”

During Louisiana’s French colonial period (1718–1763), an area called the Place des Nègres, located just outside the ramparts of the original settlement, was set aside for use by enslaved Africans and people of African descent. Slaves were free from work on Sundays and holidays, and by about 1740, they had begun to congregate at the Place des Nègres to market their garden produce, wild herbs and berries, fish and game, furs, firewood, and crafts. They also used this opportunity to socialize and to make music and dance after the manner of their African nations. The market

activities and dances at the Place des Nègres persisted during Louisiana's Spanish colonial period (1764–1803).

After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the American administration continued to allow the slaves' Sunday market activities and dances. It was during the early 1800s, when Gaetano Mariatini's traveling "Congo Circus" from Havana set up in the square during the winter season, that the site came to be called Circus Square or Congo Square.

The African cultural practices at Congo Square drew many white spectators and became a tourist attraction for American and European visitors. Many 19th-century travelers published reports of African costume, music, and dances such as the calinda, bamboula, and congo. In 1808, Christian Schultz described Africans dressed in a variety of "wild and savage fashions," who danced in circles accompanied by long, narrow drums. In 1819, Benjamin Henry Latrobe reported seeing female dancers who circled around the musicians in the center while singing a two-note refrain. Particularly valuable are Latrobe's descriptions and sketches of three drums, a banjo made from a gourd with a carved human figure atop the fingerboard, and a calabash studded with nails. These instruments have been identified as being of Yoruba, Fon, Kongo, and Ashanti origin. James Creecy wrote in 1834 of dancers adorned with fringes, ribbons, little bells, and shells and of music provided by banjos, tom-toms, jawbones, triangles, and various other instruments. By the 1840s, African instruments, dances, and apparel were being supplanted by the violin, by jigs and reels, and by European-style clothing.

Many writers from the late 19th century to the present have characterized the Congo Square phenomena as Voodoo ceremonies, said to have been presided over by the famous 19th-century priestess Marie Laveau. All African music and dance is sacred in nature, and Congo Square could certainly have been a venue for New Orleans Voodoo, a blend of African and European religious and magical traditions characterized by drumming, singing, dancing, and spirit possession.

As city authorities sought to regulate the slaves' activities, the Congo Square assemblies gradually declined. In 1820, the square was fenced and gated. In 1845, a municipal ordinance prohibited outdoor music and dancing without permission from the mayor. The festivities still occurred sporadically through the 1850s, but they were conducted under police supervision and could take place only from May through August between the hours of 4:00 and 6:30 P.M. A forest of young trees planted by the city's

gardener further inhibited the dancers, and finally they ceased to congregate there.

By the time of the Civil War, what had once been the venue for authentic African cultural practices had faded into oblivion. After Reconstruction, the New Orleans City Council renamed the square for the Confederate general P. G. T. Beauregard, and it, like many other public places, was reserved for white use and remained so until the later 20th century.

In 1960, the city of New Orleans received federal urban renewal funds, which they used to purchase nine blocks surrounding the former Congo Square for a proposed cultural complex. After evicting the mostly black residents and demolishing their houses, the authorities abandoned the project. The plan was resurrected in 1971, and following the death of New Orleans jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong, the area was named Armstrong Park. Now attractively landscaped, the park is occupied by a swimming pool, the municipal auditorium, and the broadcast facilities of radio station WWOZ. The original Congo Square is paved in concentric rings, suggestive of the slaves' dance circles, and is used for musical performances and festivals.

See also: Africanisms; Laveau, Marie

Carolyn Morrow Long

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## Conjure

Conjure is an African American form of folk healing and folk magic that involves the use of organic materials, elements of the universe, and supernatural forces to manipulate

the tangible world. The “magical” forces of conjure are inexplicable and lacking in scientific grounding. However, these forces should not be equated with illusion, charlatanry, or invocatory magic. Conjure is an American tradition primarily rooted in African cosmology and herbalism. Africans on the Continent embraced a lexicon of beliefs and customs designed to help them coexist in an environment filled with animals, plants, natural elements, and unseen forces. In addition to the supreme power to whom all answered, there were deities and ancestral figures who worked together in harmony to promote balance in the universe.

During the Atlantic slave trade, many of these beliefs and customs were transported to the New World for sustenance. Nature-based customs took a stronger foothold in geographical locations with climates resembling weather conditions in Africa. Although many syncretized, African-based religions such as Santería, Shango, Candomble, and Vodun emerged in the Americas, conjure was more common in North America. Therefore, conjure took root in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Conjunction is informed by a fusion of African magical and medicinal herbalism, American Indian botanical knowledge, and European folk traditions. With the assistance of American Indians inhabiting areas surrounding the plantations, enslaved Africans learned the properties of local herbs and roots. Herbalism survived as a vital part of slave culture and was used to treat blacks and whites on the plantation.

Conjurers, or conjure doctors, are often described as herbalists and magicians who may practice beneficial, curative, and protective magic. Practitioners are usually paid for their services. Conjunction may be viewed as a system of black traditional medicine that cures natural and occult illnesses. Herbalism is used to treat natural illnesses; hexes are occult illnesses that can be treated only by a person who can draw on elements of the universe, spells, and personal power to uncross the hex. Contrary to popular belief, members of various ethnic and racial groups practice conjure.

Other commonly used names for conjure are *hoodoo* and *rootwork*. It has been speculated that the term *hoodoo* is a derivation of the African terms *Voodoo* and *juju*. *Voodoo* is a Westernized adaptation of the Fon word *Vodun*, which means “spirit” or “god”; *juju* means magic. *Vodun* is a West African religion that was transplanted to Haiti and eventually surfaced in Louisiana early in the 19th century after

the Haitian Revolution. Hoodoo is a distinctive American tradition. Scholars have noted that beliefs and customs associated with conjure in America may be traced back to the Congo. Unlike Vodun and similar African-based practices such as Santería, Shango, and Candomble, conjure is not a religion, and therefore the practitioner, or conjurer, is not bound by a specific theology or formal initiation; conjuration may be adapted to any one of several forms of religious worship. In this tradition, personal healing and magical powers are emphasized. Conjurers empower themselves with handmade objects as an alternative to relying on the power of religious leaders or deities. Rootwork comprises a working knowledge of herbalism and nature. Therefore, the term “rootwork” is used because of the significant role of dried roots in the making of charms and casting of spells. African American practitioners and informed participants seldom use the terms “hoodoo” and “rootwork” interchangeably. In addition to roots, conjurers also use sticks, trees, stones, animals, magnets, minerals, bones, animal parts, natural waters, bodily effluvia, personal objects, ritual candles, incense, and oils.

The objectives of conjurers are often misinterpreted by the misinformed. Practitioners of conjure are consulted for spiritual cleansing, attracting affection, good health, and luck, protection, and divination. In order to achieve the desired outcomes of their clients, conjurers use techniques referred to as “laying of tricks” or “fixing tricks.” The most common object used in the laying of tricks is called a bag of tricks. Sometimes it is also referred to as a *mojo*, *nation sack*, *gris-gris*, *hand*, *trick bag*, *luck ball*, or *flannel*. The word “*mojo*” may have come from the West African word *mojuba*, which means “giving praise.” A *mojo bag* is the most commonly used talisman in conjunction, and it is extremely potent. Usually a small bag made of silk, leather, or flannel, a *mojo* is a bag of charms that serves as an amulet and is often concealed on the person for effectiveness and safety. Sometimes the *mojo* is hidden in a secret location. The basic ingredients found in a *mojo* are sticks, herbs, bones, and earth combined to accomplish a particular task. A *nation sack* is the only gender-specific *mojo*. It is a female-owned *mojo bag* worn by women under their clothes, and men were not allowed to touch them. The magical ingredients included in the *nation sack* depended on the desired wishes of the female who wore it. For example, egg yolks kept lovers committed, and red onion peels brought good luck.

Trees, stones, and roots are important conjuration tools. In African and African American cultural traditions, trees represent a spiritual connection between life and death. Stones are essential tools in conjuration because they hold energy and may be charged for use in specific applications. For instance, stones may be buried, placed in the sun, or immersed in a special water soak to evoke desired vibrations. Conjure stones are also known to heighten the power of conjure. Roots contain potent medicinal qualities and thus are a vital tool in conjuration. Some practitioners believe the Adam and Eve root and John the Conqueror root are two of the most frequently used roots in conjuration. John the Conqueror, or Conjure John, is recognized as the most powerful root of the forest, and its uses are diverse. This root is used in African, American Indian, and European herbalism. Adam and Eve is an American Indian root used to bring love and protection when used in conjures.

Conjurers adhere to a common set of beliefs. Conjurers believe there is one god to whom all must be held accountable for their actions, but there are also several supernatural forces working as conjuring agents for human beings, acting under the guide of the Supreme Being. To conjurers, the earth is a sacred, breathing entity that sustains and provides the sources needed for conjuration. In the African tradition of ancestral veneration, conjurers respect the beneficial powers of the dead to impart wisdom to the living because they have passed on to a spiritual plane where the past, present, and future merge. Conjurers believe that the future can be foretold and rely heavily on divination systems to assist their clients through spiritual and psychic readings. Popular divination systems are dream interpretation, playing cards, bones, shells, a candle and glass of water, and recognition of omens in nature. Conjurers must adhere to ethical standards. They must not abuse their powers.

In order to maximize the potential of conjuration, the conjurer must understand the principals of elemental magic by mastering the use of air, earth, fire, and water. Incense is often used to represent the element air. Various incenses are used for purification, protection, clarity, meditation, psychic awareness, dream intensification, and spirit communication. For instance, sage is used for meditation and purification, jasmine strengthens intuition and intensifies dreams, eucalyptus provides protection, and frankincense is used for spirit communication. In addition to incenses, a wide variety of herb-based scented oils

are employed in conjure. Like incense, oils are diffused in the air. Oils can also be used for anointing clients and for dressing candles.

The element of earth is fundamental to conjuration because it absorbs and illuminates energy. It is believed that earth from certain locations holds certain energy, and it is often used to ground spells. Earth from certain places is used to enhance certain spells. For instance, it is believed that earth from a church provides spiritual protection; earth from the top of a mountain increases psychic abilities and clarity; earth from a cemetery stimulates psychic ability and strengthens communication with the dead; earth from a bank attracts money and success; earth from a courthouse attracts success in legal matters; and earth from a garden intensifies love spells. Earth is commonly placed in a mojo to ground the spell.

Candles are used in conjuration to represent the element of fire and to release certain spirits. Specific colors are used for specific purposes. The candles must be dressed first in order to achieve a specific end. White candles are multifunctional and often represent peace; pink candles are used for attraction and healing; purple candles are used for spirituality and humility; red candles are used for desire and power; yellow candles are used for creativity and renewal; green candles are used for money and abundance; blue candles are used for insight and healing; brown candles are used for stability and focus; silver candles improve psychic ability and ease stress; and black candles promote change and increase occult power.

The fourth element, water, retains energy and is often used for cleansing and consecration. Holy water is used for clarity and consecration of sacred objects; ocean water may be used for increasing psychic abilities and bringing peace of mind; and spring rainwater may be used for healing and fertility.

After slavery, conjuration continued to exist because blacks could not afford the services of a traditional medical practitioner. However, as blacks migrated to urban areas, some of them rejected elements of conjure because of its stigma. City dwellers and educated blacks often viewed conjure as backward and unsophisticated. In an effort to assimilate into mainstream society, many blacks distanced themselves from the tradition for fear of rejection. Conjure and all that it encompassed was too closely related to the African past. Despite efforts to dismiss conjure as “Negro superstition,” standard medical care did not succeed in



eradicating the need for conjurers who practiced divination or crafted spells. During the late 19th and 20th centuries several conjurers gained national recognition as clients sought their services. Some of the more prominent conjurers were Doctor Buzzard of Beaufort, South Carolina; Doctor Jim Jordan of Murfreesboro, North Carolina; Aunt Caroline Dye of Newport, Arkansas; and the Seven Sisters of New Orleans. Preservation of cultural identity was also a mitigating factor in refusal of some blacks to relinquish their ties with conjure.

In the 21st century, media continues to promote negative stereotypes of conjure through images of primitive characters and rituals. Regardless of the demonization and trivialization of conjure, there has been a renewed interest in the practice and study of conjuration. In many instances, the continuation of conjure among African Americans is still perpetuated by lack of access to adequate health care. As scholars continue to explore various aspects of conjuration relative to African American healing, they are compelled to reconsider and redefine conjure beyond the realm of folklore and superstition in order to critically examine cultural dimensions of African American experiences.

*See also:* Africanisms; Pritchard, Gullah Jack; Root Doctors; Slave Culture; Slave Resistance

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## Coromantee

The term Coromantee refers to an important English trading post located on the Gold Coast of West Africa during the 17th and 18th centuries. The correct appellation,

Kromantine, was the name of both a key commercial village controlled by the Fante Kingdom of Fetu and a major trading fort established by the Dutch in 1598. Fort Kromantine, located near the modern-day village of Abanze, was destroyed in 1645 and rebuilt later by the English. It was to become the first English trading post along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. From Fort Kromantine and other coastal factories like it, the English exported Africans principally to their Caribbean possessions throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. During the second Anglo-Dutch War, Fort Kromantine was seized by the Dutch West Indies Company and renamed Fort New Amsterdam—perhaps in direct response to the seizure of its namesake in North America by British forces.

As a result of the combined Fante, English, and Dutch trading activities at Kromantine, enslaved Africans exported from this region of the Gold Coast were lumped together and referred to incorrectly as “Kromantine” by European slave traders, factors, and ship captains during the 17th and 18th centuries. Although this ethnic term has its ambiguities, “Kromantine” does refer to mostly Akan-speakers from the Gold Coast who were transported to the Western Hemisphere.

Throughout the 18th century, the so-called Coromantees were a feared contingent among the many enslaved African groups in the British, Dutch, and Danish Americas. Involved as principles and leaders in more than 23 revolts and plots in locales ranging from Antigua to New York City, Coromantees were stereotyped by British planters and ship captains as being prone to rebellion, yet fiercely loyal if one could gain their respect. Importantly, the creation of Coromantee identity in the Americas was characterized by the spreading influence of Akan-speaking cultural practices, including the use of Akan day-names, Anansi the Spider stories, and Obeah—which was likely a fusion of Akan- and Igbo-speaking spiritual practices.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade; Slave Resistance

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## Davis, Miles

Miles Dewey Davis Jr. (1926–1991) was an influential musician who transformed the genre of jazz. Many jazz artists, ethnomusicologists, and social scientists view Miles Davis's professional career as one of constant transition. His career is highlighted by distinct periods of style that included bebop (1945–1948), cool jazz (1948–1958), hard bop (1952–1963), modal jazz (1959–1968), and electronics (1969–1991). These distinct eras in his career were quite significant within the field of jazz because of Davis's continuous effort to evolve as a musician. He introduced cool jazz, modal jazz, fusion jazz, pop, hip-hop, and rock into a musical genre (big band jazz) that held itself as conservative.

Miles Davis's contributions to the field of jazz were not anticipated at the start of his career in the late 1930s. He began performing at age 13 in East St. Louis, Illinois. Miles showed great promise as a jazz trumpeter and was given his first professional opportunity performing with the Blue Devils. A year later (1941), at age 15, he performed with Adam Lambert's Six Brown Cats. From 1941 to 1943, he performed in the St. Louis area with the Eddie Randall Band.

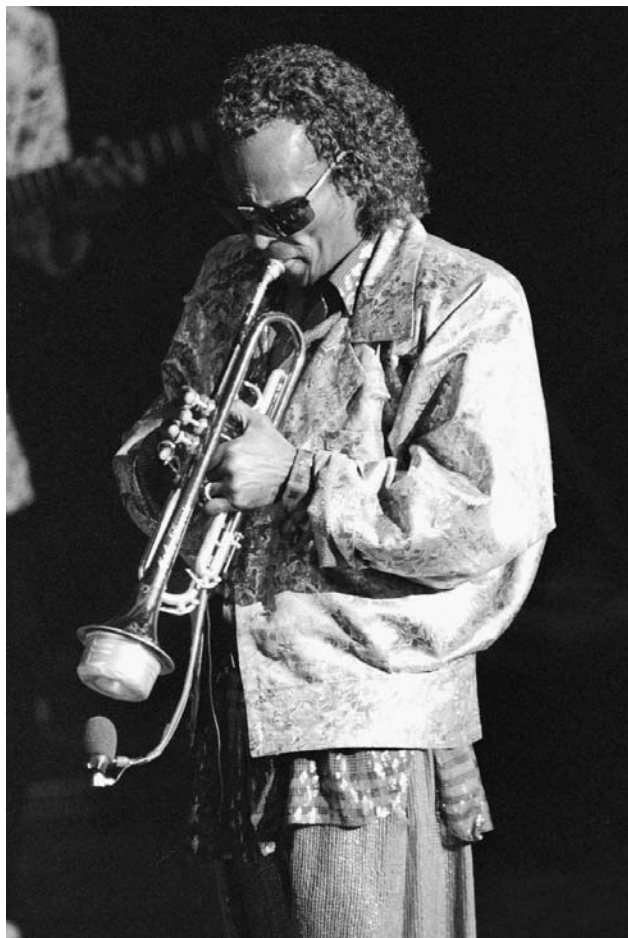
In 1945, Miles Davis enrolled at the Julliard School of Music in New York. His tenure at the school was short-lived; he decided to leave after one semester. Miles had been drawn to the jazz scene in New York and especially to the clubs on 52nd Street. He performed at these clubs with such future jazz greats as Charlie Parker, Tadd Dameron, Coleman Hawkins, and Bennett (Benny) Carter. For a period of five months, he played with the renowned William (Billy) Eckstine Band. His first recording session was in 1945 on the Savoy label with Herbie Fields's band, which featured "Rubberlegs" Williams.

Jazz music and performance styles had been established by such jazz greats as Louis Armstrong, Charlie Shavers, Roy Eldridge, and Rex Stewart. However, Davis's alterative style included playing within a narrower range, including a more lyric style and fast tempo, light with no vibrato. Influence for this style of performance came from his teacher—and Davenport, Iowa, jazz great—Leon (Bix) Biederbecke. Many of Miles's early performances and recordings emulate a new style that would serve as a transition for future jazz eras and trends.

In late 1948, Miles formed his own band. Through collaboration with Gil Evans, he participated in an experimental workshop that produced a series of selections that were collected and reissued as *Birth of the Cool*. A number of outstanding musicians, arrangers, and writers participated in bringing the album to fruition. A few of these individuals included Gerry Mulligan, John Lewis, Maxwell (Max) Roach, Johnny Carisi, Lee Konitz, and Kai Winding. Davis's recordings exposed the public to new styles and trends that would influence younger jazz performers who were not vested in the traditional big band sound. Miles closed out the 1940s with a performance on Christmas night at Carnegie Hall as a performer in the Stars of Modern Jazz concert. The Voice of America radio network broadcasted this performance a year later (1950).

The 1950s started with the third of five eras in Miles's career, with the fusion of cool jazz and hard bop. During this period, he introduced the Harmon mute as a performance accessory. In 1956, he recorded two bold albums, *Bye Bye Blackbird* and *'Round About Midnight*. The Harmon mute is used on a regular basis in both recordings. His performance style characteristics also expanded to include drones, half-tone oscillations, tonic-dominant alterations in the bass line, diatonic ostinatos, and a flamenco-like scale. His records titled "So What" and "Flamenco Sketches" exhibit the Flamenco style scale. Other recordings such as *Miles Ahead* (1957) were prepared in a big band format. He also produced the orchestral albums *Porgy and Bess* and *Sketches of Spain*. Both albums were influenced by composer Joaquin Rodrigo and became classics.

By 1957, Miles had assembled another group of outstanding musicians to perform with his group. Lead performers included Bill Evans, Jimmy Cobb, John Coltrane, and Cannonball Adderly. This ensemble produced two landmark recordings titled *Milestones* and *Kind of Blue* (1959). *Kind of Blue* received rave reviews from jazz critics



Miles Davis at a concert in Tel Aviv, 1987. (AP Photo)

and peers of Miles Davis. This album had a very avant-garde sound. The film score *Ascenseur Pour Lechafaud* (“Lift to the Scaffold”) was completed by Miles in 1957. Louis Malle directed this film, which was recognized as a major success in France, England, and the United States. The entire soundtrack was recorded at a Paris radio station. Each solo in the recording had its unique character. There is a strong-willed use of “echo” in “Generique” and “Chey le photograph du Motel” and a muted trumpet solo in “Diner au Motel,” and “Au bardu Petit Back” incorporates a luscious improvisation, whereas “Champs-Elysees” exhibits a rock blues style. Davis shocked his followers when he moved toward partnering jazz with rock. The recording *Filles De Kilimanjaro* reinforced the partnership when Miles utilized a wak-wak pedal connected to his electronic trumpet and integrated multiple electronic keyboards and electric guitar.

One of the best recordings to feature an open fusion between soul, jazz, and rock and roll is the album *Bitches*

*Brew* (1969). Album sales exceeded expectations, and it was the first in Davis’s career to go gold. Musical elements included the use of various mutings, modal melodies, free improvisation, electronic instruments and unique harmonies. In order to deliver such an outstanding performance, Miles surrounded himself with a new core of musicians with fresh ideas. Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, Joe Zawinal, and Herbie Hancock represent some of the new talent brought to Miles’s arena. Miles also experimented with the use of improvisations in a cheerless format and a tonal ambiguous bop style during the time Wayne Shorter served as his accompanist. And the rhythm section was freed to find unique ways of expressing 4/4 rhythms.

From 1975 to 1980, Davis disappeared from the jazz scene after announcing his retirement. Many jazz critics felt that his career-ending proclamation was associated with a number of health issues, including an ongoing addiction to heroin and cocaine. However, Miles returned in early 1980 to record a series of albums that crossed a number of genres. His new release, *The Man with the Horn*, was well-received by followers of Miles as well as jazz critics. This recording became the most popular since the Grammy-winning *Bitches Brew*. Following the success of this album, Miles entered the studio to record *We Want Miles* and *Star People*. Again, Miles added a number of new performers for this recording session and public performances. Among the many performers employed were Bill Evans III on saxophone (1980–1984), Brandford Marsalis on saxophone (1984–1985), John Scofield on guitar (1982–1985), Robert Irving III on synthesizer (1980–1983), and Mino Cinelu on percussion (1982–1984).

Miles continued to experiment with different styles well into the 1980s. He recorded popular music of the rock band Scritti Politti and rock singer Cyndi Lauper. In 1985, he collaborated on the “Sun City” antiapartheid recording that protested social issues in South Africa. Following the successful release of this recording, Davis became involved in a number of new initiatives. He appeared in the television show *Miami Vice*, featured in the film *Durango*, and completed a number of commercials for New York City radio stations. Davis was the recipient of an honorary doctorate in 1986 from the New England Conservatory of Music for his longstanding achievements, which had covered a period of more than 40 years. The National Association of Recording Artists awarded him a Grammy in 1990 for lifetime achievement.

Miles Davis died in Santa Monica, California, on September 28, 1991, after suffering from a stroke and pneumonia. See also: Black Folk Culture; Coltrane, John; Jazz; Parker, Charlie

Lemuel Berry Jr.

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## Double Consciousness

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote *The Souls of Black Folk*, one of the most important and deeply profound works of African American scholarship. In the opening essay, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” Du Bois used the concept of “double-consciousness” to describe the social, cultural, psychological, and political “contradiction” of the “American Negro” or African American in the U.S. context just four decades after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. Du Bois’ development of this illuminating concept was grounded in his understanding of black American life from his highly original book *The Philadelphia Negro* (1896), the first of its kind, and the legacy of this understanding of what it means to be both black and American and the struggle inherent therein. Such ground is still highly relevant for our understanding of the current realities and struggles of African Americans.

For Du Bois, the souls of black folk, though highly varied, have in common the struggle to resolve this inherent contradiction—but through a resolution that works for African Americans and not against them. Du Bois’ words

describe the dilemma of double consciousness best and show the political, cultural, and sociological struggles that continue some 100 years after the publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*. To experience and conceive of life through such a double consciousness is an undeniable dilemma and one that would, in the decades to come throughout the 20th century, define in many ways the continued struggles of Africans on American soil.

Du Bois foresaw that this concept—this dilemma, this double consciousness—that was occurring because of, alongside of, and within the central problem of the 20th century, which he identified as “the problem of the color-line,” would be fundamental to the struggle for black liberation, civil rights, and equality in the United States. Indeed, some two years later, Du Bois would give a speech at the first meeting of the Niagara Movement, which would demand full suffrage, public accommodations, human rights, education for all, and ultimately, unbending enforcement of the Constitution of the United States regardless of color. The lived experiences of African Americans, as Du Bois understood it through this concept, provided undeniable evidence that the ideals of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and indeed the Fifteenth Amendment were *not* being realized for all Americans. The demands of the Niagara Movement were certainly grounded in a desire to reconcile the double consciousness and to explicitly attack key ideals of the United States—ideals that were not fulfilled. That the internal and external struggle of the “American Negro” was one of double consciousness, Du Bois considered to be laid directly at the hands of the government of the United States—a government rooted in white supremacy. The pursuit to unify the “soul” of the African American effectively, without losing either blackness or full American citizenship, was important for the strategies of the NAACP and other black organizations as well as in movements such as Pan-Africanism, the Civil Rights movement, and Black Power.

Not only did the idea of a double consciousness hold a central place in the strategies of important black liberation movements, but the idea also foreshadowed other important conceptual developments in African and African American scholarship. For example, Carter G. Woodson’s *Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933), Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* (1965), Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton’s *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (1967), and even Molefi K. Asante’s *The Afrocentric Idea*

(1987) all were grounded in Du Bois' instructive notion of double consciousness as it manifested itself in the experiences of African Americans socially, educationally, politically, psychologically, and culturally. It truly was an idea that was ahead of its time.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B

David L. Brunnsma

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## Ebo Landing

Among the peoples living in the Sea Islands and coastal regions of Georgia and South Carolina, a unique set of forces combined over time to produce Gullah and Geechee cultures. Both cultures were combinations of various Atlantic African language cohorts, with solidly West-Central African and Sierra Leonian foundations. Other cultures and language cohorts found expression within Gullah and Geechee, even those cultures brought to the Lowcountry by the numerically insignificant Igbo-speakers of the Niger River Delta (modern Nigeria)—who represented about 8 percent of all African imports into the region during the 18th century. Because of their alleged propensity to commit suicide, folktales about flying Africans have been linked by a range of scholars to Igbo-speaking imports in South Carolina and Georgia. However, versions of these tales can be found in other diasporic locales, including Jamaica, Cuba, and Brazil. Like many Atlantic African groups, Igbo-speakers embraced the notion of the transmigration of souls, believing that upon the death of the physical body, the soul returns to inhabit ancestral lands to await rebirth. In the case of Africans dispersed into the Western Hemisphere,

this belief in transmigration was linked to the ability of the soul to fly, swim, or find other means of conveyance across the Atlantic Ocean to, in essence, make a reverse Middle Passage.

In the context of Igbo beliefs in transmigration, the claimed ubiquity of Igbo suicides, and displacement in the Americas, tales of Africans who had the supernatural ability to fly back home were frequently told among the Gullah and Geechee of the Lowcountry. Then in the year 1803, a pivotal event occurred at Dunbar Creek, a tributary of Frederica River on St. Simons Island, Georgia, which added a new set of possibilities to folktales based on the belief in transmigration. In May 1803, a group of about 75 Igbo slaves arrived in Savannah, Georgia, by ship and were purchased by two coastal planters—John Couper of Cannon's Point on St. Simons Island and Thomas Spalding of Sapelo Island. After the purchase, the Igbo were then loaded onto another ship—a schooner named *York*—for transport to St. Simons Island. After this point, accounts vary widely regarding the ultimate fate of the Igbo. In one account, they rebelled against the ship's crew and drowned after jumping overboard. In another version, they were successfully disembarked from the ship, and while in chains and engaged in a group song, they walked into Dunbar Creek and drowned. Yet another version contends that they walked into the water after receiving a severe whipping by an overseer.

Although the actual historical accounts differ, the meanings derived from these events by Gullah and Geechee generally do not. Floyd White, an ex-slave resident of St. Simons Island recounted in the 1930s that the "Ibo" disembarked from the slave ship, engaged in a group song, and marched to Dunbar Creek on their way back to Africa. In another version told by Wallace Quarterman of Darien, the Igbo—after receiving a beating from an overseer—flew back to Africa instead of walking across the Atlantic Ocean. In both cases, the idea conveyed is that the Igbo committed mass suicide in order to release their souls from earthly bounds (Goodwine, 1998).

In conjunction with the flying African stories, the Ebo Landing account may allow for an understanding of why only African-born slaves could fly, walk, or swim back to Africa. If the soul of a deceased individual returns back to former companions and friends, that would mean that the souls of African-born slaves would have to "fly" or "swim" across the Atlantic to get back home. This was an impossible feat for slaves born in the Americas. Their families and

friends were in the Western Hemisphere, not Africa, and thus they would not need the ability to take flight or “return” by other means. The phenomenon of flying Africans or analogues to Ebo Landing are absent in African folklore for similar reasons. If an individual dies in Africa, the spirit has no need to fly because it is already home. Though rooted in African metaphysical understandings, this represents an orientation that is uniquely African American in orientation and perspective.

Both the historical accounts and the folkloric renditions of Ebo Landing are what give the site known as Ebo Landing, in Glynn County, Georgia, its name. In addition to being immortalized in folk tales, the stories of Ebo Landing and flying Africans were given expression in Julie Dash’s masterful reflection on Gullah life in the 1991 film *Daughters of the Dust*; in novels by Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, and Gayl Jones—*Song of Solomon* (1977), *Praisesong for the Widow* (1984), and *Song for Annihio* (2000), respectively; and in children’s stories by Virginia Hamilton, Alice McGill, Janice Liddell, Linda Nickens, and Julius Lester.

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## Election Day

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Election Day was a weeklong event involving the enslaved and free black population in the American North that began in the early 18th century. The event took place on different dates, but those dates usually correlated with the election events of the white population. The event was seen by whites

as a mimicry of their election procedures, but this was not the case; “Negro” election day was much more celebratory and not only involved the election of a king or governor but also entailed music, dancing, dress, and feasts. In Massachusetts, Election Day was held on the last Wednesday of the Easter season; the festivities of election week would begin the Monday prior to Election Day and would not end until the Saturday after it.

Campaigning, planning, and preparation for Election Day would begin well in advance. The enslaved population would begin saving their pocket change in order to pay to put on some of the events that would occur. In fact, some would even make food items to sell in order to raise additional money for the festivities. Such treats as root beer and gingerbread election cakes also were prepared for election week. In addition to the money that the enslaved population earned and saved, their owners were also expected to contribute to the festivities, especially if one of the elected officials was their slave. Music and dance were a large part of the celebration throughout the Americas. Instruments such as the fiddle, banjo, fish horn, and Guinea drum were used in the celebration. The inaugural parade that followed the election showcased the musicians, the dancers, and the newly elected official dressed in bright colors and many times riding a horse with plaited hair.

When an enslaved person was elected to one of these positions, governor or king, that person’s owner was expected to have an inaugural dinner in his honor. The owner was also expected to provide clothing for the events and provisions such as food and liquor. Although the positions earned were held only by blacks, the owner would also share in the prestige. The whites did not see the election festivities as being a threat because they thought that the proceedings were mimicking their own election procedures. They also wished to utilize those who were elected as enforcers of colonial policies and to maintain social order within the enslaved communities.

The title “king” or “governor” varied by location: in the royal colonies such as New Hampshire and Massachusetts, the title king was given, and in other colonies such as Connecticut and Rhode Island, the title of governor was utilized. In order to be eligible to run for office, the candidate had to be of African descent, his owner must be of some political significance, and he had to have great physical strength. The governor or king had authority over his “countrymen” and held jurisdiction over his subjects. In return, the governor

or king was given respect and honor for his position. Election Day, although associated with the American North, did occur in Brazil and throughout the Caribbean. In Brazil and the Caribbean, there was one significant difference: women could be elected queens, and there could be other elected female officials.

See also: Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Pinkster Festival; Slave Culture

*Dawn Miles*

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## Ellington, Duke

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1889–1974), born in Washington, D.C., was a jazz pianist, bandleader, and composer who, throughout the course of his life, recorded over 2,000 compositions and performed over 20,000 concerts across the globe. Ellington's music combined African American musical traditions of New Orleans jazz music and the blues of the Deep South with his own unique compositional style that borrowed ideas from the European classical musical tradition. An ability to combine different musical traditions and styles led to Ellington's enormous cross-sectional appeal and international success over the course of his life. The long-ensuing argument over whether Duke Ellington's music is African American or American music, jazz music or simply music, is misguided, for Ellington's music cannot be defined as solely one or the other; rather it is both American and African American, both jazz music and music in general—universal in its dialogue with all humanity, but also particular in the way it expresses the voice of the African American experience.

The title of "Duke" was bestowed on Ellington by a childhood friend because of the dignified way Ellington presented himself, a result of his etiquette training and socialization by his mother, Daisy Kennedy Ellington, and

his father, James Edward Kennedy, who were part of D.C.'s emerging black bourgeoisie. Although exposed to music lessons at an early age, Ellington focused more on sports and art than music throughout much of his early childhood. However, by the time he was in high school, he had realized his connection with and love for music. After hearing Harvey Brooks play ragtime piano, Ellington was suddenly inspired to begin seriously learning the instrument and the music. He learned a few tricks from Brooks and then took lessons on how to read music and improve his piano-playing techniques from Oliver "Doc" Perry and Louis Brown, other D.C.-area musicians. With confidence resulting from his training, Ellington began to play different venues throughout Washington, D.C. His sudden success gigging around town prompted him to leave high school several months prior to graduation and embark on what would be a prolific, lifelong, history-making career as a musician, bandleader, composer, and "cultural ambassador" for the United States.

In 1917, Duke Ellington formed his first band, Duke's Serenaders, which played at clubs and events in Washington, Maryland, and Virginia for approximately five years. During this time, Ellington moved out of his parents' house, bought his own home, and married Edna Thompson. In 1919, Mercer Kennedy Ellington was born, who would later follow in his dad's footsteps as leader of the Ellington Orchestra. By 1923, Ellington had made the big move to New York and set up his band "The Washingtonians," a group that gained notoriety during the Prohibition Era playing such clubs as the Exclusive Club, the Hollywood Club, and the famous Cotton Club, which nationally broadcasted The Washingtonians on a live show called "From the Cotton Club." Ellington recorded his first tunes, "East Saint Louis Toodle-Oo" and "Black and Tan Fantasy," in 1927, just prior to signing an agreement with Irving Mills, which opened doors to a number of recording companies, including Columbia, Brunswick, and Victor. His move to New York and the connections he made there helped catapult Ellington and his band onto the international stage, which increased their popularity worldwide, ultimately bringing the Ellington Orchestra—no longer The Washingtonians—both national and international acclaim.

Wynton Marsalis has described Duke Ellington as "the very greatest of great facilitators" because of his ability to play any rhythmic style and to organize, manage, and lead

the 17 or so members of his orchestra. One of Ellington's gifts as a bandleader and composer was his ability to find a place and space for the different musicians' voices in his orchestra and musical arrangements, which allowed him to evoke different moods in his music and continue to generate new compositions. Ellington appreciated and worked with the different sounds, stylistic approaches, and personalities of the musicians in his band—the more hard-edge sounds of Sam Woodyard and Cootie Williams *and* the smoother sounds of Johnny Hodges and Lawrence Brown, to name a few—and they, in turn, respected and followed his lead. This type of camaraderie and musical connection among the band members was harnessed and then held together and kept in locomotion by Ellington. He was, through his leadership of the band, able to arrange and integrate the different musicians so that the music they produced together remained solid and “swinging” while still providing a variety of rich textures—tones and rhythms—that gave the orchestra its discerning sound. Many of the original band members remained in the orchestra with Ellington up until the end, playing through the latter avant-garde years and during the period of tours overseas for the U.S. State Department.

Both jazz-seasoned and classically trained composers and musicians consider “the Duke” to be one of America's (some argue the world's) greatest composers. Even a non-musician such as President Nixon recognized Duke Ellington as “America's foremost composer” and awarded Ellington the highest award issued to an American civilian, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, adding to a long list of awards, honors, and achievements garnered over the years. Duke Ellington has been awarded the President's Gold Medal on behalf of Lyndon B. Johnson; honorary doctorate degrees from America's most prestigious universities, Harvard and Yale University; the Legion of Honor, the highest honor awarded an individual by the French government; and 13 Grammy awards. Schools, festivals, parks, streets, bridges, memorials, and children across the United States have been named after Duke Ellington, a testament to his lasting impact on American music and culture and his continued importance in the hearts and minds of Americans.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Jazz; Ragtime

*Sean Elias*

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## Ethnic Randomization

Ethnic randomization is a theory that claims that slave traders and ship captains consciously selected enslaved Africans from different ethnic groups during capture and transportation so as to reduce the risk of revolts. This theory has been advanced by anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price in their book *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*.

Mintz and Price use this theory in an attempt to counter the claim of relative cultural homogeneity of the enslaved Africans advanced by Melville Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past*. According to Herskovits, there was relative cultural uniformity among West Africans, and therefore it is possible to pinpoint African cultural survivals in the New World.

Using the theory of ethnic randomization, Mintz and Price attempt to dismiss the plausibility of the argument. They argue that such survivals commonly known as Africanisms did not occur because they would require large numbers of a particular ethnic group, which was not possible because enslaved Africans had been “randomized.” Mintz and Price argue that the Africans who came to the New World were drawn from different parts of Africa, from numerous ethnic and linguistic groups, and from different societies in any region. Therefore, they posit that it cannot be said that enslaved Africans shared a common culture, in which case they had nothing to transmit.

In recent times, however, while admitting that enslaved Africans indeed had diverse ethnic origins, scholars have criticized the ethnic randomization theory, stating that it goes against the logic of slave trade. John Thornton in *Africans in the New World* argues that ethnic randomization did not occur in the Middle Passage. He says that slave ships drew their entire cargo only from one or perhaps two ports in Africa and unloaded them in large lots of as many as 200–1,000 in their new Atlantic homes. He further argues that it was in the interest of the slave-ship captains to



gather as many slaves as quickly as possible to reduce expenses and to keep down mortality rate. He states that once slaves were on board, in one location, the captain had little choice but to keep them on board, even if he went to other points of the coast. But if the slaves were gathered in one place, he could keep them on shore until he had to depart. Thornton further states that not only did this improve the health of slaves, but it also allowed the captain to shuffle some of the loss from death onto the sellers.

Ethnic randomization also assumes ignorance on the part of slave owners as to the identity and points of origin of slaves. Daniel Littlefield in his book *Rice and Slaves* shows that the slave owners in different regions in North America were very keen to bring in slaves of particular ethnic groups because of specific skills. He says that to argue that the white slave owners thought all slaves were the same, and therefore it did not matter where they came from, would be quite misleading. Littlefield writes about rice-growing in South Carolina and shows how some ethnic groups were preferred over others. He demonstrates that the plantation owners deliberately searched for slaves from Gambia who had rice-growing skills. If, therefore, slaves had actually been “randomized,” it definitely would have presented a problem for the slave traders.

Further, Littlefield shows that the slave owners not only searched for slaves from particular regions in Africa, but also were able to identify the ethnicity of slaves by certain characteristics. Although not conclusively, they seem to have been generally able to identify origin of slaves in question. This shows that it was highly unlikely that the slave owners would be deceived as to the ethnicity of their slaves.

Additionally, the theory of ethnic randomization has influenced the debate on the formation of African American identity. Mintz and Price argue that because the enslaved Africans were ethnically mixed, they were forced to form new identities very early in their experience in the New World. They maintain that enslaved Africans became a community only as much as they experienced their new environment. Instead of drawing from their African experience, they formed new identities based on the people that surrounded them.

Douglass Chambers’s book *Murder in Montpelier* addresses this issue by looking at the slave community in Montpelier in Virginia. He advances the argument that enslaved Africans reacted to crisis they encountered in the New World as Atlantic Africans as opposed to Creoles.

Moreover, he states that slaves in the Montpelier community were mainly Igbo and that although there were slaves of other ethnic groups, the Igbo influence was strong enough to influence them. So rather than the influence of the white slave owners creolizing the slaves, Chambers states that it was Igbo culture that was the dominant influence on enslaved people in that region.

Further, Chambers argues that creolization—the process of adapting to new physical and social conditions and the basic process of cultural change—was in fact a historical process as opposed to anthropological, as advanced by Mintz and Price. Chambers posits that the slave trade was more systematic and ordered than Mintz and Price want to admit. He argues, therefore, that it is plausible to state that particular ethnic groups did have the numbers enabling them to contribute significantly in the formation of African American identities.

*See also:* African Diaspora; Africanisms; Atlantic Slave Trade

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## Evangelism

Evangelism, the work of spreading religious belief, was a popular and influential form of religious conversion among African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the Americas, evangelism was originally focused on the most glaring nonbelievers, namely the Native Americans and enslaved Africans. British colonists argued over the right tactics of slave evangelization. Should religious instruction for slaves be mandatory? This posed a serious dilemma to Christian slave owners. English law clearly forbade the enslavement of Christians; once slaves were converted, must they be freed? Most Anglican leaders countered such

opposition by pointing out that the Bible sanctioned slavery and that Paul explicitly tells servants to obey their masters. Christianity would not make freed men, Anglican churchmen argued; rather, it would make better slaves, who would better understand their hierarchical position in the divine plan. With this message, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) sent missionaries to British North America. Founded in 1701, the SPG was the first organization to systematically evangelize the slaves. Southern slave owners found little to be troubled by in the SPG's tactics or message; in general, SPG evangelists affirmed the feudal hierarchy of Southern society, reiterating the morality of paternalism and rationalizing the complex slave codes that prohibited black literacy or assemblage.

Even so, the SPG achieved limited success among slaves. Few slaves could abide the tedium of the Anglican catechism without expectation of social uplift; moreover, the SPG never effectively translated the Christian message to the slave experience. It was not until Baptist and Methodist itinerant preachers spread across the rural South in the early 19th century that blacks began to convert in large numbers to Christianity. Scholars have long debated the success of Baptists and Methodists among Southern slaves, attempting to determine what made their message so appealing. Several theories have been supported: First, neither group required an educated clergy, encouraging individual slaves to preach without ecclesiastical requirement. Second, Baptists and Methodists shared an antislavery stance from their denominational beginnings and, more importantly, preached a gospel of equality that seemed to challenge the accepted social order. In addition, black evangelists such as Zilpha Elaw had a tremendous influence on converting black people to Christianity in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Subsequent black theologians would argue that Baptists and Methodism also provided a message of profound spiritual transformation and ultimate redemption, if not in this life, then in the next. Regardless of the reason, by the mid-19th century, the majority of freed blacks affiliated with either the Baptists or the Methodists as a result of this successful evangelism.

"Evangelism" is often conflated with "evangelicalism," a conservative movement in Protestantism. Evangelicalism is a specific theological strain sourced in the Wesleyan movement of the 18th century. Evangelical Christians emphasized the role of the individual in his or her own conversion. Whereas all Protestants shared an investment in personal salvation and sanctification, evangelicals believed that an individual

had the right to accept or reject salvation. In 19th-century America, evangelicalism was the mainline religion, usefully describing the attitude of most Baptists and Methodists. Historians have long conflated this evangelical majority with the eventual success of the abolitionist movement. Because such inordinate responsibility was placed on the individual in his or her own conversion, individual activity was seen more broadly as a key demonstration of God's grace. Social reform, like abolition, was therefore a major evangelism of American evangelicals, who sought to perfect the world to match their perfected souls. The majority of Northern abolitionists would aptly be described as evangelical.

The effects of Christian evangelism on African Americans are widely debated. For some, black conversion to Christianity facilitated the growth of independent black institutions (such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference) and the development of wide-ranging social service and educational networks. Others contend that Christianity was another tool of white oppression; such critiques would spawn such 20th-century movements as Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Nation of Islam, and alternatives led by religious leaders such as Daddy Grace and Father Divine. Such assessments aside, the demographic and sociological impact of Christian evangelism within African America is indisputable.

*See also:* African Methodist Episcopal Church; Daddy Grace; Elaw, Zilpha; Father Divine; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

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## Family Patterns

Family studies have identified characteristic family patterns—broadly defined as general value orientations and

structures transmitted intergenerationally through socialization—in most cultural groups. In the case of African Americans, family scholars have noted that, in spite of their diversity stemming from immigration experiences, regional residence, political views, income differences, and phenotypic characteristics, one can identify several family patterns based on African Americans' shared history and common cultural bonds. Two perspectives have dominated the study of these characteristics, at times highlighting different patterns and generating intense debate and controversy: a social pathological (or ethnocentric) approach versus a strength (or culturally relative) paradigm.

In the social-deficit tradition, African American family life, from its beginning up to the present, has not adhered to the norm or the ideal family structural model, defined as a man and a woman with their children living in the same home and endorsing a European American middle-class set of values and ways of being. The ethnocentric approach, therefore, has highlighted what it considers to be pathological and dysfunctional family patterns because of their variation from the expected Eurocentric Christian norm. It has criticized the African American family as a unit lacking a consistent and cohesive structure that moves in a constant state of turmoil. It argues that some of these family deficits existed originally in Africa prior to the capture and enslavement of Africans. It assumes that African slaves brought with them these family deficiencies to the New World and have remained part of the family structure to this day. Also, it maintains that African values, customs, and cultural norms were destroyed during slavery and to some extent by contemporary racism.

The family studies of sociologist E. Franklin Frazier (1894–1962) are prototypical of the deficit perspective and he considers the African American family deeply pathological, a condition stemming in part from the historical legacy of racism and contemporary impact of racism and discrimination. From a similar perspective, in his book *Dark Ghetto*, social psychologist Kenneth B. Clark (1895–1963) summarized what he considered some distinctive family patterns: low aspirations, poor education, family instability, illegitimacy, unemployment, crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, frequent illness, and early death. This approach entered mainstream popular discourse in 1965 with the publication of *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, in which Daniel P. Moynihan (1927–2003) described the disintegration of black families as part of a “tangle of pathology” ultimately attributed to three

hundred years of injustice and culminating in high levels of unemployment, welfare dependency, and high rates of nonmarital births.

In contrast to the social-pathology paradigm, which tends to see some of the family patterns as deeply embedded in the history of African American families, the cultural relative approach emerges out of the work of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963) and Melville J. Herskovits (1895–1963) and sees patterns such as low marriage rates, high rates of teen pregnancy, and single-parent, female-headed households as evidence of the inherent strength of African American families, especially women who raised their children and kept their families together during slavery, through Jim Crow and contemporary racism and discrimination. It argues, for example, that the high rate of single mothers leading African American families indicates a resistance, symbolic at times, to the oppressive conditions of both racism and patriarchy. Robert B. Hill is an articulate spokesperson for the strength approach, and he has identified five strengths that had been culturally transmitted through African ancestry to contemporary African American families: strong kinship bond, strong work orientation, strong achievement orientation, flexible family roles, and a strong religious orientation. In his monumental study *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925*, historian Herbert Gutman (1928–1985) argued that due to highly adaptive and resilient family patterns, the African American families survived the slave system and then legal segregation, discrimination, and enforced poverty with remarkable strength and solidarity.

From a more holistic approach, sociologist Andrew Billingsley sees African American family patterns as including both weaknesses and strengths. He has argued that their strengths are far greater, and they are distinguished by their adaptive and regenerative powers. He also has identified several distinctive African family patterns that have survived the American experience: consanguinity or blood ties taking precedence over all types of relationships; extended family versus nuclear families; child-rearing considered as the responsibility of parents and the extended family; respect and reverence shown to family elders and others; reciprocity among family members; and cooperation or shared responsibility for the well-being of others. The survival and development of African American families on American shores since 1619 is seen as a testament to their adaptability, viability, and resilience derived from these strengths.



Five generations of a slave family in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1862. (Library of Congress)

The U.S. Census Bureau recently published some statistics that provide an insight into the contemporary structural reality and patterns of average African American families. There are currently 8.4 million African American households in the United States, with 46 percent living in owner-occupied homes, with a \$31,969 annual median income, an increase up from a \$26,468 median income in 1986. Sixty-four percent of homes contain a family, and 45 percent contain a married-couple family. Additionally, 1.2 million African American grandparents are living with their own grandchildren younger than 10 years of age, and 51 percent of these grandparents are also responsible for their care.

See also: Frazier, E. Franklin; Herskovits, Melville; Slave Culture

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## Field Hollers

Field hollers—also known as whooping, arhoolies, cries, and hollers—were a form of communication between enslaved people on cotton, rice, and sugar plantations. Along with work songs, field hollers were vocal expressions that allowed slaves to articulate religious zeal, feelings of frustration, and even secret messages about escaping slavery. Yet unlike collective work songs, field hollers were a solitary expression, sung for one’s own joy, grief, relief, and so on; to communicate one’s location or other information to others; to call the hunting dogs; to let one’s family and neighbors know one is returning home, and so on. Even so, there was often a call-and-response component to field hollers, in which the holler might be echoed by other workers or passed from one to another.

Drawing on African musical styles, field hollers followed specific patterns; they were sung with recognizable lyrics or as meaningless embellished sounds, they tended to be highly improvisational, and they were characterized by a nuanced control of tone and pitch. Early writers, including renowned black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, wrote of the hollers’ vocal gymnastics and their characteristic melancholic cast. Scholars have likewise suggested that antebellum hollers, which whites often described as “meaningless,” may, in fact, have been sung in African languages not recognized by the overseers, thus serving as subversive and clandestine communication among the enslaved.

Moreover, music educator Willis Laurence James recognized that field hollers possessed a common African origin with other types of black vocal expression. He grouped field hollers with other African American cries, from street peddler’s calls to the hollers of black drill sergeants and baseball umpires, and classified hollers into three categories: “plain cries,” the simplest in form and structure; “florid

cries,” the most favored type, featuring elaborate vocalizing that cannot be recorded with standard musical notation; and “coloratura cries,” the most amazing and remarkable feats in folk music. As agriculture and other manual labor in the South became mechanized, the holler became increasingly rare. Even so, it lived on in folk preaching, dance calling, and gospel, blues, and jazz singing, and according to James, its influence is even to be heard in the singing of popular white crooners.

The holler’s influence is nowhere stronger than in the blues. Enslaved Africans used their culturally more sophisticated understanding of tone to vocally simulate sounds from the world around them. This included vocal simulations of European musical instruments, especially horns. Later, when African Americans were able to obtain European instruments, they adapted them to the aesthetic of the holler by muting and plunging them, bending notes, and so forth. Like the holler, blues is solo vocalizing, of a melancholic character, which emphasizes tone quality and variation. As a vocal genre, the blues, like the holler, allow for and displays great freedom. It is through the blues and black gospel that African American music of the second half of the 20th century absorbed this aesthetic, perhaps witnessed nowhere more spectacularly than in the live performances of James Brown and the carefully controlled and tonally complex shrieks and hollers they featured.

*See also:* Africanisms; Blues Music; Call-and-Response; Douglass, Frederick; Field Hands; Slave Culture

Fred J. Hay

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## Fitzgerald, Ella

Known as the First Lady of Song, Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996) was an accomplished jazz musician who charmed audiences and critics alike from the time she won the Apollo

Amateur Night in 1934 to her final concert in 1992. She lent her voice, characterized by impeccable pitch, superb diction, and a sweet and clear quality, to a range of musical styles that appealed to a variety of audiences. By one count, she recorded 1,117 different songs.

Fitzgerald was born April 25, 1917, to the unwed couple of William Fitzgerald and Tempie Williams Fitzgerald in Newport News City, Virginia. By the time she was four, her father had left, and her mother was living with Portuguese immigrant Joseph Da Silva. The family moved to Yonkers, New York, where Fitzgerald grew up listening to popular music and especially adored Louis Armstrong and Connee Boswell, an early and innovative white jazz singer whom Fitzgerald strove to emulate at her first Apollo appearance.

Fitzgerald's mother died in 1932. Her mother's sister, Virginia, soon removed her from her stepfather's home, fearing she was being mistreated. Her half-sister soon joined them when Da Silva died as well. Fitzgerald found work running numbers and alerting a prostitution house to police presence. The authorities caught her and sent her to a reform school, where at the time black girls were placed in the worst housing, beaten, held in basements, and perhaps even tortured, according to a 1936 government report and a 1990s journalistic investigation. Fitzgerald later became known for her work on behalf of children and helped establish the Ella Fitzgerald Child Care Center in Watts, Los Angeles, in 1977.

In the fall of 1934, Fitzgerald escaped from the reform school and lived homeless in New York City to evade the authorities. By November 21 of that year, she was on stage at the Apollo, where, as the story goes, she planned to dance but decided at the Monday screening to sing. Her top prize of a week's worth of singing engagements was not honored, possibly because of her appearance from living on the streets. Her unkempt condition later reportedly put off bandleader Fletcher Henderson. It also put off bandleader Chick Webb when he first met her. His male singer, Charles Linton, persuaded him to try her out in front of an audience.

Webb quickly came to see Fitzgerald as key to his aspirations to greater commercial success. In 1935, Fitzgerald and his band made her first record, "Love and Kisses," and after that, Webb barely recorded without her. In 1938, Fitzgerald had her first big hit with "A-Tisket, A-Tasket," a nursery rhyme she wanted to record against the judgment of Decca recording executives. She continued to

write many of her own novelty songs—with such names as "Gotta Pebble in My Shoe" and "Chew, Chew, Chew, Chew Your Bubble Gum"—and in 1940 became one of the youngest members of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). In 1939, Chick Webb, whose growth had been stunted and back hunched from a childhood disease, died of spinal tuberculosis at age 30. Fitzgerald became the leader of her own big band, an astounding feat for a female or for a vocalist, though trumpeter Taft Jordan took over most of the traditional duties. The band split up in 1942 as the big band heyday drew to a close.

Fitzgerald became interested in the emerging bop sound exemplified by Dizzy Gillespie, and indeed, biographer Stuart Nicholson calls her the only musician to successfully cross over from swing to bop. Her record "Flying Home" (1945) combined scat singing—popularized by Louis Armstrong—with bop sensibilities and became a landmark of scat, and her records "Smooth Sailing" and "How High the Moon" also exemplified bop. Such recordings also demonstrate why musicians praised the hornlike quality of her voice.



Jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald in 1940. (Library of Congress)

In the 1950s, Norman Granz, upset with Fitzgerald's treatment at Decca, got her out of her contract a year early through a trade and began recording her on Verve. This led to the 19-volume *Song Book* series, in which Fitzgerald recorded songs by such composers as Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, and Johnny Mercer. She also became a prominent draw at Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic concert tours. During this period she recorded three albums of duets with Louis Armstrong, which are characterized by the singers' playfulness and the contrast between their voices.

Fitzgerald dated a series of musicians. In 1941, she married Ben Kornegay but followed her managers' advice in seeking an annulment when they became convinced Kornegay was after her money. In 1947, she married bassist Ray Brown. Together they adopted her sister's newborn, whom they named Ray Brown Jr. When the marriage broke up in 1953, Ray Jr. lived with Ella but effectively was raised by her Ella's aunt Virginia while his adoptive parents toured.

Perhaps one of the most enduring contrasts in jazz is between Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, who, only two years Fitzgerald's senior, was already making a name for herself when Fitzgerald arrived in Harlem. Holiday fans appreciate her method of internalizing the emotions of a song and creating a subjective experience for the listener. By contrast, Fitzgerald fans often applaud her focus on melody and technique over feeling. Many have commented that Holiday acted out her songs, living and dying tragically. Yet Fitzgerald also lived her more detached musical style, making few close friendships over the years.

In the *Down Beat* readers poll for top vocalist, Fitzgerald placed first from 1937 to 1939 and again from 1953 to 1970. In the magazine's critics poll, instituted later, she placed first from 1953 to 1971 and again in 1974. In 1974, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore named its performing arts center after her, and in 1979, she received a Kennedy Center Honors Medal. She won 14 Grammys, and in 1989, the Society of Singers named its lifetime achievement award the "Ella."

See also: Black Folk Culture; Jazz

Brooke Sherrard

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## Flying African Stories

Flying African stories were tales shared among enslaved people on plantations that drew on African spiritual beliefs to give the enslaved people hope that they could escape bondage and return to their African homeland.

Numerous stories collected in *Drums & Shadows*, a compilation of tales collected by the Georgia Writers' Project (a branch of the Works Progress Administration) in 1940, describe instances of extreme suffering on the slaves' part, or the immediacy of tragic outcome, when some instances of mystic relief unexpectedly prevent the tragedy to occur. A ghost or a spirit suddenly provides the slave with wings, and the latter thus flies immediately back to his native soil. In another example, a legend told of an old man who would come to the plantations and would support the slaves with their unbearable pains. To do so, he would come close to them and blow magic words to them. Right after that, the slaves would be transformed into winged creatures and would fly back to Africa.

Significantly, flying African stories have often been linked to African spiritual beliefs, particularly the notion of transmigration, the idea that one's soul would return to Africa after physical death. Perhaps the most compelling connection between concepts of death, transmigration, and flying African stories came in the story of Ebo Landing, an event in which a group of Africans, after getting a vicious beating from their masters, marched into the ocean and drowned themselves. From then on, the story was told that they had "flown" back to Africa. Scholars now believe that folktales involving flying Africans are actually stories about transmigration and a soul-return to Africa.

Beyond the connection to transmigration, however, the flying African stories have other significant recurring elements—such as spirits' power of invisibility; power of clear-sightedness; power to blind and to restore sight; power to cure; and power to cast magic charms, spells, and evil charms—but we also find the symbol of taboo food laid

on people, including salt. Indeed, the salt that was used to preserve food shipped from abroad to America was linked both with the themes of forced exile and with the food eaten by the white tormentors. Thus, eating salt or salty food meant submitting to the whites. As opposed to that, protecting oneself from absorbing salt reflected one's ability to escape domination and thus one's power to fly. What is more, the act of refusing to eat salt was a way of expressing one's faith. This is why the symbol of salt is recurrent in flying African stories, as Monica Schuler analyses it in *Drums & Shadows*.

Flying African stories, orally transmitted from generation to generation, provided the means to bypass the official version of history and the dominant culture. The symbol of the flying African reveals a power of imagination and a creative drive on the African Americans' part. It also permits transcendence of the absence of representation and the denial of orality in the cultural landscape. Eventually, the symbol of the flying African came to illustrate the widely significant theme of a return to the roots, as in, for instance, the case of "Flying Home" by Ralph W. Ellison, who titled his short story after the famous jazz piece by Lionel Hampton. In this story, Ellison provides the reader with a transposition of the myth of flying Africans by confronting its signification with the themes of the color line, forbidden social ascension, and the perilous denial of one's roots.

The flying African stories present a mimetic transposition of the search for transcendence. They also evoke the theme of disappearance as a contrapuntal answer to bondage and earthly suffering.

See also: Africanisms; Ebo Landing; Gullah; Transmigration

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## Frazier, E. Franklin

Dr. Edward Franklin Frazier (1894-1962), a black sociologist and educator, became one of the principal voices in the Africanisms debate, which included such notable scholars as Melville Herskovits, Lorenzo Dow Turner, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Born in Maryland at the height of the black nadir, Frazier graduated from Baltimore's Colored High School in 1912 and attended Howard University to study Latin, Greek, German, and mathematics. After graduating from Howard, he taught throughout the South until 1919, when he enrolled in graduate school at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Frazier earned a master's degree in sociology and became a research fellow at the New York School of Social Work in 1920. In 1922, he began a two-year teaching stint at Morehouse College before serving as the director of the Atlanta School of Social Work until 1927. After earning a PhD in sociology at the University of Chicago in 1931, Frazier taught at Fisk University for three years. In 1934, he became chair of Howard University's sociology department, a position he held until his retirement in 1959.

Author of more than 10 books and dozens of journal articles, Frazier contributed to a number of scholarly debates and was widely recognized as the leading authority on the black family in America. His distinguished career led to a number of achievements. Frazier earned a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1940; he became the first black president of the American Sociological Association (ASA) in 1948; and for his lifetime contributions to the field of sociology, Frazier was a recipient of the ASA's MacIver Award. Despite the universal acclaim for his contributions, Frazier was not averse to controversy and took a number of unpopular stances throughout his long career. While an instructor at Morehouse College, Frazier published an article titled "The Pathology of Race Prejudice," which associated racism with mental illness. Although this conclusion has become accepted by many social scientists, in 1927, it cost Frazier his teaching position at Morehouse and was one of the factors that prompted his move to Chicago.

Perhaps the most significant controversy Frazier was involved in was the so-called Africanisms debate and his long-standing rivalry with anthropologist Melville Herskovits. The opening salvo in the debate was launched in 1939 with the publication of Frazier's *The Negro Family in the United States*. Championing what became known as the



“catastrophist school,” Frazier argued that slavery had effectively destroyed the black family, and this reality facilitated the “Americanization” of slaves and the complete annihilation of African culture in the United States. Even after the publication of Herskovits’ monumental *The Myth of the Negro Past* two years later, Frazier refused to waiver in his contention that African culture had largely disappeared in North America.

In a 1949 work titled *The Negro in the United States*, Frazier dedicated the first chapter to attacking Herskovits’s thesis that the African contributions to African American culture were substantial. Although Frazier, for the first time, acknowledged the presence of certain Africanisms, he also contended that the significance of African heritage had been diminished by conditions in American society. It is important to note that Frazier was likely responding to the social environment around him more than to the particulars of his ongoing debate with Herskovits. He was born in the midst of the black nadir, when African Americans had to face the brutal combination of legally sanctioned segregation, political disenfranchisement, unprecedented levels of racial violence, and an anti-black propaganda campaign in the media. In this hostile climate, any claims that African Americans were somehow different from whites would further justify their debased treatment. Even as late as the 1960s, in *The Negro Church in America*, published posthumously in 1963, Frazier would continue the Africanisms debate. Although he made important contributions in a number of areas, it is now clear that Frazier was wrong when he claimed that enslaved Africans in North America were completely stripped of their cultural heritage.

See also: Africanisms; Family Patterns; Herskovits, Melville; Turner, Lorenzo Dow

Walter C. Rucker

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## Full Immersion Baptism

Full immersion baptism is an initiation rite into the Christian church. Theologians have hypothesized that immersion baptism is a derivative of Jewish ritual washings, whereby the participant bathed in collected rainwater to perform personal ritual purification. The significance of this is that the tub contained flowing water that possessed qualities that sustain life. Likewise, for enslaved Africans, theologians have theorized that immersion baptism could have evinced distinctive memories of God and the significance and sacredness of water to them. Hence, many African Americans joined denominations such as the Methodists and Baptists that practiced baptism in this manner. Because Jesus himself modeled this mode of baptism, Christians practice full immersion baptism as a means of identifying with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Black liberation theologians have concluded that because Jesus identified with the poor and oppressed, and African Americans have historically been disenfranchised and oppressed, immersion baptism not only symbolizes freedom and purification from sin but also signifies one’s affirmation of his or her human worth, dignity, and willingness to submerge oneself in the black church’s commitment to continuing Christ’s mission of liberation from an unjust and immoral world, in addition to affirming an anticipation of future redemption by Christ. Consequently, participants in this mode of baptism are usually young adults or adults who have the capacity to consent to the decrees and mandates of the church.

See also: Slave Culture; Slave Religion

Pearl Bates

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## Goofer Dust

Goofer dust, also known as grave dirt, is earth taken from graves for use by practitioners of the African American

spiritual practice known as hoodoo. The term “goofer” may have evolved from the Kikongo word *kufwa*, meaning “to die.” Grave dirt has been popular since at least antebellum days, and users have employed it for diverse purposes, ranging from winning love to killing enemies. Its power comes from the spirit of the person from whose burial place it is taken. Thus, the choice of graves could be very important. For instance, hoodoo practitioners often seek plots filled with the remains of beloved family members when their object is obtaining protection from evil. On the other hand, if one wants to harm an enemy, the graves of the wicked are preferable. Most collect the dirt in rituals that culminate in payments of small change to the spirits of the deceased.

By the 20th century, goofer dust did not always literally come from graves. Some unethical hoodoo supply manufacturers have obtained soil from more convenient sources or substituted colored minerals for grave dirt. In other cases, goofer dust has developed into a compound of multiple ingredients. According to one modern hoodoo manual, goofer dust is a mixture that should incorporate graveyard dirt, sulphur, powdered snails, snake skins, and powdered herbs.

*See also:* Africanisms; Grave Dirt; Hoodoo; New York Conspiracy of 1741; Slave Culture

Jeffrey Elton Anderson

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## Grave Decorations

African Americans have a unique tradition of gravesite decoration, most often found in rural Southern cemeteries, in which family and friends leave personal objects belonging to the dead for their subsequent use in the spirit world. These “grave goods” may include cups and saucers, candy dishes, pitchers, medicine bottles, figurines, clocks, lanterns,

automobile parts, and bed frames. Graves are sometimes ornamented with seashells and outlined with bottles driven neck-down into the earth. Dishes and medicine bottles, in particular, are often selected as grave decorations because they were the items used by the deceased during their last illness, and they must be cracked so that the spirit of the vessel is released to serve its owner in the next world.

Such practices have an African origin. The Kongo people of Central Africa, a great many of whom were imported to North America as slaves, placed metal cooking pots, crockery, and glass bottles on graves to ensure that the spirit would not return in search of these necessary items. Earth from a grave was often an ingredient in Kongo *nkisi* charms, as were white objects, representing the “white realm of the dead,” and seashells, which symbolize the water from whence the spirits came and to which they will return. Just as Africans sought spiritual aid from the ancestors, African Americans use the cemetery and the spirits of the dead for supernatural power.

Researchers such as author Zora Neale Hurston, the independent folklorist Harry Middleton Hyatt, and fieldworkers for the Federal Writers’ Project documented such practices in the late 1920s through early 1940s. They found a wide variety of graveyard customs in the Upper South and Atlantic coastal regions in particular: graveyard dirt and bits of bone were incorporated into magical charms; an image of the intended target of the charm or a bottle containing his or her bodily products might be buried in the cemetery; a silver dime or a handful of rice was left to pay the dead for their assistance. In New Orleans, where most interments are in above-ground tombs, the spirits of the dead were solicited by leaving cooked food, fruit, candies, flowers, whiskey, and coins; by burning a candle; and by drawing a cross mark (the “Kongo cosmogram”) on the tomb of persons believed to possess great spiritual power. From the late 19th century until the present, the tomb of Voodoo priestess Marie Laveau and a wall vault in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2, also associated with Laveau, have been the recipients of offerings and cross marks.

*See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Hurston, Zora Neale; Kongo Cosmogram; Laveau, Marie; Slave Culture

Carolyn Morrow Long

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## Grave Dirt

Also known as goofer dust, grave dirt was the most powerful ingredient in the arsenal of African American conjurers. In combination with blood, animal parts, plant matter, and other items, graveyard dirt was included in charms, counter-charms, and remedies. It was also a prominent ingredient in oathing ceremonies throughout the African Diaspora. With origins among multiple Atlantic African groups, the significance of so-called goofer dust in African American spiritual beliefs is connected to their reverence for ancestors. The belief that the world of the living is connected to that of the dead is found among a number of African cultural groups brought to North America during the era of the Atlantic slave trade.

Graveyard dirt was used in a range of spells and charms created by African American conjurers. Many believed that rubbing goofer dust on their limbs, combining it with other items and wearing it in a bag around the neck, or burying clumps of graveyard dirt around their homes could be effective methods of warding off harmful conjuration. In the example of a love-charm, graveyard dirt was combined with one quart of vinegar, one quart of rainwater, and nine iron nails. After this mixture was boiled and then cooled for nine days, it was combined with more vinegar and rainwater, bottled and corked for nine days, and sprinkled in the target's yard. Supposedly the target would be amenable to a marriage proposal on the 10th day.

In another example, a "trick bag" could be prepared by combining the ashes of a jaybird's wing, a squirrel's jaw,

a rattlesnake's fang, and the dirt from the grave of a criminal. Once this concoction was mixed with a "pig-eating" sow and made into a cake, three feathers from a crowing hen were added, along with the hair of the person employing the charm. After all of these preparations, everything would be placed in a cat-skin bag and buried under the house of the intended victim. The trick bag would cause disease, bad luck, and sorrow. In similar fashion, harmful conjure bags used in coastal Georgia often contained grave dirt, sulphur, and the hair of the victim and were believed to cause insanity.

Another use for grave dirt was as an oathing ingredient. A number of conspiracies, particularly those involving Akan-speaking slaves from the Gold Coast, involved the consumption of an "oath drink," which typically included human blood, rum, and grave dirt. Because of the idea that ancestral spirits were an active force in the affairs of the living, imbibing an oath drink created an unbreakable bond between the ancestral spirits and the living. Examples of this use of graveyard dirt abound in the British, Danish, and Dutch Caribbean. In North America, Akan-speaking slaves inspired by loyalty oaths were involved in both the 1712 New York City revolt and the 1741 New York City conspiracy.

Although applications varied, there were certain beliefs regarding the power of graveyard dirt that were almost universal. The majority of charms contained goofer dust as an ingredient, perhaps because of the belief that gravesites contained the spiritual essence of the deceased. Among African American spiritualists, there was seeming consensus that angry spirits increased the strength of harmful charms. Thus, hoodoo doctors in New Orleans believed that dirt from the grave of a sinner or a murder victim was the most effective component to add to harmful spells or charms. Likewise, goofer dust from an infant's grave was extremely potent. Dirt from the grave of a sinner, a murdered person, or an infant were said to be the only ingredients that could make a charm powerful enough to kill.

See also: Africanisms, Black Folk Culture; Goofer Dust

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## Gullah

"Gullah" refers to the culture, language, and inhabitants of the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida, where economic and social isolation bred a unique Creole culture and society. In Georgia, Gullah people are sometimes referred to as the Geechee, a name derived from the nearby Ogeechee River.

The history of the Gullah people began with the large-scale migration of West Indian planters to the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in the 17th and 18th centuries. Relocating en masse, with their newly enslaved Africans and seasoned slaves, planters reestablished absentee plantations, where interactions between blacks and whites were limited. As early as the first decade of the 17th century, slaves and free black people outnumbered whites in the region; and by the 19th century, the number of slaves inhabiting the islands had grown to 80 percent of the local population and over 95 percent in rural pockets along the coast. Plantation agriculture—particularly cultivation of indigo, rice, and long-staple cotton—contributed to the increase in the number of slaves. In 1860, the average Sea Island plantation had two hundred bondsmen and women residing on plantations of 90,000–100,000 slaves. The unusually large numbers of Africans and African Americans in the region played a central role in the development of the Gullah culture and language.

This black majority combined with other factors, such as the relative isolation of the Sea Islands, to foster the development of Gullah culture and language. The Sea Islands, which consist of several hundred low, flat isles that hug the South Carolina and Georgia coast, range in size from the small and uninhabitable to larger islands located off the coast of urban centers, such as Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. Well into the 19th century, the islands had limited contact with the mainland, creating a cultural hot spot for the various peoples that gathered there. The coastal isolation of the islands also facilitated the continued importation of illegally imported Africans, who were sold to Sea Island planters as late as 1858. When folklorists

surveyed residents as part of the 1930s Works Progress Administration (WPA) Georgia Writers' Project, native Africans and other former slaves were still alive to share folkways passed down from recent African ancestors.

The Gullah people's contact with Africans reinforced beliefs and practices passed down centuries before; however, dramatic events of the 19th century also contributed to the development of Gullah culture. Immediately following the American Civil War, many whites abandoned their Sea Island plantations, leaving large numbers of slaves and freedmen with unregulated access to land. Precipitated by the arrival of Union troops and Northern aid workers, the islands became a testing ground for postwar programs that sought to integrate freedmen into free society. As white flight to the mainland further isolated the islands, inland blacks seeking land brought language and culture from the outside to the region. Although some whites regained rights to their land after the war, the experiences of wartime land ownership helped limit the effects of black out-migration after emancipation. The Gullah language consists of a mixture of English and African grammar and vocabulary. Scholars are divided as to the origins of the word; some trace "Gullah" to the Gola people of present-day Sierra Leone, and others to the Central African republic of Angola. Whatever its origins, the Gullah language represents a blend of European, Caribbean, and African elements acquired during three centuries of Atlantic trade. Contrary to the beliefs of 19th-century Whites, Gullah is not a simplified version of English, but a complex blend of English and several African languages. It is distinct from African American Vernacular English and Standard English, and in it linguists have identified elements of African languages, including Ewe, Hausa, Igbo, Kikongo, Mende, and Yoruba. Scholars have also identified similarities between Gullah and Krio, a West African English-based Creole language spoken in present-day Sierra Leone.

Gullah consists of several regional dialects and is generally unintelligible to English speakers. Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, abolitionist and author of *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, was among the many Northerners who remarked on the unique grammatical cadence and vocabulary of the Gullah people during and immediately after the Civil War. Higginson cited a "spicy" and "head-over-heels" arrangement of pronouns in speeches and songs such as "Ride in, Kind Saviour." He noted that renditions of the song's final stanza vacillated between "we" and "me." By

forming plurals and negations differently than in English, Gullah retained grammatical elements of African dialects that facilitated communication between speakers of various African languages.

Pronoun tenses and numbers are equally fluid in Gullah. According to Reed Smith, one early observer of the language, the following Gullah phrase—“Uh yeddy ’um but ’uh ent shum”—could be translated into English in over a dozen ways: “I (hear/heard) (it/her/him/them) but I (didn’t/don’t) see (it/her/him/them).” By distinguishing between actions that were continual and those that were momentary, rather than specifying the relative time of an action per English custom, Gullah retained grammatical rules similar to the Ewe, Yoruba, and other African linguistic groups.

In addition to grammatical variations, African vocabulary also differentiates Gullah from English. Documentation of Gullah speech from the mid-20th century, when decreolization was already underway, uncovered thousands of words with African origins, such as “goober” (peanut) and “kuta” or “cooter” (turtle), which were gradually adopted into English usage. In 1949, anthropologist and Gullah scholar Lorenzo Dow Turner documented 4,000 African words, including several hundred African names used frequently by Gullah speakers.

The use of non-African phrases, shortened over time, also characterizes the language and demonstrates how efforts to communicate shaped Gullah speech. According to another early scholar of Gullah, Mason Crum, terms such as “tebl tapa,” or “preacher,” derived from the descriptive phrase “one who taps on the table.” Similarly, “swit maout,” or “to flatter,” came from the phrase “to sweet mouth.”

Elements of nonverbal communication among the Gullah were also rooted in African patterns. A common Gullah gesture of averting one’s gaze by turning the head with pursed lips is reminiscent of a similar gesture from the Kongo. Other Gullah signs, unique to individual genders, share qualities common to various African cultures.

Gullah culture closely followed the pattern of language, borrowing heavily from African folkways. Anthropologists and folklorists have identified strong ties to African folk beliefs regarding family organization, religious practice, work patterns, and artistic expression. Gullah slaves in rice-producing regions of the coast, for example, worked rice fields in an African manner, using African-style baskets and fans to process the commodity. They also used

baskets to carry goods in a style reminiscent of African peddlers and produced coiled pottery and household items identical to those produced in West Africa. With respect to religion, the Gullah, who are primarily Christian, also incorporated elements of African song and dance into religious practices, such as the “ring shout.” In the Gullah’s understanding of magic, conjuring, and mysticism, Gullah practices were similarly derived from African and Afro-Caribbean rituals.

Despite continued isolation in the decades following the Civil War, by the 1920s and 1930s, anthropologists and folklorists recognized the potential impacts of economic and social transformation on the Gullah. In recent years, these transformations—particularly the influx of tourists in the region—have led to the gradual decline of Gullah ways. Today, less than 25,000 Gullah speakers remain in Lowcountry enclaves, and 10,000 outside of the region, primarily in the New York City area. Yet, even as the number of Gullah ebb, their lasting impact on culture and history of the region is clear. Their language and culture provide a rare window into the transplantation and recreation of African folkways among peoples of African descent in the Americas.

*See also:* Black English; Pritchard, Gullah Jack; Ring Shout; Sierra Leone; Slave Culture; Sweetgrass Baskets; Task System; Turner, Lorenzo Dow

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## Gumbo

The hearty stew known as gumbo is considered a hallmark of New Orleans cuisine and is also quite popular in the Gulf Coast region of the United States. Gumbo can be attributed to Spanish, English, German, Italian, French, Native American, West Indian, and African cultural and culinary influences that converged as a result of waves of European settlement of the American South, the transatlantic slave trade, and intermarriage.

The word “gumbo” or “gombo” is of West African origin, ascribed to the Bantu word for okra and “kombo,” the word for sassafras leaf used by the Choctaw, Chetimache, and Houma Indians who once populated southern Louisiana in great numbers. Okra was transported to the New World along with African slaves; sassafras was native to the coastal regions of the American South and introduced to settlers by the Native Americans. Both ingredients function as thickening agents within the dish; okra is added during the cooking process, whereas gumbo filé (ground sassafras leaves) is sprinkled on top of a dish after it has been prepared and is ready to be served.

There are an infinite number of recipes and varieties of gumbos: seafood, wild game, chicken, and andouille sausage are a few of the more popular varieties. The stew is alternately attributed to Cajun and Creole culinary traditions. Gumbos traverse the two cuisines and rely on the availability of local ingredients as well as the innovative spirit, skill, taste preferences, and historical memory of the cook. Although there are few hard and fast rules about gumbos, most gumbos are accompanied by rice and do include some variation of the following basic ingredients: Roux, a classical French technique and base for thickening soups and stews, roux is comprised of a mixture of equal parts flour and fat (usually butter, lard, or oil). It is constantly stirred and cooked over medium heat until it reaches the desired color (light, medium, or dark) and the raw taste of the flour is cooked off. Stock or broth, usually chicken or seafood, to which the roux is added; and trinity, a combination of equal parts diced bell pepper, onion, and celery that provides a flavor base.

Acadian or Cajun gumbos are arguably the more rustic of the two schools of cookery. Cajuns, the descendants of exiled French refugees from Nova Scotia, Canada, began to settle in the swamps and bayous of southern Louisiana during the mid-18th century. Native Americans introduced them to much of the wild game and vegetation of their habitat, and German settlers passed along sausage-making and curing techniques that Cajuns adapted to make culinary staples such as andouille and boudin sausages and tasso ham. Cajun gumbos are generally characterized as having a darker roux and a tendency to use gumbo filé instead of okra.

Creole culinary traditions originated in the kitchens of New Orleans’ elite owner classes during the early 1700s, where meals were expertly prepared by Creole housewives and African slave-cooks. As adaptations of classical Spanish, Italian, and French recipes (such as *bouillabaisse*), Creole gumbos are indebted to German butchery and sausage-making techniques as well as to West Indian, Native American, and African produce and cooking methods. Lighter roux and the use of okra are sometimes characteristic of (but not exclusive to) Creole gumbos.

Contemporary Creole cookery is especially indebted to African Americans, the descendants of enslaved Africans who continue to refine and develop the cuisine. Gumbo Zhèbes, a stew of fresh spring greens seasoned with salt pork or ham, is also attributed to Creole cooks.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Jambalaya

Lori Baptista

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## Herskovits, Melville

Melville Jean Herskovits (1895–1963) was an anthropologist and folklorist noted for constructing a model of

acculturation and cultural development in examining the absence or presence of African culture in contemporary African American life. Herskovits, one of two children, was born in Bellefontaine, Ohio, to Herman and Henrietta Hart Herskovits on September 10, 1895. His father, a merchant, emigrated from Austria-Hungary in 1872, and his mother emigrated from Germany in 1882. After his mother's death in 1941, he and his family moved to Erie, Pennsylvania, where he graduated from high school in 1912.

Herskovits studied concurrently at University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College in 1915, but his studies were interrupted by 15 months of service in World War I. In 1919, he was discharged from the U.S. Army Medical Corps; prior to returning to the United States, he studied at the University of Poitiers in France. His education continued in the United States at the University of Chicago, where he received a PhD in history in 1920. Subsequently, at Columbia University, Herskovits transitioned from history to anthropology. Franz Boaz served as his academic advisor, and in 1921, he received an MA, completing a PhD in 1923 in anthropology; his dissertation was titled "The Cattle Complex in East Africa." While in New York, Herskovits's social theories were influenced by A. A. Goldenweiser and Thorstein Veblen at the New School for Social Research, in addition to Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and his future wife, Frances Shapiro, whom he later married in 1924.

In 1923, Herskovits received a three-year research fellowship from the National Research Council Board of Biological Sciences to conduct research on the "New World Negro." While researching the physical anthropology of African Americans for the fellowship, he simultaneously taught at Columbia, from 1923 to 1927; however, in 1925, he worked at Howard University as assistant professor in anthropology, at which time he became acquainted with Alain Locke, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, and Sterling Brown. In 1927, he moved to Northwestern University as an assistant professor in sociology. Initially, he was the only anthropologist at Northwestern; he later established an anthropology department, of which he became chair in 1938. He contributed to the study of African Americans by establishing the first African American program in 1948 and was appointed chair in 1961. Later he formed the African Studies Association and became its first president.

Herskovits's scholarship was advanced through several field trips to Suriname, Nigeria, Haiti, Trinidad, Benin,

Ghana, and Brazil to conduct ethnographic studies of African diasporic civilization and evaluate African traits remaining in these cultures. The 1928 and 1929 fieldtrips to Suriname resulted into two publications coauthored with Frances Herskovits: *Rebel Destiny* (1934) and *Suriname Folk Lore* (1936). His fieldtrip to West Africa resulted in the publication of *An Outline of Dahomean Religious Belief and Dahomey: An Ancient West African Kingdom*.

In the mid 1920s, Herskovits initially followed Boaz's theory that there was an absence in the continuity of Africa's past to contemporary African Americans' lives. After his ethnographic study of African cultures, Herskovits argued that African cultural elements remained in New World African descendants throughout the Diaspora. Furthermore, his research focused on the acculturation and the process associated with cultural changes. By examining "Africanisms," he created cultural categories for Africans and Europeans to explore metaphors that could substantiate their cultural formation. Herskovits's classic thesis in *Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) postulates that Europeans tried to destroy African historical contributions to the formation of culture globally, and African cultural traits were retained in the African American culture; moreover, these traits were acculturated into Anglo-Americans as well. Herskovits linked African American linguistics, music, dance, folklore, folk medicine, and funeral practices to African cultures as evidence in his thesis. In addition, Herskovits argued that African traits were more common in Brazil and the Caribbean because of their relative isolation from Europeans; similarly, the inhabitants of the coastal islands of Georgia and South Carolina retain the highest African traits in the United States. Consequently, Herskovits was noted for his argument on ethical relativism in politics; he maintained that there was no objective order of justice and that what is moral in one culture may not be moral in another; therefore, Herskovits questions legitimating one culture and invalidating another culture.

During his long academic career, he held numerous offices and memberships, including the following professional affiliations and positions: editor of *The American Anthropologist* (1949–1952) and *The International Directory of Anthropologist* (1950), vice president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1934), president of the American Folklore Society (1945), and membership on

the permanent council of the International Anthropology Congress. Herskovits's works include *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), in which he traces African American roots to West Africa to examine racial myths; *The Economic Life of Primitive People* (1940), an anthropological study of primitive culture's economics; and *Man and His Works* (1948), a survey that was descriptive and theoretical in examining cultural anthropology. Three of Herskovits's last books, *Continuity and Change in African Culture* (1959), *Economic Transition in Africa* (1964), and *The Human Factor in Changing Africa* (1962), reflect both the rapid development of Africa's place in the world and the increased academic interest in African studies.

See also: Acculturation; Africanisms; Frazier, E. Franklin; Locke, Alain; Turner, Lorenzo Dow

T. Alys Jordan

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## High John the Conqueror Root

High John the Conqueror is a spirit-embodying root popular among practitioners of African American conjure and hoodoo. It is employed for protection from enemies and malevolent spirits, for luck in gambling and money matters, to obtain a favorable outcome in court cases, and for success with women. The root is carried in the pocket and rubbed when needed; "fed" or "dressed" with various substances; boiled to make baths and floor wash; soaked in whiskey, oils, and perfumes for an anointing substance; or incorporated into the charm packets called mojo bags and lucky hands.

Conjurers and hoodoo doctors harvested High John the Conqueror root in the wild until the mid-20th century. The large, twisted or swollen tubers, rhizomes, or taproots of Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum odoratum*), beth root (*Trillium*), or some species of wild morning glory (*Ipomoea*), all native to the

southeastern United States, may originally have served as John the Conqueror. Present-day spiritual supply stores offer a morning-glory relative, Mexican jalap root (*Ipomoea jalapa*), as High John the Conqueror. St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) has been cited by some writers as the source of High John the Conqueror, but its branching, fibrous root system in no way resembles the original John the Conqueror root.

In many West and Central African belief systems, every natural object is believed to have an indwelling spirit that can be summoned to the aid of human beings. The name "High John the Conqueror" suggests that a potent personality inhabits this magical root. High John has been equated with Funza, the Central African Kongo spirit of power and masculinity embodied in twisted, swollen, phallus-shaped roots. High John may also have West African Fon and Yoruba antecedents. In his role as a protector against human enemies, authority figures, and malevolent spirits, he resembles Gu, the warrior spirit of iron and warfare. His function as a bringer of luck in gambling, business, and money matters relates him to Eshu, the trickster spirit who governs chance and the crossroads. In his role as a "conqueror" of women, he is related to Shangó, the handsome and virile spirit of thunder and lightning.

Zora Neale Hurston associated the indwelling spirit of High John the Conqueror root with the African American slave trickster hero Old John, a man of great strength and cunning. Stories of Old John and his adversary Old Marster constitute a cycle of folk narratives that parallel the better-known tales of Brer Rabbit. Other folklore texts assert that the character of High John is synonymous with St. John the Baptist, the biblical character who baptized Jesus, preached in the wilderness, and conquered Satan.

The prototype for High John the Conqueror could also have been a historic person, possibly a powerful hoodoo doctor who became associated in the minds of believers with this African spirit. The word "high" connotes authority, strength, and potency, and in coastal Maryland and Virginia, a conjurer was called a "high man."

In all of these possible aspects, High John the Conqueror personifies a strong, dark, virile, masculine spirit who protects his devotees and brings them success, wealth, and luck. He represents the resiliency and empowerment of black people in surviving slavery and its aftermath of poverty and racism.



See also: Black Folk Culture; Conjure; Hoodoo; Hurston, Zora Neale; Root Doctors

Carolyn Morrow Long

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## Hoodoo

Hoodoo, also known as conjure, tricking, goofer, and root-work, is a spiritual system long practiced by some African Americans, particularly in the South. Adepts—known as hoodoo doctors, conjurers, trick doctors, goofer doctors, and root doctors—told fortunes, healed illnesses, performed spells, and made charms for paying clients. Conjure originated during the colonial era as a Creole adaptation of African spirituality. By the 19th century, it had developed into a rich syncretistic practice that incorporated African, European, and Native American beliefs. Hoodoo continues to survive today in the form of spiritual supply stores.

Conjure did not evolve from any single African forebear. Instead, it combined practices of many ethnicities, including the Yoruba, Fon, and Kongo. Moreover, hoodoo differed depending on the area examined. For example, along the banks of the Mississippi River, the original French colonists imported many West Africans from the Fon, Yoruba, and neighboring peoples during the early 18th and 19th centuries. In consequence, West African influences predominated in the hoodoo of the area until well into the 20th century. On the other hand, English settlers along the Atlantic Coast preferred slaves from West-Central Africa, importing large numbers from the Kongo and related groups but comparatively few West Africans. Thus, the elements of conjure in areas originally peopled by Anglo settlers tended to be West-Central African in origin.

Regional distinctions are clear in the words used for African American magic in each area. In the region settled by the French, "hoodoo" was originally the word used by

blacks to represent what whites called Voodoo. Both "hoodoo" and "Voodoo" appear to have derived from the Fon and Ewe word *vodu*, meaning "god" or "worship of the gods." In the areas settled by the English, particularly the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia, a favored term was "goofer," a word that appears to be of Kongo derivation. Eventually, "hoodoo" would come into general use to represent all African American magic, most likely because of its popularization as a result of late 19th-century media attention to New Orleans-area Voodoo. "Goofer," in contrast, would largely disappear from common usage by the mid-20th century.

Another major distinction between the regions settled by the French and English was that hoodoo survived as a religion longer in the former. Until the late 19th century, for instance, New Orleans Voodoo/Hoodoo was a full-fledged religion, complete with a pantheon of West African gods, a priesthood, and ritual worship and initiations. Over time, the religious elements of hoodoo fell away or were forcibly suppressed by whites. But according to some observers, including Zora Neale Hurston and employees of the Federal Writers' Project, many black Americans remembered the names of African deities until at least the 1930s. Initiation ceremonies also persisted until about the same time. In the English area, however, almost all the communal rituals and deities that survived the Middle Passage had disappeared before the Civil War.

In both regions, European and Native American beliefs mingled freely with the African practices on which conjure was originally based. Perhaps the best examples of this syncretism come from Louisiana hoodoo. In New Orleans, altars, images of saints, and candles made their way into the magic of African Americans by at least the early 19th century. Also, although many blacks practiced Creole faiths and worshipped such beings as Blanc Dani, the serpent god, and Monsieur Assonquer, deity of good fortune, they were likely to consider themselves good Christians. This dual belief system reportedly extended even to hoodoo priests and priestesses. Marie Laveau, the most famous of all Voodoo leaders, was reputedly a devout Catholic. In places where the dominant form of Christianity was of a Protestant variety, conjurers commonly used Bibles in their performance of spells and making of charms, and many practitioners also served as ministers. Native Americans' chief contributions took the form of herbal curios. One example was puccoon root, which some African Americans

believed conferred good luck on those who possessed it. Native Americans originally used it as a ritual paint.

Hoodoo has survived to the present. A smattering of practitioners who gather herbs and roots continue to serve clients in rural areas. More notable, however, has been the rise of conjure shops, also known as spiritual supply stores, which first appeared in the decades following Emancipation. By the 1930s and 1940s, such shops were common in urban areas. Instead of herbal curios, their shelves were filled with oils, incenses, bath crystals, and later, magical aerosol sprays. Along with the consumer-oriented conjure stores, large manufacturers and distributors of hoodoo supplies appeared, which provided most of the products that appeared in the shops and frequently conducted direct-to-consumer mail-order businesses. Spiritual supply shops and large manufacturers remain a part of many African American communities today.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Conjure; Hurston, Zora Neale; Laveau, Marie; Root Doctors

Jeffrey Elton Anderson

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## Hurston, Zora Neale

Zora Neale Hurston (ca. 1901–1960), scholar and novelist, was a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance whose writing career moved comfortably between the linguistically rich black vernacular of her Southern upbringing and the scholarly tone of her anthropological training at the prestigious Barnard College. A folklorist and creative writer, Hurston was born in Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated all-black town in America. She was the fifth of eight children born to John Hurston, a mulatto from Macon County,

Alabama, and Lucy Ann Potts, a schoolteacher. Hurston's writing was heavily influenced by her historical and cultural circumstances, with Eatonville and the tales of local storytellers often taking prominence in her texts. Hurston once said that she had the "map of Dixie" on her tongue, a trademark implicit throughout much of her literary works.

During her youth, Hurston's father served three terms as mayor of Eatonville and was a Baptist minister and carpenter. The death of her mother when she was nine marked a turning point that redirected her life and that forced Hurston to find a means of supporting herself when her father remarried a woman who did not like her. She landed a job working for a singer who was touring the South in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, with a Gilbert and Sullivan repertory company. While working for the touring group, Hurston was teased mercilessly about her Southern accent. When her employer 'Miss M-' got married, Hurston began working her way through school by sheer determination. First, she attended high school at nights in Baltimore, studying English with Dwight O. W. Holmes. She then attended Morgan for two years before transferring to Howard University (1919–1923). While at Howard, Hurston participated in The Stylus, a literary society that published her first short story, "John Redding Goes to Sea," in 1921. Hurston was beginning to discover the literary potential of a cultural milieu and the artistry of the folk idiom that would launch a remarkable career as a creative writer. Hurston's association with The Stylus, whose membership included professor and editor of the revolutionary *New Negro* Alain Leroy Locke, garnered an invitation to contribute to *Opportunity Magazine*, a new publication that she credited as "the root" of the Harlem Renaissance.

In early 1925, Hurston moved to New York City, where she met Charles S. Johnson, editor of *Opportunity*, who published her story "Drenched in Light." In 1925 and 1926, Hurston submitted the short story "Spunk" and the play "Color Struck" to *Opportunity*, and both won prizes. Through Johnson, Hurston met many black writers and reconnected with the former Morgan dean, William Pickens, who worked for the NAACP. By November 1926, Hurston was an editor, along with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman, of the short-lived magazine *Fire!!*

After arriving in New York, Hurston quickly secured a job as secretary to writer Fannie Hurst and garnered a scholarship to Barnard College through the efforts of Annie Nathan Meyer. Hurston entered the prestigious university

as the only black student in the fall of 1925. While at Barnard, Hurston studied anthropology under the guidance of famed anthropologist Dr. Franz Boas, who arranged, upon her graduation in 1928, for a fellowship to collect Negro folklore in the South. Supported by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, this initial trip left little to show for her efforts. However, in future trips, Hurston developed into a more mature and thoughtful scholar who gained success in her ventures and was able to discover the literary potential in celebrating the culture that had birthed her.

Support for additional research trips came to Hurston through Mrs. Rufus Osgood Mason, a patron of the arts (called “Godmother” by black artists Mason supported financially) who provided a stipend of \$200 a month for two years and additional sporadic support for five years. It was also during this time that Hurston met the first of her two husbands, Herbert Sheen, whom she married on May 19, 1927. Although they did not divorce until July 7,

1931, Hurston’s relationship with Sheen ended in early 1928. Her second marriage to Albert Price III, who was 23 years old when they married in June 1939 in Fernandina, Florida, was short-lived also. Divorce papers were filed in early 1940, and after a brief reconciliation, the divorce was finalized on November 9, 1943. There has been speculation that both marriages ended as a result of her fierce independence and commitment to her career.

The 1930s were Hurston’s most prolific and productive years as a writer, although much of her writing received mixed reviews. Many of her major works were published during this decade, including *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* (1934), *Mules and Men* (1935), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (1938), and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939). Hurston possessed an exuberant personality, which she was able to bring to bear in her writing. She often elected to write in a narrative style that combined the scientific voice of her formal training with a voice of a writer who had no qualms about taking creative license with the stories of her informants. Some critics frowned on this practice, finding it difficult to ascertain where Hurston’s creative writing stopped and the authentic lore began.

Hurston’s writing embodies storytelling as a distinct cultural marker of the communities she describes. While carrying on the traditions of orality, Hurston skillfully translates spoken communication into the written medium of literature. Performing stories through written texts is ultimately Hurston’s genius. Hurston was able to set down on paper the performed behaviors she observed while moving between the role of insider (subject) and outsider (one who objectifies). Hurston adopted a storytelling strategy to mimic the very folklore she sought to articulate for a mass audience by positioning herself as an insider and product of the environment she researched. Hurston’s choices were rebuffed by many of her fellow contemporaries of the Renaissance, who also sometimes accused Hurston of maintaining a sense of ambiguity and silence when confronting issues of race and politics. She often elected to focus on individual potentiality, while avoiding the larger problems of race that many of her contemporaries were dedicated to exposing.

Hurston traveled extensively, negotiating territory between Florida, New Orleans, and the Caribbean as she set about the work of collecting tales, jokes, dances, and music on front porches and in jook joints as both participant and observer. She was awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships



Zora Neale Hurston, renowned scholar and author, was a celebrated figure of the Harlem Renaissance (Library of Congress)

that assisted in her efforts to document black folklore. Hurston published a collection of folktales in 1931, "Hoodoo in America," in the *Journal of American Folklore*, and subsequently in 1935 repeated some of the same material in the book *Mules and Men*. Written in two parts, *Mules and Men* is a narrative of Hurston's journey back home to Eatonville to collect folklore and is a compilation of tall tales, songs, sermons, and stories that both Hurston and her informants call "lies"; part 2 of the book is both a travelogue and the first scholarly treatment by a black American scholar of New Orleans hoodoo culture. Hurston's journey into hoodoo involved undergoing five separate initiations by religious practitioners and included study with a supposed relative of New Orleans' most famous practitioner, Marie Laveau. In *Mules and Men* and *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (published in England under the name *Voodoo Gods*), Hurston links American and Caribbean practices and treats voodoo as a complex, old religion, worthy of spiritual possibilities and serious study and respect.

In 1930, Hurston collaborated with her friend Langston Hughes on a three-act play, which was not produced or published in their lifetimes because of what Hughes would label as a falling-out. *Mules Bone*, a comedy adapted from Hurston's collected folktale "The Bone of Contention," was written in hopes of portraying black characters in a spirited and favorable light. However, after contentious arguing over rights to the play, the longtime friendship between Hurston and Hughes dissolved, and the drama was largely forgotten until 1991, when the Lincoln Center Theatre in New York staged the play.

Hurston was drawn to the theater at various points in her life as a writer, director, and performer. On January 10, 1932, with borrowed money, she mounted a show at the John Golden Theatre consisting of the work songs, blues, and spirituals collected during her fieldwork. Although she went on to produce additional versions of this show under various names throughout her career, Hurston is not remembered as much for her dramatic texts as she is for her novels, short stories, and magazine and newspaper articles.

The short story "The Gilded Six-Bits" was published in *Story Magazine* in August 1933. Shortly thereafter, Hurston, who was living in Florida at the time, was approached by the J. B. Lippincott Company about whether she had a book-length project. This inquiry prompted Hurston to move to Sanford, where she wrote *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (1934) over a three-month period. Lippincott subsequently

bought the manuscript and paid Hurston a \$200 advance. This book marked a breakthrough for Hurston, and she went on to write the important American novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) in Haiti over the course of seven weeks. Today, this work is seen as depicting an early feminist protagonist, Janie Crawford. The central character experiences several love relationships, including a most passionate love affair with Tea Cake, only to see the affair dissolve under tragic circumstances. In the end, it becomes a story about Janie's journey and discovery of "self." Oprah Winfrey produced *Their Eyes Were Watching God* for television in 2005. Starring Halle Berry as Janie Crawford, the novel was adapted by Suzan-Lori Parks, the first African American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

After a period of prolific writing, Hurston spent her final years in Florida, where she worked as a librarian, newspaper freelancer, substitute teacher, and maid. In the literary world, she all but vanished into obscurity during her later life. Publishers rejected her final attempt at a full-length project based on the life of the biblical Herod. By early 1959, Hurston, already suffering from high blood pressure, gall bladder attacks, an ulcer, and malnutrition, had a stroke. In October of that year, Hurston was moved from her home at 1734 School Court Street in St. Pierce, Florida, to Saint Lucie County Welfare Home, where she died on January 28, 1960. Hurston was buried in an unmarked grave in the segregated Garden of the Heavenly Rest Cemetery in St. Pierce. In 1973, writer Alice Walker traveled to Florida and placed a gravestone on her burial site that reads, "Zora Neale Hurston, A Genius of the South, Novelist, Folklorist, Anthropologist, 1901-1960." In all, Hurston published seven full-length books and over 75 short stories, plays, and articles and wrote numerous pieces of unpublished materials.

See also: Black Folk Culture; Harlem Renaissance; Hoodoo; Hughes, Langston; New Negro Movement

Jayetta Slawson

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## Hush Harbors

Often referred to as invisible institutions or underground religions, hush harbors acted as critical locations where enslaved individuals would come together in secret to practice Christianity, sing spirituals, and worship with one another. Hush harbors took place not only in slave quarters, but also in wooded areas, swamps, ravines, and other remote places thought to be outside of a master's gaze or the hearing range of nearby slave owners. Believers were called to participate through specific signals and passwords—encoded messages reminiscent of the layered meanings that could be found in some of the songs of freedom that they sung—with iron pots, kettles, and wet rags sometimes used to muffle their voices and protect their secrecy. These clandestine spaces allowed for and encouraged the development of religious spirituals and the growth of black preachers long before many African Americans were able to widely practice religion freely in the United States.

Taking part in communal forms of worship was prohibited for most antebellum American slaves, and doing so meant possibly being whipped, beaten, sold, or subjected to another form of harsh punishment, including death. Nonetheless, many risked these potential consequences so that they could gather in a place that would offer them hope, healing, and a sense of spiritual and personal connection within an institution that attempted to deny them all that and more. To many of those enslaved, hush harbors served as havens of community and as necessary, if not subversive, spaces of resistance and refuge.

See also: Slave Culture; Slave Religion

Amanda J. Davis

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## Infanticide

Infanticide is the practice of killing one's own child, a form of resistance employed by enslaved women to prevent their children from being enslaved. Having experienced multiple forms of oppression in the institution of slavery, because of their race and sex, enslaved women engaged in many forms of resistance to combat the harsh realities of slavery. Specifically, there are several methods of resistance that enslaved women utilized to combat sexual abuse and to prevent unwanted pregnancies that often resulted from unwanted sexual interactions with their masters. These methods included abstinence, abortions, various means of birth control, and infanticide.

Much contention has surfaced around infanticide and the reason a mother would kill her child. However, infanticide was an intentional act performed by enslaved women for many reasons. More specifically, a woman performed infanticide to prevent her child from experiencing the harsh realities of slavery—physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

In the case of slavery in the United States, a slave did not own his or her body. Rather, enslaved women and men were considered to be the property of their master. In the case of a child born to a slave woman, the child inherited the status of his or her mother; therefore, the child too was a slave and belonged to the master, not the mother. Hence, given that the master owned the child, he had the liberty to sell the child from the mother or vice versa; he also had the freedom to treat the child in any manner that he deemed appropriate. However, in any case, the status of a child as the master's property was not readily accepted by enslaved women. Ownership of a child resulted in tensions and a constant power struggle between the enslaved women and their masters.

Infanticide was used as a mechanism for enslaved women to negotiate their power and to maintain a certain amount of autonomy over the trajectory and realities of their own lives and the lives of their children. The constant threat of potentially having a child sold from her or vice versa fueled infanticide; therefore, to avoid separation,

women utilized their power to prevent separation. A mother displayed and reclaimed ownership over her child by exhibiting her ability to bring it into and out of the world through infanticide. The most famous example of this behavior was displayed by Margaret Garner, a fugitive slave who killed her daughter rather than have her returned to bondage. In cases where the master fathered a child with a slave woman, she would kill the child so that the child would avoid being mistreated by the jealous mistress.

Moreover, infanticide was practiced to avoid other forms of sexual exploitation; specifically, infanticide was conducted as a means to control reproduction on plantations. Many masters promoted and encouraged pregnancies among their enslaved women to increase their holdings of slaves. Reproduction among slaves meant that slaves' levels of productivity would increase, and consequently, the plantation's monetary returns, effectiveness, and efficiency would too increase, without the master having to invest in purchasing additional slaves. Hence, enslaved women were viewed as economic profits for their masters because of their ability to reproduce more slaves.

From the perspective of white masters, the death of a child a result of carelessness on the mother's behalf. In one instance, a master attributed the death of an infant to recklessness on the part of his or her mother. Another master claimed that during the winter months, enslaved women had the tendency to smother or roll over onto their child in the effort to keep the child warm; and in other cases, white men attributed the death of a child to the idea that enslaved women neglected maternal feelings. Some masters, however, noticed that levels of reproduction were relatively low among their enslaved women, and they attributed this to intentional forms of abortion. In any case, regardless of how people perceived enslaved women and their relationships with their children, enslaved women loved their children. This love was depicted in a mother's willingness to lose her child rather than have the child under the constant gaze of the master and raised in the institution of slavery. A slave woman was known to have said that she would rather turn her child over to the hands of God than to her white master.

Infanticide was masked in various ways, and multiple persons participated in such acts. Infanticide was covered by a legitimate or fabricated illness that a child was said to have had; it was also disguised by poisoning, smothering, or strangulation. Moreover, women, men, and midwives participated in covering up infanticide. Midwives, for example,

made significant contributions to abortions and other ways for a pregnant woman to conceal or terminate her pregnancy and end the life of her born child. Furthermore, husbands and wives were known to have participated in killing their children and then themselves.

Regardless, not all mothers committed infanticide or intentionally terminated their pregnancy or the life of their young child. In fact, accounts of infanticide were relatively low. Recent scholarship and technology, for example, has revealed that many infants may have succumbed to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)—a syndrome among infants that causes them to mysteriously die in their sleep.

Infanticide was practiced among enslaved women for a number of reasons; regardless of the reason, however, enslaved women engaged in such conspiracies with the child's interests in mind. Given that these women were living in the unrelenting institution of slavery, they knew the heartbreak and abuse that their children would encounter if raised in such an institution.

*See also:* Garner, Margaret; Slave Resistance

Ashley C. Bowden

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## Jambalaya

Jambalaya is a rice-based dish that emerged during the 18th century in modern-day Louisiana. The dish normally consists of chicken, ham, hot sausage, shrimp, green peppers, onions, garlic, tomatoes, celery, and numerous spices, although there are many variations. The base of the dish is always rice, and the rice is cooked with the ingredients, not added to them as in many other rice-based dishes. There are two major variations of the dish, Creole jambalaya or red jambalaya and Cajun jambalaya or brown jambalaya. The differentiation in color comes from the variant methods used in cooking the dish.

There is debate over the word “jambalaya” and its origins. Some believe that the word comes from the combination of “jambon,” meaning ham in French; “a la,” meaning “in the style of”; and “ya,” which some believe to be a West African word for rice. Others believe it may be a combination of “jambon” and “paella,” which is a Spanish dish that also has rice as its base. The dish has become well known, and variations of it are present in the Caribbean and Brazil.

Louisiana was originally a colony that survived off of convict labor and the labor of enslaved Native Americans, from its establishment in 1682. The first enslaved Africans were not brought to Louisiana until 1719, and upon their arrival, they were sent immediately to purchase rice to plant. A large percentage of the enslaved Africans brought to Louisiana from this point on came from the Senegambia region of West Africa, which is part of the rice belt of West Africa. These persons played a large part in the development of the culture of the area, including the food culture.

The enslaved Africans had immense knowledge of rice-planting techniques. African technology in planting and cultivating rice is what allowed areas such as Louisiana and South Carolina to not only survive but even flourish. The technology provided by the enslaved Africans was used to transform dismal swamplands into areas appropriate for the cultivation of rice. Europeans generally had no rice cultivation skills and therefore had to rely solely on the enslaved Africans to support them with their expertise in this area.

Another influence from African cultures was the seasoning of the jambalaya. The seasoning generally has a bite to it or is spicy in a way that has been noted to be West African in nature. This lending of cultural food traits was seen in foods eaten by both the enslaved and their European enslavers, given that the enslaved women cooked for the whites. Many of the ingredients in jambalaya may not have been easily accessible for the enslaved themselves. Dishes such as jambalaya were cooked for the slave owners, and because of this, African culinary skills became interwoven in the defining of a food culture in the Americas.

*See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Gumbo

*Dawn Miles*

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## Jas

The precursor of the word “jazz” was the shortened, staccato-pronounced “jas,” commonly used in the New Orleans, southern Louisiana, region where the music first evolved. Many scholars, jazz musicians, and critics have speculated about the origins of the word “jazz” and its meaning. Significations have variously come down as “hot,” “lively,” “to spice up,” “flashy,” “to copulate,” “vulgar,” “devil music.” The word seems to have taken on as many connotations as its improvisational modes. Generally, “jas” was believed to be a slang word that had no formal linguistic ties with English or African languages. However, like many slang words whose origins have been traced back to an African language, “jas,” according to Black English expert Dr. Geneva Smitherman, is a word of Mandenka origin that means “to speed up,” “to act out of the ordinary,” or “unpredictable behavior.” The word also has Arabic language roots meaning “to break” or “to cut.”

For decades and for reasons understandable, given the spurious appropriation and designation of jazz as an amalgamated American music, jazz musicians often renounced the term as an ambiguous word loaded with stereotypic nuances and argued instead for explanatory terminologies that make references to its ethnic origins. Duke Ellington decried “jazz,” a word he mistrusted, and called his music “freedom of expression.” Yusef Lateef preferred “auto-physio-psychic music.” Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman referred to their art as “Black classical music,” and the Art Ensemble of Chicago called it simply “Great Black Music.”

No single word has concisely been substituted for the word “jazz,” and no matter how much musicians and critics try to extricate the word from that great musical genre,

the term seems to stick. In African cosmology, language possesses numinous qualities, and a word is perceived as a living entity that naturally attaches itself to the object or idea it signifies. Perhaps it is for this reason that the word “jazz,” like living seeds, thrives and persists. The meaning of “jas” is a succinct explication of the improvisational nature and style of the music. It is spontaneous and unpredictably improvised with unexpected breaks and cuts—that is to say it is syncopated. “Jas” or “jazz,” therefore, denotes improvisation and syncopation in the Mandenka/Mandingo language. Furthermore, according to Louisianan writer George Washington Cable, who wrote about the activities of 19th-century ethnic groups of New Orleans, *jas* was a style of singing used by Mandenka lead singers when they broke away from the base melodic line of a song and then improvised around the melody, a technique later simulated by jazz soloists. The lead singers of the Mandenka and the jazz singers and soloists “break up” the original melody and extemporaneously compose a new arrangement using the same notes. The same technique was employed in work songs and spirituals, and before the evolution of jazz, “jas” was associated with slave songs and dances. “Jas,” then, is an African word and aesthetic technique describing the structural elements of what became known as jazz.

See also: Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Jazz

Nubia Kai

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## Jazz

Described as “America’s classical music,” jazz is the first indigenously developed musical expression of America.

The origin of the word “jazz” is as conjectural and conflicting as its birthplace. Although some theories suggest jazz as a result of the changing name of the early Mississippi drummer Charles, others claim its descent from the French word *jaser*, meaning “to speed up, to stimulate,” vaguely signifying sexual copulation.

Developed by the black Americans, jazz is a unique synthesis of the best elements from European and West African musical heritage and the African American forms of ragtime, minstrelsy, and the blues. But what differentiates jazz from its cultural predecessors is the widespread use of complex rhythms and improvisation. Jazz improvisation refers to an artist’s creative response to a repertoire of songs mostly drawn from blues, jazz tunes, or entirely new melodies. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Houston A. Baker Jr., in *The Signifying Monkey: Towards A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism and Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature*, identify improvisation as fundamental to African storytelling and signifying traditions. Closely related to the call-and-response of African expressive cultures, jazz improvisations are based on chord progressions and the piano scales that correspond to the piano chords. The New Orleans cornetist Charles “Buddy” Bolden is considered the first improvising jazz musician. Syncopated rhythms (rhythms with offbeat accents), call-and-response patterns, harmonic structures, and kinetic orality are other invariable features of jazz music. A typical jazz orchestra employs trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and piano, though no instrument is foreign to jazz today.

Even though there are many conflicting theories, there is a general consensus about the preeminent role of the New Orleans, particularly Storyville, between 1890 and 1910 in the growth and development of jazz music. During this period, Joe “King” Oliver and his star trumpeter disciple Louis Armstrong, taking cues from earlier masters, refined and enlarged jazz music. In 1923, King Oliver’s orchestra became the first African American band to record for a major label. The other key architects of this formative period were Jelly Roll Morton, Freddie Keppard, Bunk Johnson, and Clarence Williams. With the fall of Storyville, the Red Light district of New Orleans, during the World War I, jazz migrated to Chicago and New York, developing new musical idioms there.

The late 1920s and 1930s saw an unprecedented growth of jazz music and can be seen as a progressive phase of black popular music. Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot



Seven, blues singers such as Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, and Besie Smith, and the big musical bands of Duke Ellington, together with the rise of new electronic mass media (phonographs, jukeboxes, and radio) and jazz clubs, consolidated and brought jazz to greater visibility and immense popularity. Dominated by the big bands (constituting of 12 to 16 members), the 1930s witnessed an invigorating and boisterous variety of jazz called swing. Used mostly for dancing, swing, though less complex than the later forms of jazz, expanded the rhythmic patterns of ragtime and emphasized strong rhythmic section. Bandleaders such as Benny Goodman (“The King of Swing”), Count Basie, Benny Carter, Earl Hines, Artie Shaw, Chick Webb, and Charlie Barnet and the famous black swing bands the Savoy Sultans (Count Basie’s band), the Chick Webb band, and the Jay McShann band upheld and popularized swing tradition. It was during this time that Billie Holiday (“Lady Day”), with her husky and buoyant voice, impressed the jazz lovers, later on becoming one of the prominent figures in the history of jazz. Beyond its genuine expression of the experiential realities of black life, jazz and its variants increasingly became a vital cultural and social force of this period. It is this all-pervasiveness of jazz in the early decades of the 20th century that provoked F. Scott Fitzgerald to christen the twenties as “the Jazz Age” (also referred to as “the Roaring Twenties”). Today the expression refers to the years between the end of World War I (1918) and the Stock Market crash (1929) and is related to the Harlem Renaissance.

The Great Crash (1929) and general worsening of American condition, together with the closure of many jazz clubs, dramatically declined the appreciation of jazz music. The big bands of the swing era eventually gave way to an acerbic and fiery style of jazz called bebop (shortened form “bop”). Performed primarily in small groups, bebop captivated audiences with its rhythmic intricacies and long melodies and through an emphasis on new musical idioms. Though this progressivistic desire of bebop met with fiery criticism from the purists of jazz music, who favored a revival of Dixieland jazz, it was bebop with its exacting repertoire of music that elevated jazz into classical status. The trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, the alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, and pianists Thelonius Monk and Bud Powell—along with swing-era artists, notably the tenor saxophonist Lester Young and the trumpeter Roy Eldridge—were instrumental in developing this dialect. Other practitioners include Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, J. J. Johnson, Kenny

Clarke, Max Roach, and Charles Mingus; but it was Charlie Parker (nicknamed “Yardbird” or “Bird”), with his dazzling musicianship and astounding technical virtuosity, who basked in the limelight.

The postwar era saw the rise of two new styles: cool jazz and hard bop. Blending the scored principles of swing and rhythmic progress of bebop, cool jazz was mute, light, and sometimes emotionally detached. Influenced by Stravinsky and Debussy, cool jazz disdained innovations in favor of closeted solo style and subtle rhythms. The trumpeter Miles Davis and the pianist John Lewis were of paramount importance in influencing the harmonic and rhythmic direction of bop. The first cool jazz album was by a nonet (or nine-piece) group led by Miles Davis and came to be known as “The Birth of the Cool.” The ensembles of cool jazz, besides involving typical jazz instruments, also experimented with new musical instruments such as baritone saxophone, flugelhorn, and French horn. Furthermore, modal music (the unchanging harmony played over a period of time) developed and popularized by Miles Davis eventually paved way for the fusion of jazz with rock music, referred to as jazz-rock.

If cool jazz revealed the unusual melodic aspect of jazz music, hard bop diverged from the funkier side of it. In fact, hard bop, with its emphasis on phrases and rhythms, can be described as an extension of bebop and the opposite of cool jazz. With an unmistakable influence of gospel and blues music, predominantly in the persons of Horace Silver and Donald Byrd, the hard bop was characterized by aggressive and explosive music. Particularly, this strand of jazz refracted the black experience in eastern cities, including New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit. Such diversity led to the development of such classic songs as Clifford Brown’s “Joy Spring,” Benny Golson’s “Blues March,” and Cannonball Adderley’s “Work Song.” The hard bop artists Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, and Philly Jo Jones, among others, were quite successful. But what dominated the attention of the black audience in this era was a danceable style of jazz called rhythm and blues (R&B) and its later version, rock and roll. Effervescent black saxophonist Louis Jordan was the chief architect of rhythm and blues, and the white Southerner Elvis Presley, with his sophisticated dance steps and strong dose of country and gospel music, was the most influential performer of rock and roll. Other important black rock and roll musicians include Ray Charles, Chuck Berry, and Clyde McPhatter.

After the 1950s, informed by black radicalism and cultural nationalism, jazz became a significant component of the Civil Rights movement. Inaugurated by such warriors as John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, this decade particularly witnessed the dissonance within and between solos and chaotic group improvisations, giving momentum to the “protest” aspect of jazz music. Although there were many major performers, such as Jimi Hendrix, Wilson Pickett, Curtis Mayfield, and Curtis Redding, it was John Coltrane echoing the utter disillusionment and affluent optimism of the era who captivated the audience. Ornette Coleman’s “Free Jazz” and John Coltrane’s “Ascension” set the tone of the decade. In addition, the rise of the women’s liberation movement and feminism in the late 1960s benefited women bands and veteran performers such as Mary Lou Williams, Melba Liston, and Betty Carter.

Fusion, pluralism, and fragmentation characterized the later jazz. If the 1970s saw significant cross-cultural influences and the use of sophisticated instrumental pop mixes resulting in the birth of new styles of jazz music, the post-1980s witnessed a revival of interest in traditional jazz music and big-band style in Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, and Woody Herman. Today, jazz thrives in the form of post-bop, retro swing, neobop, rap, gangsta rap, and smooth jazz. The contemporary performers, unlike the past masters, are trained artists and utilize the strengths of the electronic medium. However, the bulk of mass media (movies, television) and popular culture, the splintering of jazz into many styles, avant-garde self-indulgence, and entrenched racism robbed the relevance and urgency of jazz over the years.

Interestingly, jazz as an aesthetic model did not remain solely in the domain of music but influenced virtually all the national culture, such as photography (William Claxton, Roy DeCarava), film (*The Jazz Singer*, *Blues in the Night*), classical music (Aaron Copland), and painting (Romare Bearden, Jackson Pollack, Stuart Davis). Most notably, with its spontaneity and deep spiritualism, jazz has always fascinated black American authors, leading to its features being meaningfully syncretized as a dominant interest of the narrative. Some of the prominent literary texts that tap the metaphoric strength and multifacetedness of jazz include Langston Hughes’s poem “Jazzonia,” from his 1926 collection of poems *The Weary Blues*; James Baldwin’s *Sonny’s Blues* (1957); and James Weldon Johnson’s novella *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912). Deeply influenced by jazz musicians such as John

Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, Amiri Baraka’s poems perhaps would be the closest verbal translation of jazz music. Most recently, Ishmael Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) and Toni Morrison’s *Jazz* (1993) utilize the codes of jazz music with felicity. Morrison’s *Jazz* in particular not only capitalizes on the term “jazz” to explore the ethos of the Harlem period, which provides the setting of the novel, but also profits from its presumed sexual origins. Furthermore, improvisation and call-and-response patterns of jazz music are brought to bear on the text in order to delineate the contingency of identity and the sensual nature of the characters in the novel. Even Morrison’s recent novel *Love* (2003) references the stupendous jazz players of the previous century, such as Joe “King” Oliver and Thomas “Fats” Waller. Louis Armstrong’s *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* (1954), Sidney Bechet’s *Treat It Gentle* (1960), and Charles Mingus’s *Beneath the Undergo* (1971) are some influential jazz autobiographies, among others. Jazz festivals (New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival), jazz studies departments, and formal academic courses, as well as numerous sociological and anthropological treatises, all indisputably testify to the centrality of jazz in the American cultural terrain.

Through addressing realities and shaping perceptions, jazz remains one of the greatest expressive cultures and social forces of America. Furthermore, through its dedicated articulation of the anxieties, attitudes, chaos, and optimism of American society, jazz remains, as Paquito D’Rivera explained, a way to view life. To say this is to insist on indescribable and interpretative challenges offered by jazz, which compels one to agree with Louis Armstrong’s definition: “If you gotta ask, you’ll never know.”

See also: Africanisms; Armstrong, Louis; Bebop; Black Folk Culture; Coltrane, John; Davis, Miles; Jas; Ragtime

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## John the Slave Tales

John the Slave Tales or John Tales are a type of African American folklore that focuses on the enslaved trickster character, John. In these stories John, also named “High John” or “Jack,” frequently outsmarts and humiliates his oppressor, Ole Master, and sometimes his fellow laborers. Although John’s acquisition for food, clothing, and leisure time are highlighted in the tales, a common theme is his ability, sometimes unintentional, to outwit his oppressor. In some instances, John is successful in his efforts and overcomes punishment, whereas in others, he is not portrayed as the victor and instead suffers the wrath of Ole Master. The varying achievements of John in these stories represent a more realistic representation of the experience of slavery for African Americans than animal trickster tales. Although scholars are uncertain of the origin of these stories, they believe that enslaved Africans told John the Slave Tales among themselves for entertainment.

Whereas the characters in animal stories pursued material acquisitions, John the Slave Tales focused more on John’s sometimes-unknowing ability to defy white superiority. One such story recounts John telling Ole Master that he could tell fortunes. Ole Master told another man, who, in disbelief, bet his entire plantation that John was lying. In preparation, the man got a raccoon and put it in a box. The next morning, John and Ole Master came to the man’s plantation. John, who was lying about his ability to tell fortunes, slowly conceded and reluctantly stated, “Well, white folks, you got the old coon at last.” Even though he was referring to himself, everyone cheered and claimed that John could tell fortunes. After the spectacle, John told Ole Master that he would never tell fortunes again, and Ole Master did not care because John had made him a rich man.

John also often embarrasses Ole Master in front of his counterparts. For example, one day, Ole Master claimed to a traveler that John had never lied to him in his life. The man bet Ole Master 100 dollars to 50 cents that he could

catch John in a lie. The next day after breakfast, the traveler instructed Ole Master to put a live mouse in a covered dish on the breakfast table and tell John that he could eat any leftovers on the table but not to open the dish. After the men returned, Ole Master asked John if he had obeyed his orders, and John swore he had. The traveler then uncovered the dish, but the mouse was gone. He then boasted to Ole Master that John was lying to him all the time. Ole Master was proven wrong and undoubtedly humiliated in front of the stranger.

African American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, in particular, refers to him as “High John the Conqueror,” an African prince and root doctor enslaved in the Americas. Hurston was among the first to record John Tales in 1927 from rural black interviewees in Alabama and Florida.

John the Slave Tales provided enslaved Africans with pride, humor, and ideas about how to resist slavery. The tales are a significant part of African American folklore, and John remains a celebrated hero among African Americans. *See also:* Black Folk Culture; Hurston, Zora Neale; Slave Culture

Zawadi I. Barskile

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## Joplin, Scott

Scott Joplin (1868–1917) was born in Texas, the son of Florence Givens and Giles Joplin, during the period in American history when the peculiar institution of slavery was being dismantled, with the resultant violence against African Americans during this period being pervasive.

Through his parents, a young Scott Joplin learned the importance of possessing a strong work ethic, as well as a formal education. The condition of African American lives during the Reconstruction period necessitated that the African American rise above the imposed illiteracy and other forms of subjugation in order to preserve the

African American self. Scott Joplin learned to embrace African American traditions of dress, body language, and speech—he was also exposed to traditional African American folk music. Folk music born out of a legacy of oppression and spiritual maintenance within the United States of America and beyond would be embraced, melded, and developed into a unique African American musical art form called ragtime.

During the 1870s and 1880s, Scott Joplin attended school and learned to read and write while residing in Texarkana, Texas. His mother, Florence, was a domestic servant who worked for an employer who owned a piano. It was at the home of the W. G. Cook family that Scott Joplin was introduced to the piano. Scott Joplin developed his aptitudes and soon thereafter attracted the attention of a German music teacher, who offered Joplin training in the reading and composing of music. It was during this period that Joplin was introduced to some of the important compositions of classic European musicians.

Joplin played at churches, bars, homes, fairs, and any other venue. As an African American male, he managed to cultivate his intellectual and musical aptitudes in a period of rife with violence and hostility against African Americans. He was able to cultivate his aptitudes across racial, class, and ethnic lines during this period.

Exactly when Scott Joplin left Texarkana, Texas, is uncertain, but he turned up in Missouri in 1890. It is assumed that during the 8 to 10 years prior, Joplin traveled the South, playing his music for all to hear. A continuous student of traditional African American folk music, or “coon songs,” Scott had begun to compose and play an up-tempo, heavily syncopated musical form that would be named ragtime.

The Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, Illinois, marked the emergence of Scott Joplin as the “King of Ragtime.” It was at the Exposition that Scott Joplin and his contemporaries began critically writing ragtime sheet music, offering their compositions to the masses. As an “unofficial” musician at this exposition, Scott Joplin introduced the non-African American attendees to the world of ragtime’s richly textured music. The exposition also gave Scott Joplin an opportunity to hear the works of some of the best contemporaries of his time and to forge friendships with such important musicians as Otis Saunders.

Scott Joplin formed a band in 1893 and toured with Otis Saunders for years afterward. Saunders encouraged Joplin to further nurture his ability to compose music.

Joplin’s ragtime music was heavily syncopated and complex, quite contrary to prevailing musical compositions of the time.

By 1894, Scott Joplin was residing in Sedalia, Missouri. He played his music in spheres and establishments of all sorts in order to earn a living, all the while continuing to compose his own music. In 1897, while living in Sedalia, Scott Joplin composed the most important ragtime tune, or “rag,” of all time, the “Maple Leaf Rag”—some say with the assistance of Otis Saunders. The song was named after the Maple Leaf Club, where Scott Joplin usually entertained with his compositions and piano play. While composing and playing at the Maple Leaf Club, among others, Joplin enrolled in the Smith School of Music, a division of the George R. Smith College for Colored People. He never forgot the importance of a formal education.

While playing the “Maple Leaf Rag” one day at its namesake club, Scott Joplin was heard by music publisher John Stark. The two men formed a publishing partnership, and in 1899, “Maple Leaf Rag” was published through a publishing house. Over the next century, its sales and



*Musician Scott Joplin was known as the King of Ragtime. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)*

popularity would secure the legacy of Scott Joplin and lend credence to ragtime as a unique, African American musical complexity. The inherent complexities of Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" made it an intellectualized statement of African American musical ingenuity and sociopolitical assertiveness. The popularity of this tune afforded its composer recognition well beyond the local walls of Sedalia, Missouri.

From 1885 to 1916, Scott Joplin would continue to compose, and sparingly play, "rags." From 1911 to 1916, he worked on opera composition. During these years, he also taught music and continued to influence his contemporaries; Joplin launched the careers of several other musicians, who then expanded on the social discourse between African American music and the collective consciousness of all Americans. Scott Joplin's music echoed the chants of social, political, and economic justice.

Joplin infused the American musical lexicon with complex musical compositions born out of the experiences of field hands, house servants, and other indigenous African people from all parts of the world. He died in New York in 1917; in 1976, he was awarded a special posthumous Pulitzer Prize. Ragtime music continues to persist as both an art form and an intellectual and musical curiosity—mainly because of the legacy of Scott Joplin.

*See also:* Ragtime

Bruce Ormond Grant

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## Juba Dance

Juba is a dance popularized by enslaved Africans in the American South, though examples of it or its cognate forms were witnessed in the Dutch Guiana and the British Caribbean during the 19th century. Like so many expressive forms created in slave communities throughout the Americas, the

Juba was a multidimensional concept involving a dance, a type of song and group singing, a rhythmic "patting" of body parts in emulation of musical instruments, and a method of competitive banter. In a typical demonstration, a circle of performers—engaged in singing, creating improvised rhymes, dancing, and bodily patting—would form around two dancers who would engage in semi-competitive dance play. The circle of dancers would sometimes move counterclockwise while the two Juba dancers inside the circle would turn counterclockwise with one leg raised, engage in stomping and thigh slapping, and perform a variety of dance steps popular on Southern plantations, including the Pigeon Wing, the Long Dog Scratch, Blow the Candle Out, and the Yaller Cat, among many others.

Because of the multiple references and connections to counterclockwise circularity, the Juba dance is often linked to the Kongo cosmogram, the ring shout, and even Brazilian Capoeira. As such, the origin of this form might be found among enslaved West-Central Africans who made up the majority of those brought to North America via the Atlantic slave trade. Though the origins of this form may not be clear, it is quite certain that from the various Juba circles formed in the plantation South during the 19th century sprang highly popular dances and dance styles such as the Charleston, hambone, Black Greek step-dancing, and tap dancing.

*See also:* Angolan/Kongoese; Black Folk Culture; Kongo Cosmogram; Ring Shout; West-Central Africa

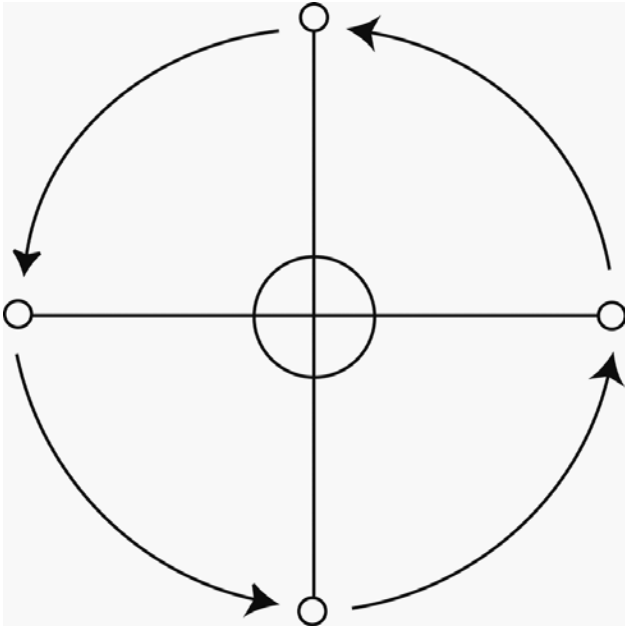
Walter C. Rucker

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## Kongo Cosmogram

The Kongo cosmogram (*Yowa*) is a ritual symbol that represents the Kongo sign of the cosmos and the continuity of human life. Although its design is similar to the Greek cross (+), the Kongo cosmogram does not symbolize the



*Kongo cosmogram*

crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The BaKongo (Kongolese persons) believe that the continuity of life is circular. The horizontal bar of the cosmogram represents the divide between the mountain of the living world and the world of the dead. The BaKongo believe that these two worlds are counterparts, where the mountain of the living is called “earth” (*ntoto*) and the mountain of the dead is called “white clay” (*mpemba*).

The four disks at the points of the cross stand for the “four moments of the sun,” and the continuity of the circumference represents the certainty of reincarnation. The vertical ends signal the summits of each world. The north point symbolizes noon, maleness, and the peak of a person’s strength on earth. The south point represents midnight, femaleness, and the peak of a person’s strength in the world of the dead. BaKongo believe that the righteous person will never be destroyed but will continue to return to earth in the name or body of progeny, or as water, a stone, or a mountain.

The cosmogram is a symbol of crossroads and is used in various spiritual ceremonies. The point of intersection symbolizes the passage and communication between the world of the living and the world of the dead. When drawn on the ground, the cosmogram is used as a ritual space for oath-taking. When taking an oath, a person stands on the cross, situating him or herself between both worlds, and invokes the powers of both. Cosmograms were also used

when reading the soul of a person or in rituals that invoked the dead. The various purposes of the Kongo cross reflect the many ways in which it can be drawn. The form the cross takes depends on who draws it and what type of ceremony it will be used for. The designs are sometimes elaborate and include arrowheads at the ends of the four points and designs within the quadrants. The more simple designs have four points at the tips connected by a line representing a counterclockwise motion.

For Kongo priests, drawing the cosmogram is only a part of ritual ceremonies. Singing or chanting in Ki-Kongo (a Kongo language) is another integral part. The BaKongo believe that drawing the cosmogram and singing join together to bring God’s power to the designated spot. These practices and rituals can be found among different groups throughout the African Diaspora.

In places such as the Southern United States, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Brazil, where enslaved Kongolese were taken, cosmograms were found painted on walls and engraved in bowls. In the U.S. South, some of these bowls were found at the bottoms of rivers and date back to the 18th century. Many scholars believe that the Kongo cosmogram’s ubiquity suggests that African captives retained their African beliefs in the New World.

*See also:* Flying African Tales; Juba Dance; Kongo Kingdom; Ring Shout; Transmigration

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## **Kwanzaa**

Kwanzaa is a Pan-African holiday started in the United States in 1966 during the midst of African struggles for equality and liberation worldwide. The holiday is a cultural celebration of African beliefs and values celebrated annually from December 26 through January 1. Patterned

after African harvest festivals, Kwanzaa gets its name from the Swahili phrase “matunda ya kwanza” or “first fruits.” Though the holiday was begun in the United States during the Black Power movement, it is based on communitarian value systems practiced in Africa for thousands of years and therefore available to all descendants of Africans, regardless of where they live. As part of a larger Kawaida cultural theory, Kwanzaa is usually celebrated by people of African ancestry who are interested in reclaiming and reconstructing their cultural heritage.

Kwanzaa was started by Maulana Karenga through the US Organization and is based on five fundamental activities performed by its practitioners: (1) ingathering of the people, (2) reverence for the creator and creation, (3) commemoration of the past, (4) recommitment to the highest cultural ideas, and (5) celebration of the good. The cultural holiday is not religious and can be celebrated by Africans regardless of religious affiliation.

At its core, Kwanzaa is based on a matrix of seven governing principles that are meant to help Africans build up and reinforce the African culture and worldview. Collectively known as the Nguzo Saba, the seven principles were selected for their recurrence in communitarian African societies, their relevance to the African American struggle for equality, the cultural and spiritual importance of the number seven in African cosmology, and the manageability of this number in learning and teaching the principles. Created as an Afrocentric value system, the Nguzo Saba is also regarded as contributing to the building up and reinforcing of family within the Pan-African community. The seven principles of Kwanzaa are as follows:

*Umoja* (unity): Umoja is the first principle; it is considered foundational in the celebration of Kwanzaa because without it, the remaining six principles suffer.

*Kujichagulia* (self-determination): Succinctly, *kujichagulia* expresses the importance of self-definition and the right of a people to define and develop themselves outside of external influences.

*Ujima* (collective work and responsibility): This third principle emphasizes the need for all Africans to work together on issues affecting the entire collective. As defined by Karenga, this principle regards “African” as more than an identity; it is also a duty and a responsibility.

*Ujamaa* (cooperative economics): This principle of the Nguzo Saba stresses the relevance of shared wealth and social responsibility and is based on communitarian values.

*Nia* (purpose): As the fifth principle of Kwanzaa, *Nia* is a commitment to the understanding that Africans are a people whose legacy has contributed to the world as it is known today and thereby links Africans to a specific cultural and historical identity.

*Kuumba* (creativity): The sixth principle of the Nguzo Saba is based on African spiritual beliefs that view creativity as an imitation of the original act of the Creator. As a principle of Kwanzaa, *Kuumba* addresses the responsibility of Africans in making the community more beautiful than the previous generation had.

*Imani* (faith): The final principle of the Nguzo Saba is to remind Africans that they are capable of victory.

During the week of December 26 through January 1, celebrants meditate on one of the Nguzo Saba principles each day. The family usually gathers at some time during the day to discuss the principle, recommit to its basic value, and practice *tambiko*, or the pouring of libation from the *kikombe cha umoja*, or unity cup. During this gathering, the family congregates in a space decorated according to Kwanzaa practice.

In a central location in the family home or community institution, a *mkeka* (or straw mat) is placed to symbolize the cultural and historical foundation on which Kwanzaa is based. On top of this *mkeka* are placed *mazao* (the crops) that symbolize the rewards of collective labor; the *kinara* (candleholder) symbolizing the roots of African people found on the African continent; the *muhindi* (ears of corn) to symbolize the children; the *mishumaa saba* (seven candles) to symbolize the seven principles of Kwanzaa; the *kikombe cha umoja* (unity cup) to symbolize unity; *zawadi* (gifts) to symbolize the reciprocal relationships between parents, through labor and love, and their children, through their commitments made and kept; and occasionally the *bendera* (flag) to symbolize the struggle (red), people (black), and the future (green).

Once everyone has gathered, it is common for one to ask “*Habari gani?*” or “What is the news?” A one-word response is given according to the principle of the day, for example, “*umoja.*” Each day, candles are lit to commemorate the value of the day. Each candle in the *kinara* represents a single principle. The center candle is black and represents the people. This is the first candle lit during the celebration and symbolizes the principle of *umoja*, or unity. To the left of this candle are three red candles symbolizing the principles *kujichagulia*, *ujamaa*, and *kuumba*. To the right of

the black candle are three green candles symbolizing the principles *ujima*, *nia*, and *imani*. The black candle is always lit first to illustrate the understanding that the people come first. Candles are then lit left to right to show that the people come first, followed by the struggle, but that from the struggle comes hope.

During the Kwanzaa celebration, if gifts are exchanged, they are usually given to children. Included in these *zawadi* (gifts) are always a book and some symbol of the child's cultural heritage. Commercialization of Kwanzaa is a concern for many of its practitioners, and for that reason many *zawadi* are handmade to avoid corporate exploitation of the holiday. The final day of celebration, January 1, is reserved for somber reflection and assessment of the preceding principles and the work of the individual in the coming year. Kwanzaa's emphasis here is on recommitment to the restoration of African culture and sovereignty globally.

See also: Afrocentricity; Black Power; Karenga, Maulana; US Organization

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## Laveau, Marie

Marie Laveau (1801–1881), generally referred to as a “Voodoo queen,” was a leading figure in New Orleans throughout much of the 19th century. In part because mystical self-representation was key to Laveau's life, in part because she seems to have been illiterate, and in part because rumors continue to swirl around her memory (her tomb remains a popular New Orleans tourist stop), many of the details of her biography remain confused or unknown, including the spelling of her name, which is often spelled either “Laveau” or “Leveaux.” During the late 19th century, Laveau and her family, for example, regularly listed her age in the 90s—suggesting a birth date in the 1780s. Her father, Charles

Laveau[x], is sometimes listed as white—even though he was much more likely of mixed race. Some accounts indicate that her mother, Marguerite D'Arcantel, was also a *voodooienne*, though very little is known about her. Several other women used Laveau's name—including at least one of her daughters—and their exploits are sometimes collapsed into the Marie legend.

Recent scholars, though, have found baptismal records (as well as an August 1819 marriage record documenting Laveau's brief marriage to Jacques Paris) that mark her birth as a free Creole of color in 1801. Little is known of her Haitian-born husband Paris, who died soon after the wedding under mysterious circumstances. Laveau spent much of the next 40 years with Jean Cristophe Duminy de Glapion, a War of 1812 veteran who died on June 26, 1855, and who some continue to assert was of mixed race even though public documents consistently place him as white. The two never officially married but had several children (probably 5—2 boys and 3 girls—though some more fanciful sources suggest as many as 15). Laveau used Glapion as her last name—and as the last name of her children—for most of the rest of her life.

By the 1840s, Laveau was already prominent in New Orleans' spiritual culture. She was a participant in the ceremonial dances in New Orleans' Congo Square as well as in St. John's Eve festivals at Lake Pontchartrain, and her leadership in such ceremonies, which borrowed from (and heavily sexualized) both Roman Catholic and African diasporic traditions, became central to her legend. She combined the growing public sense of her supernatural abilities with knowledge gained from working as a hairdresser to New Orleans' white elite to position herself as one of the city's most important practitioners of Voodoo and also a dealer in charms and home remedies. (This combination was also likely the reason that she avoided harassment during the periodic crackdowns on Voodoo by the New Orleans authorities, especially in the 1850s.)

As she was building this public persona, Laveau was also raising her family. Her two sons (François and Archange) and one daughter (Marie Louise) died young, but at least two daughters—Marie Heloise and Marie Philomene (spelled variously)—eventually joined their mother in the world of voodoo. Some scholars note Marie Heloise as “Marie the Second” and suggest that she joined her mother as a “Voodoo queen.” Philomene, who had a long-term relationship with the white Alexandre Legendre, similar to



her mother's with Glapion (they had at least three children and were even listed together in the 1870 census), did much to advance her mother's legend by producing a widely cited obituary when Laveau died in 1881. All seem to have lived in the vicinity of Laveau's St. Ann Street home, and some census records list Philomene and her children as living with Laveau late in the 19th century.

Some accounts suggest that Laveau used her power to help the community; select recent biographers depict her alternately as an antislavery activist (even though both she and Glapion owned slaves), an antipoverty crusader, and a nurse in yellow fever and cholera epidemics. On the other hand, some claim that she used her role mainly for personal gain and that she kept a brothel on Lake Pontchartrain that catered to rich whites. Little direct evidence supports these assertions. Laveau never became wealthy because of her role among New Orleans voodooiennes; recent evidence suggests that she did not even own the house on St. Ann Street that she made famous.

Laveau's youngest daughter Philomene died June 11, 1897, and essentially ended her immediate family's large-scale public promotion of Laveau's legend—though some women who held (and more who claimed) the Laveau name continued to be active in New Orleans. A number of interviews conducted by the Louisiana Writers Project contain stories about Laveau, but two 20th-century figures shaped the modern sense of Laveau most heavily. Zora Neale Hurston spoke in depth on Voodoo culture (and sometimes specifically on Laveau) in an extended 1931 article in the *Journal of American Folklore* and in her 1935 *Mules and Men*. Hurston's depictions—shaped by both her training as an anthropologist and her deep love of story—are of arguable credibility even though they are fascinating and lively; late 20th-century efforts to reconsider Hurston led naturally to additional examination of her work on Voodoo. Much less trustworthy, much more sensationalistic, and much more popular when it was released is Robert Tallant's 1946 *Voodoo in New Orleans*, which recounts a number of (highly sexualized) stories of Laveau.

See also: Conjure; Hoodoo; Hurston, Zora Neale

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## Locke, Alain

History remembers Alain Locke (1885–1954) as the first African American Rhodes Scholar (1907) and, more famously, as the “dean” of the Harlem Renaissance (1919–1934). Locke edited *The New Negro* (1925), acclaimed as the “first national book” of African Americans. In this way, Locke's role is analogous to that of Martin Luther King: whereas King championed the civil rights of African Americans through nonviolent civil disobedience, Locke did so through a process known as “civil rights by copyright.”

In the Jim Crow era, when blacks had no effective political recourse, Locke used the arts as a strategy to win the respect of the white majority and to call to their attention the need to fully democratize democracy and Americanize America by extending full equality to all minorities. Recent scholarship has brought Locke back to life, and his philosophy of democracy, in particular, lends him renewed importance.

Harvard, Harlem, Haifa—place names that represent Locke's special involvement in philosophy, art, and religion—are keys to understanding his life and thought. Harvard prepared Locke for distinction as the first black Rhodes Scholar in 1907 and, in 1918, awarded Locke his PhD in philosophy, thus securing his position as chair of the Department of Philosophy at Howard University from 1927 until his retirement in 1953. Harlem was the mecca of the Harlem Renaissance, whereby Locke, as a spokesman for his race, revitalized racial solidarity and fostered the group consciousness among African Americans that proved a necessary precondition of the Civil Rights movement. Haifa is the world center of the Bahá'í Faith, the religion to which Locke converted in 1918, the same year he received his doctorate from Harvard. Until recently, this has been the least understood aspect of Locke's life. During the Jim Crow era, at a time when black people saw little possibility of interracial harmony, this new religious movement offered hope through its “race amity” efforts, which Locke was instrumental in organizing. These three spheres

of activity—the academy, the art world, and spiritual society—converge to create a composite picture of Locke as an integrationist whose model was not assimilation, but rather “unity through diversity” (the title of one of his *Bahá’i World* essays).

Born in 1885, Locke was sent by his mother to one of the Ethical Culture schools—a pioneer, experimental program of Froebelian pedagogy (after Friedrich Froebel [d. 1852], who opened the first kindergarten). By the time he enrolled in Central High School (1898–1902), Locke was already an accomplished pianist and violinist. In 1902, Locke attended the Philadelphia School of Pedagogy, graduating second in his class in 1904. That year, Locke entered Harvard College with honors at entrance, where he was among only a precious few African American undergraduates.

During the “golden age of philosophy at Harvard,” Locke studied at a time when Josiah Royce, William James, George Herbert Palmer, Hugo Münsterberg, and Ralph



Alain Locke was a writer, philosopher, educator, and patron of the arts. He is best known for his writings on and about the Harlem Renaissance. (National Archives)

Barton Perry were on the faculty. Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, in 1907 Locke won the Bowdoin Prize—Harvard’s most prestigious academic award—for an essay he wrote, “The Literary Heritage of Tennyson.” Remarkably, Locke completed his four-year undergraduate program at Harvard in only three years, graduating magna cum laude with his bachelor’s degree in philosophy. Then, Locke made history and headlines in May 1907 as America’s first African American Rhodes Scholar. Although his Rhodes scholarship provided for study abroad at Oxford, it was no guarantee of admission. Rejected by five Oxford colleges because of his race, Locke was finally admitted to Hertford College, where studied from 1907 to 1910.

Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen describes a racial incident over a Thanksgiving Day dinner hosted at the American Club at Oxford. Locke was not invited because Southern men refused to dine with him. Kallen and Locke became lifelong friends. In the course of their conversations, the phrase “cultural pluralism” was born. Although the term itself was thus coined by Kallen in this historic conversation with Locke, it was really Locke who developed the concept into a full-blown philosophical framework for the melioration of African Americans. Distancing himself from Kallen’s purist and separatist conception of it, Locke was part of the cultural pluralist movement that flourished between the 1920s and the 1940s. Indeed, Locke has been called the “father of multiculturalism.”

So acutely did the Thanksgiving Day dinner incident traumatize Locke that he left Oxford without taking a degree and spent the 1910–1911 academic year studying Kant at the University of Berlin and touring Eastern Europe as well. During his stay in Berlin, where he earned a B.Litt, Locke became conversant with the “Austrian school” of anthropology, known as philosophical anthropology, under the tutelage of Franz Brentano, Alexius von Meinong, Christian Freiherr von Ehrenfels, Paul Natorp, and others. Locke much preferred Europe to America. Indeed, there were moments when Locke resolved never to return to the United States. Reluctantly, he did so in 1911.

As an assistant professor of the teaching of English and an instructor in philosophy and education, Locke taught literature, English, education, and ethics—and later, ethics and logic—at Howard University itself, although he did not have an opportunity to teach a course on philosophy until 1915. In 1915–1916, the Howard chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

People (NAACP) and the Social Science Club sponsored a two-year extension course of public lectures, which Locke called, “Race Contacts and Inter-Racial Relations: A Study in the Theory and Practice of Race.”

In the 1916–1917 academic year, Locke took a sabbatical from Howard University to become Austin Teaching Fellow at Harvard, where he wrote his 263-page dissertation, *The Problem of Classification in [the] Theory of Values*, evidently an extension of an earlier essay he had written at Oxford. It was Harvard professor of philosophy Josiah Royce who originally inspired Locke’s interest in the philosophy of value. Of all the major American pragmatists to date, only Royce had published a book dealing with racism: *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* (1908). In formulating his own theory of value, Locke synthesized the Austrian school of value theory (Franz Brentano, Alexius von Meinong, and later on, Rudolf Maria Holzapfel) with American pragmatism (George Santayana, William James, and Josiah Royce), along with the anthropology of Franz Boas and Kant’s theories of aesthetic judgment.

When awarded his PhD in philosophy from Harvard in 1918, Locke emerged as perhaps the most exquisitely educated and erudite African American of his generation. The year 1918 was another milestone in Locke’s life, when he found a “spiritual home” in the Bahá’í Faith, a new world religion whose gospel was the unity of the human race. The recent discovery of Locke’s signed “Bahá’í Historical Record” card (1935), in which Locke fixes the date of his conversion in 1918, restores a “missing dimension” of Locke’s life. Locke was actively involved in the early “race amity” initiatives sponsored by the Bahá’ís. “Race amity” was the Bahá’í term for ideal race relations (interracial unity). The Bahá’í “race amity” era lasted from 1921 to 1936, followed by the “race unity” period of 1939–1947, with other socially significant experiments in interracial harmony (such as “Race Unity Day”) down to the present. Although he studiously avoided references to the faith in his professional life, Locke’s four *Bahá’í World* essays served as his public testimony of faith. But it was not until an article, “Bahá’í Faith: Only Church in World That Does Not Discriminate,” appeared in the October 1952 issue of *Ebony* magazine that Locke’s Bahá’í identity was ever publicized in the popular media.

In 1925, the Harlem Renaissance was publicly launched. It was conceived a year earlier, when Locke was

asked by the editor of the *Survey Graphic* to produce demographics on Harlem, which is in the district of Manhattan in New York. That special issue, *Harlem, Mecca of the New Negro*, Locke subsequently recast as an anthology, *The New Negro: An Interpretation of Negro Life*, published in December 1925. A landmark in black literature, it was an instant success. Locke contributed five essays: the foreword, “The New Negro,” “Negro Youth Speaks,” “The Negro Spirituals,” and “The Legacy of Ancestral Arts.” *The New Negro* featured five white contributors as well, making this artistic tour de force a genuinely interracial collaboration, with much support from white patronage (not without some strings attached, however). The last essay was contributed by W. E. B. Du Bois.

Locke hoped the Harlem Renaissance would provide “an emancipating vision to America” and would advance “a new democracy in American culture.” He spoke of a “race pride,” “race genius,” and the “race-gift.” This “race pride” was to be cultivated through developing a distinctive culture, a hybrid of African and African American elements. For Locke, art ought to contribute to the improvement of life—a pragmatist aesthetic principle sometimes called “meliorism.” But the Harlem Renaissance was more of an aristocratic than democratic approach to culture. Criticized by some African American contemporaries, Locke himself came to regret the Harlem Renaissance’s excesses of exhibitionism as well as its elitism. Its dazzling success was short-lived.

Strange to say, Locke did not publish a formal philosophical essay until he was 50. “Values and Imperatives” appeared in 1935. In fact, this was Locke’s only formal philosophical work between 1925 and 1939. Apart from his dissertation, Locke published only four major articles in a philosophy journal or anthology: “Values and Imperatives” (1935), “Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy” (1942), “Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace” (1944), and “Pluralism and Ideological Peace” (1947).

In 1943, Locke was on leave as Inter-American Exchange Professor to Haiti under the joint auspices of the American Committee for Inter-American Artistic and Intellectual Relations and the Haitian Ministry of Education. Toward the end of his stay there, Haitian president Élie Lescot personally decorated Locke with the National Order of Honor and Merit, grade of Commandeur. There Locke wrote *Le rôle du Nègre dans la culture Américaine*, the nucleus of a grand project that Locke believed would

be his magnum opus. That project, *The Negro in American Culture*, was completed in 1956 by Margaret Just Butcher, daughter of Howard colleague and close friend Ernest E. Just. It is not, however, considered to be an authentic work of Locke.

In 1944, Locke became a charter member of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, which published its annual proceedings. During the 1945–1946 academic year, Locke was a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin, and in 1947, he was a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research. For the 1946–1947 term, Locke was elected president of the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE), as the first black president of a predominantly white institution. His reputation as a leader in adult education had already been established by the nine-volume *Bronze Booklet* series that he had edited, two volumes of which he had personally authored as well.

He moved to New York in July 1953. For practically his entire life, Locke had sought treatment for his rheumatic heart. Locke died of heart failure on June 9, 1954, in Mount Sinai Hospital. On June 11 at Benta's Chapel, Brooklyn, Locke's memorial was presided over by Dr. Channing Tobias, with cremation following at Fresh Pond Crematory in Little Village, Long Island.

As a cultural pluralist, Locke may have a renewed importance as a social philosopher, particularly as a philosopher of democracy. Because Locke was not a systematic philosopher, however, it is necessary to systematize his philosophy in order to bring its deep structure into bold relief.

Democracy is a process of progressive equalizing. It is a matter of degree. For blacks, American democracy was largely a source of oppression, not liberation. America's racial crisis was not just national—it was a problem of world-historical proportions. As a cultural pluralist, Alain Locke sought to further Americanize Americanism and further democratize democracy. In so doing, he proposed a multidimensional model of democracy that ranged from concepts of “local democracy” all the way up to “world democracy.” This multidimensional typology is developed further in the penultimate chapter of Christopher Buck's *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy* (2005). We know that Alain Locke was important. If his philosophy of democracy has any merit, we know now that is Locke is important, especially if it is time to transform democratic values into democratic imperatives.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B; Harlem Renaissance; New Negro Movement; Woodson, Carter Godwin

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## Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is an annual celebration, historically held in New Orleans, Louisiana, that draws tourists from around the world; it is the culmination of 10 days of street festivities that include musical performances, dancing, costume displaying, extravagant parades, and fancy balls. Mardi Gras marks the last day of feasting prior to the beginning of Lent. The holiday is always scheduled 47 days before Easter Sunday and falls between February 3 and March 9. Surrounding Mardi Gras are multicultural and boisterous public spectacles that have maintained particular significance and distinction in the communities of African Americans and Creoles of Color. Two of the most prominent events associated with the merriment, and having deep cultural and historical roots, are the parades of the Mardi Gras Indians and the Zulu Krewe. As such, similar festivals,

such as Carnival, are celebrated around the world in places such as Rio de Janeiro, Bolivia, and the Caribbean.

In the early 1700s, Code Noir, an official regulation of conduct between slaves and slave owners, had both positive and negative consequences in New Orleans. One benefit of the code was the margin of freedom it provided for slaves, which aided in the sanctioning of a public space that would later be called Congo Square. By the mid 1730s, Congo Square was a public market where African singing, dancing, and costuming were commonplace occurrences. These artistic expressions were forerunners to and aided in the establishment of African American Carnival traditions. All social classes in New Orleans celebrated Mardi Gras (French for “Fat Tuesday”), although for a brief period, blacks were prohibited from masking because of fear that the maskers might aid the king’s enemies in gaining access to dances or might commit robberies.



Revelers beg for prized Zulu coconuts from Zulu Rascals member Benjamin Bennett, left, during the Krewe of Zulu Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans, February 5, 2008. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Carnival has long been identified with New Orleans street performance. A form of street dancing called “Second Line” originated in the mid 1800s. The phrase was originally coined to refer to the crowd that followed the musicians and mourners in a street celebration for a funeral. Another influence on the evolution of Mardi Gras in African American communities was Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows that, in the late 1800s, introduced New Orleans audiences to the pageantry of Native American costuming. These shows may have affected a street spectacle that formed as an outgrowth of a cultural bond between runaway slaves and the Native Americans that hid them: the parading of various Mardi Gras Native American groups headed by chiefs and “shrouded in secrecy.” Africans and Native Americans had found commonality as oppressed subcultures and forged connections. When groups of black men, sometimes referred to as “gangs” or “tribes,” began dressing up like Native Americans and parading on improvised street routes during celebration, there were sometimes violent encounters among the various groups.

Today, the complex and ornamental costumes worn by the revelers are central to the identity of Mardi Gras Indians. These costumes are magnificent constructions that are hand-sewn at great expense by individuals who spend several months every year preparing the intricate beading and feathered regalia with great care. These colorful costumes, when worn during Carnival in contemporary society, became a source of celebration and competitiveness between the various groups. Costume competitiveness has replaced much of the violence formerly associated with the Mardi Gras Indian celebrations. These syncretistic practices coupled with Caribbean influences evidence cultural traditions that survive in contemporary New Orleans culture and are displayed publicly during Mardi Gras celebrations by men who dress as Native Americans during street reveling.

Other events of historical significance to New Orleans Mardi Gras include the Illinois Club formed during Jim Crow for purposes of providing a ball for people of color. Although women were initially allowed to join the club, it soon became an all-male organization. This formal ball stood in sharp contrast to the Baby Dolls, a group of prostitutes who, beginning in 1912, dressed up and paraded through the streets dressed in bonnets and ribbons. Yet another Mardi Gras tradition that formed in the first part of the 20th century was the Krewe of Zulu, a group originally established in 1909 under the name “The Tramps,”

but reorganized in 1916 under the auspices of Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. The Zulu parade is the oldest and largest African American parade connected to Mardi Gras, and it is widely known for the coconuts that the float riders, dressed in grass skirts and blackface, throw to parade watchers. In 1949, wearing a red velvet robe and traditional blackface, Louis Armstrong became the most famous king to lead the Zulu Parade.

Some of the activities associated with Mardi Gras have become outdated but are still recreated each year. For instance, flambeaux carriers were men of color who initially carried torches to light parade floats before electricity was available to do so. Even though this tradition is still alive at present, fewer flambeaux carriers are seen at each Mardi Gras celebration. The few remaining carriers stand as bearers of historical memory.

*See also:* Armstrong, Louis; Black Folk Culture; Congo Square, New Orleans

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## Miscegenation

The term “miscegenation” refers to the sexual union and cohabitation between persons of different racial origin and was used in laws passed in the United States that prohibited interracial marriage. It also refers to persons who believe racial intermarriage is fundamentally wrong. The term is derived from the Latin *miscere*, meaning “to mix,” and *genus*, meaning “race,” and it replaces the term “amalgamate,” which was not accurate or scientific. In short, it means simply “to mix race,” a phenomenon that has been in existence since the early colonial times in American history, to the present day. The word was coined, or at least became popularized, in 1863 by the anonymous authors of a pamphlet at Christmas time in New York City, titled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of Races Applied to the White and Negro*, who argued in favor of African American and white intermarriage. The real authors were discovered to be

David Goodman Croly, managing editor of the *New York World*, a staunchly Democratic Party paper, and George Wakeman, a reporter for the same newspaper. The pamphlet was soon exposed to be a hoax, essentially a political ploy aimed at discrediting the Republican Party, Abraham Lincoln's presidency, and the abolitionist movement, only months away from a presidential reelection in 1864. Nonetheless, this pamphlet and others like it resurfaced regularly throughout the American Civil War by opponents of the Republicans. At that time, the notion of interracial marriage between blacks and whites was indeed highly controversial, and it certainly would have angered some voters.

The first anti-miscegenation law was enacted in 1664 in Maryland, likely in response to sexual liaisons and marriages between white indentured servants and black slaves. At that time, virtually all blacks were slaves and whites free. As a result, race and legal status were intertwined. Unions between whites males and black slave women were not a concern for the law because the resulting progeny were forever black and slaves under the matrilineal principle of identity. However unions between black male slaves and free white women complicated social boundaries for that day and produced mixed-race progeny who were legally white for all purposes of the law. This undermined the very institution of slavery, both legally and economically. Thus, early anti-miscegenation laws were aimed at discouraging racial intermarriage that created the mirage of "racial equality" and at maintaining a system where blacks were forever property and at the bottom. Henceforth, most states, one after the other, passed laws banning interracial intermarriage. These laws chiefly targeted blacks but sometimes applied to Native Americans and Asians, but never Latinos. As a result, some non-white groups were able to intermarry with each other, whereas others were not. There were even cases of persons with a triracial identity (black, white, and Native American) who were unable to marry anyone. Some states enforced their own anti-miscegenation laws comprehensively, whereas others did not enforce them at all or only selectively. These variations existed because marriage was a state responsibility and tended to reflect local custom and attitudes. Moreover, definitions of "blackness" and "whiteness" also varied from state to state and over time. Someone considered legally white in one state might be considered black in another and vice versa and thus unable to contract marriage with anyone outside his or her perceived racial group. Civil authorities such as town marriage clerks, the

police, and even clergy licensed to perform marriages had wide discretion when determining racial classification and served as watchdogs and enforcers of white supremacy. During the Reconstruction era immediately following the Civil War, many Southern states temporarily abandoned their anti-miscegenation laws in light of political and economic ruin caused by the war and the Union's victory over the Confederacy under the banner "equality for all." But by about 1880—the onset of the Jim Crow era that brought about legalized segregation throughout the United States—many states reenacted laws banning interracial marriages, and this caused a chain reaction of sorts, leading to many states, not limited to the South, either reenacting previous passed legislation or tightening existing laws on anti-miscegenation, making them far more universal and exclusive, in terms of racial definitions, than ever before.

Those accused of miscegenation faced the strong possibility of a felony-misdemeanor conviction, resulting in a fine or imprisonment for one to five years or sometimes both. The state of Virginia punished violators with banishment from the state. Criminal penalties such as hefty fines also extended to civil authorities, such as officiants at wedding ceremonies and town clerks who issued marriage licenses. Sometimes immunity for interracial couples was as simple as crossing the state line to a jurisdiction that permitted mixed-race marriages. Yet some states, such as Virginia, did not recognize interracial marriages contracted in other states, so there was no guarantee. Even those who did not get caught felt the sting of these laws. The interracial nature of a marriage was sufficient grounds to have a marriage declared null and void and was sometimes used by relatives to deny the surviving black spouse of his or her rightful inheritance.

The best-known victim and resister of the anti-miscegenation regime was Jack Johnson (1878–1946), the first African American heavyweight boxing champion. Throughout his professional career, 1897–1915, Johnson earned considerable wealth fighting black and then white boxers. His flair, narcissism, athletic prowess, outspoken contempt for racism, and public pursuit of white women (he married three) breached social convention and made him a target. As a result of Johnson's success in the ring as well as the bedroom, he was hated and feared by American white males, and this almost led to Congress's passing a law banning interracial marriages, which would have been an invasion of states' rights. Unable to charge Johnson with any existing anti-miscegenation law, in 1913 his

enemies conspired to find him guilty of violating the Mann Act (1912), which prohibited transporting a white woman across state lines Johnson had bought a train ticket from Pittsburgh to Chicago for his 19-year-old white wife. The case was dubbed “the evils of miscegenation.” Fleeing his conviction, Johnson went into exile. In 1915, he fought Jess Willard in Cuba and lost his heavyweight championship. In 1920, he returned to the United States, surrendered himself to authorities, and served one year in jail.

During the height of the anti-miscegenation regime, 1880 to 1950, courts and politicians at all levels upheld the constitutionality of these laws. There were several important court cases, specifically, *Pace v. Alabama* (1883) and *Loving v. Virginia* (1967). In the former, the Supreme Court reaffirmed its position on miscegenation and denied the interracial couple the right to a legal marriage based on the “equal protection” clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Anti-miscegenation laws and their associated criminal penalties in theory applied equally to all persons, black, white, yellow, and so on, and hence did not discriminate; therefore, they were considered constitutional. The watershed case was *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), in which an interracial couple, Mildred Jeter, a black woman, and her white husband, Robert Loving, were arrested in their home state of Virginia for violating that state’s anti-miscegenation laws. The couple temporarily relocated to the District of Columbia, which had long since repealed its own anti-miscegenation laws. Upon their return to Virginia, the Lovings found their marriage and cohabitation in violation of state law. They were ordered to leave the state and never return, on pain of imprisonment. The couple moved back to the District of Columbia and filed action against Virginia. After a long and hard-fought battle, the couple was successful in the Supreme Court, which struck down anti-miscegenation laws as unconstitutional in breach of the same clause that was used to uphold the *Pace* case. It was not until 2000, however, that Alabama became the last state to repeal its anti-miscegenation law (which formed part of the state constitution).

It is ironic that African Americans gained civil rights (1965) before they gained the right to marry outside their own racial group (1967). In some respects, interracial marriage was more significant than civil rights. The ability to marry outside one’s race, but within the dominant culture, was less a legal right than a fundamental human right symbolizing true racial equality. Civil rights gained in the 1950s

and 1960s did not extend to interracial marriage. African Americans could still be second-class citizens despite having acquired full citizenship rights—a strange paradox that speaks volumes of race relations.

*See also:* Amalgamation; Mulatto; Quadroon

*Justin Marcus Johnston*

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## Mulatto

“Mulatto” (often assumed to be derived from the Spanish *mulato*, or “little mule”) typically refers to someone of mixed racial heritage; however, the term commonly refers to a person of mixed Caucasian and Negro ancestry or, in late 20th-century parlance, a “biracial” individual. In the American context, “race mixing,” or miscegenation, occurred regularly. The one-drop rule (defining who was black) can be traced back to the colonial period, when miscegenation occurred largely between white indentured servants and both slave and free blacks. In most colonies, the mulatto children from these unions were considered black (with exceptions—e.g., Virginia, where they were sometimes considered white). In areas of the South, when interracial intercourse occurred, it was generally between white men and both enslaved and free black women. Some areas, such as Charleston and New Orleans, saw free mulattos forming alliances with whites and serving as a buffer group (economically and socially) between whites and blacks, possessing a unique in-between status within the existing racial hierarchy.

However, these are the exceptions to the rule. The institution of slavery, built on white supremacist ideology and absolute prohibition of miscegenation, brought whites and blacks into close physical proximity on a daily basis. As a result of the mentality that white male slave owners could “rightfully” use their black female slaves at will, the vast



majority of interracial sex consisted of exploitative unions between white male slave owners and their black female slaves (whereas sex between white women and black men was strictly forbidden). To have a mulatto child in a white family was scandalous and threatened the entire ideological logic of the slave system. A mixed-race child in the slave quarters, however, was not only tolerated but often considered an asset. Either way, light-skinned mulatto children were often given special privileges: positions as “house servants,” education, training, and access to white culture, to name a few.

The Civil War, due to increasing Southern defense of slavery and the one-drop rule, created a climate of distrust and hostility toward free mulattos and permanently altered the relationship between whites and mulattos in many places. Free mulattos sought alliances with blacks and shifted their sense of identity accordingly—this alliance, though not unproblematic, continued well into the mid-20th century. Because of the many privileges mulattos were allowed prior to the Civil War, many emerged as leaders of Southern blacks through Reconstruction and into Jim Crow and served critically important roles in the black struggle (e.g., see prominent mulattos such as W. E. B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, James Weldon Johnson, A. Philip Randolph, and Walter White). Interestingly, throughout the Harlem Renaissance, the work of many mulatto artists, musicians, dancers, poets, and writers represented *the* articulation of the black experience (e.g., Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Jean Toomer) to white audiences.

A generation after the passage of *Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia* (1967), which made laws prohibiting miscegenation illegal, by the mid-1980s, the United States had seen the rise of multiracial, biracial, and mixed-race individuals and groups of individuals demanding a change in the way that the United States racially classifies its citizens. Dubbed by some scholars as the “neo-mulattos,” the multiracial movement is attempting to deal serious blows to the one-drop rule; however, the reasons behind these movements and the implications for the struggle for black liberation in the United States remain little understood. *See also:* Amalgamation; Miscegenation

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## Names Debate

The names debate refers to the conflict among African Americans over which term they wanted to use to describe themselves racially. Many terms—both positive and derogatory—were used to describe people of African descent in the United States, including “Afric,” “African,” “colored,” “black,” “Niger,” “Negro,” and so on.

Yet by the 1830s, African Americans sought to exercise self-determination and wanted to name themselves on their own terms. Thus, the names debate began in 1835 when William Whipper, a wealthy Philadelphian, introduced a controversial resolution at the fifth gathering of the Colored Convention. Prior to 1835, most black organizations used “African” as a way of demonstrating their distinct identity and cultural pride. However as opposition to African colonization prompted black activists to claim America as their homeland, some leaders pondered the ramifications of their naming tradition. In particular, men such as William Whipper argued that black people should break down the barriers of racial separation by removing racial designations and eradicating separate black organizations and institutions. This belief led Whipper to propose that African Americans should abandon the use of the term “colored” and remove the term “African” from their organizational titles.

Not surprisingly, there was significant debate over Whipper’s proposal at the 1835 Colored Convention. However, the resolution finally passed. In the end, however, it is important to note that African Americans were reluctant to abandon the use of racial designations entirely. Although they eventually ceased using the term “African,” they retained the use of “colored” as well as other racial signifiers. Reflecting their early commitment to Black Nationalism, most black activists were not yet ready to adopt Whipper’s vision of complete assimilation into American society, and therefore, black leaders continued to create and support separate black organizations and institutions long after the 1835 convention. They supported their decision so strongly

that, in 1838, when Philadelphians continued to press the issue of removing racial distinctions, Samuel Cornish, editor of the *Colored American* newspaper, became enraged and criticized the Philadelphians for arguing about minor issues rather than focusing on the real issues, such as slavery and the denial of citizenship, that plagued the black community.

Even so, the debate over names that commenced in the 1830s haunted African Americans well into the 21st century, as activists struggled to determine how they wanted to define themselves as a race.

See also: Cornish, Samuel; Whipper, William

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Negritude

Negritude was a Pan-African literary, philosophical, cultural, and sociopolitical movement characterized by the writings of young, black, French intellectuals from the 1930s well into the 1950s. Fostered by some of France's leading intellectuals through the 1940s and 1950s, Negritude grew to worldwide recognition as a pivotal moment in the historical trajectory of black consciousness thought. Inspired by the artists, writers, and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance as well as black writers of various disciplines from the French colonies, Negritude intellectuals advocated the search for an authentic black voice that stemmed from the awareness of a rich African cultural heritage. Negritude writers implored Africans and African descendants from all over the world to throw off the shackles of European colonial imperialism, which they considered not only devastating to their African inheritance but also stifling to the artistic creation and cultural and social autonomy that this history precipitated. Negritude manifested itself in the

form of philosophical, social, and political tracts in addition to a magnitude of literary works in poetry, prose, theater, and fiction. Distinguished by multifarious interpretations of the methods and meanings of black consciousness and black humanism, the Negritude writers did not subscribe to a unified theory for black cultural advancement. Even in the midst of its development, Negritude faced criticism from within and outside the movement for what appeared to be an essentialist outlook on black identity. Despite the critiques of Negritude, which have consistently questioned its methods for the past 65 years, it is widely recognized as a paramount literary, cultural, and sociopolitical movement.

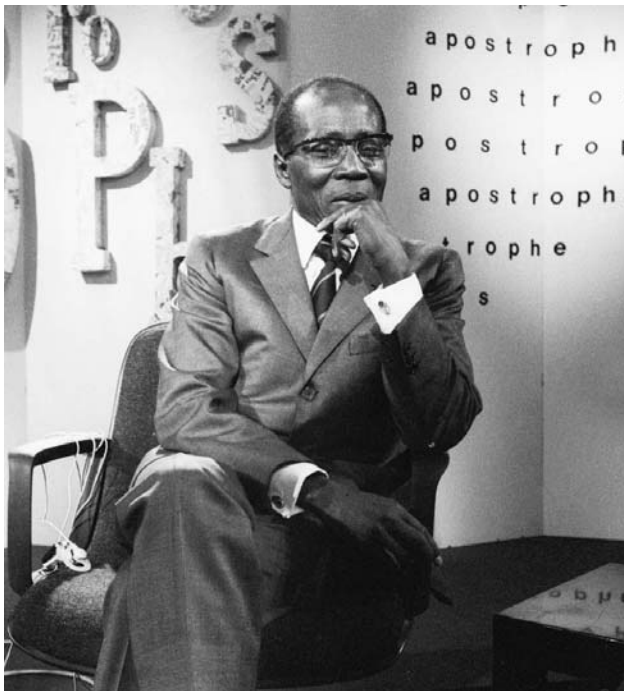
Students from the West Indies islands of the French Antilles, who were attending universities in Paris, founded the Negritude movement. The publication of two student journals, each of which produced only a single issue, punctuated the early history of Negritude. The first, *Légitime Défense*, written by René Ménéil, Jules Monnerot, and Etienne Léro in 1932, represented the more politically oriented facet of Negritude. The Marxist-Leninist theory that was popular among the French intelligentsia of the time and the surrealist circle of André Breton heavily influenced the writing of *Légitime Défense*. Addressed to their fellow students, the *Légitime Défense* group's manifesto was a shocking cry against their very own French bourgeois backgrounds and the capitalist oppression of the proletariat in the Caribbean. Reaching both West Indian and African immigrants in Paris and causing quite a stir in the Caribbean, *Légitime Défense* was one of the inspirations behind the publication of the second student journal that defined Negritude's early years. Titled *L'Étudiant noir*, and published in 1935, it contained contributions by Antilleans Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas and the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor. In the pages of *L'Étudiant noir*, these three writers, who became the central voices of the Negritude movement, appealed to a Pan-African community, both locally and abroad, fractured by the tactics of assimilation used by European colonizers to assert their own cultural superiority over that of the cultures they colonized. *L'Étudiant noir* served as a foundation for the unification of colored people from diverse backgrounds, supported by the Negritude writers in the form of a search for cultural memory and a revitalization of authentic, African cultural forms. Unlike the writers of *Légitime Défense*, Senghor, Césaire, and Damas did not believe that communism or surrealism were effective tools for bringing about the changes

they desired for communities of disenfranchised blacks. In contrast to the political content of *Légitime Défense*, *L'Étudiant noir* advocated social and cultural methods through which African descendants could rediscover their lost cultures and exercise their unique creative potential.

The students who authored these early formulations of Negritude found inspiration in a variety of sources indigenous to their countries of origin, as well as important texts to which they were introduced through their French educations. A number of journals and newspapers circulating in Paris in the 1930s catered to black audiences and treated issues of race in the colonial situation, such as *La Voix des Nègres*, *La Race nègre*, and *La Dépêche africaine*. Although these periodicals were not as inflammatory as Negritude theory intended to be, they were a model platform for the discussion of cultural conflict. The Negritude writers also admired the work of such anthropologists and ethnologists as Leo Frobenius and Maurice Delafosse, who, during the first quarter of the 20th century, began to critically explore the social and cultural achievements of pre-colonial African societies. Such studies posed a threat to the French program of assimilation because they asserted the existence of a unique African culture, and thus their

impact and content appealed to young black scholars. The work of the writer and African colonial administrator René Maran, whose novels, articles, and journal *Les Continents* elucidated the mismanagement of the French authorities in Africa and supported black cultural production, was of particular importance to an intellectual community of African descendents in Paris and was especially foundational to Senghor's theorization of symbiosis of African and European civilizations. Maran was an important figure in the promotion of the literature and social movement surrounding the Harlem Renaissance in France, through critical articles and in encouraging translations of African American works. Maran hosted W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and others in Paris throughout the 1920s and 1930s, introducing black French scholars to the works of their American compatriots. Paulette and Jeanne Nardal's *La Revue du monde noir* similarly promoted African American writers of the Harlem Renaissance and advocated Pan-African unification around the sharing and exchange of cultural production, a goal that the Negritude writers later championed. The biting tone and sense of urgency presented by the "New Negroes" of the Harlem Renaissance particularly appealed to the Parisian students who would compose the Negritude movement. During the pre-Negritude period, the cultural exchange between African Americans and French blacks was one-sided, yielding the translation of many Harlem Renaissance writers into French, but few French texts into English. One of the most influential works translated into French was Claude McKay's novel *Banjo*, which depicted realistic race relations in the African Diaspora, attempted to dispel interracial prejudices propagated by colonial hegemony, and sought to reconcile the supposed distinction between primitive and civilized societies. McKay's work was a common inspiration for the varied foundations of Negritude in Nardal's revue, *Légitime Défense*, as well as the writings of Césaire, Damas, and Senghor.

Although the Negritude movement gained considerable momentum in 1930s Paris through the activities of the West Indian students, the writings of its major figures did not reach a wider French audience until the late 1940s. In many cases, the promotion of Negritude relied on the elite French intellectual community to embrace its outpouring and support its publication. Damas's seminal 1937 book of poems, *Pigments*, was the notable exception, although it still carried, in the form of a preface, the stamp of approval



Léopold Sédar Senghor was a Senegalese writer and statesman, and key figure in the Negritude movement. (Sophie Bassouls/Sygma/Corbis)

of the surrealist author Robert Desnos. Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, the most highly regarded work of Negritude poetry, did not appear in a full edition until 1947, with the endorsement of André Breton. In 1948, Senghor published two books of his own poetry, *Hosties noires* and *Chants d'ombre*, in addition to an anthology of French-language black poetry, prefaced by the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's controversial essay "Orphée noir." Negritude appealed to the postwar French literati because it shared in common with European modernism sentiments of alienation, fragmentation, and a distrust of enlightenment philosophy and inherited cultural norms. Negritude's perceived link to primitive expression also reinforced a classic theme of modernism, which sought to expose cultural difference and posit a universal primitivism at the heart of European culture. Another reason for the postponed reception of the Negritude writers was the climate of interwar France. It was not until after World War II that the French colonial administration and the public at large were ready to start accepting decolonization. Black voices began to be heard after the war, not because they were previously silent, but because the world was finally ready to listen to them.

Aside from the initial split between Negritude's politically and culturally minded camps, the three canonical Negritude theorists—Damas, Césaire, and Senghor—themselves differed in their approaches to the questions of black identity. Damas and Césaire mounted scathing, anguished critiques of slavery, colonialism, and the terminal condition of assimilation, insisting instead on an authentic black identity rooted in the West Indies and pre-colonial Africa. Assimilation amounts, for Damas, to the negation of indigenous African culture and casts whoever participates in a conspiratorial role, one guilty of the bloodshed in the name of colonial domination. Césaire hails the purportedly savage, fictively brutal tendencies ascribed to blacks over the reason and logic of Western civilization in an effort to radically combat assimilation. These racial stereotypes, readily accepted by many Westernized blacks, become ridiculous tropes in Césaire, exposing the fallacious assumptions inherent in a discourse sympathetic to assimilation. Césaire would rather embrace the negative racial stereotype imposed on him and in turn relish in a seemingly more authentic blackness that participate in a culture that dismissed and tried to eradicate his heritage. Senghor, on the other hand, had grown up in Senegal, and his poetry reflected a close tie to African roots while at the same time lamenting

a mythic, romantic vision of a lost Africa that represented both his youth and Africa's pre-colonial innocence. Senghor maintained a belief in the harmonious coexistence and integration of Western and African cultures, where each mutually benefited from the other.

The enhanced audience that Negritude writers began to receive in the late 1940s brought with it a concomitant critical eye that accounts for the relative downplay the movement has experienced ever since. The most notable critique was Sartre's dialectical, Marxist take on Negritude in his "Orphée noir," which labeled Negritude a form of "antiracist racism" that, though constituting an invaluable phase in the triumph over racial oppression, would have to eventually be superseded by a raceless worldview. Senghor would later agree with Sartre on the racism inherent in Negritude that led the writers to adopt the rhetoric of the colonizers in order to spur the black masses into a consciousness of their own state. Rather than point out how whites actively portrayed stereotypic characteristics of assimilated blacks, Negritude sought to liberate these guises that had unconsciously been internalized by blacks. By angrily and viciously affirming their authentic cultural achievements and potentials, as well as pointing out the methods through which those qualities had been systematically erased from cultural memory, the Negritude writers sought to revitalize and reestablish black culture as a worthy and natural form of production. However, the Negritude writers (Senghor in particular) are often criticized for adopting an essentialist view of black experience where, in order to unite a Pan-African community, they neglect the specific, diverse, and localized situations faced by subaltern subjects. Whatever its shortcomings, Negritude stands as an important precursor to post-colonial thought, and it is recognized today as being a vital force in the advancement of black consciousness.

*See also:* Harlem Renaissance; New Negro Movement

Matthew Evans Teti

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## Obeah

Obeah is a sacred healing practice identified with the Caribbean and Caribbean-based communities. It is rooted in West African belief systems and characterized by the syncretism, or mixture, of African and European elements. The word “obeah” stems from the Gold Coast region of Africa, from the Ashanti word *obay-ifo* or *obeye*, for witch or wizard, which was, through the enslavement of large African populations and the subsequent imposition of British culture, anglicized into “obeah,” “obiah,” and “obia.” In contemporary terms, Obeah is conceptually most closely linked to witchcraft; Obeah also carries with it the same myriad of misrepresentations and pejorative connotations as witchcraft. This accounts, in part, for the secretive nature of Obeah practice. The Obeah practitioner, most often called an Obeah man, Obeah woman, bush man, or bush woman, consults with an individual client in order to secure for him or her a desired effect associated with the client’s real and perceived health and personal welfare. The Obeah practitioner then uses his or her knowledge of herbal and animal medicinal properties or ability to invoke ghosts of the dead and other spirits to produce the desired effect.

Obeah is often linked, or thought to be synonymous with, other African-derived religious practices of the region, specifically Vodou (often known as “Voodoo”) and Santeria. Although they are all similar in terms of their African origin, syncretic manifestation, and coexistence within Caribbean cultures, they are not the same. Some differences stem from the dissimilarities in the cultures and political histories of the colonizing powers. Other differences stem from varying spiritual and stylistic preoccupations within the belief systems. Both Vodou and Santeria are practiced through community-based ceremonies characterized by group rituals, drumming, singing, and dancing. They also

acknowledge a primarily fixed pantheon of deities or ancestors who guide practitioners and manifest themselves through possession. Although Vodou and Santeria priests and priestesses are trained with specialized knowledge, any believer can participate in these religious practices to some degree. On the other hand, Obeah is individualistic by nature, and practitioners are trained through a lengthy process of apprenticeship. Not everyone can practice Obeah. There is also no group ritual involved in Obeah, except in the case of Myalism, a unique form of Obeah practiced solely in Jamaica. The supernatural in Obeah are not deities who guide; rather, they are primarily spirits of the dead manifested in ghosts and nature, called on for a desired end, both good and bad. Obeah is not a religion but rather a sacred healing practice that acknowledges a spiritual belief system.

In the British imagination, Obeah has historically been the umbrella term for any African-based spiritual practice unknown to the European tradition that purports to give the black population a sense of agency or authority. Most often dismissed by the colonial power as the superstitious beliefs of backward people, the legal impositions put on Obeah speak to a more complex, ambivalent relationship to it. Since the earliest days of slavery, Obeah has in fact proven to be a source of anxiety for the British population. Its practice, as well as all the cultural practices associated with it such as drumming, was continually banned throughout the region at various moments from the 17th through 19th centuries, forcing it underground. Obeah was seen as potentially dangerous, the source of potential insurrection. Despite the individualistic nature of Obeah, the Obeah practitioner was considered a community leader with the power to incite slaves to rebellion and to poison slaveholders and their families. Two of the most notorious rebellions in Jamaica were led by those associated with Obeah. Nanny, also called Queen Mother of the Blue Mountains, or Granny Nanny, led the resistance against the British during the First Maroon War (1730–1739). She was known to be an Obeah woman. Tacky, the leader of the Easter Sunday Rebellion of 1760, claimed African royalty and aid from an Obeah man while in battle. The spirit of resistance inherent in these rebellions and others only heightened British apprehension about Obeah, which reached its peak in the late 18th century. Obeah also became a popular motif in British literature and performance at this moment. Through literature and performance, through fear and mocking, the complexities of Obeah were made more manageable for a British audience.

Further syncretized with Hindu mysticism during the post-emancipation importation of South Asian laborers to Trinidad and Guyana, Obeah has grown and changed since the end of slavery in the Caribbean. Nonetheless, in contemporary Caribbean society and Caribbean communities throughout the world, Obeah remains an underground practice that captures the popular imagination. It is a standard motif in literature, art, and music. Artists such as Nina Simone, the Mighty Sparrow, Jamaica Kincaid, and Jean Rhys have all employed the motif of Obeah at some point in their work. For most of these artists, Obeah symbolizes an alternative to Western understandings about the world. Obeah represents a resistance to oppression and an insistence on African-based notions of personal and political autonomy. *See also:* Conjure; Coromantee; Igbo; Slave Religion

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## Octoroon

Sexual activity among Euro-Americans, Native Americans, and enslaved and free African Americans led to children of "mixed" parentage. Observers, particularly in the dominant culture, created legal and social categories into which they placed these individuals. More than a dozen terms existed; a few become standardized in the United States: "mulatto" for someone with one black and one white parent, "quadroon" for someone with one black and three white grandparents, and "octoroon" for an individual with seven white great-grandparents and one black great-grandparent.

"Octoroons" were assumed to physically resemble stereotypical white Americans so closely that few observers would ascribe to them an African American identity. Especially in the pre- and post-Civil War period, but throughout U.S. cultural history, white and African American writers

and filmmakers have produced works based on the supposed condition of life for octoroons. When the protagonist is a male, this literature may explore the ways in which "passing for white" could lead to significant economic and other benefits. More commonly, the protagonist is a "tragic octoroon," a young woman who at first may not even know her lineage. Some accident or happenstance uncovers her parentage, and the heroine is faced with new circumstances—she might be enslaved or lose her inheritance or her fiancé or, especially in post-slavery material, face issues of discrimination and questions of self-identity. In many cases, the ending is tragic: suicide, murder, or a sudden illness ends the octoroon's life. Occasionally, even in pre-Civil War works, there is a happier ending—in *Caste* (1856) the "white" hero does not recoil from the news of his beloved's ancestry, and they leave the United States for a happier married life in France.

In both popular culture and serious literature, the octoroon has been a useful construction through which society can explore racial attitudes and experiences. In real life, those who were defined as octoroons sometimes defined themselves as "white" and sometimes as "black" and today might define themselves as "multiracial."

*See also:* Amalgamation; Miscegenation; Mulatto; Quadroon

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## Parker, Charlie

Charles Christopher "Bird" Parker Jr. (1920–1955), born in Kansas City, Missouri, and known also by the nicknames

“Yardbird” and “Yard,” was a jazz saxophonist, composer, and leader in the development of bebop, a radical movement in jazz away from the popular, orchestrated swing music of big bands to smaller ensembles that relied more on improvisation and complicated, rapidly played melodies and rhythms. Parker’s distinctive, influential approach to music took shape during the 1940s and 1950s, when he, along with such musicians as Thelonius Monk, Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Max Roach, and Dizzy Gillespie, revolutionized jazz music and challenged the sensibilities of what was acceptable musically and socially in the mid-20th century. Parker and the other bebop innovators directed jazz music away from the realm of entertainment and into the arena of cultural, political, and social critique and “high art” to voice a pro-black, race-conscious perspective on the world and present a complex, sophisticated art equal to or better than any of the great European artistic creations. The bebop revolution, with Parker at the helm, sought to disrupt the status quo, musically and intellectually, to reprogram jazz and reestablish African American influence and presence in jazz, and to challenge the way big-band jazz was being appropriated by white musicians and protest the ways the older swing-era jazz was losing its African American “voice” by accommodating to white audiences.

Charles and Addie Parker’s only child, Charlie Parker, began playing saxophone in 1931, at the age of 11. By the time he was a teenager, Parker was playing sax in the high school band and immersing himself in the thriving local musical scene of Kansas City. By 1935, he was gigging around town with a number of jazz and blues ensembles and, at the same time, taking in the music of Count Basie (as well as other talented, well-established jazz groups playing around Kansas City) and learning various techniques and ideas from Buster Smith. He married his first wife, Rebecca Ruffin, in 1936. And in 1938, Parker joined the pianist Jay McShann’s group and began to tour across the United States. After playing in Chicago and New York and throughout the southwestern United States with McShann, Parker moved to New York in 1939, where he took odd jobs to support himself; participated in jam sessions with other African American musicians at Monroe’s Playhouse, Minton’s Playhouse, and other “uptown” African American clubs; and continued to perform and record on and off with McShann.

In 1942, Parker left McShann to play with Earl Hines, and by 1945, he was leading his own band and collaborating

with Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Thelonius Monk, and other up-and-coming bebop musicians. In the middle of this period, in 1943, Parker married his second wife, Geraldine Scott. In 1945, Parker went on the road with Gillespie, hoping to make something happen in California. But the project went sour, the band broke up, and all the musicians headed back to New York, except for Parker, who decided to stay on the West Coast. While living in Los Angeles, Parker began to use heroin and quickly became addicted. In 1946, shortly after recording “Lover Man” for the Dial record label, Parker was committed to Camarillo State Hospital following an alcohol- and drug-related “nervous breakdown.” After his release from the hospital in 1947 and return to New York, Charlie Parker was able to stay clean for only a short period of time, a period that, some claim, facilitated his best playing and most solid recordings.

During what might be considered the high point of his musical career, the years 1947–1951, Charlie Parker, by all accounts, was playing at his best and recording his most memorable work. In 1947, Parker released *Yardbird Suite*, a group of recordings that included a number of different lineups of musicians, including the legendary Charlie Parker Quintet he formed with such jazz powerhouses as Max Roach, Tommy Potter, Duke Jordan, and Miles Davis. In addition to his quintet, Parker formed several other ensembles that also appear on the record: the Charlie Parker Septet, the Charlie Parker Quartet, Charlie Parker’s New Stars, Charlie Parker’s All Stars, and Charlie Parker’s Re-Boppers. Parker married his third wife, Doris Snyder, in 1948, and then married his final wife, Chan Richards, in 1950. Parker fathered five children, two with Richards and three in his other marriages. In 1949–1950, Parker traveled to Europe to perform and was well received. Back home in the United States, Parker continued to record and play venues throughout New York. But in 1951, Parker’s cabaret license was revoked due to a drug-related issue, banning him from seeking employment at nightclubs around town. From 1952 to 1953, Parker struggled with unemployment, which likely contributed to his excessive drug and alcohol use and mental illness. Nevertheless, he was still able to produce valuable music during this period.

In 1953, the same year his license was reinstated, Parker, along with Max Roach, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Dizzy Gillespie, was invited to perform at Massey Hall in Toronto, Canada. This performance recorded by Mingus, *Jazz at Massey Hall*, has been described as one of

the best live jazz recordings ever made. Although Parker was still generating his musical genius in recordings and performances such as that at Massey Hall, he was in poor health, and in 1955, Parker died from a bleeding ulcer and pneumonia, complications no doubt related to hard living. According to musicians and jazz critics alike, Charlie Parker is considered to be one of only a few true innovators in jazz and the key player and guiding force in the bebop revolution of jazz music. Parker's music is required learning for any aspiring jazz musician, and his role as a tragic hero is a lesson for anyone interested in the history of jazz.

*See also:* Bebop; Black Folk Culture; Jazz

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## Pinkster Festival

Pinkster is the name that the Dutch gave to the holiday known as Pentecost, a holiday that developed into an influential African American festival in the 17th and 18th centuries. Pentecost refers to the seventh Sunday after Easter (the day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ), when the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Among medieval and early modern Europeans, the day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday) and the season of its celebration (Whitsuntide) constituted an important part of popular Christianity, marked by a variety of festivities.

In the 17th century, Dutch immigrants came to North America to settle the New Netherland colony, the area from Delaware Bay to the Connecticut River that comprises present-day New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The Dutch émigrés brought with them the religious and secular celebrations of their homeland. Pinkster emerged as the dominant public holiday, where settlers gathered in town squares and the countryside to celebrate Pentecost in festival. Interestingly, Pinkster transformed from a religious, European celebration to a secular festival

characterized by West African-style music, dance, and pageantry, featuring an African “king” who presided over the revelry. The emergence of the Pinkster celebration as a predominantly African American festival in character attests to the ability of enslaved Africans to syncretize various West African cultural forms with those of Europeans—in this case the culture of the Dutch colonists—to invent tradition under the oppressive strictures of slavery.

In 1609, the Dutch sent English sea captain Henry Hudson to explore North America in search of the Northwest Passage. Hudson explored Delaware Bay and the river that would later bear his name. He made contact with the Mohawk branch of the Iroquois Nation and with their help established a lucrative fur trade. The trade facilitated the immigration of Dutch men and eventually the founding of a colony under the control of the Dutch West India Company.

The Dutch West India Company, however, did not relegate its activities to fur trading. As early as 1596, the Dutch participated in the trading and enslaving of Africans. Yet it was not until the Dutch owned several colonies in the Americas (i.e., the Netherland Antilles, Virgin Islands, Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, and parts of Brazil and Chile) that slave trading represented a significant portion of the Dutch Atlantic economy. All of these colonies required a constant labor source to maximize profits for the settlers, company, and Dutch empire—namely slaves. New Netherland (New Amsterdam) did not exempt itself from trafficking in the slave trade and utilizing slave labor in Albany (Fort Orange), the Hudson Valley, Long Island, East New Jersey, and Manhattan (New York City). The importation of enslaved Africans directly from Africa, as well as from South America and the Caribbean, altered the cultural map of Dutch North America—most evidently in public celebrations such as Pinkster.

When the Dutch lost control of their mainland North American colony to the British in 1664, slavery had already taken root in New England and the Middle Colonies. Although now populated with predominantly British settlers, Dutch families and Africans continued to observe Pinkster in the region. In the mid-18th century, the African-born population in New York increased significantly, coinciding with their participation in Pinkster. As dramatized by the writer James Fenimore Cooper in his novels *Spy* (1823) and *Satanstoe* (1845), African Americans dominated “pinkster frolics” in New York by the early 19th century.



An 1803 description of the Pinkster festival celebrated in Albany, New York, proves instructive in revealing the African transformation of a Dutch holiday into a distinctly African American cultural product. According to contemporaneous reports, African Americans patrolled the streets of Albany the week before Pinkster, during which time residents could hear the beating of drums. This activity coupled with the encampment of Pinkster Hill by enslaved Africans signaled the advent of Pinkster. On the actual day of the festival, the Monday after Pinkster, residents (both black and white) of the city and the surrounding countryside gathered at the hill to witness and participate in the festival. The white audience amounted to spectators who came to watch the “Negroes” frolic. However, the black on-lookers were more often than not active participants in the festivities.

The Africans altered the hill, a site where public hangings took place, by constructing arbors of bushes and branches and adorned with azaleas (also known as the Pinkster Blummachee) in the form of an amphitheatre. The use of bushes to construct these coverings harkened back to West African cultural practices. In the arbors revelers could find a variety of foodstuffs and spirits. The celebration included sports, games, and dancing. The African king, referred to as the “captain-general and commander in chief of the pinkster boys,” presided over the events. As a rule, the king had to be African-born, and he usually traced his lineage back to one of the ethnic groups on the so-called Guinea Coast—the west coastal region of Africa from present-day Sierra Leone to Benin. The most famous king was King Charles (aka King Charley or Carolus Africanus Rex).

King Charles, like his African subjects, dressed in a manner that set him apart from the white revelers. The king wore a flamboyant outfit: a British brigadier’s red jacket of ankle-length, trimmed with gold lace; yellow buckskins; blue stockings; and black shoes with gleaming silver buckles. A hat, also trimmed with gold lace, complemented the ensemble. The African participants wore vibrantly colored cloths emblematic of their African heritages. Although King Charles wore European-style clothing in mockery of the defeated British, his identity as an African was unquestionable to the active and passive participants. Similarly, the clothing of the African-descended population bespoke their connection to the land of their ancestors.

It was not simply the raiment of the Africans that reflected the transformation of the Dutch holiday, but the

content of the celebration as well. Three central components of African American culture—songs, oration, and dance—infused the fête. Orators and songstresses performed in a variety of African languages, of which the white audience would have had little to no knowledge. Such practices revealed not only the polyglot nature of the African-descended population but also the insular messages of the songs and speeches. The lyrics and words were meant to be understood by those in the black community with cultural memories of West Africa. In addition to the oral tradition, the somatic or bodily performance in dance reflected the African provenance of the festival. Most noted by spectators was the “Toto” or “Guinea dance” characterized by gesticulations alien to the European and white colonial dance forms. Criticized by whites as either “lewd” or “indecent,” this dance unabashedly proclaimed the enslaved Africans’ desire to tap into their African roots. Thus, the dance itself was an act of resistance to white attempts to diffuse and negate African cultural retentions. Clothing, dance, song, speech, material culture, food—all affirmed the African-derived nature of the Pinkster experience.

On the eve of the Albany Common Council’s decision to ban the Pinkster festival in 1811, Africans continued to celebrate the holiday according to their own dictates. Although the festivities themselves became increasingly commercialized and child-oriented (in terms of audience), the content of the performances changed little. Although white children and their parents may have interpreted the African king as an Uncle Remus figure (the wise storyteller) for their own amusement, the African American population revered him as an important figure in their community. The secularization of Pinkster, though perhaps viewed as blasphemous or at best a championing of a world turned upside down, allowed blacks to create their own cultural space and tradition in New York. It was this exercising of black autonomy that alarmed the council most, despite white protestations that the festival promoted immorality, which led to the dismantling of Pinkster celebrations in the city. As in Albany, by the 1820s, Pinkster had disappeared from the African American cultural landscape in the North. This celebration was supplanted by abolition parades and General Training Day (the parade of black Revolutionary War veterans).

Scholars continue to debate to what extent African cultural patterns influenced the formation of African American culture. Analyses of Pinkster are not exempt from the

controversy over retention, syncretism, and borrowing in the African American tradition. Clearly Pinkster had its roots in Dutch culture, but through the process of cultural contact, it ceased to be something purely “Dutch.” Indeed, the absence of whites in performance roles and the relegation to them as spectators signaled the processes by which whites slowly acculturated to African American ritual. It is not clear why or how the African king emerged as the symbolic figure of the Pinkster boys. However, historic evidence suggests that African determination rather than Dutch colonial paternalism was responsible for the reinvention of Pinkster as an African American celebration.

See also: Dutch New Netherland; Middle Colonies

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## Poisonings

Throughout the history of slavery in the Americas, and especially in the 18th century, enslaved Africans drew on indigenous African, European, and Native American cultural and religious knowledge to resist the conditions of slavery

through the use of poisons and other deadly substances. Victims of poisoning were not only white masters and overseers; more often, they were other enslaved people or animals. Although many poisons were made from deadly substances, such as arsenic, ground glass, or toxic plants, poisoners also sought to inflict harm by manipulating the supernatural through religious rituals and conjuring. Whether magical or material, whites and blacks used the term “poisoning” to describe a range of activities and substances designed to injure their target. One of many tools creatively used to resist enslavement, poisons were also employed by slaves to exact power, express frustration, punish wrongdoers, and wield social control.

The practice of poisoning took hold as a form of slave resistance because it proved to be an effective tool for slaves to retaliate against whites and to gain positions of power in their own communities. Though African religious and cultural practices did include the use of poisons and harmful magic, it was the particular conditions of slavery that led to poisoning’s popularity. Because slaves were responsible for agriculture, livestock, and food preparation, their daily work gave them access to goods that could be poisoned or could deliver poison. Thus, rather than poison slaveholders, slaves often used poison to kill livestock. Poisoning livestock was safer than killing whites but still undermined white authority and delivered a financial blow. As the animal’s caretakers, slaves could portray poisonings as sickness or epidemic. Furthermore, slaves sometimes poisoned or killed livestock when their own food supplies were meager as a way to procure meat that would be rejected by whites for fear of disease.

It is important to remember, however, that poisonings were targeted not only at those outside of the slave community. Intra-black poisonings dominate reports and illustrate the complex conditions of slavery. As with any community, tensions existed between slaves. Whether those conflicts occurred in the Americas or originated from individual or national conflicts in Africa, poisons were one of the few weapons available to slaves looking to harm or kill each other. Intra-black poisonings also occurred when individuals were perceived as threats to the slave community. Slaves, particularly domestic slaves, who were favored by masters, who gave information to whites, or who collaborated with whites were likely targets. In this way, poison-induced death or sickness was a form of social control intended to discourage slaves from cooperating with masters and

eliminate individuals who were a threat. In addition, these actions undermined masters by exacting financial loss.

Though noxious substances were used throughout the Americas to harm people and animals, reports of poisonings also document a pervasive belief that Africans and natives effectively used magic and conjuring to produce sickness and death. The term “poisoning” was used just as frequently to describe these supernatural events. In some ways, the threat of supernatural harm was more unsettling to potential victims because it was quite difficult to detect or prevent the ill effects of magic. Many whites had little doubt about Africans’ inherently devilish dispositions and easily believed that their slaves were able to harm them using these powers. Religious leaders, often referred to as Obeah men and women, found themselves in powerful social positions. Often individuals who had recently lived in Africa, Obeah practitioners were said to have the power to make someone invincible, cure diseases, resurrect the dead, and cause harm to anyone they wished. These religious experts possessed knowledge of poisons, whether magical or material, and offered their services through reciprocal exchange. In the slave and white communities, known Obeah practitioners were feared and revered. Whites, apprehensive of an Obeah leader’s power to organize slaves in rebellion, cause harm, provide leadership, and transmit knowledge, attempted to identify and remove an Obeah man from their labor force.

Historical documents illustrate clearly that slaves used poisons; however, it is unlikely that poisonings occurred as frequently as they were reported. Living in fear of their slaves’ religious and worldly powers, whites were apt to attribute sickness, death, and other destructive events to poisonings or malevolent religious activity. It was even believed that the Obeah practitioner could slowly dispense poison from afar and, therefore, mimic the natural progression of sickness. In this way, whites’ obsession with poisoning was largely self-sustaining. As whites accepted and shared stories of slave revolts and poisonings, they simultaneously reinforced the power of Obeah leaders in the eyes of whites and Africans. Rumors of potential poisonings or curses could send an entire white population into panic, and in many cases, dozens of slaves were punished or killed for their alleged involvement. Some communities even passed laws mandating that slaves’ quarters be searched regularly in the interest of public safety. Even as late as 1826, when reports of slave poisonings had almost disappeared, nearly

30 slaves accused of poisoning were brought to trial in Martinique, an island in the French Caribbean.

Though reports of poisonings by slaves occurred all across the Americas, they were most pronounced in the Caribbean, where slavery was particularly harsh, slaves vastly outnumbered Europeans, African cultural and religious practices survived, and contact with natives provided information about indigenous poisons. Until the end of the Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century, the Caribbean was a major economic center of the New World, and most African slaves brought into the Americas entered through Caribbean ports. As slaves were taken from the Caribbean and sold throughout the Americas, knowledge about poisons and the religious practices associated with poisonings spread. Of course, differing conditions of enslavement and slave population sizes affected the ways this knowledge was used in new environments.

Accounts of poisonings during slavery are a fascinating blend of fantasy and fact. As enslaved Africans adjusted to life in the New World, poisonings—and the threat of poisonings—were a way to exert control on a world that was profoundly uncontrollable. By disrupting operations, undermining discipline, challenging white power, and exerting agency, poisoners posed a threat that went to the foundations of colonial order. Whether used to punish whites, gain social power, or produce fear, Africans poisoned, threatened poisoning, and took credit for poisonings as a means of exerting agency and resisting enslavement. Of course, the cultural drama surrounding poisoning did not always favor slaves, given that white fears of black power led to false accusations and increased supervision, punishments, and paranoia. By the beginning of the 19th century, a decline in the Atlantic slave trade paralleled a decline in reported poisonings. As the slave trade became a domestic affair, African Americans turned toward different forms of religious and social resistance.

*See also:* New York Conspiracy of 1741; Pritchard, Gullah Jack; Slave Resistance

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## Prince Hall Masonry

The African American Masonic order known as Prince Hall Masonry was established in the United States in 1787 under a British Masonic charter and takes its name from Prince Hall, a former Boston slave who obtained his freedom around 1770. An ardent patriot, a veteran of the American Revolution, and an active abolitionist, Hall found it necessary to take an unusual route to establish this brotherhood organization for African Americans.

Hall established the first brotherhood organization for African Americans in Boston in the 1770s, under the name of the African Grand Lodge of North America. Locally, it was called the Prince Hall Masons. In 1775, he had applied to the Boston Masonic Lodge for membership and was rejected on the basis of his African ancestry. As a result, Hall petitioned a British lodge associated with British army troops then occupying Boston for membership. Hall and several other free men of color in Boston were then initiated into the Irish Army Lodge #441. Even after the American Revolution, Hall was unable to gain a full charter for the African Lodge through Masonic orders in the United States. In 1784, Hall obtained a limited license by a British order to establish African Lodge #1, with Hall as its first grand master. Hall turned to the same British order for help once again in 1787 when the British granted a full charter for the African Lodge #459, and in 1791, Hall became the provincial grand master of North America. With his new authority, Hall began to authorize black lodges in other American cities, including New York, Philadelphia, and Providence. The Prince Hall Masonic orders worked to improve personal, interpersonal, and community relationships skills—as well as to promote tolerance, charity, and improve the welfare of all.

In Boston, the African Meeting House, the African Society, and the African Lodge worked closely on social issues to better the lives of African Americans. As Prince Hall Masonry began to expand, the groups worked alongside

Methodist congregations as well as other benevolent aid societies to further social causes on behalf of both free and enslaved blacks. To a great extent, the causes reflected those that their founder, Prince Hall, had begun to fight upon establishing his personal freedom prior to the American Revolution.

Upon becoming free, Prince Hall had become an activist almost immediately as he, along with others, petitioned the Massachusetts Colonial Legislature, urging them to end slavery in the state. His philosophy borrowed from the same rhetoric used by the founding fathers who were pushing for independence from the Crown—natural rights. In his determination to effect change, Hall established two modes of attack. The first mode involved direct activism, such as petitioning the legislature—he challenged the existing order and protested for specific change. Hall's other method employed to create change was to work through institutional development—using organizations such as the Masons, churches, and other voluntary associations.

Prince Hall used his Masonic organization to promote community-building activities. Besides speaking out against slavery and violence to blacks and promoting rights for free Africans, Hall used his position (first as "worshipful master" and later as "grand master") as a platform to fight for education for black children, citing that free people of color were taxed as were white citizens, thereby qualifying black children for public education. He eventually established a school in his own home.

By 1786, Prince Hall and his Masonic Orders began to demonstrate their support of the fledgling United States and to establish the place of free Africans within the new system. Hall went as far as offering assistance to the government in putting down Shays Rebellion. The government rejected their offer. The government also rejected Hall's petition for funding the "repatriation" of African Americans to Africa, utilizing their own government and structure once settled—one of the earliest expressions of colonization to come from a major African American leader.

By Hall's death in 1807, black Masonic orders were spread throughout cities in the Northeast and the Midwest, and many stable orders existed in the Upper South. Many African lodges were casually referred to as "Prince Hall" orders during Hall's lifetime; many groups officially changed their name in his honor after his passing. Some orders have merged into the white American Masonic structure, some still hold British charters, and many are independent

organizations without an official affiliation with either country's Masonic orders.

See also: Black Fraternal Societies; Hall, Prince

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## Pryor, Richard

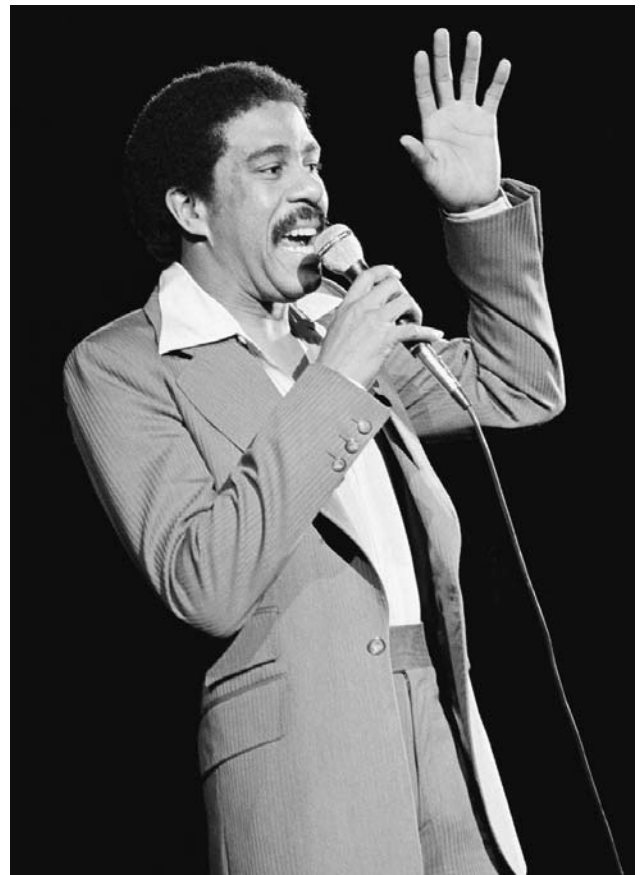
Richard Pryor (1940–2005) began his comedic career with relatively race-neutral comedy modeled after his idol Bill Cosby, but he eventually brought an African American folk sensibility tinged with a sometimes foul-mouthed vulgarity to his humor. His stage act often drew on the pathos of the African American working class and the dispossessed, such as pimps, prostitutes, and winos, in an overt and unapologetic way. His comedic styling opened up African American language and customs to the American mainstream. An article in *Ebony* magazine written in 2006, said that Pryor mirrored the black condition without exploiting it and that his comedy contributed to the evolution of a true black humor in the United States (*Ebony*, February 2006).

Initially, his comedic style after a self-imposed exile in California's Bay Area was considered black hipster chic. However, Pryor's outrageous stage persona and unique style of looking at the world eventually exerted a lasting influence on the nation's humor and cultural life. At the time of his death from a heart attack on December 11, 2005, news outlets across the country noted that Pryor's comedy had given numerous entertainers, including Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams, Chris Rock, and Steve Martin, license to inject social commentary into their comedy, acting, or art.

Richard Franklin Lenox Thomas Pryor III was born on December 1, 1940, in Peoria, Illinois. His father, Leroy "Buck" Pryor, was a pimp; his mother, Gertrude Thomas Pryor, was a prostitute; and his grandmother who raised him, Marie Carter, was a madam who ran a brothel.

Although Pryor's parents were not married when Richard was born, they did marry briefly three years later, but from an early age, he was left in the care and custody of his father's mother at the brothel on north Washington Street. The *Official Biography of Richard Pryor* says that at age six, he was raped by a teenage neighbor and was later molested by a Catholic priest during catechism. His home life was not much better. He was later molested again as a teenager by one of the brothel's customers and allegedly witnessed his mother performing sexual acts for money with the town's mayor. Many of those closest to him attribute his legendary problems with booze, sex, and alcohol to his inability to escape the traumas of his early life.

Bishetta D. Merritt says in her profile of Pryor for the *Museum of Broadcast Communications* that his public performing career began in high school when a teacher convinced him to stop cutting and disrupting classes by giving him the opportunity to perform his comedy routine once a week for his classmates. Later, Pryor dropped out of high



Comedian Richard Pryor performs at the Hollywood Bowl on September 19, 1977, in Los Angeles, California. (AP Photo/Lennox McLendon)

school and enlisted in the army, and when he was dishonorably discharged for allegedly stabbing another soldier in a fight, he began playing in small strip and jazz clubs along the infamous “chittlin’ circuit” throughout the Midwest. The earlier phases of his notoriety found him playing clubs in New York as the opening act for Bob Dylan and Richie Havens among others, but his routines did not contain the razor’s-edge social commentary for which he would later become famous. It was not until after a two-year hiatus spent in exile in the politically charged atmosphere of Berkeley, California, hanging out with such iconic figures as Ishmael Reed and Huey P. Newton, reading the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and observing people in bars and clubs and on street corners, that he returned to the stage.

This new Pryor no longer mimicked the clean-cut Cosby’s image. In his *Washington Post* obituary, Mel Watkins says that Pryor’s body language conveyed the ambivalence—at once belligerent and defensive—of the African American male’s provisional stance in society. His monologues evoked the passions and foibles of all segments of black society, including working-class, churchgoing people and prostitutes, pimps, and hustlers. He began to create side-splitting comedy out of blatant racism, sex, and his bizarre upbringing in a house of prostitution in his native Peoria, Illinois.

Eventually, his popularity skyrocketed, and his career as a stand-up comedian expanded to that of television and film star. Pryor appeared in, wrote, or directed a variety of films, including the following: *The Busy Body* (1967), *Wild in the Streets* (1968), *The Green Berets* (1968), *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972), *Car Wash* (1977), *Superman* (1983), and *Brewster’s Millions* (1985). Throughout his career, he won five Grammy Awards and one Emmy. In 1998, he was awarded the Kennedy Center’s Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

On December 11, 2005, Richard Pryor died after a lengthy battle against multiple sclerosis.

*See also:* Cosby, Bill; Poitier, Sidney

*Raymond Janifer*

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## Quadroon

The word “quadroon” comes from the Spanish word *cuarteron*, which was a racial category given to people with one-quarter, or one *cuarto*, of black ancestry. With the rise of the Atlantic slave trade during the 16th and 17th centuries, many people of African and European descent engaged in sexual acts that produced mulatto offspring, or children of mixed race. Most European lawmakers, in both Africa and North America, looked down on such activities as “shameful” and “unnatural.” Ultimately, colonial leaders enacted miscegenation laws that forbade or limited sexual interaction and marriage between people of different races. Many of these laws remained intact into the 20th century.

Although people of European and African descent sometimes chose to develop unions, more often, white slaveholders forcibly engaged in sexual intercourse with enslaved women. This combination of factors produced a diverse spectrum of racial categories and skin colors. Many “free people of color,” as they came to be known, established communities in urban areas in both the North and the South. Free people of color might be quadroons, octoroons (one-eighth black), or any other percentage of blackness, but they were almost always considered black by society’s standards. After the American Revolution, many people of European descent, particularly in the South, began to equate whiteness with freedom and blackness with slavery. Though it was sometimes possible for people of African descent to “pass” as white, the emerging tensions between the North and South compelled many white slaveholders to insist on a strict legal separation based on race.

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, emancipated people of African descent still experienced the burden of racial categorization. Segregation laws were the most

poignant example of the U.S. government's unwillingness or inability to treat people of all races with equal consideration. Even after the Civil Rights movement, racial categories such as "quadroon" still shape the way some people think about human differences.

*See also:* Amalgamation; Miscegenation

*Michael Pasquier*

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## **Ragtime**

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Ragtime is a popular musical genre originated by African Americans that emerged in the United States during the late 19th century. One set of the genre's roots resides in the African American work songs and spirituals from the American South. Ragtime was first prominent during the years 1897–1919 and was notably associated with composer Scott Joplin. The genre of ragtime was considered by some to be an early form of jazz, and although also considered by many to be primarily composed for the piano (i.e., instrumental, ragtime also existed in vocal form.

Classic piano ragtime compositions were composed mostly of three or four themes. Each theme was conceived to be a complete, independent, 16-measure musical entity, with the measures of each theme combined and recombined in order to produce sound. Melodically and structurally, ragtime compositions resemble the march. In addition to the march, the foxtrot, cakewalk, "coon-song," and various African rhythms have each served as a source for early ragtime compositions.

Most ragtime compositions were distinguished by their elaborate syncopated rhythms. The act of musical syncopation involves placing an emphasis on a usually unstressed beat. In ragtime music, primarily delaying or advancing a melodic note accomplishes syncopation. The important types of syncopations within ragtime music are "tied," "untied," and "augmented." Syncopation is an enduring, distinctive element of ragtime music, but syncopation is by no means the primary defining element. Although there are many ragtime compositions that do not contain syncopated

rhythms, syncopation and syncopated rhythms are defining features of African American music.

The syncopation of ragtime music served as a starting point for some who were curious of the origin of the word "ragtime." The elaborate syncopated rhythms led some to believe that the word "ragtime" is descriptive of the type of physical reaction one had to the elaborate rhythms. Others proposed that the word "rag" was descriptive of the clothing of its performers, with "rag-time" denoting the fact that this music was played by African Americans individuals and bands from the American South. Consequently, the active use and interpretation of the word "ragtime" implied that it was time for the "ragged" entertainment of African American ragtime bands. What is certain, however, is that the dynamic yet unclear origins of the word reflected the African American social, cultural, political, and economic reality of the times from which it emerged.

The popularity of ragtime music in a time of intense American racism was cause for concern to some. Some critics of ragtime asserted that the music appealed to the worst of human tastes because the content of the early tunes reflected the African American people as racialized social products of the times. Ragtime was thus viewed as an extension of the "coon song" and thus was not appealing to mainstream white America because it allegedly represented a musical production of the lowest cultural kind.

Being an African American invention, ragtime music was further derogated because of that fact alone. Further, piano ragtime music was derogated because it first found life in social establishments not very respected by mainstream white America, further providing impetus for criticism of the genre as a legitimate art form. Ragtime music, however, would enjoy sustained popularity for this very reason.

The sustained popularity of ragtime was partly due to the creative ways in which African Americans allowed the genre to expand and become inclusive. African Americans composed and performed ragtime, but they also allowed other racial groups and women to compose and perform their art, allowing for a sustained longevity of the complex and elaborate art form in various derivations.

Ragtime music was innovative, complex, rich, and textured; it was a sophisticated way through which African Americans critiqued the social, political, and economic realities of the times. Ragtime provided a medium through which African Americans could communicate to each

other and to the world; ragtime communicated ideas about liberty, freedom, love, community, and family. Its elaborate melodic and compositional makeup stood as testament to the ingenuity of African Americans; it stood as a reminder of eternal African American inner strength, resilience, persistence, and genius.

Ragtime music has endured over the years and most recently has experienced a renewed scholarly interest with the African American musical community. Some important ragtime compositions include “Harlem Rag,” “Frog Legs Rag,” “Sunflower Slow Drag,” and “Maple Leaf Rag.”

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Jazz

Bruce Ormond Grant

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## Ring Shout

The ring shout is a kind of holy dance in which the participants move counterclockwise in a circle, hardly lifting their feet from the floor, knees bent, leaning slightly forward from the hips, and making movements expressive of the lyrics sung by a “leader” and “basers,” or chorus, in call-and-response fashion, propelled by cross-rhythms produced by foot stomping, hand clapping, and often a “sticker,” a person who beats a broom handle or other stick on the wood floor. The shout usually begins slowly and gradually builds in intensity. Sometimes a shout might last an hour or more and a shout service for hours. Drums, common to the ring dances of Africa and elsewhere in the African Diaspora, were usually absent from the North American ring shout, their use by slaves having been forbidden. The persistence and complexity of the African rhythmic base was maintained through these other percussive techniques.

Once found throughout the slave states, the shout survived longest along the rice coast stretching from the North Carolina–South Carolina border to north Florida. This was an area with a greater concentration of African Americans and one in which a number of the slaves at the time of emancipation were African-born. It was thought that the ring shout had completely disappeared in North America until 1980, when a surviving shout group was discovered in coastal Georgia. This group organized themselves as the McIntosh County Shouters for festival performances. The McIntosh County Shouters are documented in sound recordings, videos, and a scholarly book.

Slave owners sometimes tolerated but often were unaware of the shouts. Many clergy, black and white, disapproved of this mode of worship that was of such obvious African origin; they often referred to the shout as “heathenish” or “barbaric.” For these reasons, slaves, and later freed blacks, often performed the shout ritual in secrecy. Though syncretized with Christian themes and motifs, the ring shout stemmed from sacred dance and ritual of West Africa—its counterpart still to be commonly found in Jamaican Afro-Christian cults, in Haitian Voodoo, and throughout the Afro-Caribbean culture area.

There exist a few descriptions of the shout made by white observers prior to emancipation, but most descriptions of the shout are postbellum, including numerous ones collected in the Federal Writers’ Project ex-slave narratives. According to Dena Epstein, the first known description of the ring shout dates from 1845—Sir Charles Lyell’s description of slaves in coastal Georgia. The earliest use (1860) of the term “shout” was in an unidentified Englishman’s description from Beaufort, South Carolina. During Reconstruction, descriptions of the shout appeared more frequently.

In the 20th century, Robert W. Gordon published important descriptions of the shout in Georgia (1927) and South Carolina (1931). New Jersey native Lydia Parrish collected a number of shout songs in coastal Georgia in the decades prior to World War II, publishing them with descriptions and photographs of the shout in *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands* (1942). John and Alan Lomax recorded shouts as far west as Louisiana for the Library of Congress over a period of several decades. The Rosenbaums (Art and Margo Newmark) and Johann Buis published a study of the McIntosh County ring shout, complete with song texts, drawings, photographs, an ethnographic study



of the shouters, and a biographic profile of their leader, Lawrence McKiver, in their essential work, *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia* (1998). The Rosenbaum's book includes the most detailed and complete historical overview of the shout tradition and the most extensive Bibliography.

The shout should be understood as community dance and ritual rather than in terms of the English word "shout." Of undoubted African origin, the shout as practiced by African Americans along the rice coast in the 20th century did not include actual vocalized shouting. Earlier accounts of the shout sometimes describe participants becoming possessed, shouting, and "falling out" of the circle. Rosenbaum suggested that this spirit possession was due to the influence of the Great Revival, but these instances are more likely reinterpretations of African spirit possession as is still found in the circular dancing of Afro-Caribbean religion. The term "shout" itself may have come from Africa: linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner suggested the word's origin could be found in the Arabic word *saut*—a term used to denote circular ritual movement as practiced in parts of Islamic western Africa. Rosenbaum and other 20th-century observers discovered a separate category of mostly religious-themed songs for the shout, "shout songs" or "running spirituals."

Historians such as Sterling Stuckey who have examined the shout primarily through the historical literature argue that spirituality was central to the ring dance. The ring shout has a connection to many different ring dances throughout West and West-Central Africa and can be found throughout the African Diaspora. Perhaps the most compelling spiritual connection is the ring shout's similarity to the Kongo cosmogram, which symbolizes the four major phases of the lifecycle—birth, adolescence, adulthood, and the afterlife. Thus, both the ring shout and the cosmogram were important symbols in African American culture that reflected the belief in the connection between the living and the ancestral worlds.

Because the ring shout had a distinctly African spiritual origin, the shout was typically held apart from the regular Christian worship service as a distinct activity, either after regular worship had concluded or as specially scheduled events. Participants were careful to never cross their legs because it was believed that to do so was dancing rather than shouting, of Satan rather than of God. Those who crossed their legs or danced too lasciviously were removed from the ring if not the building. The shout was also performed at

funerals and on secular occasions such as corn shuckings and post-harvest celebrations, and the lyrics were not always on sacred topics, but rather sometimes on demonstrably secular topics. To apply the premises of Euro-American religious thought to African American practice forces the latter into a false dichotomy of the sacred and secular that does not exist in traditional African and African Diasporan culture. The ring as symbol of community and respect for the ancestors is of many dimensions, reflecting both sacred and profane aspects of life.

Johann S. Buis identifies the underlying rhythm of the shout as the 3+3+2 pattern—the African rhythmic pattern that is the basis of African American music, from the blues, gospel, and jazz to all that followed. The tools of Western musical analysis are insufficient not only to study the rhythmic sophistication of African and African-derived music but also to study its characteristic nuance of tone. It is in these two dimensions that the ancestral spirituality of Africa survives in the ring shout and in its musical progeny: the popular music of black America.

In New Orleans, the ring shout was used in burial rituals, and the ring was straightened out to become the second line of jazz funerals. There is also evidence of the shout's influence in bop jazz and rhythm and blues hits, such as Paul Williams's "The Hucklebuck." The emergence of funk in mid-20th century was nothing less than a full-blown revival of the ring in modern garb.

The shout has also survived in secular dance. A number of observers have mentioned the shout's influence on the minstrel shows' "walk around" and "cake walk," as well as its adaptation into the Charleston. Floyd adds to these the breakdown, buzzard lope, and slow drag of the late 19th century on through the 20th century's black bottom and lindy hop, to the line dances of the late 20th century.

*See also:* Kongo Cosmogram; Slave Culture; Slave Religion

Fred J. Hay

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## Rogers, Joel Augustus

Joel Augustus (J. A.) Rogers (1880–1966) was a prolific self-trained historian, photo-anthropologist, novelist, and journalist who fluently spoke and read fluently four different languages (Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese). During his lifetime, Rogers did more to popularize African, African American, and African Diaspora history than any other American scholar in the 20th century. Rogers was born on September 6, 1880, in Negril, B.W.I., Jamaica, to Samuel Rogers and Emily Johnstone. As a child growing up in Jamaica's color class-consciousness, Rogers was taught by the British ruling class that unmixed black people were inferior to them and to biracial light-skinned colored blacks. Fortunately, Rogers, a light-skinned black Jamaican, found it very hard to believe such racist sentiments.

Before immigrating to the United States, Rogers served in the British Army with the Royal Garrison Artillery at Port Royal but was discharged because of a heart murmur. Shortly after arriving in New York on July 23, 1906, Rogers experienced his first taste of American racism when he was discriminated against at a small restaurant in Times Square, something he never forgot for the rest of his life. Rogers stayed briefly in New York and Canada before relocating to Chicago on July 4, 1908. In 1909, Rogers enrolled in the Chicago Art Institute, where he studied commercial art and worked as a Pullman porter during the summers from 1909 to 1919. Rogers tried to enroll at the University of Chicago but was denied entry because he did not possess a high school diploma. The irony of Rogers being denied entry to this prestigious institution is that Zonia Baber and George B. Foster, a couple of distinguished professors, were using his self-published novel *From "Superman" to Man* (1917)

in their classes. In fact, after finding out about Rogers's rejected application at the University of Chicago, Foster invited Rogers to lecture in one of his classes.

While living in Chicago, Rogers officially became a naturalized U.S. citizen on February 21, 1918. In 1921, Rogers relocated to Harlem, where he met and befriended Hubert Harrison (1883–1927), the Caribbean black radical and George Schulyer (1895–1977), journalist and satire novelist. New York and later Paris (late 1920s and various times afterward) became the two places where Rogers would live throughout his life, while doing research at important libraries, art galleries, museums, and cathedrals in America, Europe, and Africa. Even though Rogers never attained an academic degree, he was respected for his work in France and England. In 1930, he was elected to membership in the Paris Society of Anthropology, the oldest anthropological society in the world. In 1931, Rogers also gave a paper on "race mixing" at the International Congress of Anthropology in Paris, France, which was opened by President Paul Doumer (1857–1932) of the Third French Republic. To Rogers's surprise, his paper was later published in several French newspapers and the *London Times*. Roger also became a member of the American Geographical Society in 1945.

Rogers is mostly known for his historical writing on history and race, but he is rarely given credit for being an exceptional journalist. During the 1920s, Rogers became a newspaper columnist and reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *New York Amsterdam News* and wrote many essays and commentaries for *The Messenger Magazine*. Rogers worked for the *Pittsburgh Courier* from approximately 1923 to 1966. His weekly comic column, "Your History," which began in 1934, became a medium for popularizing African and African Diaspora history to the masses of African Americans throughout America. Rogers used the "Your History" column not only to disseminate history but also to popularize prominent contemporary people of African descent. In 1962, the "Your History" column name was changed to "Facts About the Negro." Rogers also wrote social commentaries in the *Pittsburgh Courier* titled "Rogers Says" and "History Shows."

As a newspaper correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Rogers became a household name among African Americans as an overseas newspaper correspondent. He wrote about his travels in Europe and Africa. During the late 1920s, and while living in Paris, he wrote a short-lived

column titled the “Paris Pepper Pot,” which covered race relations in France and how African Americans fared in Paris compared to America. The “Paris Pepper Pot” was also syndicated in the *New York Amsterdam News* and the *Chicago Defender*. In 1930, Rogers attended the coronation of Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, yet his most rewarding overseas job was going to Ethiopia in 1935 to cover the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936). Through the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Rogers was the only African American to report back firsthand accounts of war activities in Ethiopia.

After leaving in Ethiopia in 1936, Rogers traveled to Geneva to attend the League of Nations hearings on the Italo-Ethiopian war and reported through the *Courier* what the Leagues’ Committee of Thirteen had proposed to do about the war. A few days later, Rogers traveled to London and lectured before Sir Percy Vincent, Lord Mayor of London, and other British dignitaries about the crisis confronting the Ethiopians. After settling back in New York, Rogers became a major contributor and advisor for the Writers’ Program. As a historian and journalist, one of Rogers’s biggest compliments came from the American journalist and social critic H. L. Mencken, who paid Rogers \$500 to publish “The Negro in Europe” in the *American Mercury* (May 1930) and who in 1945 personally praised Rogers for writing his pioneering work about black and white miscegenation, *Sex and Race*.

As a self-trained historian, Rogers did pioneering archival historical research that many scholars today would classify as African Diaspora history. Rogers’s contribution to world history was so influential that, in 1954, he was presented with a gold medal at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria by Ethiopia’s Emperor Haile Selassie (Ras Tafari) in recognition of his contribution to the study of African history. Considering the handicaps of not having a research assistant and traveling throughout Europe, Africa, and America at his own expense without any philanthropic or institutional support, it is amazing that he accomplished as much as a scholar before he passed away in New York on March 26, 1966.

See also: African Diaspora; Harlem Renaissance; Woodson, Carter Godwin

Thabiti A. Asukile

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## Root Doctors

Root doctors, also known as rootworkers, were African American practitioners of magic and herbal medicine who appeared during the colonial and antebellum eras, partly in response to inadequate medical care and the injustices of slavery. The title “root doctor” refers to practitioners’ tendency to rely heavily on roots in their treatments. Historically, there have been two types of root doctors: those who also practiced magic and those who did not. For African American magic workers, known as conjurers or hoodoo doctors, treating illnesses with roots and herbs was merely part of their repertoire. Some root doctors, however, focused on healing without engaging in other activities commonly practiced by hoodoo doctors, such as fortune-telling and making luck charms.

In actual practice, the lines between the two categories of root doctors are blurry, especially before the late 19th century, when the efforts of black educators to eradicate so-called superstition from the black community succeeded in convincing many African Americans of conjure’s supposed backwardness. For example, early root doctors frequently saw their healing as a magical pursuit and relied on the aid of animistic spirits that purportedly inhabited the botanical and zoological elements that practitioners employed in their cures. The role of magic is best illustrated by the ailments that root doctors were called on to treat. Some were commonly recognized medical concerns, such as headaches or sore throats. Others, however, were clearly magical illnesses. Among the most common of the latter were reptilian inhabitants of the body, insanity brought on by curses, and locked bowels, a kind of terminal constipation.

Regardless of their acceptance or rejection of magic, root doctors possessed notable abilities to help with both physical and mental complaints. In the days before emancipation, when gaining access to medical professionals was difficult for many slaves, rootwork was a viable alternative. Among the slaves’ many herbal remedies were the use of horehound to treat colds, dried watermelon seeds to expel kidney stones, and mullein for swollen joints. After the demise of slavery, rootworkers survived as a comparatively inexpensive substitute for doctors. Of course, although some of the root doctors’ magic-based cures were no more medically efficacious than placebos, others have since been scientifically proven to have beneficial effects. Modern mental health care professionals have also pointed out that

rootwork could act as a form of psychological therapy as well, especially for those who believed that they were victims of evil magic. Some psychiatrists and psychologists have suggested that today's health care professionals should seek out root doctors to help treat African Americans who believe they are suffering from hoodoo curses.

On the other hand, rootworkers could also be a source of maladies. As the reputed existence of magical illnesses implies, some also practiced malevolent sorcery. Many examples of slaves employing magical "poisons" to harm their masters have survived. More recently, some African Americans have considered rootwork an effective method of eliminating enemies. Thus, although root doctors could cure such ailments as reptiles in one's body and locked bowels, they might have caused them in the first place.

*See also:* Conjure; Hoodoo; Slave Religion

Jeffrey Elton Anderson

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## Salt-Water Negroes

"Salt-water Negroes" is a derogatory term assigned to slaves who were brought from Africa, across the Atlantic Ocean, during the Atlantic slave trade. They were given this term to differentiate them from the American-born slaves. The "salt-water" part of the phrase is derived from the salty nature of the Atlantic Ocean waters, and the term was probably used by both white slave owners and American-born slaves. Some sources claim that American-born slaves used this term because they saw themselves as better than the newcomers, given that they were familiar with the functioning of the American system. However, other scholars have argued that such terminology was mainly a creation of the white slave owners, and if it was ever adopted by the slaves, it likely did not carry the same connotation. Further, they argue that American-born slaves held newcomers in high esteem because they represented the connection with

Africa, their common homeland, which those born in the Americas had never seen.

Regardless, most scholars agree that African-born slaves rejuvenated African American cultures in the New World and prevented Africa from fading from the minds of enslaved Africans. Moreover, they note that African-born slaves usually played a significant role in revolts and conspiracies, a fact that most white slave owners recognized as well. For example, after the eruption of the Stono rebellion in 1739, colonial officials deemed it prudent to reduce the numbers of Africans in the colony.

The influx of "salt-water" slaves did not stop until after the ban on the slave trade was put in place in 1808. Meanwhile, their influx contributed greatly to the demographic pattern of slaves in the New World. This continuous influx gave the African Diaspora its distinctive feel and influenced the formation of African American identity.

*See also:* Atlantic Slave Trade

Karen W. Ngonya

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## Sambo

"Sambo" is a derogatory racial stereotype that ridicules and belittles African Americans; it was created by the slave-owning plantocracy of the antebellum South to characterize the typical slave and, thereby, justify the institution of slavery. Sambo was a caricature rather than an apt characterization; it portrayed the slave as happy-go-lucky, docile, childish, and dependent on and loyal to his master, yet lazy and irresponsible. The happy-go-lucky, docile, and loyal aspects of this highly distorted image suggested that

slaves were contented with their lot. Sambo's alleged child-like, dependent, lazy, and irresponsible traits were invoked by the plantocracy to justify the bondage of infantile blacks to paternalistic white masters. In sharp contrast to the feared and hated brute or savage—a rival stereotype of the violent and sexually threatening black male that emerged in the Reconstruction era—the silly-acting Sambo was viewed as a lovable, if sometimes exasperating, character. Even as rival black stereotypes emerged, the Sambo stereotype persisted in Southern folklore as an example of black inferiority.

The Sambo stereotype crossed -over into mainstream American culture with the publication, in 1898, of Helen Bannerman's illustrated children's book, *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Sambo (often depicted as a tattered, grinning, watermelon-eating fool) and other "darky" images, such as the Coon, Mammy, Uncle, and Pickanniny, became mascots of the white supremacist South. These caricatures appeared ubiquitously on everyday items—for example, sugar bowls, saltshakers and other kitchen utensils, postcards, lawn statuettes, and business logos. They were symbols that reinforced white dominance and black subordination during the Jim Crow era. The offensive practice of publicly displaying such caricatures in the South continued into the late 20th century, gradually diminishing as a result of black protest. Many African Americans now collect such items as memorabilia of a painful yet never-to-be-forgotten past.

Boskin traces the etymology of the name Sambo either to the West African Mende and Vai languages, where the word means "shameful" or "disgraced," or to Hispanic and Portuguese sources, where *zambo* means "bow-legged" or "knock-kneed" and denotes a person who resembles a monkey. Boskin notes that Sambo, as a proper name given to slaves, appears in records as early as the 1600s. It gained increasing popularity in the 1700s and 1800s, eventually becoming a nickname used by whites to designate any anonymous slave. Ultimately, Sambo became a generalized racial slur that was hurled at any African American.

Sambo made a dramatic appearance in the hallowed halls of academia when the historian Stanley Elkins unleashed a firestorm of scholarly debate and criticism with the publication of a controversial thesis concerning the impact of slavery on the African American personality. Elkins argued that Sambo was a real historical personality type, not a fictive caricature, and that the docile (non-rebellious),

infantile Sambo was the most prevalent personality type occurring among African American slaves. Furthermore, he asserted that this dysfunctional Sambo personality type was uniquely the product of the oppressive "total institution" or "closed system" of North American slavery and that the Sambo type did not occur in the relatively "open" (i.e., less oppressive, less restrictive) slave systems of Latin American and the Caribbean, where normal human aspirations for freedom resulted in long-standing traditions of slave revolt. He stressed, however, that a comparable prevalent dysfunctional docile personality type did occur among Jews interred in Nazi concentration camps, which were similar in oppressive structure to North American slave plantations.

Scholars contended with Elkins on several issues, including the following: (1) a reinterpretation of historical evidence minimizing his crucial distinctions between North American and Latin America slavery, slave docility, and rebelliousness; (2) the existence of other prevalent African American slave personality types, most notably a rebellious "Nat" (i.e., Nat Turner) type; (3) the evidence of a "Quashee" personality type, analogous to Sambo, in the Caribbean slave system; (4) the evidence that Sambo was a dissemblance or masquerade, not an internalized personality type; and (5) the questionable analogy between North American plantation slavery and Nazi concentration camps.

Television and film provide further instances of, or commentary on, Sambo and other distorted black images. Most notable are the banned 1950s sitcom *Amos 'n' Andy*; the PBS documentaries *Ethnic Notions* by Marlon Riggs and *The Black Caricature* by Deidre Leake Butcher; and Spike Lee's film *Bamboozled* (2002). Haile Gerima's film *Sankofa* (1993), focusing on the dynamic transformation of the slave personality from docility to rebelliousness, presents a critical and corrective commentary on the controversial Elkins thesis.

*See also:* Slave Resistance

*Yusuf Nuruddin*

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## Sanchez, Sonia

Sonia Sanchez (1934–) is an author and activist who played a significant role in the black arts movement and continues to agitate for black civil rights in the 21st century. Born Wilsonia Benita Driver in Birmingham, Alabama, Sonia Sanchez's parents were Wilson L. and Lena (Jones) Driver. She has one sibling, Pat, and her mother died while attempting to deliver twins when Sonia was one year old. Sonia and Pat were raised by their paternal grandmother and relatives until Sanchez was six.

In the late 1930s, Birmingham, Alabama, was segregated, and African Americans routinely had to endure violence, ridicule, cruelty, and continuing harassment at the hands of whites. One day, while Sanchez was riding the bus with her aunt Pauline, the bus continued to become crowded with white passengers, pushing the African American riders to the back of the bus. The bus driver told all of the African American passengers to exit the bus, and when Sanchez's aunt refused to get off the bus, the driver threatened to physically remove her. Sanchez's aunt spit on the driver and was arrested. Sanchez's family felt that her aunt had to leave Birmingham that night in order for the rest of the family to stay there without harassment.

By 1943, Sanchez had lost her mother and her grandmother and had consistently dealt with the annals of racism and white supremacy in the South. It was also within that same year that Sanchez and her sister Pat had to move to Harlem, New York, to live with their father and his third

wife. These life-changing events became the catalyst for Sanchez to begin writing. The library became a regular field trip for Sanchez, and a black female librarian introduced her to a book called *Negro Poetry*. Sanchez continued to study and write using the pen, as opposed to her voice, to express her deepest feelings about white supremacy, black unity, and the relationships between black women and men.

Sanchez earned a bachelor's degree from Hunter College. Later, Sanchez received a postgraduate degree, studying poetry with Louise Bogan, at New York University in 1958. This is also where she formed a writers group with other poets from in and around Greenwich Village. Other members of the poetry group included Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Askia Muhammad Touré. Newly divorced from Puerto Rican immigrant Albert Sanchez, Sanchez began to perform her first poetry readings at local bars and clubs. Her group wanted to take its poetry to places that it was not normally heard. While Sanchez worked with this particular group, she was able to publish her first poem.

Shortly thereafter, Sanchez, Haki R. Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), Nikki Giovanni, and Etheridge Knight formed the "Broadside Quartet," a group of black poets known for their strident political beliefs. This same group produced Broadside Press, an African American-owned and operated press. Sanchez and the other members of the group often put their royalties back into the press to continue publishing and investing the company. The group held the conviction that African American arts were a needed form of expression within the larger African American community. Sanchez went on to marry Etheridge Knight and later had three children with him, Anita, Morani Neusi, and Mungu Neusi, although the marriage ultimately ended in divorce.

With the unfolding Black Nationalist movement in the United States, the tones and sentiments within Sanchez's poetry began to change. Her ontological stance began to take on the rhetoric and energy of the budding nationalist movement in the United States and abroad. For the first time, Sanchez's as well as other African American poets' work began to sing the praises of Malcolm X, to call for African Americans to begin to reclaim and reconnect with their African heritage, and to allow African Americans to conceive of a world and life without the presence of white supremacy and fear. One of the most intricate revolutionary stances Sanchez adopted in her poetry was her rejection of Western academic jargon and her embracing of the "language of the streets." Sanchez often used lowercase letters,

hyphens, different spellings, and different phonetic structures in her poetry, which made her poetry stand out for its originality and passion for an alternative way of writing.

Sanchez also had a long career as an academic, helping form the first Black Studies program in the nation at San Francisco State in 1965. She later went on to teach at the University of Pittsburgh and became an assistant professor at Rutgers from 1970 to 1971. Separating from the Broadside Quartet, Sanchez reformulated as an independent artist, focusing more on black women and continuing to teach courses at Manhattan Community College and City College of the City University of New York.

In 1972, Sanchez went on to become an associate professor at Amherst College. Being that Sanchez was a poet, academic, and activist, she struggled to maintain her public

and personal life. Her radical views, and her subsequent arrest at a strike at Manhattan Community College, caused Sanchez to lose employment in the academic realm. In 1977, Sanchez moved out of New York to settle in Philadelphia, where she still lives today. She obtained a job teaching at the University of Pennsylvania and later at Temple University, where she became the chair of the women's studies program.

Sanchez has delivered lectures and performed her poetry at more than 500 universities and colleges. Her books of poetry, *Homegirls* and *Handgrenades*, won an American Book Award in 1985, and in 1997, *Does Your House Have Lions*, which was about her stepbrother, who died of AIDS complications, was nominated for both an NAACP Image Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her ability to talk about such hard-hitting issues as poverty, racism, sexism, and rage has earned Sonia Sanchez the reputation of one of the most revered and accomplished poets of our time.

*See also:* Black Arts Movement; X, Malcolm

Kaila A. Story



Poet Sonia Sanchez speaks during a news conference at the opening of the "Freedom's Sisters" exhibition at the Cincinnati Museum Center, March 14, 2008. The Smithsonian traveling exhibit tells the story of 20 African American women who helped shape the Civil Rights movement. (AP Photo/David Kohl)

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## Shakur, Tupac

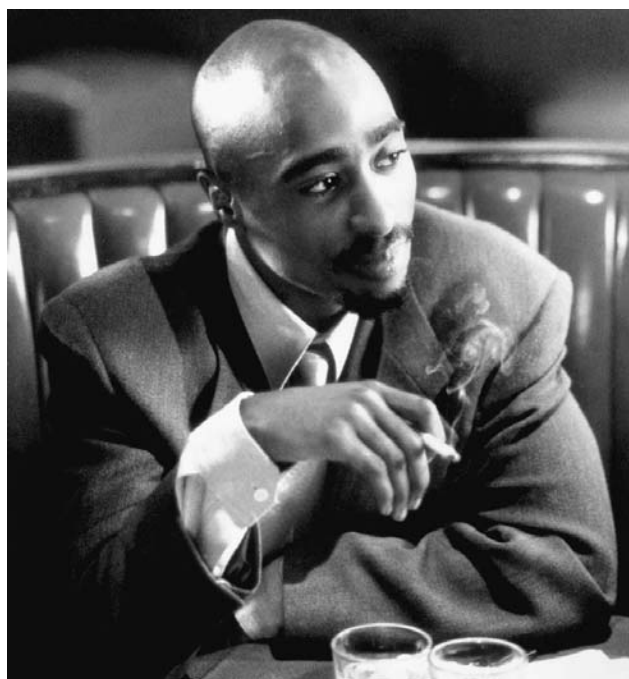
Tupac "2Pac" Amaru Shakur (1971–1996) was a prominent American rapper and actor who, though born and raised in New York and Baltimore, became synonymous with West Coast "gangsta" rap during the 1990s.

Born Lesane Parish Crooks on June 16, 1971, his name was quickly changed to Tupac Amaru Shakur by his mother, prominent Black Panther activist Afeni Shakur. Many critics and scholars have noted the contradictory or

fragmented nature of Tupac's music, namely the tension between sensitive social and political awareness and the need to be a hardened "gangsta." Through the continuous release of posthumous albums, and the establishment of the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation by his mother, Tupac's legacy has been profound. The intelligence, astute social commentary, and keen political awareness—all a product of his unique upbringing—combined with the swagger, continued legal troubles, and violence of his public persona, have all contributed to the mythologizing of Tupac into a black folk hero or martyr for the hip-hop generation. Like no other musician save Elvis, the mythology surrounding Tupac has given rise to the belief that he still lives.

Afeni Shakur, a member of the Black Panther Party, became pregnant with Tupac while out on bail, having been arrested in April 1969, along with 20 other New York Black Panthers, for allegedly conspiring to bomb several New York locations, including police and train stations. Midway through her pregnancy, the bail was revoked, and she was again incarcerated. At trial, Afeni—though 8 months pregnant and lacking a high school diploma—acted as her own lawyer and succeeded in getting herself acquitted for lack of evidence.

Once out of jail, Afeni married fellow black revolutionary, Mutulu Shakur, who was later accused of orchestrating



*Tupac Shakur in a scene still from Gang Related (1997). (Photofest)*

a 1981 Brinks armored car robbery that left two New York policemen and a Brinks guard dead. Mutulu went underground for several years, maintaining his innocence, but was arrested in 1986 and found guilty of the robbery and attempting to break famed African American activist Assata Shakur out of prison.

With Mutulu on the run, Afeni and her children moved between Harlem and the Bronx during the 1970s and mid-1980s. Hip-hop was developing in the Bronx at this time, potentially offering Tupac his first exposure to the culture in which he would later become a legend. In 1983, Tupac enrolled in the Harlem-based 127th Street Ensemble theater group, where he played Travis in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun." That same year, Afeni Shakur was introduced to crack cocaine by her boyfriend "Legs," a gangster and street hustler. As a result, Afeni and her family spent many of the next few years living in homeless shelters while on welfare.

In 1985, Afeni moved her family to Baltimore, where Tupac enrolled in the Baltimore School for the Arts. In addition to studying jazz, ballet, and poetry, he continued acting and performed in various Shakespeare plays before landing the role of the Mouse King in "The Nutcracker." Tupac also began his rap career while in Baltimore. With his friend Dana "Mouse" Smith as his beatbox, Tupac began competing with the other kids in his school, quickly gaining recognition as one of the best. Around this time, he also wrote his first rhyme, inspired by the fatal shooting death of a friend, under the name MC New York. Despite his obvious poverty, Tupac used his significant charisma and sense of humor to parlay his connection to New York into a tough-guy reputation, adding a swagger and air of cool to his already-popular school persona. While at school, Tupac also first met Jada Pinkett (later wife of Will Smith), who would be a close friend until his death.

Afeni again moved her family in 1988, taking them to Marin City, California. In Marin City, a poor and predominantly African American section of the otherwise affluent Marin County, Tupac underwent one of the most painful parts of his life. Afeni's drug addiction grew worse, and Tupac became increasingly responsible for his family's well-being. Although he tried to stay involved in the performing arts, he eventually dropped out of high school, moved from his mother's house, and began selling drugs.

By the end of the 1980s, Tupac dropped MC New York in favor of his given name and was rapping with a local



group, “Strictly Dope.” In 1990, Tupac caught a break when he was hired as a roadie and backup dancer/rapper for the Oakland-based rap group Digital Underground. Tupac’s first appearance on a record came with Digital Underground’s 1991 album *This Is an EP Release*. While on tour, Tupac also read for the part of Bishop in Ernest Dickerson’s 1992 film *Juice*, landing the role and launching a short but successful acting career.

In November of 1991, Tupac released his debut solo album, *2Pacalypse Now*. The album reached number 13 on the *Billboard* R&B chart, eventually going gold, but quickly drew fire from politicians, police, and some African American leaders for its violent imagery and critique of law enforcement. Not all of the songs on this largely gangsta rap album were violent. “Brenda’s Got a Baby,” the socially aware story of a pregnant 12-year-old inspired by a newspaper article Tupac read, became one of the album’s most popular tracks.

Tupac released *Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z.* in 1993, which hit number 4 on the R&B charts before going platinum. The album was a blend of powerful social commentary and good-time music, as exemplified by the two hits, “Keep Ya Head Up” and “I Get Around,” which peaked on the pop charts at numbers 12 and 11, respectively. Following the earlier acclaim of *Juice*, in 1993 Tupac landed a role in John Singleton’s *Poetic Justice* alongside Janet Jackson, followed by a role in *Above the Rim* later that year. In 1994, after his near-fatal shooting and while imprisoned for sexual assault, Tupac released *Me Against the World*. Filled with new depth and emotion fueled by his shooting and ongoing legal troubles, the record was a success, debuting at number one on the U.S. charts and making him the first artist to have a number 1 record while incarcerated.

Though sentenced to four and a half years, Tupac was released on parole after serving eight months when he signed to Marion “Suge” Knight’s Death Row records and Knight posted a \$1.4 million bond. Having been productive in jail, Tupac’s next release was *All Eyes on Me*, hip-hop’s first two-disc album of original material. Debuting at number 1 on the charts, and going quintuple platinum by fall, *All Eyes on Me* represented a harder album, with Tupac unashamedly embracing his thug-icon status. It contained several popular singles, including the mega-hit “California Love,” and was quickly regarded as a classic example of gangsta rap style. After moving to Death Row, Tupac expressed a growing dissatisfaction with hip-hop and an

interest in pursuing acting full-time. In the summer of 1996, he starred in *Bullet* and began filming for *Gridlock’d* and *Gang Related*, the last two of which would be released after his death later that year.

At the time of his death, Tupac was recording his second Death Row album. Released eight weeks after he died, *Don Kiluminati: The 7 Day Theory* was widely seen as an attempt by Knight to exploit Tupac’s death. More significantly, it was released under the alias “Makaveli,” a clear nod to Italian political theorist Niccolo Machiaveli, who faked his own death in order to take revenge on his enemies seven days later. Thus, the album was less influential as music than it was in perpetuating the myth that Tupac still lives.

Tupac’s legal troubles began with his rap career. In 1991, Tupac filed a \$10 million civil suit against the Oakland Police, claiming he was beaten after a jaywalking citation. The suit was settled out of court. In 1992, Tupac’s entourage was involved in an altercation in Marin City that escalated into a shootout, leaving a six-year-old child dead from a stray bullet. Although ballistics cleared him of responsibility, the child’s family brought a wrongful death suit against him in 1995. Tupac was arrested in 1993 for shooting two off-duty Atlanta police officers whom he saw harassing a black motorist. The charges were dropped when it was found that the officers had been drunk and in possession of weapons stolen from the evidence locker. Later that year, Tupac and several members of his entourage were charged with sexual assault. Though Tupac admitted to having consensual sex with the woman several days before, he denied the charges that he or his entourage gang-raped her when she visited his room, claiming that he had been asleep. One day prior to being found guilty on three accounts of molestation, though found innocent on six greater charges, Tupac was robbed and shot five times while entering a Manhattan recording studio. In jail, Tupac claimed that Sean “Puff Daddy” Combs, Biggie Smalls (the Notorious B.I.G.), and Tupac’s close friend and producer Randy “Stretch” Walker had set him up. Once released from jail, Tupac recorded “Hit ’Em Up.” On it Tupac claimed he had slept with Smalls’s wife, Faith Evans, and publicly accused Smalls of orchestrating the shooting. This altercation sparked the famed East Coast–West Coast rivalry that ended only after the murders of both Smalls and Tupac.

Tupac Shakur was shot on September 8, 1996, in Las Vegas, Nevada, following the Tyson–Seldon fight at

the MGM Grand. Before leaving the hotel, Tupac and his entourage were involved in the beating of Southside Crips gang member Orlando “Baby Lane” Anderson, in response to Anderson’s earlier robbery of a Death Row employee. After the beating, Tupac and Knight started driving to the Death Row–owned Club 662. On the way, a white Cadillac opened fire on Knight’s car, hitting Tupac four times: once each in the chest, pelvis, right hand, and right thigh, with one of the bullets ricocheting into his right lung. He died five days later from internal bleeding and was cremated. Knight suffered minor head wounds caused by shrapnel.

The case remains unsolved, leaving a wake of popular theories. Some believe that Smalls and Combs arranged the shooting in an escalation of their public rivalry. Others suggest it was Knight or Death Row’s mob or gang connections. The most enduring theory links it to Anderson’s beating, a claim made more popular by Anderson’s mysterious shooting death less than two years later. The case, thought to be cold, was reopened in 2007 following new evidence presented by Tupac’s former bodyguard, Kevin Hackie, implicating Knight and the allegedly corrupt retired Compton policeman Reginald Wright Jr. The two maintain their innocence, and the case remains unsolved. *See also:* Black Panther Party; Hip-Hop

Aaron D. Sachs

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## Shrine of the Black Madonna

The Shrine of the Black Madonna is part of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church (PAOCC), founded by Rev. Albert B. Cleage Jr. (Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman) in Detroit, Michigan. The Shrine gained national fame in

1967 when on Easter Sunday, Cleage unveiled an 18-foot-high and 9-foot-wide black Madonna and Child, which replaced a stained glass window depicting the Pilgrims’ landing at Plymouth Rock. With the Shrine as his institutional base, Rev. Cleage called for black churches to reinterpret the teachings of Christianity to address the social, economic, and political needs of the contemporary African American community. The Shrine thus provided a crucial physical and metaphysical space that fostered the emergence of Afrocentric black theology in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Formerly known as the Central Congregational Church, founded by Cleage in 1953, the Shrine of the Black Madonna has provided theological, philosophical, and institutional support for the African American community in Detroit and beyond. It had 50,000 members at its peak, and although membership has declined in recent years, the Shrine has expanded with new congregations in other locales, including Flint, Michigan; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Houston; Atlanta; New York; Philadelphia; and South Carolina. Featuring a strong focus on economic self-sufficiency and religious reawakening, the Shrine envisions the church as a focal point of the African American community, playing an important role especially in political, cultural, and educational life. Combining black separatism with biblical inspiration, the Shrine stands firmly in the long tradition of leaders who blended religion and Black Nationalism; indeed, Cleage publicly acknowledged his debt to such ideological predecessors as Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey.

The Shrine became particularly prominent for its role in city politics following the 1967 riots in Detroit. As many whites fled the city to the suburbs, membership in black social and political organizations exploded, and the Shrine became one of the most important religious and civic organizations in the city. The Shrine actively campaigned to elect black public officials and was instrumental in the 1973 election of Detroit’s first African American mayor, Coleman Young. It also helped launch the political careers of U.S. representative Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick and former U.S. representative Barbara-Rose Collins.

Over the years, the Shrine has offered a number of institutional programs, including bookstores, community service centers, youth centers and academies, a neighborhood supermarket, and Beulah Land Farms in South Carolina. The Shrine of the Black Madonna Culture Center and

Bookstore, established in 1970, has served as an outlet for black writers, historians, and artists to share their work and as a place where members of the black community can learn their history and culture. All of these institutions are designed to enhance the goal of black economic development.

In the midst of the social and cultural upheavals of the 1960s, many black activists began to question whether Christianity was a source of liberation or oppression for African Americans. Cleage was quite critical of the role played by white Christians in fostering racism, colonialism, and imperialism, but he forcefully countered the claims of those such as Elijah Muhammad and Stokely Carmichael that Christianity was a white man's religion with a white man's God, inherently bankrupt and serviceable only in the propagation of white supremacy. Asserting that Christianity was rightfully a black religion, Cleage redefined Jesus and Christianity in new terms that sought to assure their continuing relevance in the modern black community. The Shrine of the Black Madonna served as the institutional base for Cleage's ideas.

Born in 1911 in Indianapolis and then raised in Detroit, Cleage was ordained a minister in the Congregational Church in 1943. His early efforts at building interracial fellowships among Congregationalists and Presbyterians were failures, and he grew increasingly frustrated with the integrationist approach of the mainstream Civil Rights movement. By the late 1960s, he had become the most vocal Christian clergyman calling for a more radical approach to the question of racial equality. After unsuccessful attempts to win elected office, he launched the Black Christian National Movement (the name was later changed to the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church) in 1967 and transformed his Congregational church to the Shrine of the Black Madonna, with the Easter Sunday unveiling of the Black Madonna as the dramatic signifier of the change.

In 1968, Cleage expressed his theological views in a collection of sermons and other writings titled *The Black Messiah*. He further articulated his views in *Black Christian Nationalism: New Directions for the Black Church* (1972). He also changed his name to Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman, Swahili for "liberator, holy man, savior of the nation."

The Shrine of the Black Madonna has continued its active ministry and community work, even after the death of its founder in 2000. The current leader of the Shrine, and

patriarch of the PAOCC, is Jaramogi Menelik Kimathi (Demosthene Nelson).

*See also:* Black Churches; Black Nationalism; Pan-Africanism; Republic of New Afrika

Patrick Q. Mason

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## Signifying

The act of signifying is a verbal art form in which a person puts down or talks negatively about (signifies on) someone, to make a point or sometimes just for fun. The notion of signifying was also made famous and analyzed by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in *The Signifying Monkey*. It refers to an instrument for eloquent swerving that exploits stylistic devices such as double entendre and irony. Indeed, the concept itself designates the ambivalent art of concealing, hiding, and veiling, in order to highlight and underline one's discourse and intended message.

The signifying principle is pregnant with cultural and historical values. The recurrent trickster figure of the Monkey in the Signifying Monkey series of tales embodies the concept and the act of signifying. Henry Louis Gates Jr. traces the Signifying Monkey's origins back to the mythological figure of Esu. Belonging to the Fon mythology and standing as the equivalent to the Greek mythological figure of Hermes, Esu-Elegbara stands as the figure of interpretation and therefore the figure of representation. Esu, the ubiquitous messenger gifted with the ability to speak any language, thus stands as the best mediator. Esu is also known as a trickster and as such is likely to play tricks, to blur, and to trap, for instance, through words. Therefore, one better understands the mythopoetic status of the Signifying Monkey.

Moreover, a character such as the Signifying Monkey reminds us of a "playful" semantic dimension that one also finds in verbal games such as the call-and-response or confrontations, as in playing the dozens (a kind of game meant to test one's ability to resist insult). The blurring and misleading aspect of the instance of signifying also reminds us of the first gospels and blues songs whose content sounded

either happy and rejoiced to express sorrow or sad and longing to convey feelings of joy. African American slaves used to employ this process of codification in order to communicate without having white masters spy on them.

The act of signifying consists of a three-step informative process and a double didactic challenge. First, the signifier targets his “momentary victim.” Second, the latter receives the two-layered message, which contains both the blurring content and its “real” significance to be deciphered. The process of signifying both conceals the message and provides the receiver with the necessary clues to decode it. Thereafter, the temporary prey figures the message out and gains a better awareness at the same time. On the other hand, the act of receiving the message itself unfolds according to three phases: first, the addressee gets the misleading message; then he undergoes the humiliating effects of its blurring content, for instance, misunderstanding or a feeling that he is being laughed at. And last, the signifier’s target starts figuring out the keys the message also contains before grasping its initially intended meaning. Thus, the process of signifying aims both to convey some information and to teach how to decode its blurred content, thanks, for example, to tonal connotation or implausible aspects of the message itself. This allows us to add two more remarks. On one hand, the information conveyed is not the sole element whose origins are veiled. Indeed, the signifier’s target may also remain difficult to identify until the signifying process has concluded. The addressee could be, for instance, a third person attending the instance of signifying without realizing he or she is the actual receiver. On the other hand, the signifier’s purpose could consist of both a didactic attempt toward the addressee and a way for the signifier to express his disbelief toward a set of circumstances thanks to the ironic dimension of the act of signifying.

See also: Anansi the Spider; Animal Trickster Stories; Brer Rabbit; John the Slave Tales

Valerie Caruana-Loisel

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## Slave Culture

Slave culture refers to the totality of shared learned behavior and system of meanings that were historically inherited by slaves from their ancestral past, socially constructed and adapted during their enslavement and transferred to new generations. Their culture encompassed all dimensions of their human existence, shaped and constructed their realities and worldviews, and often served an adaptive and supportive role. Culture is internally represented as the cherished symbols, goals, beliefs, and values of slaves. As an external representation, it includes the arts, rituals, artifacts, institutions and social structures of the slave period.

The ancestral African past of slave culture has been debated by historians. E. Franklin Frazier (1894–1962) noted in *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World* that few remnants of African culture survived slavery. Dissenting with this view, Melville J. Herskovits (1895–1963) documented many Africanisms, or African expressive cultural practices, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), which he found in the costume, culinary and funerary practices, hair braiding, musical instrument making, naming and traditions related to childbirth, proverbs, techniques of planting and harvesting, architecture, and ways of speaking. Herskovits described vestiges of West Africa in slave culture such as the significance and homage paid to ancestors, the use of song for social derision, extensive employment of magic, the use of animal tales as devices of enculturation and moral education, African linguistic patterns, and a major role for women in economic life. Newbell Niles Puckett (1898–1967), in his classic *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (1926), also studied slave culture and discussed the preservation of African traits in slave burial customs and religious beliefs in ghosts, witchcraft, and voodoo. Many slaves continued to hold onto these African worldviews in which spirits, charms, and spells had potent power. For historian Sterling Stuckey, the ring shout is another example of a carryover of cultural and religious practice from Africa where a sense of identity was celebrated and formed.

The breadth and depth of slave culture is extensive. Slaves had a rich repertoire of folktales, which included trickster tales and tales of metaphorpheses. Animals of African ancestry were acculturated, and so the African hare became Brer Rabbit, the jackal became the American fox, and the tortoise became a turtle or terrapin. The structure and purpose of folktales often answered why and how questions, as illustrated in the well-known tales *Why the Lizard Often Nods*, *Why the Owl Never Sleeps at Night*, *Why Women Always Take Advantage of Men*, and *Why the Sister in Black Works Hardest*. John Wesley Blassingame (1940–2000) noted that slave culture acted as a form of resistance to enslavement and that this folklore lightened the burden of oppression, promoted group solidarity, provided ways for verbalizing anger, sustained hope, and built self-esteem. The protagonists of these tales often outsmart the enemy and inspire unity, as in the story of *Why the Hare Runs Away* and the *King Buzzard* tales. Joel Chandler Harris (1845–1908) published *Uncle Remus: Songs and Sayings* (1880), which contains the first collection of these slave tales.

Slaves also retained and practiced some of their folk arts and crafts at the plantations, such as sweetgrass basket-weaving, quilting, and woodwork and metalwork. Slave women often got together at night, after a day's work in the rice fields, to make warm and beautiful quilts. Quilting became an occasion of social interaction as well as an occasion of work, thus helping to ease the burden of bondage. The North Star, crossroads, and the wagon wheel are some celebrated quilting coded symbols used by slaves to mark safe houses and escape routes on the Underground Railroad. Male slaves living on the plantation became skilled craftsmen and crafted beautiful and functional furniture from local wood, often cypress and oak, as the intricate woodwork of old plantation houses erected by slave labor still indicates.

Africans also brought music that served as an expression of hope and religious faith. In his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), Frederick Douglass described how slaves would often sing while working. These work songs kept slaves working in rhythm and are purported to be the source of the musical genre of the blues. In many parts of Africa, music was not primarily a form of entertainment but rather a means for people to connect with each other and to communicate with the spirit world. Chanting and singing were designed to facilitate such communication by creating trance states or inducing a shared emotional climate among the participants.

Slaves would often gather in rural settings and listen to fiery speeches by slave preachers and sang songs, which eventually developed into the form called Negro spiritual. Some of the stylistic features of these musical expressions in slave culture—for example, harmonization, singing in thirds, emotionalism, and the call-and-response—are also purported to be some of the foundations of gospel music.

Slave culture has also left a rich legacy of literature and writing. Some of the landmarks include the ballad *Bars Fight* (1855) by Lucy Terry (circa 1730–1821), considered the oldest known work in literature by an African American; *The Narratives of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Britton Hammon, a Negro Man* (1760) by Britton Hammon (birth and death dates unknown), the first voyage account published by an African American; *An Evening Thought, Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries* (1760) by Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806), the first known poem by an African American male; and *On Messrs. Hussey and Coffin* (1766) by Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784), an enslaved African in Boston who became the first published female African American poet. The slave narrative, a literary form used by former slaves to recount their stories of oppression, is part of this impressive heritage.

See also: Africanisms; Animal Trickster Stories; Black Folk Culture; Conjure; Ring Shout; Slave Diet; Slave Religion; Work Songs

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## Slave Religion

Slave religion refers to the spiritual practices of enslaved Americans who combined African culture and religion

with Christian principles to create a unique form of Christianity that emphasized physical and spiritual liberation.

The messages of freedom and Christian deliverance at the core of slave religion emerged in mid-18th-century North America when a series of religious revivals swept both the Northern and Southern colonies. Emotionally charged and egalitarian in nature, the revivals attracted large numbers of slaves, who saw elements of African religious practices in the expressive nature of evangelical worship. Hundreds of blacks, remarked itinerant Methodist minister Devereux Jarratt, were moved to tears during a revival that swept Virginia and North Carolina in the late 1770s (Raboteau, 1999). Through emphasis on personal experience instead of rigorous and ascetic moral instruction, social divisions rooted in race, education, and status that had previously separated black and white congregants diminished.

As black and white attitudes toward religion shifted, increasing numbers of slaves joined evangelical churches. By the 1790s, thousands of black congregants across the South had become members of the two fastest-growing evangelical denominations among blacks and whites—Methodist and Baptist. In 1797, the Methodist Church recorded over 12,000 black congregants—one-fourth of total church membership. Similar numbers of slaves joined Baptist churches, especially in rural areas. Spurred by revival and the decentralized nature of the Baptist Church, the number of black Baptists in early America increased from 18,000 in 1793 to 40,000 in 1813.

As slave membership increased and religious revivals subsided, the presence of African elements in religious worship gradually distinguished slave religion from mainstream Christianity. “Ring shouts” of the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry incorporated vocal responses, clapping, and shuffling into worship, reminiscent of African religious dance. Other African-influenced practices, such as call-and-response” singing, also characterized the religious worship of slaves. By using African cultural forms to express Christian themes, slaves reaffirmed their claims to the Christian faith.

Black preachers, numbers of whom grew alongside converts, also helped define slave religion in important ways. Although Southern law required white supervision of black religious gatherings, licensed black Methodist and Baptist ministers created congregations within white churches and fostered the creation of independent black churches in the

early decades of the 19th century. Often having firsthand knowledge of slavery, these black leaders were fundamental in bringing Christianity to the quarters.

Indeed, black preaching in Methodist and Baptist churches and institutional church membership represented only one manifestation of slaves’ growing interest in Christianity. On plantations where masters circumscribed slaves’ ability to create independent religious institutions, slaves looked outside of the formal church for spiritual guidance free of proslavery propaganda. These “invisible institutions,” as one scholar has called them, lacked denominational structure and formal membership, but nonetheless provided slaves with spiritual support and guidance. As slaves “stole away,” gathering in cabins and brush harbors or “hush harbors” that were free from the prying eyes of masters, slave preachers extolled messages of physical and spiritual liberation. The result was a variation of Protestant Christianity that resembled the emotionalism of earlier revivals and integrated slave culture and African religions into slave worship.

Part of slaves’ appropriation of Christianity also grew out of the themes extolled in slave sermon and song. Old Testament figures such as Moses achieved particular prominence in slave preaching. Slaves saw themselves as the wandering children of Israel, prisoners of Egypt who suffered bondage under the Pharaoh and sought exodus. This spiritual journey from slavery to freedom, as well as New Testament messages, struck a chord among slaves. Indeed, spirituals were perhaps the clearest expression of slave faith and a desire to be relieved of the suffering of their world.

Immediately following the Civil War, one close observer of slave religious practices heard one of the many songs of freedom that epitomized the core message of slave religion. As slaves sung of being set free and rising from the valley, they personified the difficult journey from slavery to freedom.

After emancipation, the religion slaves created would remain a cornerstone of black life and faith amid continued struggles for social equality in the U.S. North and South. *See also:* Black Folk Culture; Hush Harbors; Ring Shout; Slave Culture

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## Soul Food

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Soul food refers generally to the style of cooking and eating developed by enslaved Africans on Southern plantations. It represents a synthesis of African culinary sensibilities with the practicalities of African survival in the American South. It also embodies the taste traditions of the various cultures to which Africans in the New World were exposed.

Before arriving in the New World, sub-Saharan Africans had a diet primarily emphasizing such vegetables as okra, yams, squash, pumpkins, eggplant, leafy greens, and peppers. These were prepared in rich soups and stews along with meat, fish, or fowl and often served with a starch. The starchy accompaniment to these meals, known by many names, might consist of pounded yam (also known as FuFu) or stiff cornmeal porridge (also known as Sadza) and was essentially used as a bread-like eating utensil. Other food staples included palm oil, in which foods were fried, as well as groundnuts and seeds.

The enslavement of African people between the 15th and 19th centuries had a significant impact on the quality and substance of their diet. Enslaved Africans traveling to the Americas were typically malnourished, subsisting on small quantities of beans and rice and low-quality food rations. On American plantations, enslaved Africans were sometimes able to grow local vegetables that in some instances were similar to those found in Africa. Over time, American "sweet potatoes" replaced African "yams," and collard greens replaced leafy greens found on the African continent. In addition to local vegetables, enslaved Africans caught fish and seafood or hunted such small easily caught game as squirrel, rabbit, and possum. Periodically, enslaved Africans might also receive food rations from their owners consisting of such items as cornmeal, flour, milk, and molasses. These items in combination with others were used to produce such filling staples as

cornbread and hushpuppies. Many enslaved Africans, particularly those who worked in the homes of their owners, also received scraps of meat that were left over from choicer portions. These included fatty pieces of pork sometimes called fatback or salt pork, which was typically used to season and cook vegetables. Enslaved Africans also had access to other remains from the pig, such as the feet, tails, ears, intestines and skin. These were typically fried or pickled, becoming such favored items as scrapple, chitlins, and pork rinds. Over time the culinary innovations and adaptations introduced by enslaved Africans became popular with whites as well.

Today, a typical "soul food" dinner might consist of some combination of the following, for example: fried chicken, baked ham, smothered pork chops, fried catfish, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, collard greens, candied yams, black-eyed peas, corn bread, sweet potato pie, and peach cobbler. Other popular soul food items include gumbo (a hearty Creole stew combining sausage, seafood, and vegetables), jambalaya (a Creole dish similar to gumbo), grits (an enriched corn porridge), and potato salad.

The term "soul food" became popular during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States during a time when the Civil Rights and Black Power movements measurably influenced the way that Americans thought about African American culture. In an era when such terms and ideas as "Black Power" and "black is beautiful" came into usage in relation to African Americans, so did the concept of "soul." Soul in relation to African Americans refers to an intangible, yet validating spiritual essence or style that is seen as permeating African American culture. Thus, it is not uncommon for the concept of soul to be applied to African American music, art, dance, and food.

In recent years, the soul food diet, particularly the aspect that deals with the heavy consumption of fried, processed, salty, high-fat, and high-cholesterol foods, has been increasingly criticized for contributing to rising rates of obesity and morbidity among African Americans as well as related health ailments such as diabetes (sometimes referred to as "sugar"), high blood pressure, and heart disease. In response, cooks, dieticians, and nutritionists in consultation with medical personnel have begun to publish cookbooks touting healthier versions of many popular soul food dishes. The soul food diet persists in African American communities because of the comfort and sense of

community with which the food is associated. Often served at churches, family gatherings, and neighborhood events, soul food has become fundamentally linked to the African American experience.

*See also:* Africanisms; Black Folk Culture; Rice Cultivation; Slave Culture; Slave Diet

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## Sweetgrass Baskets

Sweetgrass baskets, coil form—or sewn—baskets, are named for the materials used in their construction. Sweetgrass (*Muhlenbergia filipes*) is a perennial grass that grows from underground runners in nutrient-poor, sandy soil, often near the edge of tidal marshlands of the mainland, barrier islands, and sea islands of Lowcountry, South Carolina. The plants, which produce distinctive, ornamental mauve flowers in the autumn, prefer full to partial sun and are made up of long, smooth grass blades that are strong, yet supple enough to be woven into functional baskets. A thin, continuous bundle of the dried sweetgrass is woven around itself and tied—or sewn—down by a second medium, such



Weavers in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, make sweetgrass baskets. (AP Photo/Evan Berland)



as split palmetto leaves, raffia, or even pine needles, to form an “eye” in the middle of the basket and wound outward to form the desired size and shape of the basket being created. Baskets of similar design, but of varying materials, are made throughout the Lowcountry with bulrushes or other local grasses used in place of the sweetgrass.

Utilitarian baskets of this style were brought from the rice coast of West Africa to the rice-growing regions of the colonies as early as the 17th century. These sewn baskets were strong yet flexible and made in a variety of shapes and sizes depending on the task for which the basket was intended. One specific basket style was the fanner basket, which played an important role in the processing of rice on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Once the rice had been pounded to loosen the husk from the kernel, the rice was placed in the large, flat fanner basket, and workers would repeatedly toss the pounded rice into the air. The wind would blow away the chaff while the worker caught the cleaned rice back in the basket. These fanner baskets, as well as other functional baskets, were vital tools on the rice plantations, and planters’ records from the antebellum period reveal that collecting materials for and making sweetgrass baskets was an important activity performed by the enslaved population, typically the men.

As rice production came to an end due to labor changes after the Civil War and natural disasters that altered the saline content of the former rice paddocks, the creation and use of sweetgrass baskets in Charleston declined dramatically. However, within many African American households, the craft continued, often with women taking over the collecting of materials and the sewing of baskets. The craft was most often passed from mother or grandmother to daughters and granddaughters. Although sweetgrass basket making almost disappeared to a great extent throughout the Lowcountry, a small group of women in the Mt. Pleasant area kept the skill alive and passed it down through the generations. Many of them descended from the enslaved populations on Boone Hall Plantation or Snee Farm and were able to make an income from producing these baskets in the 20th century and selling them to tourists in small stalls along the Ocean Highway (Route 17) or in the market and street corners of historic downtown Charleston.

Mt. Pleasant, formerly a small town just up the coast from Charleston, is still the hub of the sweetgrass basket makers—many of whom have placed baskets in the Smithsonian Institution or other prominent museums and whose

baskets command great prices as works of art. The knowledge of finding and preparing the sweetgrass—as well as the technique of making baskets—is still mainly passed down through families. Basket styles range from the traditional utilitarian types during the plantation era to new, elaborately decorative forms created by the artistic. Sweetgrass baskets can still be purchased at private stands along Highway 17 above Mt. Pleasant and from vendors in the market or on street corners of the main tourist areas of Charleston.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Carolinas; Gullah; Rice Cultivation; Sierra Leone; Task System

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## Syncretism

Anthropologists, folklorists, and cultural historians use the term “syncretism” to explain the merging of cultural forms or practices from different cultures to produce a new cultural product. This process of cultural blending involves both retention and reinterpretation—that is, the maintenance of preexisting traits distinct to one’s own culture as well as the synthesis of those traits with new ones encountered through the experience of cultural contact. Cultural encounters can occur in a relationship of either domination and subordination or willing coexistence. Yet syncretism reflects the ability of individuals to consciously mix, borrow, or modify seemingly irreconcilable or incongruent cultural practices in order to create a new product meaningful to and functional in their lives.

Syncretism as a concept for understanding cultural formation is closely related to the terms “creolization” and “hybridity.” Somewhat synonymous, the three terms contain slight variations in meaning. Thus, taken collectively, syncretism, creolization, and hybridity allow scholars to

explain the complex phenomena of cultural interpenetration by acknowledging but not deriding mixture. Linguists (scholars who study language) initially used creolization to explain the emergence of new languages—pidgins and creoles—when two or more distinct linguistic groups came into contact. Pidgin was the simple form of a language first spoken by people who came into contact with one another but did not share a common language. For example, first-generation Africans enslaved in the Americas developed pidgins to communicate with their European enslavers. Those Africans passed those languages down to their children, so that the next generation spoke them as “native” languages—creoles. Although scholars use creolization predominantly to explain linguistic mixture or syncretism, the term is also used to explain identity formation. As indicated in the preceding example, not only were new languages formed (i.e., patois, Black English, and so on), but new identities were formed as well (African Americans, West Indians, Creoles).

Hybridity also explains cultural mixture. Although initially used pejoratively to denote racial mixture (miscegenation or “mongrelization”), scholars now use hybridity to explain the mixture of two cultural elements. Like syncretism, hybridity recognizes deliberate choices made by individuals to blend identities or cultural elements to their benefit. For example, the term African American recognizes the hybrid identity of peoples of African descent in America. Ostensibly, it does not privilege either the American or African component of black identity in America. It views black identity as a hybrid of two cultural experiences, broadly speaking. It acknowledges the African origin and past and the American past and present that inform the African American experience.

With regard to the history of Americans of African descent, scholars employ syncretism to explain not only the “birth” or emergence of African American culture, but also its specific elements as they evolved in the context of race-based slavery and white supremacy. For example, some scholars of the colonial and antebellum African American experiences invoke syncretism to explain such myriad cultural phenomena as slave naming practices, religion, parades, burial rituals, family patterns, marriage rites, language, music, dance, diet, and dress. In their examination of these cultural elements, these scholars call attention to the African retentions found in slave adaptations of dominant cultural forms. Thus, syncretism as a model for

understanding African American cultural formation does not dismiss the African influences on black culture, but acknowledges the real limitations that isolation from Africa and bondage placed on that development.

One noted example of cultural syncretism among enslaved Africans in the Americas was their conversion to Christianity. In the British North American colonies, which later became the United States, that conversion involved a blending of various religious beliefs and rituals from West and Central Africa with Protestant Christianity. The product of that fusion is what scholars and lay people alike refer to as black Christianity. In this illustration, African beliefs in spirit possession rationalized the Christian belief in the Holy Spirit to the slave’s worldview. Similarly, African religious practices that incorporated dance and the playing of multiple musical instruments validated for converted slaves the Psalmist’s entreaty to worship the creator with dance and music. Thus, ecstatic worship, dance, spirit possession, and shouting rooted in the varied heritages of enslaved Africans transformed not only their religious identity as African Americans but also the worship style of white evangelical Christians. In this case, religious syncretism was reciprocal.

Syncretism allows scholars to explain not only the historic development of African American culture but also contemporary configurations of black culture, particularly in the age of globalization. Syncretism helps explain a new era of cultural cross-pollination in the African Diaspora, where Latino, Caribbean, African, and African American cultures combined to produce new vibrant cultural expressions, such as hip-hop.

*See also:* Acculturation; Africanisms; Amalgamation

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## Tituba

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Tituba (birth and death unknown), also known as Tituba Indian, was the slave of Samuel Parris, the minister of Salem Village, Massachusetts, from 1689 to 1697. Her birth date and her age during her time of residence in Salem are unknown. She was one of the first three people to be accused of witchcraft by Minister Parris's 9-year-old daughter, Betty, and Betty's 11-year-old cousin, Abigail Williams, during the Salem Witch Trials (1692–1693). Despite the key role she played during the trials, Tituba's involvement is often overlooked in official histories of the period. Her story has long been characterized by debate and speculation, and she has acquired an almost mythical status.

Tituba's origins and racial identity are largely unknown and continue to be heavily debated among critics and historians. In historical documentation, Tituba is described interchangeably as Indian or African. In 1868, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote the verse-drama *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms*, in which he identifies Tituba as half-Indian and half-African. Other literary and critical interpretations have sought to specifically pinpoint Tituba's origins to one of these racial groups. In both Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953) and Ann Petry's novel *Tituba of Salem Village* (1964), Tituba is portrayed as African. Novelist Maryse Condé believes Tituba to have been born in Barbados, the daughter of an African slave who was raped by an Englishman during her crossing from Africa to the Caribbean. However, Elaine Breslaw, author of *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem* (1996), posits that she is an Arawak Indian from Guiana. She argues that Tituba traveled from Guiana to Barbados, either as the victim of kidnap or through the migration of her community.

Samuel Parris was born in Barbados but immigrated to America to take up a place at Harvard University. He returned to the island in 1673 to claim his inheritance. Although no direct historical evidence exists, it is thought that he bought Tituba and her husband, John Indian, as domestic slaves on this trip. Tituba and John moved with the

Parris family to Salem Village in July 1689. The accusations of witchcraft aimed at Tituba began in February 1692. Betty Parris and Abigail Williams began complaining that they had been bitten during their sleep and began to suffer from a series of strange seizures and trances. The Parris's neighbor, Mary Sibley, asked Tituba and John Indian to help her make a witch cake, a practice that would supposedly protect the girls and reveal the names of their afflictors. Tituba did so; however, the girls' symptoms became worse after the use of the witch cake. After the village doctor, Dr. Griggs, could find no apparent medical cause for these physical afflictions, witchcraft was declared to be responsible, and the girls named Tituba and their neighbors Sarah Good and Sarah Osbourne as the perpetrators. All three women were cross-examined in the Salem town court by Judge John Hathorne in March 1692.

A number of interpretations have been put forward to suggest why the girls began to demonstrate such strange behavior. Popular legend held that the girls had made frequent trips with Tituba to the Salem woods, where she had demonstrated to them, and they had participated in, various kinds of voodoo magic, and that their accusations toward her resulted from the guilt they felt at participating in such "heathen" activities. However, many historians, including Mary Beth Norton and Elaine Breslaw, have since proved this story to be a fabrication of 19th-century stories about the trials. A complex mix of personal grudges, social unease, political instability in the area, and a culture of fear generated from the threat of American Indian attacks is the most likely explanation for what became an outbreak of accusations. The fact that Tituba was of a different ethnicity that was, whether Indian or African, associated in the Puritans' mind with unfamiliar pagan and voodoo practices most likely made her an appropriate and believable target or scapegoat for the girls' initial accusation.

At first, Tituba denied having any involvement in witchcraft. During her trial, however, which lasted for several days, she eventually not only confessed, declaring herself to be under the influence of the devil and confirming the community's fears, but also accused other people from inside and outside Salem village as being witches and of tormenting her, including Good and Osbourne. Her testimony and the language that she used to describe the supernatural occurrences she had witnessed played on the deepest fears of Salem's Puritan population and thus



Depiction of West Indian slave Tituba “bewitching” children in Salem in 1692. Tituba was the first woman accused of witchcraft preceding the Salem Witch Trials. She admitted to the practice and implicated others in her confession. (North Wind Picture Archives)

contributed to the escalation of the crisis. It is thought that Minister Parris may have beaten her in order to get her to confess.

If a person accused of witchcraft during this period pleaded guilty, part of the person’s punishment was the seizing of his or her property and assets. Because Tituba was a slave, she had no property or assets to lose. After her confession, she was placed in Salem jail, where she remained for 13 months. Minister Parris refused to pay her jail fees. It is thought that Tituba was acquitted of her “crimes” on May 9, 1693. It is not known precisely when Tituba was released from prison or whether upon her release she was

reunited with John Indian. Although historians continue to debate the details of her life, the circumstances surrounding her actions after the witch trials and concerning her death remain unknown, contributing to her status as an elusive historical figure.

See also: Conjure; New England Colonies; Slave Religion

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## Transmigration

The notion that the human spirit or soul is indestructible and eternal can be found in a number of religions and spiritual systems in Atlantic Africa and throughout the Atlantic African Diaspora in the Americas. At the heart of such folkloric traditions as the "flying African" tales and the story of Ebo Landing, this concept—akin to reincarnation—prefigured a number of phenomena in African American religious worldviews. In Atlantic Africa, transmigration is at the heart of the Kongo cosmogram—a continuously moving, counterclockwise circle that reflected both the east-to-west motion of the sun and the movement of human souls to and from the earthly plane of existence. In the particular context, an ancestral spirit could often be reborn with its kinship group. The link between the Kongo cosmogram and transmigration may have prefigured the idea within African American folkloric traditions that dreaming of a fish equates to an imminent pregnancy within the family. Beings residing below the Kalunga Line—a horizontal line in the Kongo cosmogram separating the earthly and spirit realms—were envisioned as *simbi* spirits, or chalk-white fish. These disembodied *simbi* spirits, bound to be reborn, indeed represented potential pregnancy, birth, and the continuation of the perpetual cycle of life.

Transmigration was also embodied within the ring shout, which itself was a reflection of the Kongo cosmogram. Though individuals engaging in the ring shout by the late 19th and early 20th centuries may have lost touch with the spiritual underpinnings of this practice, the form itself—a counterclockwise circle in emulation of the cosmogram—captures the very concept of the immortality of the human spirit.

Belief in transmigration likely played an important role in slave rebelliousness and resistance. In the course of

the 1733–1734 Danish St. John slave revolt, a movement in which slaves held the island for nearly six months, the leaders were inspired by notions of the eternal soul. During the subsequent court trials, one anonymous slave testified, "When I die, I shall return to my own land." It is clear that the rebels involved in this particular attempt to cast off the chains of enslavement originated from West Africa's Gold Coast and were likely Akan-speakers from the collapsed state of Akwamu. Other Akan-speakers used similar conceptualizations of transmigration to engage in acts of resistance or shaped community values regarding burial practices. A sizable number of suicides or suicidal resistance efforts engaged in by Akan-speakers in 18th-century Jamaica, New York, Antigua, and Barbados were likely shaped by a strong belief in transmigration. In addition, a symbol that implies the impervious and eternal nature of the human soul—the Akan *Adinkra* known as *Sankofa*—was found on a coffin lid buried at some point in the early 18th century in New York City's African Burial Ground. The use of conch shells and other seashells—as a replication of the Kongo cosmogram—conveyed similar values at gravesites in South Carolina, Brazil, and Haiti, among many other locales.

Within African American folklore, the ubiquitous "flying African" tales and the story of Ebo Landing embody both resistance to slavery and spiritual transmigration. Both sets of folktales are based on cases of suicide or death through other means that lead to the releasing of human spirits from earthly limitations in order to fly, walk, or swim back to Atlantic Africa. Within these stories, only those born in Africa had the ability to fly or walk back to Africa. Verification that slaves in the American South embraced transmigration and the ability of Africans to return home can be found in the narratives of Charles Ball and Olaudah Equiano. If the soul of a deceased individual returns back to former companions, friends, and kin, that would mean that the souls of African-born slaves would have to "fly" or "swim" across the Atlantic to get back home. This would not work for slaves born in the Americas. Their families and friends were in the Western Hemisphere, not Africa, and thus they did not have the ability to take flight. The phenomenon of flying Africans is absent in African folklore for similar reasons. If an individual dies in Africa, the spirit has no need to fly because it is already home. Though rooted in African metaphysical understandings,

this represents an orientation that was uniquely African American and perhaps, in other ways, epitomizes the creolization process.

See also: Ebo Landing; Flying African Stories; Slave Religion

Walter C. Rucker

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## Turner, Lorenzo Dow

Named the "Father of Gullah Studies," African American linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner (1890–1972) was born on August 21, 1890, in Elizabeth, North Carolina. His father, Rooks Turner, was a free black man who, after attending Howard University, became an educator. Before Lorenzo Dow's birth, Rooks purchased three acres of land in North Carolina, where he later built the Rooks Turner Normal School. His mother, Elizabeth Sessoms Freeman, was born enslaved and later raised by her African American stepfather, Anthony Freeman.

In 1910, Lorenzo Dow, like his father, entered Howard University where he studied German, French, Latin, and Greek and received bachelor's degree in English. In 1917, he received a master's in English from Harvard University. Seven years later, he received a PhD in English from the University of Chicago. During the summer of 1929, while taking time from teaching at Fisk University in Nashville, Turner ventured to another historically black university, South Carolina State, located in Orangeburg. It was during this summer teaching experience that he heard "Gullah" for the first time, marking his initial interest in the language

and culture that would become paramount in the development of his career and legacy.

From June to December 1932, and again in the summer of 1933, Turner studied the South Carolina Sea Islands through ethnographic interactions. Turner interviewed 21 Gullah speakers in South Carolina on Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and St. Helena Islands; in Georgia on Sapelo and St. Simons Islands; and on Harris Neck and Brewer's Neck, parts of a peninsula mainland area. In 1935, he immersed himself in the study of African languages that he believed were crucial to understanding the background of the Gullah culture and language. Between 1936 and 1941, Turner traveled across three continents to study the language patterns of Africans throughout the Diaspora. He learned five languages, including those of Krio, Twi, Kimbundu, Efik, Fante, Ewe, Yoruba, and other groups while in England. In Brazil, he found pride among diasporic Africans toward their contribution to the region's cultural elements, especially dance and language.

In 1949, his book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* was published and recognized as an unprecedented analysis of the Gullah people and their language. In his work, he debunked the dominant myth of Gullah as "baby talk" English from the mouths of uncivilized, enslaved Africans. Instead, he asserted that Gullah is a creolized form, blending elements from numerous languages of enslaved Africans who were transported to South Carolina and Georgia during the 18th century and the first half of the 19th. He provided exhaustive lists of sounds, intonations, names, and words in Gullah that are parallel to those in West African languages, demonstrating that Gullah is a language, adhering to grammatical rules and sentence structures. *Africanisms* served as a model for multidisciplinary studies ranging from anthropology to history and especially linguistics. Historians used the manuscript in the development of their works regarding African Americans; such is the case with Melville Herskovits's *Myth of the Negro Past*.

Although Turner published two more works, *The Krio Language of the Sierra Leone* (1963) and *Krio Texts: With Grammatical Notes and Translation in English* (1965), *Africanisms* is noted as one the most influential works in African American and African studies. In 1972, Lorenzo Dow Turner died, leaving behind his two sons and widow Lois Turner Williams, who continued the dissemination of his

works to various archives and research centers across the United States.

See also: Africanisms; Gullah; Herskovits, Melville

Tamara T. Butler

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## Walker, Margaret

Margaret Abigail Walker (1915–1998), a poet, novelist, and essayist, was born in Birmingham, Alabama. Her father, Sigismond, was a native of Jamaica who earned a theological degree and was ordained as a black Methodist minister, and her mother, Marion, was a college-educated musician. Walker was one of four children born to them. Together they instilled in their daughter an awareness of and respect for the power of words. Walker found her communicative talent in poetry, which she began writing at age 12. She enrolled at Northwestern and earned her bachelor's degree in 1935. After graduation, she remained in Chicago for the next four years to work, holding various publishing jobs as a typist, a newspaper reporter, an editor of a magazine, and a member of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Writers' Project. Her participation in this latter group led to her introduction to several politically active writers of the Chicago Renaissance, such as Nelson Algren, Richard Wright, James Farrell, Studs Terkel, and Gwendolyn Brooks.

In 1939, she started a master's program at the University of Iowa, and she earned her MA in 1940 by submitting a collection of poems she had written as her thesis. In 1942, when Walker was 27 years old, she published a volume of poetry titled *For My People*, her first book. She received immediate recognition and praise for this book when she was awarded the Yale University Younger Poets Competition for the title poem, which also earned her the distinction of being the first African American ever to win the prize. In *For My People*, Walker incorporates jazz and blues rhythms, figures from folklore, religious imagery, and U.S. history to evoke the devastating effects of racism on African

Americans. Like Langston Hughes's "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," Walker's titular poem became an oft-quoted verse of civil rights protest. This poem is all the more remarkable when one considers Walker's assertion that it took her only 15 minutes to compose it on her typewriter.

Walker's writing and her academic responsibilities kept her busy during the 1940s; in 1942, she was given a professorship at Livingston College in North Carolina, in the English department, and she also lectured at Jackson State University in Mississippi, where she was made a faculty member in 1949. In 1944, she won a Rosenwald Fellowship for creative writing. From 1943 through 1948, she was a lecturer with the National Concert Artists Corporation. In 1943, she married Firnish James Alexander and had four children—two boys and two girls.

In her late 40s, she enrolled in a PhD program at Iowa University, where she earned her degree in 1965, when she was 50 years old. Her doctoral dissertation was the manuscript of her novel *Jubilee*. This book was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1966, and that same year, Walker was named a Houghton Mifflin literature fellow. Though she published a handful of poems in the 1940s and 1950s, there is a glaring gap in her publishing activity from 1942 until the appearance of *Jubilee* in 1966. This silence can be attributed to the fact that she was raising her family, teaching at various colleges, and researching information for *Jubilee*, which was set during the Civil War and contains significant biographical and historical data. A large part of this work is based on the life of Walker's great-grandmother, Margaret Duggans Ware Brown. It focuses on the antebellum period through the Reconstruction and provides accurate details about the plantation system and slavery in the South during this time.

The bulk of this book's content is based on the stories Walker's grandmother told her about her great-grandmother; her family's oral history forms the backbone of the novel. Walker began to flesh out her story by researching Civil War history and other black slave narratives when she was an undergraduate at Northwestern, and she continued to work on her book in between her teaching and family duties.

Unlike traditional coming-of-age novels, *Jubilee* traces the gender, class, and race awareness and evolution of Vyry, a mulatto house servant. Vyry's father is the master of the plantation she lives on, and her mother was his mistress. Her mother dies when she is seven years old, and she goes

to live in her father/master's house, where she becomes the servant of his daughter, Lillian, and the object of loathing of his wife, Big Missy Salina. As a teenager, Vvry becomes the house cook. Randall Ware, a freeborn black man who works as a blacksmith, unsuccessfully tries to buy Vvry's freedom. On the eve of the Civil War, and before her 20th birthday, Vvry births three of Ware's children. Ware becomes a blacksmith for the Union Army in 1862, and Vvry remains on the plantation. After the war, Vvry marries Innis Brown, and the couple work as sharecroppers in Alabama. The Ku Klux Klan burns down their home, forcing them to flee. They eventually find a town in which to live, where their white neighbors help them build a new house, and Vvry and Innis are able to start a new life.

Not only is the book well researched and poignantly written, but it is also a novel about a black woman's experience, written by a black woman writer, and this element of the novel cannot be overemphasized.

Walker is also the author of *How I Wrote Jubilee* (1972), *A Poetic Equation: Conversations between Margaret Walker and Nikki Giovanni* (1974), *The Daemonic Genius of Richard Wright* (1982), *This Is My Century: New and Collected Poems* (1988), and *How I Wrote Jubilee and Other Essays on Life and Literature* (1990). Other awards and honors she received include a Fulbright Fellowship in 1971, a National Endowment for the Humanities in 1972, an honorary doctorate in literature from Northwestern University in 1974, an honorary doctorate of letters from Rust College in 1974, an honorary doctorate of fine arts from Dennison University in 1974, and an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Morgan State University in 1976. Walker died in Chicago, in 1998.

See also: Brooks, Gwendolyn; Haley, Alex; Wright, Richard

Jessica Noelle Apuzzo

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## Wonder, Stevie

An internationally renowned musician, composer, producer, humanitarian, and social activist, Stevie Wonder (1950–) is one of the most well-known and successful artists on the original Motown label. Wonder's career, beginning in his early teens, spans over four decades and has earned him international acclaim. The multitalented artist plays at least seven instruments and continues to draw new and younger listeners while maintaining a solid international fan base. His activism and concern with humanitarian issues, which is reflected in both his actions and his music, has also contributed to his enduring appeal.

Stevie Wonder was born Steveland Hardaway Judkins in Saginaw, Michigan. He later moved to Detroit, where he changed his last name to Steveland Morris, a name that he uses today. As a premature infant, Wonder was exposed to excessive levels of oxygen in his incubator that rendered him blind. He developed a refined hearing sensibility and a gift for music. By the time he was 12 years old, Stevie had learned to play a number of instruments, including the piano, drums, and harmonica. After being discovered by Ronnie White of the Miracles, Stevie was signed to Motown Records. Motown mogul Berry Gordy, quickly renamed the youth "Little Stevie Wonder," and by age 13, Wonder had scored his first major hit with the song "Fingertips." As a teen, Stevie Wonder went on to score a number of hits for the Motown record label, including "Uptight (Everything's Alright)," "With a Child's Heart," and many others. He also began to compose and produce hit songs for other Motown artists.

Although Wonder scored numerous hit records with Motown as a teen, either himself or as a songwriter for others, it was when he reached adulthood that his artistic genius began to flourish. When Stevie Wonder turned 21, he brokered a deal with Motown that gave him full artistic control over his music as well as ownership of his work.



He financed and produced two albums featuring his own material and began working with such artists as Deniece Williams and Syreeta White, whom he later married. The album *Talking Book*, released in 1972, was a critical and commercial success that featured the hits “Superstition” and “You Are the Sunshine of My Life.” The album *Innervisions*, released in 1973, extended the themes of social consciousness reflected in some of Wonder’s earlier work. Hit singles from *Innervisions* include “Living for the City” and “Higher Ground.” Other critically acclaimed and hit albums produced during the 1970s include *Music of my Mind* (1972); *Fulfillingness’ First Finale* (1974); what is considered by some to be a crowning achievement of this era, the double album *Songs in the Key of Life* (1976); and a movie soundtrack, *Journey through the Secret Life of Plants* (1979).

During the 1980s, Stevie Wonder continued to produce successful albums, including the platinum-selling *Hotter Than July* (1980), which featured hit tributes to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Bob Marley; *Original Musiquarium* (1982), which featured a hit tribute to Dizzy Gillespie; the soundtrack for the film *The Woman in Red*, which produced the number 1 hit “I Just Called to Say I Love You” (1984); *In Square Circle* (1985), featuring the number 1 pop hit “Part-Time Lover”; and *Characters* (1987).

After *Characters*, Stevie went on a four-year hiatus. He resurfaced in 1991 with the soundtrack for Spike Lee’s film *Jungle Fever* (1991), a mellow production exploring the theme of interracial relationships. During the 1990s, he also produced *Conversation Peace*, which attempted to address how themes of love, forgiveness, and communication could be used to prevent human violence. He also produced a live album, *Natural Wonder*, which featured energized renditions of his classic hits.

In addition to his own work, Stevie Wonder has also written and produced numerous hit songs or collaborated with other artists, including Michael Jackson, Roberta Flack, Chaka Khan, Barbara Streisand, Paul McCartney, the Eurhythmics, Julio Iglesias, and others. He has also influenced multiple generations of musicians, including most recently such artists as India Arie, John Legend, Jodeci, and Alicia Keys.

Stevie Wonder’s contributions extend beyond music. Although many consider him a remarkable person because of his artistic gifts, it is his consistent commitment

to dealing with themes of social justice that has earned him humanitarian status.

Songs produced by Stevie Wonder during the 1960s and 1970s, including a remake of Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind,” tackle such themes as the plight of Vietnam veterans, poverty, and government corruption. One of his most popular songs, “Happy Birthday,” was produced in 1980 as part of an initiative in which Wonder was involved to obtain federal approval for a national Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Implemented as a federal holiday in 1986, the first Martin Luther King Day was commemorated with a concert at which Wonder performed. During the 1980s, Wonder also produced songs dealing with apartheid in South Africa, was active in the “We Are the World” initiative to focus global attention on the AIDS epidemic in Africa, and used his music to address themes of gang and domestic violence. In 2005, he was involved in a Live Aid concert to focus attention on debt relief and humanitarian aid to African countries.

See also: Black Folk Culture

Chishamiso Rowley

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## Work Songs

The work song was a secular African American form that accompanied work. Work songs can be traced to parts of West Africa, where functional music accompanied a variety of activities, such as domestic chores and fieldwork. Similar to spirituals, work songs were sung by a group that typically consisted of a leader and group. The typical work song was sung a cappella and either in unison or in a call-and-response pattern. In the call-and-response structure, the lead singer sang the call or melody, and the group added the response or refrain.

The leader had the freedom to embellish the melody, and the group could respond by interpolating vocal inflections, for example, moans and shouts. Improvisation and

vocal inflections allowed workers to interpret the music and text in their own personal way.

During slavery, singing was an essential part of black culture because it addressed the emotional needs of slaves and created a sense of community. Work songs accompanied a variety of work, such as picking cotton and sweet potatoes, loading and unloading ships, and wielding axes and hoes. For slaves and laborers, singing relieved the monotony of work, alleviated tension, eased the enormity of their problems, and created a communal environment. Work songs that were sung on plantations, and subsequently on levees and prison farms, depicted the oppressed lives of slaves, stevedores, and inmates. The texts of work songs often provided an escape from the harsh realities of life as an African American. Because of their oppressed lives as African Americans, these songs, like the spirituals and blues, created a shared experience. Black slaves and laborers often commented on the transgressions of the boss, provided vivid descriptions of the work, or reminisced about a woman. “Rosie,” a song about a woman and possibly sung in prison camps and on levees, allowed workers to transcend their presence to reminiscence about the past and contemplate the future. From the end of slavery and throughout most of the 20th century, work songs were an important part of prison culture. For example, in the convict lease system, a brutal system where men and women were subjected to oppressive conditions, work songs coordinated work, expressed the misery of the conditions, and depicted the oppressive life of the black inmate. Other common work songs included “Diamond Joe,” “Look Down That Long Lonesome Road,” “Lost John,” and “Jumping Judy.” Subsequently, by the mid-20th century, work songs had become obsolete and lost their significance, as popular genres became a reflection of progressive generations. Work songs were undeniably one of the most expressive secular folk forms that reflected the African American experience.

See also: Blues Music; Field Hands; Field Hollers; Slave Culture; Slave Plantation

Ralph A. Russell

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## Wright, Richard

Richard Wright (1908–1960) a novelist, short story writer, political journalist, and essayist, was most famous for the novel *Native Son*. Wright was born on a plantation in Mississippi. His father, Nathaniel Wright, was an illiterate sharecropper, and his mother, Ella Wilson Wright, was a schoolteacher. His birth name was Nathaniel Wright.

Richard Wright experienced many hardships before becoming a writer. His father abandoned his family when he was five years old, and his mother supported her family as a cook. When his mother became ill, his family went to live with several relatives in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee. He and his brother spent a period of time in an orphanage. Consequently, Wright was not able to complete a full year of school before the age of 12. However, in 1925, he graduated as the valedictorian from Smith Robertson Junior High School in Jackson, Mississippi, and the *Jackson Southern Register* published his first story, consisting of three parts, “The Voodoo of Hell’s Half-Acre.” Although Wright was excited about the publication, his family and friends felt it was unrealistic to believe that African Americans could overcome racial prejudices and barriers. Wright quit high school after only a few weeks to earn money.

In 1925, Wright discovered the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper’s Magazine*, and naturalist writer H. L. Mencken. In 1927, Wright moved to Chicago and worked as a dishwasher and delivery boy until he gained employment with the postal service. In 1930, after the stock market crash, Wright lost his postal job and started to work on a novel *Cesspool*—published posthumously in the 1970s as *Lawd Today!*—that reflected his postal service experiences. In 1931, Wright published the short story “Superstition” in the short-lived *Abbott’s Monthly Magazine*. He also wrote through the Federal Writers’ Project.

Wright was a witness and participant in the Communist and the Pan Africanist political and philosophical movements. While living in Chicago, Wright was involved

in the John Reed Club, a Communist literary organization, and he became an official member in 1933. He then published revolutionary poetry and short stories in *Left Front*, *New Masses*, and *Anvil*. By 1935, he found work with the Federal Negro Theater, under the Federal Writers' Project. He wrote some short stories and a novel during this time, but they were not published until after his death. Wright moved to New York, in 1937, and became Harlem editor of a Communist paper, *Daily Worker*, and coeditor of *Left Front*. He also helped establish the magazine *New Challenge*. In 1938, he published *Uncle Tom's Children*, which won him first prize for best book-length manuscript from *Story* magazine. He published "Bright and Morning Star" in *New Masses* and soon after became part of the magazine's editorial board. Wright eventually faulted the Communist party for not understanding that it relied on African Americans for support. He left the party in 1942 and in 1944 published a related essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*: "I Tried to Be a Communist." In 1949, it was printed again as *The God That Failed*, as a collection of essays by ex-Communists. In 1953, he also published *The Outsider*.



Richard Wright (photographed in 1939) is best known for his first published novel, *Native Son*. (Library of Congress)

In 1939, he married Dhimah Rose Meadman, a Russian-Jewish dance teacher, with author Ralph Ellison as his best man. Wright started to work on the novel *Little Sister*, but it was never published. He spent a short time with his wife in Mexico, but the marriage dissolved after a few months. He returned to New York and divorced in 1940. While returning to New York, Wright paid a visit to his father, whom he had not seen in 25 years. In his 1945 autobiography, *Black Boy*, which sold over 400,000 copies, he describes this visit in great detail. The novel also describes his determination to borrow books from an all-white library, by forging permission notes.

He finished *Native Son* in 1940, and it became an immediate international success, although it was banned in Birmingham, Alabama, libraries. The novel gained Wright both popularity and fortune in its first weeks of publication, selling 215,000 copies. It was also selected as a Book of the Month best seller. *Native Son* encouraged African Americans to reveal their discontent with the prejudices that they faced in American society. A stage adaptation of *Native Son* was written from 1940 to 1941, in collaboration with Paul Green. Wright was discontent with Paul Green's production, so Wright and John Houseman revised it, Orson Welles staged it, and it ran on Broadway successfully in the spring of 1941. Wright won a prestigious Spingarn Medal, in 1941, from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Wright married his second wife, Ellen Poplar, in 1941, and the couple had two daughters. In 1947, he and his family moved to Paris and stayed there for the rest of his life. While in Paris, Wright continued to enjoy reading and took to existentialism. He produced three novels during this period, but none were as well received as his earlier works. In 1960, Wright suffered a heart attack and died on November 28, at the age of 52. He is buried in Paris.

See also: Ellison, Ralph; Hughes, Langston; McKay, Claude

Nicole Joy DeCarlo

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# Political Activity and Resistance to Oppression: From the American Revolution to the Civil War

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Slave songs are a testament to the way in which Christianity provided slaves with the precedents, heroes, and future promise that allowed them to transcend the purely temporal bonds of the Peculiar Institution.

Historians have frequently failed to perceive the full importance of this because they have not taken the slave's religiosity seriously enough. A people cannot create a music as forceful and striking as slave music out of a mere uninternalized anodyne. Those who have argued that Negroes did not oppose slavery in any meaningful way are writing from a modern, political context. What they really mean is that the slaves found no *political* means to oppose slavery. But, slaves, to borrow Professor Hobsbawm's term, were prepolitical beings in a prepolitical situation. Within their frame of reference there were other—and from the point of view of personality development, not necessarily less effective—means of escape and opposition. If mid-twentieth century historians have difficulty perceiving the sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders, the problem may be the historians' and not the slaves.'

Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*

The 1776 anticolonial settler revolt against the parliamentary monarchy of England was punctuated with multivalent political languages, one of which asserted that the colonists feared not only tyranny but also enslavement by the mother country. The kind of slavery against which the colonists were rebelling, however, did not concern the social conditions to which African and African-descended slaves had been subjected (central to which remained a lack

of political representation in the emergent nation). Rather, the colonists remained preoccupied with their ability to exercise certain liberties that they believed were being increasingly undermined by the political administration and the mercantile policies of the mother country. These liberties did not sacrifice the concept of rugged individualism but remained circumscribed by the prescriptions of local communal institutions (parochial government and church). Indeed, one could scarcely find use of the language of democracy associated with the claim that "all men are created equal" because this term (which seems to have come into the English political lexicon only after 1789, in the wake of the French revolution) was initially used very hesitantly, given that it was often associated with terror and misguided revolution in Europe. Reflecting this zeitgeist, the *Federalist Papers*, whose influence on contemporary public opinion may be debatable (though its influence on U.S. political thought remains indisputable), drew an important distinction between a republic and a democracy, preferring the former to the latter because it was thought that a republican government could "refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interests of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice, will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations." It was further argued that under such a system, "it may well happen that the public voice pronounced by the

representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good, than if pronounced by the people themselves convened for the purpose.”

In other words, the colonists revolted not so much within the terms of liberal individualism, but rather as disenchanting English subjects who were compelled (regretfully, they always seemed to argue) to contest a situation of increasing corruption (executive measures such as standing armies, national debts, and excise schemes forced on a weakened Parliament) that threatened their unique inheritance of liberty. This liberty was represented as being the exclusive possession of the English and most clearly reflected in the constitution (based not on one specific, formal written document, but more on unwritten constitutional conventions as well as some written texts). The uniqueness of their notion of liberty remained that the English constitution had succeeded in achieving a freedom that was not even realized with the attempts, however commendable, during the classical ages of Greece and Rome. According to John Adams, the English constitution was the finest under heaven, and according to Samuel Adams, it was founded in nature. One could therefore say that its “immaculate conception” rendered its perfection both celestial and terrestrial. Yet during the age of revolution, it was claimed that such unparalleled freedom was now under siege.

Representing themselves as the true heirs to this intellectual and political tradition, the revolting colonists claimed this freedom could no longer be achieved in the Old World. In so doing, the revolutionaries furthered the self-conception of British North America as the exceptional “city on the hill.” The only way that the colonists could preserve this historically unique liberty was by separating themselves from the mother country, which had fallen from grace. If not, they too would remain in bondage, that is, in political slavery.

Enslaved and free blacks would have been well aware of the implications of invoking such political terms as “liberty,” “equality,” and the “rights of man” in a society that had institutionalized the unfreedom of a population group. Blacks were therefore compelled to exploit this opportunity by adapting this language to their own interests and purposes. As a consequence, their behavior exerted a profound influence on the formation of the political structure and cultural imagination (not that the two are distinct) of the newly formed nation and thus constituted something more fundamental than what can be accounted for by the

explanatory model defined by the resistance/accommodation binary. Although on one level, enslaved and free blacks transmitted the official languages of freedom, liberty, and independence, they were also creators of new ones, such as with the analogical reading of the biblical story of Exodus and the reassertion of a God as the liberator of oppressed peoples, a claim that invoked the original, revolutionary thrust of Christianity at the moment it arose in its challenge to the empire of Rome. Blacks in the newly constituted United States also challenged empire, one that, according to Thomas Jefferson in the wake of the Louisiana Purchase, constituted an “empire of liberty.” The relation of blacks (as slaves and free people) to the ruling order was thus both complementary and antagonistic, as they adapted, on the one hand, and transformed, on the other hand, the dominant political languages that structured the society.

Although established well before the Revolutionary era, and despite its gradual abolition in the Northern states, the institution of slavery expanded and intensified after 1776. Indeed, the *présence Africaine* in fact made certain aspects of the Revolution itself possible. In a paradox that Edmund Morgan has defined as prototypically American, the independence of the new nation was literally bought with slave labor. When the revolting colonies sought aid from France in their struggle for independence, “their single most valuable product with which to purchase assistance was tobacco, produced mainly by slave labor.” Such a relation necessarily implies that one has to move beyond the explanatory resistance and accommodation model to account for the actions of enslaved and free blacks, because the existence of Anglo-American settler, anticolonial freedom required the perpetuation of slavery and racial hierarchy.

This relationship continued with the actual formation of the nation in the wake of the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution. As many historians have noted, the words “slave” and “slavery” do not appear in the document. Yet, of the three major compromises needed in 1787 for the passage of the political and intellectual charter of the nation, one was directly related to the issue of slavery, and the other two (establishment of a bicameral legislature and the election of the president) were not completely unrelated to questions of distribution of power in which the institution of slavery continued to be implicated. The three-fifths compromise, which apportioned taxation and representation in the House of Representatives (and the U.S. Electoral College) on the basis of a ratio of three black slaves to five

slaveholding whites, served an organizing role in the emergent political system. It made some whites even more free than others, by giving districts with slaves additional votes for their property in humans. Over time, these extra votes gave the South a third more representatives in Congress, greatly bolstering the political power of the region and ensuring that a slaveholding Southerner (or supporter) occupied the presidency for much of the pre-Civil War era.

Yet in addition to the political implications for the structuring of power in the emergent nation, the enslavement of those of African hereditary descent also served a metaphysical function. No wonder John C. Calhoun insisted that to “make equality of *condition* essential to liberty, would be to destroy both liberty and progress.” While the black presence politically enfranchised some whites disproportionately, blacks simultaneously also came to represent symbolically the ultimate embodiment, within the languages of republicanism, of the anti-citizen, a dependent who, like a child, would require that decisions be taken on his or her behalf. This symbolic constitution (far more powerful than the juridical expression to which it gave rise) would be solidified beginning in 1790, with the first of a series of naturalization acts that legally defined citizenship as being the exclusive privilege of “free white persons” (1790 act) with “good moral character” (1802 act). It is in this context, therefore, that the black came to embody the conceptual “other,” what it meant to be not fully human. Moreover, this discourse of “naturalization” represented not only a political strategy, but also a rhetorical one that enabled a settler population to assert claims of nativity and belonging over the claims of indigenous peoples, who after having domesticated the continent as the original founders, now found their lands being expropriated and their modes of existence being characterized as primitive and barbaric (not that many indigenous people would have conceptualized ownership of lands in the same terms as Euro-American settlers). Indeed, it became increasingly clear from the Revolutionary era that although “all men are created equal,” not all humans were considered as fully men, and thus, the “rights of man,” as Trumper argued in George Lamming’s classic novel, *In the Castle of My Skin*, could not incorporate the “rights of the Negro.”

Nonetheless, despite the legal acts that represented the black subject outside of the dominant terms of citizenship, free and enslaved blacks consistently repudiated such an assertion, as they laid claim to this new land in which they

found themselves (and not by choice as immigrants). In a process that Sylvia Wynter defines as neo-indigenization, together with the first indigenous peoples and western Europeans, African descended peoples would become one of the founding civilizations to the cultural matrix of the Americas. Therefore, when blacks contradicted the official order of consciousness that defined the United States from the early national period as an Anglo-American republic (rather than as a civilization constituted by settlers, slaves, and displaced indigenous people), it was a challenge mounted against what can be identified, a century and half before the Third Reich, as the first racial state.

It is precisely within such a frame that the political activity of blacks, beginning during the 1776 revolt, can be understood. The moment was not missed to make clear, in both political and intellectual terms, the stakes of the Revolution for an enslaved population. Maria Stewart, who according to Benjamin Quarles was the “first native-born American woman to speak in public and leave extant texts of her addresses,” made this point most clearly in her 1832 lecture at Franklin Hall: “the whites have so long and so loudly proclaimed the theme of equal rights and privileges, that our souls have caught the flame also, ragged as we are.” Earlier, Phillis Wheatley had made similar assertions in a series of poems that sparked controversy during the late 18th century when they were published in London and the United States. In her poem to the Earl of Dartmouth, Wheatley noted that the new and independent nation was free of the mournful wrongs and grievances unaddressed by Britain: “No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain / Which wanton *Tyranny* with lawless hand / Had made, and with it meant t enslave the land.” However, Wheatley pointed out that she understood such a dynamic precisely because of her own experience (“Should you my, lord, while you peruse my song, / Wonder from whence my love of *Freedom* sprung”), being “snatched from Africa” away from her family. She therefore hoped others would not be subjected to such a situation, to such tyranny: “And can I then but pray / Others may never feel tyrannic sway?”

On the political level, some blacks demonstrated their understanding of anticolonial liberty by embracing the fight against the mother country. Although some fought on the side of the Loyalists, an estimated 5,000 served in the Continental Army. Interestingly enough, both sides only reluctantly admitted blacks to fight for their respective causes, illustrating the depth of the fear of extending the “rights of

man” discourse to slaves. However, a regiment consisting of more than 500 *gens de couleurs* (free men of color) from the then-French colony of St. Domingue (known as the *Corps de Chasseurs-Volontaires*) was able to serve the Revolutionary cause, fighting valiantly at the 1779 Battle of Savannah. Ironically, some of the soldiers, who as a group formed a part of a slaveholding class in St. Domingue, were enslaved themselves after being captured by the British. For their service, blacks who were slaves were often promised freedom for enlisting, and some were indeed freed at the end of the war, as occurred with Prince Estabrook, who joined George Washington’s army after having fought at Lexington in 1775. Some who had fought for the British would later find themselves in Nova Scotia and, eventually, because of the discriminatory conditions there, in Sierra Leone.

With blacks serving in military conflicts in British North America before the Revolution, such as in the French and Indian War, and afterward, such as in the War of 1812, the Civil War (on both the Union and the Confederate sides), and the Indian Wars, a paradoxical tradition has continued to the contemporary era. The death of Crispus Attucks during the 1770 Boston Massacre can be seen as emblematic of a relation identified by James Baldwin almost two centuries later, whereby blacks had pledged allegiance to a nation that had yet to pledge allegiance to them. Nonetheless, though often rewarded less for their service, blacks continued to participate in all the major conflicts of the nation, including both World War I and World War II, and continue to do so, even though the dynamic has yet to fundamentally change.

The ironic role of blacks in the military during the Revolutionary War demonstrated a tension that would come to define much of the experience of African-descended peoples in British North America and that remains central to what has often been identified as resistance. In the serving, and literally dying for, the birth (as well as the symbolic rebirth) of the nation, both the antagonistic and complementary role of the black presence can be seen. On one level, such actions called into question the very nature of the society. If a slave was represented as the conceptual “other” to the idea of the citizen, how then were they able to participate in one of the activities that from the classical era has defined citizenship? This attempt to be incorporated into the dominant society, despite prohibitions and proscriptions, can be generalized to define much of the social reality of blacks in the Americas since arriving as a consequence of the Middle

Passage. Despite all that slaves claimed to embody and not be capable of accomplishing, enslaved and free blacks nonetheless became intellectuals, political actors, and creators of art and established both traditional and alternative families and kinship networks.

The rebellious acts of the colonists leading to 1776 therefore had unintended consequences that led to a challenge by those of African hereditary descent. The actions of blacks, however, had precedents before the anticolonial war of independence. In April 1712, there had been a slave revolt in New York City, where a group of armed slaves set fire to buildings, killing at least nine whites in the resulting confusion. As a result, approximately 20 slaves were executed (and others committed suicide). The anxiety of whites was transformed into restrictive laws, including one that discouraged manumission at all as well as one that levied a fee of 200 pounds for liberating a slave (to be given to the freed person if unable to take care of herself or himself). Another slave uprising occurred in New York in 1741, which was ignited (literally and figuratively) by another series of fires that swept the city. The extent of a formalized slave conspiracy remains a question of debate among historians, but it does seem that the breach of social norms, especially the legal codes restricting the behavior of blacks (dancing and drinking at night and on Sundays, for instance), caused the kind of anxiety that led many to think that with the help of some whites (in particular, Catholics), slaves were going to burn the city.

Of course, the most notable colonial rebellion occurred two years prior in South Carolina, near the Stono River, 20 miles southwest of Charleston. After having met in secret in September 1739, 20 slaves planned a march toward Spanish Florida, where it had been reported that in the wake of the outbreak of war between Britain and Spain, slaves could obtain freedom. Arming themselves with weapons seized from a store near Stono Bridge (killing two storekeepers in the process) and with their numbers increasing, the rebels marched toward St. Augustine and Fort Mose (*Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose*). Although the former had a significant free and slave population for the colonial era, the latter had become, in 1738, the first legally sanctioned free black community in Spanish-controlled North America. By the time the hurriedly assembled response of plantation owners and slaveholders had put down the rebellion, many slaveholders and family members had been killed as well as their homes burned. With this serving as a warning to the dominant society of the lengths to which slaves would go

to obtain freedom, more severe slave laws were instituted including a decade long ban on the slave trade.

It certainly should be noted that physical resistance to slavery took many forms, including work stoppages, which could involve poor performance of work or feigning illness in order to not work at all. As well, slaves engaged in individual acts of sabotage on plantations, including arson in some instances. Personal actions committed against slaveholding families, such as poisoning, occurred, though probably not to the extent feared by whites. Opposition to slavery was not restricted to plantations because slaves revolted on ships as well. Although the 1839 mutiny on the ironically named schooner the *Amistad* (“Friendship”) has become well-known, just two years after the revolt led by Cinque, an uprising occurred on the brig the *Creole*, led by the also ironically named Madison Washington. On November 7, 1841, Washington and 18 others seized the ship en route from Richmond, Virginia, to New Orleans (where North America’s largest slave market was located) and forced the crew to sail to the Bahamas, where they knew they would be free because England had abolished slavery in 1834. Both mutinies revealed the geopolitical dynamics of empire and slave trading. Whereas the *Amistad* brought the United States and Spain into conflict (the mutiny having occurred off the coast of Spain’s colony Cuba), the *Creole* ignited an intense diplomatic struggle between the United States and Great Britain. In the end, most found freedom, but not until after enduring the ordeal of a Supreme Court trial (in March 1841), in the case of the *Amistad*, and imprisonment for those involved in the mutiny on the *Creole*.

Running away also constituted a protracted challenge to the institution of slavery. Although precise numbers will never be known, slaves ran away as individuals, as families, and in small groups. Moreover, in the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina as well as the Florida Everglades, maroon communities of runaway slaves formed, though they never established themselves in the same way as they did in the Caribbean (and Brazil), especially in the case of Jamaica, where a treaty with the colonial powers was negotiated in 1795. From the 17th century, runaway slaves from coastal Georgia and South Carolina joined with Indian groups, most significantly, the Seminoles, to form communities that resisted colonial encroachment. The Revolution of 1776 intensified the formation of maroon settlements, such as with the community formed during the war on the Savannah River by blacks who had acquired

military training from fighting in the conflict. As occurred with most in British North America, this settlement was ultimately destroyed by the state police forces (with some killed and others wounded), but not before the group had conducted armed attacks on plantations and the state troopers of Georgia. There nonetheless were extraordinary moments, such as in July 1816, when 300 fugitive slaves (with Indian allies) held Fort Blount (captured from the Creeks in 1815 and used as refuge for runaway slaves) in Apalachicola, Florida, for several days before being subdued by U.S. military forces.

Although some have argued that the seizure of Fort Blount constituted the largest slave rebellion in British North America, usually four plots or rebellions have been described as the archetype of resistance to slavery: Gabriel’s Rebellion near Richmond, Virginia (1800); Charles Deslondes’s near New Orleans (1811); Denmark Vesey’s in Charleston, South Carolina (1821–22); and Nat Turner’s in Southampton County, Virginia (1831). The number of actual slave rebellions may never be known and continues to be debated. Herbert Aptheker long ago proposed that over 200 had occurred. Of the four major ones, many of the “leaders” of these rebellions or plots invoked the claims of the Revolution of 1776 as well as the tenets of Christianity.

Gabriel, born in July 1776, planned—with his wife, Nanny; two brothers, Solomon and Martin; and Jack Bowler—an armed rebellion to overtake the city of Richmond. Because of torrential rains as well as the betrayal of the plot by two slaves, the plan was aborted. It has been stated that Gabriel, slave of Tomas Prosser of Henrico County, wanted to buy a flag on which to write “death or liberty,” and Bowler insisted “we had as much right to fight for our liberty as any men.” Indeed, according to an English visitor a few years after the rebels were hanged, a lawyer present at the trials told him that Gabriel had stated in his defense, “I have nothing more to offer than what General Washington would have had to offer, had he been taken by the British and put to trial by them.”

In January 1811, Deslondes, a slave driver originally from St. Domingue, led a march of more than several hundred slaves toward New Orleans, in which plantations in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes were burned and at least two whites were killed before federal marshals suppressed the insurrection.

Traditional historical accounts (based on the official report from the trial) have described Vesey as a carpenter



and a minister who had purchased his freedom with lottery winnings in 1799, after having been brought to South Carolina (via St. Thomas and St. Domingue). Purportedly, after establishing a following in a Methodist church he helped to found, he planned to attack the arsenal at, and the plantations surrounding, the city of Charleston. Because “the plot” was discovered, the attack was prevented. Although doubt has been cast over the validity of the plot, the brutality of the response over the imagined plot has not been disputed. Thirty-five men, including Vesey, were hanged, and another 40 were sent into exile “beyond the limits of the United States.” As was the case with Gabriel’s Rebellion and Deslondes’s rebellion, “the leaders” had to be hanged. Indeed, in the case of Deslondes, he and approximately 20 rebels were decapitated, with their heads placed on mile markers along Bayou St. John as a warning for those who had the unmitigated gall to breach the sacred belief of the plantocracy that the natural position of the black was as a slave.

Yet such brutal responses did not deter blacks from continuing to mount challenges to the institution of slavery. Nat Turner’s August 1831 revolt demonstrated the extent to which many would go to bring an end to their enslaved status. Turner, impelled by visions of spiritual battles, led more than 70 slaves in an attack on plantations, marching toward the nearby town, named ironically, Jerusalem. Because more than 50 whites had been killed by the end of the assault, the response was severe. In the end, more than 50 blacks were executed by the state, but in addition to this action, vigilante groups murdered more than 200 blacks, most of whom could have had nothing to do with the rebellion. Moreover, the legislature of the state of Virginia was debating proposals for the gradual abolition of slavery. It was in this context that Thomas Dew, professor of political economy at the College of William and Mary, authored his innovative defense of slavery in which he argued that abolition of slavery would cause greater injury to slaveholders and the enslaved. Dew insisted that “no rule of conscience or revealed law of God” could condemn slaveholders. Indeed, slavery with its racial hierarchy provided a “badge of distinction, the true mark of aristocracy,” for “all who are white are equal in spite of the variety of occupation.” Slavery and racial hierarchy therefore served as an organizing principle that gave rise to and integrated the society, which then produced, as Dew stated, a “spirit of equality which is both the generator and preserver of the genuine spirit of liberty.”

Hence, in tandem with the extraordinary physical acts that challenged the institution of slavery, blacks were forced to resist the intellectual underpinnings of the social order, such as those put forth by Professor Dew. Indeed, David Walker’s *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* contested Thomas Jefferson’s assertion in his *Notes on Virginia* that between black and white, “the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us.” Refuting this claim, Walker insisted that it was not nature that produced these distinctions, but in fact, the understanding of what it meant to be human that determined the treatment of blacks. “Have they [whites] not, after having reduced us to the deplorable conditions of slaves under their feet, held us up as descending originally from the tribes of *Monkeys* or *Orang-Outangs*?” Thus, according to Walker, blacks had to “contradict or confirm him by our own actions” for “unless we try to refute Mr. Jefferson’s arguments respecting us, we will only establish them.”

And contradict them, they did. Walker had been an agent for *Freedom’s Journal*, the first newspaper owned and operated by blacks in the United States. Established by Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russwurm in March 1827 (the same year that the state of New York abolished slavery), the newspaper sought to give an alternative perspective of the situation of blacks to the one presented in the white press. In this vein, the paper advocated the right to vote as well as opposed the predominantly white-supported colonizationist movement that sought to solve the “problem” of free blacks by “emigrating” them from the United States to Africa (although the impetus for the American Colonization Society was a benevolent one based on the feeling that blacks would never be accepted as citizens in the United States and could have a better life in Africa). More important, *Freedom’s Journal* helped to initiate a counter-discourse that offered another interpretation of the social reality of blacks, and not only in the United States, as the newspaper adopted a Pan-African perspective before such an ideology was conceptualized a century later. Thus, on the heels of the journal, a plethora of slave narratives, newspapers, and journals sought to challenge the dominant system of representation that legitimated slavery by offering vivid descriptions of the empirical social conditions to which slaves were subjected. These writings, together with powerful speeches, served an indispensable role in the abolitionist movement, which emerged in its first form in the wake of the Revolution of 1776.

*Freedom's Journal* was also one of many organizations and institutions created by blacks to deal with their socio-political situation. Beginning circa 1775 with the establishment of the Silver Bluff Baptist Church in South Carolina, blacks in the North and the South created church and non-religious organizations that tackled the issues that the dominant refused to address, and logically so, given that the origins of the problem lay with these very structures of power (legislative, judicial, ecclesiastical). Some of the innovations included new religious dominations, such as with the establishment in 1816 of the African Methodist Episcopal Church by Richard Allen, which followed Allen's formation (with Absalom Jones) of the Free African Society in 1787. Some other organizations, primarily located in the North, included mutual aid, fraternal, benevolent, temperance, and educational associations, such the African Society in Boston, the Female Literary Association in Philadelphia, and the American Society of Free Persons of Colour, for Improving Their Condition in the United States; for Purchasing Lands; and for the Establishment of a Settlement in Upper Canada, also based in Philadelphia. Societies such as the American Society of Free Persons of Colour reflected the diversity of perspectives and approaches to the questions of colonization and of abolition. Without a doubt, no organization was more central to black political activities during this era than the antislavery societies.

Although the profound and, indeed, unavoidable contradiction of an anticolonial revolt in the name of freedom led some slaveholders (such as Robert Carter in Virginia) to free their slaves, the Revolutionary era also prompted the Northern states to adopt measures toward the gradual abolition of slavery. As a result, manumission and antislavery societies emerged across the region that began to call for a gradual end to the institution of slavery. Although complexly constituted, such as with the (initially) all-male, all-white elite Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society formed in 1789, or with the movement for colonization, these movements would be transformed with the influence of black thought and action. Offering critiques of the colonization movement as well as groups that excluded blacks from their own liberation, the antislavery movement underwent a profound shift in the 1830s to call for immediate emancipation. William Lloyd Garrison, one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, often ascribed his conversion from supporting the American Colonization Society to the interventions of black activists. Subsequently,

many of these very activists constituted the bedrock of the financial support for his antislavery newspaper, the *Liberator*. Indeed, the concerted efforts of blacks remained central to the antislavery movement, especially with regard to the production of slave narratives, which recounted in vivid and often horrifying detail the lived experiences of those suffering under the legally sanctioned institution of slavery.

Nowhere else in the history of the institution of slavery, which preexisted the formation of the post-1492 Americas, will one find such a substantial written record of the realities of slavery from the perspective of the slave. In addition to the most popular antebellum narratives, such as those authored by Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Harriet Jacobs, there were numerous others, including some written after the Civil War. When one considers all the writings (narratives, broadsides, and pamphlets) of the slaves and former slaves, one is forced to confront the extent to which these represent an original, indigenous literary form that belong specifically to the field of American cultural and intellectual production. And despite the recent excellent scholarship on the subject, it nonetheless seems that this, to borrow Arna Bontemps's term, "American genre" has yet to find its fully articulated theoretical ground in the present contemporary canon of what is often defined as literature.

As the case of the slave narrative implies, the experiences and the political activities of blacks can also be understood in the context of the contributions made to the general society. In fact, what has often been understood only as "slave culture" and "resistance" was, more profoundly, an attempt to institute a new kind of society, on the basis of the experiences of all its peoples. Thus, the slave's reinterpretation of Christianity, which produced the spirituals by fusing the symbolic systems of Africa with those of those of Judeo-Christianity, gave rise to new cultural forms that spoke to the existential reality in ways the dominant society remained unable to. In other words, their most powerful form of "resistance" was their "resistance" to the explanatory model that underlay the organization of the society. More than anything else, this dynamic—one of trying to make a putative democratic and Christian society embody its stated principles—has been the experience of those of African hereditary descent in the Americas. One is reminded here of Frederick Douglass when he asserted that blacks needed the vote because had he lived under an autocratic or aristocratic government "where the few bore

rule and the many were subject, there would be no special stigma resting upon me, because I did not exercise the elective franchise." He therefore insisted on voting rights because "where universal suffrage is the rule, where that is the fundamental idea of the Government, to rule us out is to make us an exception, to brand us with the stigma of inferiority, and to invite to our heads the missiles of those about us." It seems that nearly a century and a half after the surrender at the Appomattox Court House, despite some significant changes, those of African hereditary descent, wholly or partly, whose ancestors would have come here only as a result of the Middle Passage, continue to find themselves made into an exception (though in different but related terms) and still subjected to a social stigma (though no longer as slaves) and continue to have to dodge numerous political (as well as military) missiles.

Demetrius Eudell

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## Abelman v. Booth

*Abelman v. Booth* was an important court case that shed light on the controversial Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The U.S. Supreme Court consolidated two cases, which involved the same transactions and depended on the same

legal principles, to render a decision in *Abelman v. Booth* in 1859. This case revealed the conflict between North and South over the Fugitive Slave Act and caused tremendous turmoil when the Supreme Court ultimately ruled that state courts did not have the power to review or interfere with federal laws.

The case commenced in 1854, when abolitionist Sherman Booth was charged before a federal commissioner in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with aiding and abetting the escape of a fugitive slave from a U.S. deputy marshal, Stephen Abelman. Abelman had the slave in custody under a warrant issued by a U.S. district court judge pursuant to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, but Booth incited a riot to help the enslaved man escape, an action that was deemed a clear violation of the act's stipulation that required all Americans to cooperate in apprehending fugitives.

Following the incident, Booth was held in jail until he was to appear in the U.S. district court. Before his appearance date, Booth asked a Wisconsin Supreme Court justice for a writ of habeas corpus, arguing that he was being restrained of his liberty by the U.S. marshal. Booth argued to the Wisconsin Supreme Court justice that his imprisonment was illegal because the 1850 Act was unconstitutional and void and that the warrant for his arrest was defective because the warrant had not described the offense created by the act even had the act been valid. The state court justice issued the writ and directed the U.S. marshal to bring Booth before the state's highest court for a hearing. After the hearing, the justice decided Booth's detention was illegal and ordered Abelman to discharge him and set Booth free. Abelman complied with the state court's order but then applied to the Wisconsin Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari and argued that Booth's release had been erroneous and unlawful and that the state court's decision should be reversed. The Wisconsin State Supreme Court affirmed its decision to set Booth free.

The second case was initiated when Abelman filed a writ of error with the U.S. Supreme Court and asked that court to reverse the Wisconsin state court. After the writ had been filed, but before the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case, a federal court grand jury in Wisconsin indicted Booth for the offense for which the Wisconsin Supreme Court had discharged him. Booth pled not guilty but was convicted by a jury, sentenced to one-month imprisonment, and fined \$1,000. After his sentencing, Booth filed a petition in both the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the U.S.

district court in Wisconsin and argued that his conviction and imprisonment were illegal because the Fugitive Slave Law was unconstitutional. He also argued that the federal district court had no jurisdiction over him because the proceedings and sentence were legal nullities.

The district court ordered both the U.S. marshal and the sheriff to produce Booth in court. The U.S. marshal responded that he was unable to do so because Booth was in the custody of the sheriff. The sheriff produced Booth at the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which again decided Booth's imprisonment was illegal and ordered Booth's discharge.

The U.S. attorney general filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court and argued that the state court had no jurisdiction and that the U.S. Supreme Court should accept the case to correct the error. The U.S. Supreme Court heard both cases together because they involved different parts of the same offense and the same principles of law. The U.S. attorney general argued both cases for the government. No counsel appeared for Booth, but the Supreme Court had access to the documents from the first case as well as the Wisconsin Supreme Court opinions, arguments, and bases for its decisions.

In 1859 the U.S. Supreme Court reversed both decisions of the Wisconsin Supreme Court and upheld the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act. In delivering the opinion of the Court, Chief Justice Roger Taney articulated the Supreme Court's role in appellate jurisdiction and the role of state courts. The Supreme Court's decision reinforced that principle that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and that there is a division of authority between state and federal courts. The Court stressed the importance of uniformity in the interpretation of laws throughout the states and held the Wisconsin state court's actions were without authority. The Court explained that a state court's sovereignty is limited and restricted by the U.S. Constitution and that although both state and federal governments have powers within a state, both must act separately and independently within their sphere because the sphere of U.S. government action should be supreme without any interruption by state officials.

Chief Justice Taney, who had previously suffered severe criticism for his decision in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case in 1857, argued that the supremacy of the federal government had not been forced on the states. Instead, Taney maintained, the framers of the Constitution and the people of the United States deliberately conferred the powers on

the federal government for their own protection and safety, and it was the duty of the Supreme Court to determine the constitutionality of federal laws. The Court also held that it has appellate jurisdiction, whether from state or U.S. courts, and that such jurisdictional power is necessary to show states' errors and the resulting consequences if incorrect state decisions are not followed. The Court explained that the U.S. district court had exclusive jurisdiction of the laws of the United States and that the state court had no authority to question the federal district court's decision. Further, because the Fugitive Slave Law and all of its provisions were fully authorized by the Constitution of the United States, the Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. Commissioner had the legal authority to issue a warrant to commit Booth to jail. In so doing, Justice Taney and the majority opinion denied the right of state courts to interfere in federal cases, prohibited states from releasing federal prisoners through writs of habeas corpus, and upheld the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act.

*See also: Dred Scott v. Sandford; Fugitive Slave Act of 1793; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves*

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## Abolition, Slave Trade

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The Atlantic slave trade, the largest forced migration of people in human history, occurred between the mid-1400s and the mid-1800s. Estimates of the number of Africans who survived the journey and arrived in the Americas range between 9 and 30 million. This trade had a profound demographic impact on both Africa and the Americas. By the end of the trade, West and West-Central Africa were close to the brink of demographic exhaustion. By contrast, Africans were central in populating the Americas, especially after "Old World" diseases destroyed 90 percent of indigenous populations.

The Atlantic slave trade was a deadly enterprise. African captives died on forced marches to the coast, in slave pens on the African littoral, on ships during the Middle Passage, and during their first year of "seasoning" in the Americas. At least 40 percent of the Africans caught up in the trade were killed by it. Historians who count only those who died on ships during the Middle Passage itself set the mortality rates at approximately 20 percent.

The Atlantic slave trade was carried out by shifting European naval powers, each of which overlapped but gained ascendancy in different time periods. The Portuguese were first, and then came the Dutch, followed by the Spanish and the French. The English began trading in large numbers during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. This entry focuses on the abolition of the British and American trades because they directly impacted the English settler colonies that would become the United States and because the United States and England were the first countries to abolish the Atlantic slave trade by law.

### Abolition in England

The British slave trade grew exponentially between the last decades of the 1600s and the first years of the 19th century, and the movement for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade grew along with it. In the course of the triangular trade, some African captives were brought to England and purchased by wealthy Englishmen as personal servants. Their exact legal status was unclear until 1772, when opponents of slavery brought the case of James Somerset, a runaway slave. His owner, Charles Stuart, captured him and intended to ship him to a Jamaican plantation. In response, Somerset brought a writ of habeas corpus before Lord Mansfield, the chief justice of the King's Bench. In *Somerset v. Stuart*, Mansfield held that the condition of slavery was not supported on English soil by English law, and Somerset must be freed.

Despite this victory for abolitionists, slavery continued to thrive in the British colonies, and the slave trade expanded dramatically. Quakers and other religious and political groups who opposed slavery formed the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, or SEAST, on May 22, 1787. SEAST was able to focus the energies of various abolitionist forces and direct it toward one purpose: the legal abolition of the slave trade. Although its members were opposed to slavery as well as to the slave trade,

SEAST decided that they could save the most lives if they focused on the abolition of the trade. They hoped that if the trade were discontinued, planters in the American colonies would be forced to take better care of their slaves, instead of relying on the practice of working their slaves to death and then simply buying more. SEAST's strategy was to educate the public about the horrors of the trade and the immoral acts committed by traders and slavers and to petition the government and demand new legislation that would abolish the trade. The indefatigable Thomas Clarkson, a central player in SEAST, traveled the country interviewing sailors engaged in the trade, who conveyed to him horror stories about conditions on slave ships for slaves and sailors both, and this evidence was used in both legislative and educational campaigns. They organized demonstrations, distributed informational pamphlets, and designed crockery and medallions with antislavery figurines, such as Josiah Wedgwood's pottery medallion depicting an African man in chains in a posture of supplication, asking, "Am I not a Man and Brother?" Public sentiment against the trade was also mobilized by the publication of Olaudah Equiano's autobiographical slave narrative in 1789. English women played a central role in bringing about the abolition of slavery, and although unrepresented in Parliament, women formed their own antislavery societies and organized extraordinarily effective boycotts of slave-produced products such as sugar.

In response to public outcry, the king ordered the formation of a committee of his Privy Council to collect evidence on the slave trade. SEAST began focusing its efforts in the short run on getting the government involved in ameliorating the horrid conditions of the Middle Passage that led to so many fatalities. The first of these regulations was introduced in May 1788 by the elderly Sir William Dolben, MP, from Oxford. A devoted Anglican and member of SEAST, Dolben was morally opposed to the trade, particularly after he visited a slave ship docked in the Thames and witnessed the conditions there. Shortly thereafter, he introduced his bill to the House of Commons. Dolben's goal was to save lives in the short term with some kind of regulation on which everyone could agree. He argued that the act need not diminish the profit of slave traders and also maintained that improving conditions on board would save lives of ship crew members. Dolben argued forcefully that an act that limited the number of slaves according to the size of the ship and that required basic ventilation and

other health-related essentials should be adopted immediately to prevent further loss of life. Those in favor and those opposed worked on gathering evidence for their side. The Committee of the Liverpool African Merchants compiled statistics on the financial loss that would be caused to the trade if the number of captives were limited by the size of the ship. After enough evidence was put before the House of Commons and the Privy Council, even some members of Parliament who were invested in the trade began to understand that if there was any hope in saving it, they must assuage the moral outrage caused by the number of slaves dying in tightly packed holds, without sufficient air, water, and food, and they must decrease the number of English sailors dying because of the spread of disease and insufficient provisions.

Dolben was ultimately successful in persuading the House of Commons and the House of Lords to enact his law to ameliorate conditions during the Middle Passage: "An Act to Regulate, for a limited Time, the shipping and carrying Slaves in British Vessels from the Coast of Africa." Passed in 1788, it came to be known as the Dolben Act and was to be in effect temporarily while Parliament and the Privy Council continued to gather evidence about the trade. Prime Minister Pitt ordered Captain Parrey, a naval surveyor, to take measurements of slaving vessels docked at Liverpool. Parrey came back with surveys of several ships measurements, including those of the slaver called the *Brookes* (or *Brooks*). SEAST used the measurements of the *Brookes* and created the now-famous *Brookes* diagram, visually demonstrating the manner in which slaves were packed on board a slaver. This ship was in compliance with Dolben's Act, and it was hard to comprehend what conditions must have been like before the act. The *Brookes* diagram became one of the most powerful tools in the struggle for abolition.

In May 1789, M. P. William Wilberforce, who had been recruited to the cause by Thomas Clarkson of SEAST, delivered a delivered a powerful speech in the House of Commons against the slave trade, drawing on the mass of evidence collected by Clarkson and SEAST. Then in 1791, Wilberforce introduced the first bill to abolish the slave trade.

After more than 70 years of abolitionist activism, almost two decades of study and debate in Parliament, and a war with France, England finally abolished the trade. The Slave Trade Act, which banned the slave trade throughout the British Empire, was passed by both houses and

endorsed by King George III on March 25, 1807. Abolition of the trade was ultimately successful as a result of (1) the organization and mobilization of abolitionist sentiment on moral grounds and (2) the West Indies slaver lobby and their English agrarian allies' decline in strength in the face of the rising industrial capitalism. England had lost the colonies that made up the new nation of the United States, which had resulted in a smaller plantation economy for the empire. This reduced the political power that slave plantation owners had in England. England's rapid industrialization during the last two decades of the 18th century had begun changing the political and economic landscape of the British Empire. The Parliament and Privy Council's detailed study of the slave trade and the potential impact of its abolition on the British economy led political and economic leaders to believe that abolition would be more profitable in the long run. The British people began to believe in the greater strength and profitability of free labor in an industrial economy. The convergence of interest between the abolitionist movement that opposed slavery on moral grounds and that of the new industrializing market forces ultimately resulted in the British Empire's abolition of the slave trade. Lawmakers believed that abolition worked in favor of England's new economic model, which involved moving away from an emphasis on Caribbean plantations and slave trading and toward the control of West Africa itself. It also emphasized the establishment of palm oil production needed to run England's industrial machinery and the use of laborers that England did not have to feed or transport. Economic historians debate whether abolition ultimately had a positive or negative impact on the British economy in hindsight, but it is clear from the historical record that those in power believed in abolition's positive economic impact at the time. Abolitionists and advocates of industrialization were ultimately able to overpower the proponents of Britain's slave plantation economy.

### **Abolition in the United States**

Abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in the United States followed a very different path, even though an abolitionist movement grew in British North American mainland colonies in the 1700s just as it had in England. In fact, SEAST was organized on both sides of the Atlantic. And like in England, abolitionists were primarily Quakers and other deeply religious men and women who believed that

the institution of slavery was fundamentally evil. However, the colonies of British America were not involved as heavily in the Atlantic slave trade per se, but were rather on the receiving end of the trade, buying slaves from British traders. Some American colonists were active in the Atlantic slave trade, and the economies of certain areas, such as the port cities of Boston, New York, and Charleston, relied to a large extent on the profits from the shipping and selling of slaves. Nonetheless, the British colonies of the American mainland were primarily recipients of England's Atlantic trade, rather than conductors of the trade. Further, there was no American equivalent of the Somerset case. Slavery was legal by statute throughout the American colonies. Laws were crafted in the colonies that protected the institution of slavery and fostered its expansion and growth in the American colonies in the North and the South. Thus, although America's abolitionists were part of the movement that was growing on both sides of the Atlantic, their focus was on making the institution of slavery itself illegal. Another important difference between the abolitionist movement in England and that of the United States was that in England there were only a handful of black abolitionists because there was a tiny black population in England at the turn of the 18th century. Things were very different on the American mainland, where free blacks and fugitive slaves eventually spearheaded the abolitionist movement. In fact, the movement in the United States was thoroughly interracial; men and women, both black and white, worked together in the fight against slavery.

Nonetheless, the issue of the Atlantic slave trade was pressing as America transitioned from a loosely connected group of British colonies to the sovereign state of the United States. As the former colonies came together as states, with economic ties between them and regulated by the new federal government, divergent economic interests relating to the slave trade emerged. The issue was hotly contested at the Constitutional Convention during the summer of 1789. The Articles of Confederation that had bound the states together as one nation proved ineffective, due in large part to the lack of sufficient centralized power. One of the primary ways this problem was addressed was the creation of a list of enumerated powers given to Congress by Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution. One of these powers was the Commerce Clause, which gave Congress the exclusive right to regulate commerce between the states and with foreign powers. The states of the Lower South, such as

North and South Carolina, did not want the federal government to be able to abolish the slave trade, which it clearly would be able to accomplish if so motivated using the powers given it through the Commerce Clause. Ironically, the states of the Upper South, particularly the powerful state of Virginia, wanted an end to the Atlantic slave trade because they were economically invested in being the prime source of the internal slave trade: Virginia and, to a lesser extent, Maryland made most of their money “breeding” and selling slaves “down the river” (the origin of that phrase) into the Lower South. The Lower South, on the other hand, wanted to foster competition among suppliers of slaves, hoping to get better prices.

The result of this conflict was a compromise: Although Congress had the power under the Commerce Clause to ban the international slave trade, the members of the Constitutional Convention enacted the infamous (and often misunderstood) “Slave Trade Clause.” Article 1, Section 9[1], stated that Congress was prohibited from banning the international slave trade until the year 1808. Even so, Congress did in fact prohibit the importation of slaves from outside the United States on the first day it was allowed to do so: January 1, 1808. With the abolition of the international trade, the domestic slave trade proved to be vastly profitable to the Upper South, and the sale and “shipping” of slaves around slave states and territories formed the bedrock of the region’s physical and financial infrastructure.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah; Equiano, Olaudah; Wilberforce, William

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## Abolition, Slavery

The United States in the three decades before the Civil War was flooded with various reform movements. Inspired by the religious revivals of the Second Great Awakening, these reform movements sought to improve or perfect human society by eliminating any evil the reformers believed was an affront to the moral and spiritual health of the nation. Reformers attacked such issues as failure to observe the Sabbath, poor treatment of the mentally ill, crime and punishment, temperance, women’s rights, and the abolition of slavery. General antislavery sentiment had developed in both the North and the South during and immediately after the American Revolution. Ironically, by the mid-1820s, there were more antislavery societies in the South, over 100, than in the North, just 24. However, by 1830, Southern antislavery sentiment had largely disappeared. The larger antislavery movement included advocates of the colonization movement; gradualists who believed in a slow move toward emancipation through voluntary manumission; free-soil advocates who simply opposed further extension of slavery; and abolitionists who pursued an immediate compulsory end to slavery. It was not until the late 1820s and 1830s, as part of the massive push to reform society, that immediate abolition came to dominate the antislavery movement.

As late as the mid-1700s, most organized Western religions or denominations had failed to discourage their congregations from practicing slavery. Many European governments were actively engaged in the slave trade. Slaves could be found in all of the 13 British North American colonies, and throughout the American Revolution, many of the founding fathers were slaveholders. Antislavery sentiment, prior to 1787, was largely limited to those practicing the Quaker faith. Quakers would continue to be leaders of the movement until slavery was eventually abolished. In 1787, as the nation took its first steps, Congress barred slavery from the Old Northwest territory, the area north of the



Ohio River, and included in the Constitution the provision that the Atlantic slave trade would be outlawed in 1808. Most believed that the institution of slavery was destined to die out.

The first large-scale, organized emancipation movement appeared in 1817 with the creation of the American Colonization Society (ACS). A major hurdle for those who supported emancipation was the pervasive view that blacks and whites could not coexist equally within one nation. Thus, any plan for emancipation required the separation of the two. The colonization movement pushed for voluntary manumission and gradual emancipation, along with the removal of blacks back to Africa. Supporters of the American Colonization Society included Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Marshall, and James Monroe. To encourage this process, the ACS helped establish the country of Liberia in 1820. Its capital, Monrovia, was named in honor of President James Monroe. Within 10 years, the society had brought a little more than 1,400 free blacks to Liberia. American free blacks thus founded the country of Liberia, south of Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, most African Americans rejected the notion of colonization and saw the process as nothing more than a program for ridding the United States of its growing free black population. By the 1830s, colonization was seen as an unrealistic way to end slavery.

As stated previously, the evangelical fervor and reform-mindedness of the Second Great Awakening helped to bring about the rise of abolitionism. During the 1820s, the preaching of Lyman Beecher in New England and the revivals that began in western New York led by Charles Granderson Finney swept through much of the North, creating a powerful impulse toward social reform. Emancipation of the slaves was chief among the reform movements, and among Charles Finney's converts were leading abolitionists Theodore Dwight Weld and the brothers Arthur Tappan and Lewis Tappan. Weld became a leading antislavery lecturer and author of *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (1839), which exhibited the horrors of slavery and became the abolitionist's handbook for more than a decade. Arthur and Lewis Tappan, two wealthy New York philanthropists, were greatly influenced by Finney's revivalism and threw themselves headlong into support of the abolitionist cause. Other leading abolitionists included New Englander William Lloyd Garrison and the former slave Frederick Douglass.

The nation's most famous abolitionist was William Lloyd Garrison of Massachusetts. In 1831, he began publication in Boston of a new antislavery newspaper, the *Liberator*, and organized the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison grew up in poverty and educated himself while an apprentice to a newspaper publisher. Early in his career, Garrison edited a number of antislavery papers, but he soon became impatient with the strategies of gradualism and colonization. In the first issue of the *Liberator*, he renounced the doctrine of gradualism and vowed to be uncompromising in his assault on the institution of slavery. Throughout the 1830s, Garrison became the nation's most passionate and uncompromising opponent of slavery.

In December 1833, Garrison and the Tappan brothers were the chief organizers of the American Anti-Slavery Society. At a convention held in Philadelphia, along with 60 other delegates, they denounced slavery as a moral evil and demanded immediate abolition without compensation for slaveholders. The most radical demand emerging from the convention was the one for legal equality of the races. They hoped to use the publicity created when the British antislavery movement persuaded Parliament, also in 1833, to end slavery throughout the entire British Empire. However, they did not follow the British lead in providing compensation for slaveholders. In 1835, the society initiated an enormous propaganda campaign. It inundated the slave states with abolitionist literature, sent representatives all over the Northern states to organize state and local antislavery societies, and sent numerous petitions to Congress calling for the abolition of slavery in the nation's capital.

By 1834, 200 antislavery societies had been formed in the North. Support for these organizations came from evangelical reformers and Quakers, middle-class merchants and artisans, and most of all from women. Within two years, the number of societies had grown to over 500, and within four years, there were nearly 1,300 active antislavery societies. A petition campaign in 1838–1839 gathered over 2 million signatures proclaiming the sinfulness of slavery.

Initially, the abolitionists were generally condemned and mistreated. Mobs attacked them in the North; Garrison was a frequent target and was physically assaulted several times after speeches in Boston, and anti-abolition riots plagued Northern cities. Southerners burned antislavery pamphlets and blamed the Nat Turner slave insurrection in August 1831 on abolitionist agitation. There is no evidence that Turner had read any antislavery pamphlets or

the *Liberator*; yet Southerners were convinced that the new, more aggressive abolitionist rhetoric was the cause. These events, and the mob attack and murder of Illinois abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy in 1837, led many abolitionists to fear that the approach taken by the more radical abolitionists such as Garrison was detrimental to the cause.

As the abolition movement grew, debates over strategy increased. At the beginning of the 1840s, two clear and disparate camps had emerged within the abolitionist movement: one, often referred to as “radical abolitionists,” led by Garrison and another, the “political abolitionists,” led by New Yorkers Arthur and Lewis Tappan, wealthy New Yorker Gerrit Smith, and James G. Birney of Alabama, a former slaveholder.

Garrison and his more radical followers, often called Garrisonians, embraced nearly every important reform of the day: abolition, pacifism, temperance, and women’s rights. Additionally, these radicals believed that American society was corrupted from top to bottom and should be reformed. Their primary mode of protest was that of moral persuasion, aiming to convince their adversaries of the sinfulness of slavery. As part of their protest, they removed themselves from all corrupted institutions, including religion and government. Garrison broke with the organized church and along with his followers refused to vote, hold public office, or file lawsuits. He also burned a copy of the Constitution in protest. The schism in the movement came at the 1840 meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York. Two issues tore the movement asunder: whether women should be allowed to participate in the organization as equal members and whether the society should nominate abolitionists to run as independent political candidates.

The issue of women’s rights was particularly controversial. Women had, of course, been active in the abolitionist movement from its inception, but primarily in female-only societies. In the late 1830s, however, activists Sarah and Angelina Grimké brought the issue of women’s rights to the forefront. The Grimké sisters were daughters of a South Carolina slaveholder but disagreed with their parents’ slaveholding practices and left for the North. Both converted to Quakerism and became abolitionists and women’s rights activists. After attending numerous training conferences for abolition activists, they began publicly speaking against slavery, first to female audiences and later to those of mixed gender. Their activities brought condemnation from ministers in other denominations for taking part in unfeminine

activities. At the 1840 American Anti-Slavery Society meeting, the radicals insisted on the right of women to participate equally in the organization and eventually won this point. The Tappans’ New York delegation, however, argued that women’s rights and abolition should remain separate issues and broke away from the American Anti-Slavery Society to form the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

One result of this split was the growth of the women’s rights movement out of the radical abolitionist cause. Another result of the split was that those favoring a political solution to end slavery formed political parties. The Tappans, Gerrit Smith, and James Birney created the Liberty Party in 1840. The party petitioned Congress to end the slave trade in Washington, D.C., repeal local and state “black codes,” end the interstate slave trade, and discontinue admitting slave states to the Union. The Liberty Party nominated Birney for president in the 1840. He received just over 7,000 votes, and Garrisonians assailed the results of his candidacy as foolish. Nevertheless, the Liberty Party persisted and nominated Birney again in 1844. This time, however, he garnered over 61,000 votes and captured enough votes to deny the Whig Party candidate, Henry Clay, the presidency.

Between 1844 and 1848, political abolitionists suffered a number of setbacks. The annexation of Texas in 1844 as a slave state and the acquisition of half of Mexico’s territory after the 1846 U.S.-Mexican War threatened to further expand the institution of slavery. However, they did persuade some Northern Democrats and Whigs that there was a compelling need to end slavery. These factions along with the Liberty Party formed the Free-Soil Party in 1848 and nominated Martin Van Buren for president. In many ways, this new party was seen as a softer version of the Liberty Party. The Free-Soil Party limited its attack on slavery to abolition of the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and the prohibition of slavery from any new states. No longer was there a political call for abolition or equal rights for free blacks, as there had been with the Liberty Party. The Free-Soil Party garnered over 290,000 votes for Van Buren and thus helped elect Zachary Taylor (Whig) as president. They also placed a number of Free-Soil candidates in Congress. Support for the Free-Soil Party waned, and their 1852 presidential candidate, John P. Hale, gained less than 160,000 votes.

Radical critics of the Free-Soil Party denounced the organization as racist because the party declined to renounce racial discrimination, and many held overtly racist views. Yet for most Free-Soilers, avoiding abolition and the rights

of free blacks was wholly a political decision to gain further support. For this reason, most black abolitionists could be counted with the more radical branch of abolitionism.

Abolitionism held a specific allure for free blacks in the North. Poor living conditions and racial oppression, which at times could be as bad for them as for their slave counterparts, were facts of life for the nearly 500,000 free blacks in the antebellum period. Nonetheless, they were proud of their freedom and never forgot their brothers and sisters in bondage. Although many in the 1830s came to support Garrison and his goals, they also backed leaders from the black community.

Many black abolitionist leaders were either Baptist or Methodist ministers; however, the most famous black abolitionists were such former slaves as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass. William Lloyd Garrison claimed that Douglass and other former slaves were the best qualified to inform the public of the horrors of slavery. Douglass's autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, was published in 1845. While a slave, he had learned to read and write as a servant for a kind mistress in Baltimore. After the *Narrative* was published, he feared being captured. Thus, as a fugitive slave, he spent several years in England before returning in 1847, after abolitionist friends purchased his freedom. Upon his return to the United States, he established the antislavery newspaper the *North Star*. Living in Rochester, New York, he edited the *North Star* (under various names) for nearly two decades in support of the abolitionist cause.

Early in his abolitionist career, Douglass aligned himself with Garrison and the radicals. However, after his time in England with British abolitionists, Douglass began to see the advantages of political action. He used the *North Star* to support political parties and candidates, such as James Birney and the Liberty Party. During the 1850s, Douglass backed the Republican Party, even though their platform called only for an end to the expansion of slavery. In many ways Douglass was a pragmatist, who envisioned a future where all American racial and cultural differences were blended to create a single American nationality. Through his writings and speeches, Douglass was the one of the nation's most eloquent critics of racial inequality.

During the 1850s, as Douglass, Garrison, and other abolitionists struggled to end slavery through moral suasion and protest, the political system became unable to contain the sectional disputes surrounding slavery. Possibly the

most significant event to bolster the abolitionist cause was the passage of the Compromise of 1850. The most threatening provision of the Compromise was that it implemented vigorous enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, first passed in 1793. The new version of this law stripped runaway slaves of the right to trial and the right to testify in their own defense. Additionally, it required Northern citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves. In essence this measure forced even antislavery Northerners into the service of the slave-hunters. It brought more people into the fold of the abolitionist camp, people such as the essayist and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who previously had held antislavery sentiments but had avoided concerted action. Emerson saw the passage of the compromise as a call to arms, a call all men of conscience must answer. Using his fame as a lecturer and writer, Emerson took to the antislavery lecture circuit, calling on everyone to fight or at the very least ignore the new Fugitive Slave Law.

Mob riots against the Fugitive Slave Law broke out in a number of Northern states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts. In most cases, the aim of the mob was to free a fugitive slave captured by slave catchers. After several fugitives were rescued by abolitionist mobs, the state and federal governments stepped in to help the slave catchers. In Boston, federal marshals and 22 companies of state troopers were needed to prevent a crowd, estimated at 50,000, from storming a courthouse to free Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave.

As the furor over the Fugitive Slave Law grew, the most persuasive item of abolitionist propaganda was published in 1852. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe presented a fictionalized account of slavery, which through Stowe's eyes was an abominable sin. Within a year of publication, it had sold over 300,000 copies and was reissued numerous times. The abolitionist message was brought to an enormous new audience, not only through those who read the book but also through those who saw dramatizations of the book in local theaters across the nation.

In response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, some critics of slavery determined that more drastic measures should be taken, and a few began to advocate violence. Essentially, the act nullified the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that forbade slavery in the northern portions of the Louisiana Purchase. The Kansas and Nebraska territories would determine if they were slave or free through popular sovereignty. Everyone generally agreed that Nebraska would be

free; however, Kansas was up for grabs. Both proslavery and abolition supporters sent “settlers” to Kansas to assure their side won the vote. In the end, two separate territorial governments, one proslavery and the other antislavery, were created. As the tension escalated, violence ensued.

Among the most fervent abolitionists in Kansas was John Brown, a 56-year-old Connecticut native. Brown’s antislavery zeal had prompted him to move to Kansas with his sons in order to fight to make sure Kansas was a free state. After a proslavery mob attacked and burned the free-state town of Lawrence, Kansas, Brown and seven other men, including four of his sons, went on the offensive. In May 1856, they targeted the proslavery town of Pottawatomie and murdered five proslavery settlers. Known as the Pottawatomie Massacre, Brown’s actions set off a guerrilla war in Kansas that lasted through the fall.

Up until the Kansas-Nebraska Act, most abolitionists had been averse to the use of violence. But by the late 1850s, this aversion had faded, and some began to openly court armed conflict. After returning from Kansas, John Brown began to seek northeastern support for his cause, making visits to Massachusetts, establishing there his Secret Six, who would help fund his planned invasion of the South. He gained financial support from prominent abolitionists, including Samuel Gridley Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Theodore Parker, Franklin B. Sanborn, Gerrit Smith, and George L. Stearns. Brown also discussed his plans with Frederick Douglass and asked the former slave to join him. Douglass declined, considering the plan hopeless and suicidal. On October 16, 1859, Brown and a group of 18 followers attacked and won control of a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The slave uprising Brown hoped to spark did not occur, and he very quickly found himself pinned down in the arsenal by citizens and the local militia. U.S. troops under the command of Robert E. Lee eventually forced Brown to surrender.

The abolitionist John Brown was tried in a Virginia court for treason and sentenced to death. He and six of his followers were hanged. Throughout the North on December 2, 1859, Brown’s execution date, church bells rang out, flags were flown at half-mast, and buildings were draped in black. William Lloyd Garrison, a longtime advocate of nonviolent measures to end slavery, proclaimed that Brown’s death had shown him that violence was needed to destroy slavery.

Even after the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, abolitionists

continued their struggle to end slavery and to promote the civil rights of African Americans. During the Civil War, abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, encouraged President Lincoln to make ending slavery a goal of the war and pressured him to deliver the Emancipation Proclamation. Many abolitionists joined the army and personally took active roles in military operations to ensure the success of the Union cause. After the war, abolitionists were on the forefront of the fight for black suffrage and protection of freedmen’s civil rights. Abolitionists in Congress advocated the creation of the Freedmen’s Bureau and brought forward the constitutional amendments that abolished slavery, guaranteed citizenship, and gave suffrage to black men.

It is true that some abolitionists held racist views and adopted paternalistic attitudes toward African Americans. Additionally, abolitionism failed to change society’s fundamental inequalities and injustices faced by blacks in America. Yet the movement that Garrison and others launched, and that thousands of activists kept alive for over 30 years, was instrumental in the fight to end slavery and in the eventual passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.

*See also:* American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Birney, James; Brown, John; Douglass, Frederick; Emancipation Proclamation; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Garrison, William Lloyd; Gradual Emancipation; Immediatism; Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Liberia; Smith, Gerrit; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis; Thirteenth Amendment; Truth, Sojourner; Tubman, Harriet

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## Adams, John Quincy

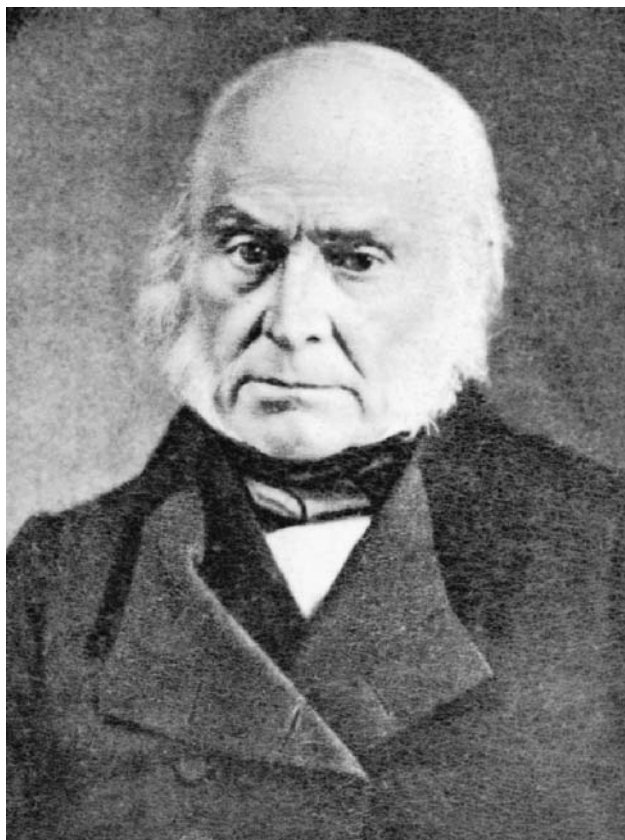
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John Quincy Adams (1767–1848) was the sixth president of the United States. Yet his greatest achievements regarding African Americans came after leaving the presidency, when he emerged as a dedicated opponent of slavery in Congress and the Supreme Court. His goal was to limit and ultimately end the hypocrisy, injustice, and immorality of American slavery and thereby fulfill the promise of human equality in the Declaration of Independence. He eventually admitted to being the de facto leader of the antislavery movement in the United States and proudly welcomed the enmity of the southern “slavocracy.”

Adams had been a skilled lawyer, Harvard professor, U.S. senator, ambassador to numerous nations, and secretary of state. After entering the White House in 1825, he expressed his willingness to meet with any person of color, black or Indian. Despite his diligence and experience, however, Adams failed to achieve his ambitious nationalist agenda, for he was hindered by growing congressional partisanship and sectionalism, his refusal to remove opponents from office, and an austere personality in an era when the “common touch” was of increasing political importance. Adams’s administration was most critically wounded, however, by his failure to win a majority of the popular and electoral votes. He achieved victory only when the selection was put in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, supporters of Andrew Jackson falsely alleged a “corrupt bargain” between Adams and House Speaker Henry Clay after Adams named Clay secretary of state. Hence, Jackson’s camp commenced the ultimately successful campaign to deny Adams reelection in 1828.

Upon leaving the presidency in 1829, a depressed Adams returned to his home in Quincy, Massachusetts. However, in 1830, he was thrilled and honored to learn of his election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Although always opposed to slavery, once in Congress, Adams’s views evolved to a more radical position. At first he denied being an abolitionist, but later he became less inclined to object to the characterization.

Adams said his greatest sorrow was America’s departure from its founding principles through slavery, and his greatest hope was to witness its end. He saw slavery as causing sectionalism, corruption of the political process, and class division between slaveholders and non-slaveholders.



*John Quincy Adams was president of the United States during 1825–1829. He was best known in the African American community for his role in arguing for the freedom of the Africans aboard the schooner Amistad in 1841. (Library of Congress)*

His objections, however, were not limited to the institution of slavery in the abstract, for he included the suffering inflicted on individual slaves brought to his attention. He refused to debate racial inferiority, contending that such was irrelevant to the Declaration of Independence, natural law, and the teachings of Christ.

Adams first believed that slavery would naturally die because of the influence of democracy and slavery’s evident immorality, and therefore he reluctantly supported the Missouri Compromise. He later concluded, however, that compromise was impossible and wrong and viewed the Constitution’s compromises with slavery as undemocratically favoring slaveholders and evil. He came to contend that government had the duty to aid the cause of human equality and therefore opposed the Atherton Resolution that declared that Congress lacked authority to interfere with slavery. He later foresaw that temporary disunion and even the Civil War would be required to achieve the triumph of liberty over slavery’s increasing influence.

In an attempt to limit slavery's spread, Adams opposed the annexation of Texas and the admission of Texas and Florida as states, and he opposed the Mexican War as an unjust and proslavery adventure. He also denounced discrimination against free blacks, such as a Virginia law that allowed the incarceration of blacks on the presumption that they were escaped slaves and a South Carolina law barring entry of free blacks into the state.

During the first session of the 22nd Congress alone, he presented 15 Quaker petitions calling for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself. In 1836, the House passed the "gag rule" automatically tabling antislavery petitions and thus preventing their reading. Despite the rule, censure motions, and threats of expulsion from the House, in early 1837, Adams moved to present 21 petitions, some from slaves. He assured his opponents that if expelled, he would swiftly be reelected. Adams also struggled to win repeal of the rule by repeatedly arguing that it violated civil liberties, particularly freedom of speech and petition, and his right to represent his constituents. He finally won repeal in 1844.

At the urging of abolitionists in 1841, when Adams was 73 and almost deaf, he agreed to represent the Africans captured on the schooner *Amistad* before the Supreme Court. In his argument, Adams contended that his clients were not slaves and therefore not property to be returned to Spain pursuant to treaty, and he condemned the Van Buren administration for disregarding the free Africans' rights. More importantly, he asserted the applicability of natural rights and the principles of the Declaration of Independence. He also charged that it was the obligation of the Court to secure the rights of all people. Although a majority of justices owned or had owned slaves, the Court ruled for the Africans. Adams would subsequently defeat two efforts in Congress to reimburse Spanish claimants.

As his antislavery activities increased, Adams received numerous death threats from the South, and he concluded that this demonstrated the depravity where slavery existed. In the North, he became a hero and, because of his orations in Congress, earned the moniker "Old Man Eloquent." As he rose to commence an address to the House in 1848, he collapsed from a stroke. He died in the speaker's chamber two days later at the age of 80.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; *Amistad*

Russell Fowler

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## African Civilization Society

The African Civilization Society was an organization that briefly flourished during the mid-19th century and whose specific goal was to institute African colonization by African Americans in an effort to engender black pride and black financial independence from white America. The brainchild of Henry Highland Garnet (1815–1882), the African Civilization Society was controversial from the outset, gaining irate critics from inside the black community, who conflated it with the racist African Colonization Society.

It is impossible to understand the African Civilization Society without also appreciating the life of Garnet. A Presbyterian minister, Garnet had always been restless about the status of blacks in America. After escaping slavery, he relentlessly pursued educational opportunities and the social mobility afforded free blacks in the North. In 1843, he acquired a controversial reputation following his appearance at the National Colored Convention, where he called on slaves to murder their masters. Other participants at the convention shunned Garnet for his dramatic recommendations, particularly Frederick Douglass, with whom he shared a notorious exchange on the floor of the convention.

Although shocking to his contemporaries, Garnet's endorsement of racial violence can be understood best in context. As a fugitive slave, Garnet had personally experienced the caustic reality of life for African peoples in America. Unwilling to await legislative liberation, Garnet persistently dreamt of black self-determination. To this end, he worked to increase black institutions, both ecclesiastical and financial. It was in this spirit that he founded the African Civilization Society in 1859. Since the early 19th century, most African Americans had opposed the labors of the African Colonization Society, a largely white organization bent on repatriating blacks to Africa. Many free Northern blacks believed repatriation was a shortcut to avoid the real dilemma of racial cohabitation. Garnet, though not a member of the African Colonization Society, felt there was utility in an African return. He established his society with the ambition of

creating a separate sphere for black religious and economic uplift. In every document for the society, Garnet persistently reiterated his tripartite ambition of immediate emancipation, African civilization, and Haitian migration.

Religion and business were the cornerstones of the society's plans for Africa. Garnet believed that British textile merchants would purchase cotton grown in Africa just as readily as they purchased that grown by slaves in the American South. Thus, he thought that he could destroy the American slave trade by developing a flourishing cotton industry in the Yoruba Valley. Expatriated blacks would become cotton planters and grow as rich as their former white masters had. Garnet was optimistic that this development would not disrupt existing African societies; he believed African Americans could coexist with local tribal governments. This faith in peaceful cohabitation was endorsed by his evangelical impulse, for cotton was not Garnet's only planned import to Africa; he also imagined that the African Civilization Society would bring Christ to resident Africans. Evangelization and civilization were coefficients in Garnet's colonizing plot; one could not emerge without the other. Therefore, he believed the African Civilization Society not only would produce a black economic center in Africa, but also would serve as the organizing missionary body for all black churches seeking to establish Christian settlements on the continent.

Garnet's elaborate scheme received a mixed reaction from black leaders in America. The African Civilization Society was summarily rejected by leaders such as Douglass, Charles Lenox Remond, James McCune Smith, and William Cooper Nell. Douglass accused Garnet of draining the most talented blacks from their home nation; William Wells Brown believed Garnet was little more than a patsy for white segregationists. However, some blacks were attracted to Garnet's ambition, including Martin Delany, James W. C. Pennington, and the poets James Madison Bell and Elymas Payson Rogers, all contributors to the *Weekly Anglo African*, which consistently published editorials supporting Garnet's efforts. Alongside his supporters, Garnet labored to prove to his critics that he was not attempting to drain America of its brightest blacks or, indeed, to lead a movement of mass exodus. Rather, he imagined the African Civilization Society as serving a temporary function for a limited number of blacks. Once blacks had gained some financial status from their African plantations, and once whites had grown accustomed to successful black businessmen, then their

interests could again be focused on the United States. However, Garnet felt the mid-19th-century situation for blacks was thoroughly untenable, as few educated blacks could acquire non-menial work or significant economic advance.

On the eve of the Civil War, Garnet laid out a clear plan for settlement. Because Martin Delany had made a successful tour of the Niger Valley, Garnet felt the time was right to initiate movement. Thus, in August 1860, he addressed a small audience in the Cooper Union auditorium, where he outlined a four-part repatriation plan that included settlement in West Africa, land acquisition, the development of church and educational institutions, and finally, the planting of cotton and other site-appropriate crops. However, Garnet's clarity of purpose seemed out of step with his countrymen. The secession crisis had seized the attentions of most able-bodied African American men, and Garnet's single-minded devotion to colonization seemed misdirected during such a climactic moment in the history of abolitionism.

Eventually, Garnet fell into the war cause, focusing on the recruitment of black troops. Garnet's aspirations for large-scale free labor plantations in Africa, however, were never realized. Civil war continued in Nigeria, and in this climate, few Englishmen invested their money in free labor plantations. The African Civilization Society thus faded from public view, although Garnet never lessened in his own dream to travel to Africa. Finally, on December 28, 1881, he made it to Monrovia, Liberia. However, his African stay was short-lived; he died on February 12, 1882. The Liberian government offered a state funeral to this man who had devoted so much to the African, and African American, dream of independence.

*See also:* Delany, Martin R.; Douglass, Frederick; Garnet, Henry Highland; Nell, William Cooper; Pennington, James Williams Charles; Remond, Charles L.; Smith, James McCune

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## African Dorcas Association

The African Dorcas Association was founded in New York City in January 1828, as part of the black community's ongoing commitment to education and racial advancement. Although New York City's black children had the benefit of the African Free School system, attendance at the schools suffered because of extreme poverty in the community. In the late 1820s, members of the black leadership sought to ascertain the causes behind lagging enrollment in the school system because they firmly believed that educational success would determine the future of race. Once activists discovered that low attendance was due to the children's lack of appropriate attire during the cold winter months, they solicited support from women to create an organization for the purpose of making, altering, and distributing clothes to impoverished children.

Therefore, on January 23, 1828, black female activists, along with a group of black ministers and white abolitionists, met to form the African Dorcas Association. Cognizant that there would be some public resistance to a female organization involved in education, black ministers, including Samuel Cornish and Peter Williams Jr., agreed to serve as a governing board to the African Dorcas Association. Indeed, the ministers' influence on the organization was clear from the beginning. The advisory group offered assistance and public legitimacy to the association by keeping the records, receiving donations, and setting the meetings. Moreover, even the organization's name had a religious association. Dorcas was a Biblical figure, found in the Book of Acts, who made clothes for the poor in her village, clearly a reference that reflected the organization's founding mission.

Yet despite the strong male influence on the association's early activities, the women of the African Dorcas Association soon began to exercise more power over the organization's functioning. In February 1828, Dorcas women held their first independent meeting, during which they elected Margaret Francis as their president and a board of managers composed entirely of women. They also drafted a constitution, which reiterated their primary goal to provide clothing and other necessary items for poor students who could not afford their own. Less than a month after its first meeting, the African Dorcas Association was already receiving praise for its activities. An article in the black newspaper *Freedom's Journal* not only applauded the women's

efforts, but also provided a brief glimpse into their early activities. The women divided into sewing circles, which met every two weeks, to make and repair clothes for schoolchildren. In the meantime, they dedicated themselves to soliciting contributions. The newspaper admired the women for their praiseworthy participation and encouraged others to support the effort.

Despite the group's excellent work, the advisory committee had perhaps foreseen that the women of the Dorcas Association would come under public attack. By September 1828, *Freedom's Journal* spoke of antagonism toward the African Dorcas Association in veiled language. It is unclear who their enemies were, or how the antipathy manifested itself, but the newspaper acknowledged the Dorcas Society's enemies and urged the women to remain committed to their important endeavor. Regardless of the criticisms launched against the African Dorcas Association, the organization flourished. In November 1828, the association was again praised for its labor. An anonymous author called "Cato" wrote an article celebrating the women's success and pleaded with the New York community to assist the society's work on behalf of children. *Freedom's Journal's* editor echoed the praise, remarking on the association's determination to exert every effort to assist poor black children to attend school and advance the race. By February 1829, the organization was able to report some accomplishments. The women had managed to distribute 168 articles of clothing and clothe 64 boys and girls. As result, these underprivileged children were afforded the opportunity to pursue education and, hopefully, improve the future of the black community.

The African Dorcas Association revealed a great deal about the gender dynamics within New York's black activist community. On the surface, the association and its focus on children's education strongly conformed to white republican notions about the proper roles for women. It was, in fact, a form of activism that reflected mothering and nurturing and was therefore not particularly threatening to the status quo. However, the activities of the African Dorcas Association also reflected a black ethic, in which people collectively contributed their skills in order to uplift the community. Because it had been determined that children were not attending school because they did not possess adequate clothing, black women simply put their skills to work on behalf of the race. These strategies mirrored African cultural practices, in which men and women performed



different activities, yet everyone's contributions were seen as essential. The African Dorcas Association remained active into the 1830s, and some of its members extended their commitment to education by forming the Ladies Literary Society in 1834.

*See also:* African Free Schools; Jennings, Elizabeth

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## African Free Schools

The African Free Schools of New York City were founded in 1787 by the New York Manumission Society. Although the New York Manumission Society was an organization of white, wealthy men, which included John Jay and Alexander Hamilton as members, its mission was to advocate for the full abolition of African slavery. Their purpose in establishing the African Free Schools was to provide education to the children of slaves and freemen, allowing them to take an active and equal role in white society.

The first of the African Free Schools, opened just nine years after New York outlawed the sale of slaves imported into the colony, was a one-room facility that could educate approximately 40 students. The first students were primarily children of people who had been enslaved. By 1791, a female teacher was added to teach needlework to the girls at the school, and the school continued to keep between 40 and 60 students enrolled at any given time. The teaching was done in the traditional method for lower-class 18th-century schools, known as the Lancasterian method: one teacher and many student monitors, or assistants, to teach large-sized classes. The student monitors undertook much of the responsibility for the interaction with individual students and rewarding their efforts. Although some visitors viewed this method of instruction as less than adequate for the students and as taking advantage of those high performers chosen as monitors, others saw the role of the monitors, in particular, as a valid method of developing good

leadership skills. By 1820, a second branch of the school was opened, and along with providing sewing instruction for the girls, the schools carried an enrollment of almost 500 students.

In 1828, the African Free Schools began to work with the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, the African Dorcas Association, and other rising middle-class organizations on a project that would increase enrollment in the schools and provide material aid to lower-class black families. Men from the New York African Society for Mutual Relief were dispatched for home visits to enumerate the households, children, and condition in which the families were living; the women of the African Dorcas Association would provide clothing as needed; and the appropriate-aged children could then be enrolled in school.

Although the African Free Schools were established to help the children of slaves and freedmen obtain the intellectual knowledge, citizenship ideals, and life skills that would allow them to succeed in the newly developing society without slavery, no one knew to what extent these students would actually be allowed to participate in the broader society when they grew up. As a result, much ambivalence can be seen in the curriculum. Even so, the African Free Schools produced a number of prominent African American leaders. Along with numerous prosperous community leaders and reformers, the graduates of the African Free Schools include Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Rev. Peter Williams Jr., Dr. Alexander Crummell, and Dr. James McCune Smith. All were outspoken in their various beliefs concerning abolition and colonization, in addition to being gifted and prolific writers.

Like the school's benefactor, the New York Manumission Society, many of its graduates were proponents of radical abolition and African colonization. By the 1830s, the New York Manumission Society withdrew its participation from the African Free Schools because its position on African colonization directly conflicted with its earlier goal of educating black children so that they could compete equally with whites in American society. But by 1854, seven African Free Schools existed in New York and were absorbed into the public school system.

Like most early schools for blacks, a great deal of potential conflict existed around the school and its policies. Administration and teachers were white: did that provide the best education available or teach young black students to be subservient? Whose best interest was being acted on,

and who was to decide what the proper role for blacks would be in a free society? Conflict between parents and teachers or school administrators was common. Once the schools were absorbed into the public school system, the schools suffered decline in educational standards and the quality of the overall education experience for the black students.

See also: African Dorcas Association; Crummell, Alexander; Garnet, Henry Highland; Smith, James McCune; Williams, Peter Jr.

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## African Grove Theater

In the early 1820s, William Alexander Brown, a free man of color from the West Indies and a retired ship's steward, created the African Grove Theater in New York City to provide a dinner and entertainment venue for the city's thriving and upwardly mobile black community. Until that time, the only theater that blacks could frequent was the Park Theater, where they were obliged to sit in segregated seating in one of the upper balconies. With many of the free blacks beginning to have disposable income, Brown recognized a need for a black-owned and operated theater with an all-black theater company. The theater was actually referred to by many different names. It appears that Mordecai Noah in an 1821 column dubbed the theater the "African Grove" perhaps because of the black ownership and patrons. Through the years, it would be called the African Theater, the Minor Theater, and the American Theater.

References to the African Grove appeared mainly between 1821 and 1823. The first mention of the African Grove was Noah's announcement of its opening in his 1821 editorial in the *National Advocate*. At that time, the theater was operating in the backyard of Brown's house on Thomas Street. A month later, the *National Advocate* announced that the pleasure garden had been shut down because of neighbors' complaints of the noise, but by the end

of September, another notice proclaimed that the African Grove had resumed its performances at Brown's new location at Mercer and Bleeker streets in remote Greenwich Village. It was this location that became associated with the theater, although the theater did move several times in its short history. For a brief period in 1822, Brown rented a hall next to the Park Theater in order to attract white patrons and to be more centrally located. However, the Park Theater was opposed to the competition and arranged for a raid on the African Grove. The police attacked the African Grove Theater later that year, and the players were arrested on trumped-up charges of disorderly conduct. To secure their release, they had to agree to discontinue their performances next to the Park Theater. After that episode, the theater remained at the Mercer Street location until its apparent closure in 1824, although it continued to emerge sporadically until 1829.

As was common with pleasure gardens during the period, food and drinks were served, and instrumental and vocal musical entertainment was provided for patrons. The African Grove Theater company performed a variety of acts, including musicales, ballets, pantomimes, opera, and dramatic productions. Although most of the actors and actresses were amateurs, a couple of the performers, Ira Aldridge and James Hewlett, went on to have successful professional acting careers. The company designed and produced abbreviated versions of several Shakespeare plays, including *Richard III* and *Othello*. They also performed their own versions of international plays, such as London's comic hit *Tom and Jerry, or, Life in London*. Another first for the history of black theater was the production of an original drama written by Brown, *The Drama of King Shotaway*, which was based on the 1795 insurrection of the Black Caribs on St. Vincent's Island in the West Indies. Although the African Grove Theater had a brief existence, its owner and performers introduced the African American influence to American theater.

See also: Black Folk Culture

Donna Smith

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## African Methodist Episcopal Church

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The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) is currently one of the largest African American denominations, with an estimated 5,000,000 members worldwide. Although the AMEC was formally established in April 1816, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church preceded it. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church emanated from the Free African Society, a mutual aid association that had been organized in 1787 by Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and other black members of the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church as a result of the inhumane and discriminatory treatment they received therein. As Jones and other black members were worshipping in prayer, Jones was rudely interrupted because he and the other black members were occupying a "whites only" section of the church. Choosing not to endure such indignities any longer, Jones, Allen, and other black members removed themselves from St. George's, and the resultant Free African Society emerged. Theological differences between Jones and Allen resulted in their decision to part ways, and in 1793, with a collected \$360, Richard Allen purchased the land on Sixth and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in order to build an African Methodist Meeting House, where "Mother" Bethel still stands today.

In 1794, the African Methodist Meeting House was forged from an old blacksmith shop. The AMEC honors its humble beginnings and employs the cross and the anvil as its emblem. Methodist Episcopal Bishop Francis Asbury officially blessed the African Methodist Meeting House for worship and appointed a white minister for the congregation. When governing members of the Methodist Church learned that the African Meeting House had been purchased by blacks and, with the exception of a white preacher, was independent of any white oversight, they demanded that the church title the property to the Methodist Conference and submit to its governance.

When the congregation refused and continued to worship and self-govern the church, the congregation faced

stubborn opposition from the Methodist officials. After several years of fighting for self-rule and ensuing legal battles, the congregation seceded from the Methodist Episcopal denomination. In 1816, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was officially formed, and the Rev. Richard Allen was elected and consecrated the first bishop of the newly formed denomination.

Incontrovertible evidence suggests that the denomination was formed for two specific purposes: the first was to counter the rampant racism encountered by blacks everywhere by elevating the degraded African to full humanity; and the second, under the leadership of Bishop Allen, was to recapture and provide an antidote to American Methodism, which had strayed from the basic Wesleyan tenets of evangelism and egalitarianism. The denomination afforded blacks the tools with which to worship and practice Christianity in its truest and most unfettered form. Therefore, the denomination urged its churches to persist in carrying out the principles of self-help and self-reliance that were originally practiced within the Free African Society.

Bishop Allen and the AMEC were also known for their support of antislavery causes. In 1829, David Walker, author of one of the most radical anti-enslavement documents, *An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, lauded Bishop Allen, who in his estimation had done more to advance the state of blacks in America than anyone before him. This testimony in the widely circulated document surely gave credence to the work and mission of the AMEC as an independent and forward-thinking organization committed to the uplift of the communities in which it ministered.

Because Methodism is governed by what is known as "The Discipline," initially, the AMEC adopted the Discipline of the Methodist Church until it could prepare its own. In 1817, the denomination published its AME "Doctrine and Discipline," making it the first institution led by blacks to independently publish. Because all Methodists are known as being "singing people," and black church necessitates music, in 1818, the denomination published its first hymnal. The hymnal was compiled by Bishop Allen, Rev. Daniel Coker, James Champion, and Jacob Tapisco. The import of the publication of the hymnal is that, like the AMEC itself, it represents the validity of the cultural uniqueness of the people who produced it. The denomination is also credited with publishing the oldest contiguous African American religious newspaper, having first published the *Christian Herald*, now known as the *Christian Recorder*, in 1843.

Since its inception, the AMEC has been committed to social uplift through education. The denomination's sixth bishop, Daniel A. Payne, himself a seminary-trained pedagogue, is credited with elevating the standards of black church ministry by requiring AMEC ministers to be formally educated. In 1863, Bishop Payne's quest became reality when the AMEC acquired Wilberforce University. Bishop Payne became the first African American president of a university when the denomination named him the first president of Wilberforce University. He was also an avid abolitionist and joined the venerable Frederick Douglass in the anti-enslavement cause.

The AMEC has continued Payne's legacy and currently operates six colleges and five seminaries in the United States and two seminaries and four colleges in Africa. In addition to his push for educated clergy, Payne argued for an expansive vision of Christian ministry, which led him and several other AME ministers to attend the First Ecumenical Conference on Methodism in Liverpool, England, in 1881. The denomination's motto, "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother," was also inscribed by Bishop Payne, and that influence has permeated the denomination throughout the years. One of the more admirable examples of this is the 1950 charter membership of the AMEC into the National Council of Churches.

Bishop Henry McNeil Turner, the AMEC's 12th bishop is credited with being the impetus for the church's expansion into Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Bishop Turner succeeded in penetrating the African continent with the AME mission when, in 1891, he was able to organize churches in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Denominational concern for black brothers and sisters in Latin American countries such as Cuba following the Spanish American war motivated AMEC ministers to organize churches in Santiago, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Further following the denomination's commitment to evangelization, AMEC expansion was targeted toward the Bahamas in 1900. Recently, over the past 10 years, the AMEC has expanded its missionary efforts into Uganda, Angola, and India.

Not only has Bishop Turner's influence been felt regarding missionary efforts, but his staunch thinking regarding the "race problem" in America and Black Nationalism as its solution has allowed the denomination to continually examine its mission in the United States and abroad. One of Bishop Turner's reasons for advocating Black Nationalism, or the creation of a strong Africa for the people of

Africa and African descent, was that he thought that the building of the continent of Africa with strong black leadership would serve as a model for blacks worldwide and would ultimately provide enhancement to blacks' standing in America. The spirit of this thinking was evidenced in 2004, when the church acknowledged movement toward strengthening the churches and people in Africa, by making the crucial decision to install indigenous African bishops by electing the Revs. Wilfred Jacobus Messiah, Paul Jones Mulenga Kawimbe, and David Rwhynica Daniels Jr. to the bishopric.

Bishop Turner also recognized that women in the AMEC had been rebuffed and inappropriately excluded from formal ministry in the church ever since 1817, when Bishop Allen refused to acknowledge Jarena Lee's call to ministry by ordaining her. She had previously approached Rev. Allen in 1809 and was informed that the Methodist discipline did not provide for women in the ministry. Thus, in 1885, Bishop Turner made a bold and courageous move by ordaining Sarah Hughes an itinerant deacon in the AMEC. Although this bold move was overturned by ecclesial authority, the church's recognition of the viability of women ministers had been established.

The movement toward ordination of women pressed forward until, in 1960, the General Conference (the governing body of the AMEC) finally heeded the calls of Rev. Martha Jayne Keys, the vanguard proponent for the ordination of women, and approved legislation to allow women to be ordained into ministry. Although this step was monumental, it was merely the beginning of the movement of women to emerge from the hidden sphere of service to male ministers and ecclesial leadership. The AME Women in Ministry group was formed through the valiant efforts of Rev. Lillian Friar Webb and Rev. Jacqueline Grant. And in 2000, led by the stalwart efforts of Dr. Jamye Coleman Williams, the AMEC once again made a historic move and ordained its first woman bishop, the Rev. Vashti Murphy McKenzie. This legacy continued, and in 2004, the General Conference elected the Revs. Carolyn Tyler Guidry and Sarah Francis Davis to the Bishopric.

With Bishop Allen laying the groundwork for AMEC preacher-activists, the AMEC has consistently produced ministers who have concerned themselves with both the spiritual and the social standing of African Americans in the United States, and several of them have played key roles in the elevation of African Americans through their activism.

The Rev. Archibald J. Carey Jr. was an early influencer of the Committee of Racial Equality (CORE), later renamed the Congress of Racial Equality, headed by James Farmer. Trained as a lawyer, Rev. Carey advised the organization in its efforts to combat racism in the Chicago area. He was friend and mentor to Bernice Fisher, one of CORE's founders. He also participated in the American delegation to the United Nations under President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Rev. Carey was a confidante of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery march at Dr. King's behest.

Rev. Carey, a contemporary of the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell Jr., the pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and a New York congressman, was known to be an effective activist and preacher, and he contributed to the Republican Party and addressed the 1952 Republican National Convention. Several of Rev. Carey's sermon themes and content were duplicated in Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons.

The Rev. Joseph A. Delaine's activism in South Carolina was the prototype from which the *Brown v. Board of Education* case derived. An active participant in the area's NAACP, Delaine participated in cases involving black students' relatively poor access to school bus transportation in comparison with their white counterparts. The most prominent case, *Briggs v. Elliott*, also known as the Clarendon County case, led the courts to acknowledge the inequality of segregated school systems.

The Rev. Dr. James Cone is an AME preacher and theologian. His 1969 book, *Black Theology and Black Power*, articulated a black liberation theology that challenged Euro-centric models of deriving theological claims. The book gave credence to the experience of African Americans as a starting point for doing theology. The Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Grant and Rev. Dr. Renita J. Weems have also been in the forefront of advancing new norms for theological inquiry, particularly for African American women through womanist studies.

The Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake, a graduate and the current president of Wilberforce University, served as a U.S. congressman from New York from 1987 to 1997. His duties as congressman did not detract from, but enhanced, his pastorate at the Greater Allen AME Cathedral in Jamaica, New York. Because of his extensive contacts and knowledge of available resources for community development, Dr. Flake has been able to garner funding and support for the

church's many projects, including senior housing, a school, and many other commercial and residential endeavors that have significantly contributed to the revitalization of the Jamaica, New York, neighborhood in which it resides.

See also: Allen, Richard; Black Churches; Jones, Absalom

Pearl Bates

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## Allen, Richard

Richard Allen (1760–1831) was the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A civic leader, social reformer, and memoirist, Allen emerged as one of the most important African Americans of the 19th century. Born into slavery in Philadelphia, Allen was sold at the age of eight to Stokely Sturgis, a financially struggling Delaware planter. During his early teen years, Allen lost his mother and several of his siblings when Sturgis was forced to sell them in order to pay off his debts. Some time later, Richard and his brother experienced an encounter with an itinerant Methodist minister. During the late 19th century, Methodist preachers were slowly spreading their version of the gospel message among enslaved blacks. The preacher who evangelized to Allen was successful, converting both him and his brother with a message of salvation and freedom.

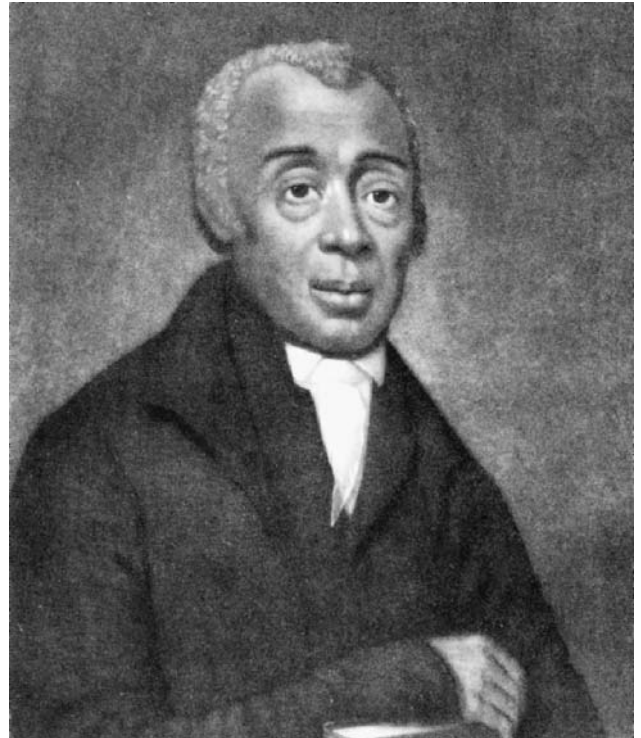
Following his conversion, Allen doubled his labors for Sturgis. Although he was unconverted, Sturgis was intrigued by Allen's renewed work ethic following conversion. At Allen's request, Sturgis opened his home to other traveling Methodists, including the legendary Francis Asbury, founding father of the Methodist Episcopal Church

in the United States. Over time, these visits with preachers led Sturgis to believe that he could no longer in good conscience own slaves; therefore, he allowed Allen and his brother to buy their freedom. Over the next few years, Allen labored at countless miscellaneous tasks, eventually gathering the price named by Sturgis in 1783. This experience of liberation had a lifelong impact on Allen; he believed that his story demonstrated the unique abolitionist capacity of Christianity. Although always an ardent antislavery activist, his own biography convinced Allen that if slaves worked very hard, they would be freed by the eventual conscience of their masters; those who were not freed would have the consolation of salvation.

Allen therefore quickly took to the Christian message and began a preaching career while working to earn his manumission. His reputation as a minister spread so quickly that Asbury invited him on a Southern tour; Allen, however, refused. Asbury required that Allen not mix with slaves and expected Allen to sleep in his carriage. Allen could not abide such limitations to his Christian dignity. Despite his rebuffing of Asbury's offer, Allen was accepted as a "minister of promise" in 1784 at the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States in Baltimore. Eventually, Allen wound up in Philadelphia, the center of free black life in the young republic. Although blacks made up over 10 percent of that city's population, the majority of them worked at menial jobs for a limited wage. Thus, Allen entered the city in a moment primed for his message of discipline and endurance. The elder at St. George's Methodist Church gave Allen access to the pulpit at 5:00 A.M. each day, and he began to gather a small following.

In 1787, he and another community leader, Absalom Jones, established the Free African Society, one of black America's first mutual aid society. Through the society, Jones and Allen provided social services to the black community of Philadelphia while preaching the virtues of frugality and moral rectitude. Throughout his life, Allen considered his own life experiences the key exhibit in his spiritual message. Although during the first decades of his freedom, he continued to work other odd jobs to support his family, he always saw his evangelism as his life's salvation. Through Methodism, he believed he had found the discipline and fortitude requisite to become an effective free citizen.

His own attitude notwithstanding, the white co-religionists at St. George's did not view Allen as an equal.



*Richard Allen (1760–1831), founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. (Payne, Daniel Alexander. History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1891)*

He and the other black members of the congregation experienced considerable discrimination until 1787, when Allen, Absalom Jones, and William White were assaulted by a church usher who attempted to force the three into the balcony. Angered by such treatment, they withdrew from the church. This moment, known subsequently as "the gallery incident," gained legendary acclaim within African American histories as a critical act of early civil disobedience. For several years, Allen conducted services wherever he could, often under the auspices of the Free African Society. The society was successful, and several sister institutions were founded in other Northern cities. From the outset, however, the group was splintered by denominational differences. Convinced that blacks needed an independent church of their own, Allen strove to impose Methodist usages on the society; this antagonized some of the Quaker members of the society, who saw its purpose as strictly nonsectarian. Allen and Jones eventually left to establish an exclusively religious body. First, they formed St. Thomas Episcopal Church, the first black Episcopal congregation in America. However, when this congregation affiliated exclusively with the new Episcopal Church,

Allen broke with Jones and organized the Bethel Church for Black Methodists, in 1794.

The break with Jones was difficult for Allen, who valued Jones's friendship and oratorical panache. However, Allen's commitment to Methodism was absolute. He believed Methodism alone offered resolution to black oppression. With simple doctrine and extemporaneous preaching, Methodism differentiated itself from the dogma of Episcopal catechism and exegesis. In addition, the relentless Methodist invocation of discipline was, for Allen, the watchword for an impoverished race. Unlike other denominations, which focused on complex theology and complex ritual, the Methodist church celebrated industry and temperance, two virtues necessary for economic uplift. Allen always combined the social conditions of blacks with their spiritual reformation. Bethel Church organized a day school in 1795, and in 1804, Allen founded the Society of Free People of Color for Promoting the Instruction and School Education of Children of African Descent. An active abolitionist, he led petition drives demanding the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania (1799, 1800) and in the United States (1800). From the earliest days of Bethel, then, Allen saw his religious labors and his political efforts conjoined. Black Americans needed salvation, and Allen provided it on several fronts.

As Allen developed a religious reputation among black Philadelphians, he also acquired a political profile among whites. In 1793, Matthew Carey, a prominent white Philadelphian, published an account of the yellow fever epidemic in that city, describing black residents as immoral scavengers during this crisis. However, he complimented Allen and Absalom Jones for possessing uniquely high moral standards. Rather than merely enjoy the compliment, Allen and Jones replied in print to Carey's praise, publishing a refutation to his condemnation of Philadelphia blacks. They rejected Carey's condescending approval and argued that blacks were not the problem in Philadelphia; the problem was the pernicious moral weight of slavery. Absent slavery, blacks would triumph as whites did. At the conclusion of their retort, Allen appended an "Address to Those Who Keep Slaves and Approve the Practice." Using scriptural argument, Allen offered a markedly direct antislavery argument, reiterating the moral optimism he experienced while a young man in Dover, Delaware.

With this publication, Allen acquired a reputation beyond his church. However, it was church matters that

largely preoccupied his daily life. By 1815, the relationship between the members of Bethel Church and Methodist denominational authorities had deteriorated considerably. When a white elder attempted to take the pulpit at a Sunday morning Bethel service, he was forcibly prevented from doing so by the congregation. That elder then filed with the courts, arguing that the black members of Bethel had no right to rebel against their white institutional elders. The case would eventually make it to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; in 1816, that body found for Bethel Church, effectively inaugurating the independent African American church movement. Although dedicated by Francis Asbury in 1794, it took over 20 years for Allen and Bethel Church to achieve independent authority.

Allen seized the opportunity. In 1816, Bethel hosted the first General Conference of 16 black congregations, which ordained Allen as the first bishop of the first racially distinct denomination in this country, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Under this definitive bureaucratic umbrella, Allen promoted education, economy, and spiritual discipline. Observers debated whether Allen was more interested in garnering personal power or in uniting black Methodists; his single-minded independence made it difficult to work with him. For this reason, the early years of black Methodism saw the proliferation of Methodist sects, such as the Methodist Zion churches, founded by James Varick. However, a strong contingency of low-income constituencies found purpose and clarity within Allen's tripartite endorsement of economic independence, political activism, and moral fortitude. The AME church quickly expanded to become the primary agency of black social services and economic cooperation within African America, offering everything from clothing to spiritual education to sanctuary for runaway slaves.

Allen's national reputation continued to grow alongside that of his church. Although Allen's views on black emigration are not widely known, he initially supported Haitian migration. In 1824, Allen began corresponding with Haitian President Jean Pierre Boyer and began recruiting migrants. Eventually, both Allen and James Forten formed the Philadelphia Haitian Emigration Society's leadership. Allen even sent one of his sons to Haiti to assess the movement's progress and provide reports about its success and, in 1825, helped publish a pamphlet urging free blacks to consider immigration to Haiti on the grounds that they would never achieve full equality in the United States. Yet by the end

of the 1820s, Haitian migration lost support in the black community, and Allen began to denounce emigration and colonization.

In fact, throughout the 1830s, Allen's public condemnation of the American Colonization Society established a precedent among free black leaders. For Allen, colonization was an insult to his life's work: Why should blacks be forced to leave when they were so close to successful assimilation? Subsequent black leaders, such as William Wells Brown and Frederick Douglass, would agree, invoking Allen's fierce stance against the society. The year before he died, Allen further contributed to the organizational cultivation of black America when he was elected president of the first national black political organization, the National Colored Convention. This group originated at Bethel Church when 40 men met to protest systematic discrimination against blacks in northern urban centers. The subsequent "colored conventions" became a critical location of black debate and organization throughout the 19th century. Finally, as Allen cultivated more public venues for black self-determination, the AME church continued to grow dramatically under his leadership. At the time of his death on March 26, 1831, the African Methodist Episcopal Church had over 7,000 members in the United States and missions in Canada, Haiti, and West Africa. Allen's legacy was not merely institutional or ecclesiastical, however. With the publication of his memoir, Allen ensured that his life story would not be lost to the generations. Indeed, his experiences have been retold, revised, and reaffirmed by generations of African Americans bent on remaking their biographical and national destiny.

See also: African Methodist Episcopal Church; Jones, Absalom

Kathryn Emily Lofton

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## American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society

In the 19th century, abolitionists represented only a tiny minority of the free American public. Historians estimate that perhaps 1 percent of Northerners were wholehearted supporters of radical abolitionism. Although members of the abolitionist movement were firmly united in their desire to see the institution of slavery brought to an end, despite all of their efforts, they could not agree on the best way to secure the liberation of the enslaved. In the decades before the Civil War, abolitionists fiercely debated what role the American government and antislavery political parties ought to play in abolitionism, what women's roles should be in the antislavery movement, and whether or not American churches could be a significant venue for the preaching of the antislavery gospel. Unable to reconcile their distinctly divergent views on these issues, in 1840, the abolitionist movement split in two, with one group of disgruntled abolitionists leaving the dominant antislavery organization, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), to form their own group. This new organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS), existed for 15 years, during which time it sought to firmly separate the causes of abolitionism and women's rights, involve American churches in the antislavery fight, and use political activism to advance the abolitionist cause.

Although the final break in the abolitionist movement took place at the AASS's 1840 convention, trouble had been brewing within the antislavery ranks for several years before this definitive rift. During the 1830s, William Lloyd Garrison (an extremely influential leader within the AASS) had become increasingly radical in his views on a diverse assortment of social issues. Garrison and his supporters had become more harshly critical of American churches for refusing to take a firm stand against slavery. Garrisonians' attacks on churches and church leaders made



many evangelical abolitionists profoundly uneasy, fearful that American abolitionism was becoming increasingly unmoored from traditional Christian institutions and values. Many abolitionists were also displeased by Garrison's adoption of the principle of "non-resistance": the belief that abolitionists ought to abstain from any involvement in politics because the American government was an essentially corrupt, violent institution. Garrison's call to avoid any participation in politics angered numerous members of the AASS, who had begun to feel that political action would be vital in bringing slavery to an end.

Perhaps most controversially, by 1840, Garrison and his supporters had firmly blended together the abolitionist cause with the emerging struggle for women's rights. During the 1830s, female abolitionists such as Maria W. Stewart, Angelina Grimké, and Sarah Grimké took the radical step of speaking publicly in favor of the antislavery cause, both implicitly and explicitly insisting on women's right to fully participate in American society as they did so. Garrison wholeheartedly supported these female activists, seeking to thoroughly integrate women into all levels of the antislavery movement. Numerous male abolitionists disapproved of this blending of women's rights and abolitionism, fearing that integrating the two causes would alienate many members of the American public, who might otherwise be receptive to the antislavery message. The question of women's involvement in abolition was brought to a head at the 1840 AASS convention, during which abolitionist and women's rights activist Abby Kelley was nominated to the powerful business committee. After Kelley was appointed to the committee by a vote of 557 to 451, many abolitionists left the AASS in disgust, vowing to form their own organization.

This new organization, the AFASS, was led by white, male abolitionists including Lewis Tappan, Gerrit Smith, and Elizur Wright Jr. These leaders quickly set about drawing up a constitution that articulated the new group's goals and ideals. The AFASS, its constitution affirmed, would not involve itself in questions of women's rights; would regard American churches not as morally suspect stumbling blocks to the advancement of abolition, but rather as vital allies to the cause; and would adopt an aggressive approach with regard to antislavery activism. This would entail taking the antislavery fight into the South itself (by disseminating abolitionist propaganda there) and also becoming involved in antislavery politics.

African American abolitionists' responses to the AFASS, which had a predominantly white leadership and

constituency both, were mixed. Much like the AASS, the AFASS was committed to racial equality in theory but often fell short of its own high ideals, frequently marginalizing its African American members. Despite these failings, some African American abolitionists nonetheless embraced the AFASS, pleased by its emphasis on political activism. To some African American abolitionists, the AFASS's strong focus on politics seemed more likely to advance their goal of achieving black male suffrage than the AASS's denunciation of any political activity did. Other African American abolitionists, deeply loyal to Garrison, remained within the ranks of the AASS. But the majority of African American abolitionists agreed with Frederick Douglass and sought to remain neutral in the power struggle between the AASS and the AFASS.

Despite hopes that the rift within the movement would soon be overcome, and that AFASS members would soon return to the AASS fold, the AFASS endured until 1855. During its 15 years of existence, the AFASS served not only as a divisive, negative force but also as a positive, creative vehicle for social change, which fostered the development of a strong political antislavery movement and worked to persuade free American Christians that slavery was a moral evil that needed to be rapidly brought to an end.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Douglass, Frederick; Garrison, William Lloyd; Smith, Gerrit; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis

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## American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS)

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The American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) was the first national antislavery organization in the United States. Founded in 1833, it advocated for immediate emancipation and political equality for African Americans. Criticized

throughout its history for its political philosophy and inclusion of women, the AASS kept the cause of immediate abolitionism in the public sphere and helped bring about its achievement.

Prior to the establishment of the AASS, most American abolitionists asserted that whites and blacks could not coexist, and therefore free African Americans should be returned to Africa. In 1832, the New England Anti-Slavery Society (NEASS) became the first abolitionist organization to replace a colonizationist perspective with an immediatist one. The NEASS urged a swift end to slavery, argued against compensating slaveholders, and did not advocate for the removal of the black population. After the founding of the NEASS, New York abolitionist Arthur Tappan issued a call for a national organization committed to the same immediatist principles. On December 6, 1833, 63 delegates convened in Philadelphia and signed a formal declaration establishing the American Anti-Slavery Society. Among the society's founders were three African Americans, reflecting the organization's commitment to an interracial membership, and William Lloyd Garrison, a Boston abolitionist already renowned for his newspaper the *Liberator*, which began publishing in 1831.

The AASS's structure combined a national office in New York City with local and state units. The national office oversaw the society's extensive publication work, which produced thousands of pamphlets and a newspaper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, that were crucial to circulating the organization's message. The AASS also employed field agents who lectured mostly in the North and Midwest and sent petitions to Congress addressing such issues as the abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C., and the annexation of slaveholding Texas. The AASS attracted support from abolitionists who shared its equation of slavery with sin and its desire to purge the nation of that sin, an understanding inspired by evangelical Protestantism. At its annual meeting in May 1836, the Society counted over 500 local chapters in 15 states. In 1837 and 1838, it added another 350 units, employed 38 field agents, had issued 600,000 pamphlets, and despite the fact that Congress had imposed a gag rule tabling all antislavery petitions in 1836, had sent 400,000 petitions with almost 1 million signatures.

But internal disagreements simmered through the 1830s, finally coming to a head at the society's annual meeting in 1840. A conservative faction within the AASS was dismayed by the political approach avowed by William Lloyd Garrison and his supporters, which considered the

Constitution a proslavery document and eschewed voting, running for office, forming an antislavery party, or engaging in other forms of political participation. Conservatives also feared identification with the unpopular cause of women's rights, which they feared would detract from the abolitionist crusade. As a result, when delegates at the AASS annual meeting in 1840 elected Abby Kelley to its business committee, President Arthur Tappan resigned along with a contingent of delegates. Led by Lewis Tappan, the disgruntled factions dramatically walked out of the convention and later established a separate organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

The departure of the Tappanites cleared the way for the dominance of Garrisonian principles of nonviolence, gender equality, and political disengagement. The AASS moved its headquarters to Boston in 1843, and Garrison assumed its presidency that year, a position he would hold until 1865. Though it continued to stay out of party politics, the AASS was a conspicuous presence in the public sphere as sectional tensions worsened in the 1840s and 1850s. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, the society launched a lecturing campaign from 1851 to 1853 to protest it, employing an interracial slate of speakers including Susan B. Anthony and Sojourner Truth. It also used its political neutrality to praise or condemn politicians from all parties according to their views on abolition.

The AASS declined during the Civil War as local units folded and the government finally instituted immediate emancipation in 1863. The organization produced no annual report after 1861, stopped issuing pamphlets after 1862, and had no field agents by 1865. As the war approached its conclusion, society members debated whether their purpose had been fulfilled. Garrison resigned in 1865 with the ratification of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. Wendell Phillips assumed the presidency of the AASS, and those who stayed in the organization believed that their work would be finished only when African Americans received the same legal rights as whites. For the remaining members, this moment arrived in 1870, with the ratification of the 15th Amendment guaranteeing suffrage to all male Americans regardless of race. The society officially disbanded on April 9, 1870, at a final meeting at Apollo Hall in New York City. History would show that the 15th Amendment was insufficient to ensure the legal and civil rights of African Americans, but in its time, the American Anti-Slavery Society was a tenacious force that was essential to the struggle for emancipation.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Douglass, Frederick; Garrison, William Lloyd; Immediatism; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis

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## American Colonization Society

The American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States, better known as the American Colonization Society (ACS), was founded in 1816 to transport free blacks and manumitted slaves to a colony outside the United States. Its mission was founded in white racism, the belief in black inferiority, and the premise that whites and black could not live in peaceful coexistence. The ACS reflected the widespread belief among 19th-century whites that people of African American descent could never be free or equal. Although the ACS sent more than 13,000 emigrants to Africa by 1867, it ultimately failed.

The roots of colonization are deep and obscure. Various plans surfaced during the 18th century, but none were seriously considered. Conditions changed in the 19th century, when it became clear that the number of African Americans in the United States was increasing, and slavery was becoming stronger, not weaker. The ACS took shape in December 1816. A number of influential politicians, Presbyterian ministers, and wealthy residents of Washington, D.C., drafted a constitution for the organization. Either present at the organizational meeting or named one of the organization's officials were Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, John Randolph, Francis Scott Key, and Bushrod Washington, George Washington's nephew. Other prominent supporters included John Marshall, James Monroe, and Abraham Lincoln. A number of auxiliary organizations appeared in various states to buttress the work of the national group. These societies operated both in concert with

and independently from the ACS. State groups had their own officers, constitutions, and fund-raising efforts but used the national group to help coordinate emigration.

The founders and early supporters of the ACS typified the fragile coalition of slave-owning Southerners and antislavery Northerners who worked together to reduce the number of African Americans in the United States. Northern members were often opposed to slavery and hoped that the ACS would reduce the number of slaves in the United States and pave the way to the end of the peculiar institution. Southerners, who usually came from the Upper South states of Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, had a variety of reasons for supporting colonization. Some hoped to rid their region of free blacks who served as a tangible reminder to slaves of the benefits of freedom. These slave owners wanted to remove a population that undermined control and plantation discipline. Other Southerners saw the declining state of agriculture in the Upper South and despaired at freeing their slaves without transporting them outside their region. They saw the ACS as a way to handle the demands of declining agricultural production without subjecting their slaves to further bondage in the United States. The ACS, as a result, was founded on the contradictory premises of both weakening and strengthening slavery and could never identify its central mission.

Even before the ACS established a colony overseas, it came under fire from its critics. Bushrod Washington, who served as president of the organization and who inherited his uncle's Mount Vernon estate, sold 52 slaves to 2 men from Louisiana. The new owners, who paid over \$10,000 to Washington, transported the slaves in chains out of Virginia. Critics reported the incident as an example of the hypocrisy of the ACS because it looked like Washington participated in the interstate slave trade. Although Washington was able to defuse the situation, the burgeoning interstate slave trade operated as a brake on manumission in the Upper South. Many owners sold their slaves to the expanding regions of the Deep South rather than consider freeing their bondpeople and shipping them to Africa.

The ACS also met criticism from African Americans, the vast majority of whom rejected colonization. Many slaves, when given the option between inequality in the United States and colonization, chose to remain in their native land. They considered themselves to be Americans and had no desire to return to the continent of their ancestors. Northern blacks were often outspoken in their criticism;



*Departure of the Danish steamer Horsa from Savannah, Georgia, on March 19, 1895. The 200 African Americans aboard were bound for Liberia under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. (North Wind Picture Archives)*

for example, in an 1817 meeting in Philadelphia, African Americans denounced colonization as cruel and as a violation of America's fundamental principles, and black activists in New York and Boston made similar statements.

A number of African Americans, however, supported colonization. Some argued that the movement could help spread Christianity and education in Africa, and others believed that blacks would never attain equal rights or decent treatment in the United States and were better off beginning a new life as freed people in their homeland. Thousands of rank-and-file African Americans supported colonization by moving overseas, but support came from a number of prominent advocates as well, such as Paul Cuffe. Cuffe was a Quaker ship owner from Boston who gained support from the British government and members of Congress to take African Americans to Sierra Leone. In 1816, Cuffe took 38 African Americans to Sierra Leone, a voyage he hoped would establish a regular schedule of emigration, but Cuffe's death in 1817 ended this venture. Decades later, in 1858, black nationalists under the leadership of Henry Highland Garnet established the African Civilization Society, which advocated for black repatriation.

Despite some difficult beginnings, the members of the ACS pressed ahead with finding a suitable location for a colony. Agents traveled to Haiti and Sherbro Island, near present-day Sierra Leone, but neither location was suitable. President James Monroe, who sympathized with colonization, sent government agents in 1820 to Africa to prepare a settlement. Some prospective colonists made the ocean journey, but most of them died from disease once they landed in Africa. An expedition the next year met the same fate. A third government-sponsored expedition had more success in late 1821. On December 15 of that year, ACS agents purchased Cape Mesurado (or Montserado) from King Peter, and this region became the focus of colonization efforts. The king was reluctant to allow foreigners to establish a foothold on his land but was persuaded when an American naval officer pointed a gun at his head. ACS agents later admitted they gave almost nothing of value for the land—merely muskets, gunpowder, beads, tobacco, clothing, food, and rum worth about \$300.

The colony constantly lacked food and equipment. As with earlier efforts, diseases ravaged the population, and the colony struggled to survive. Despite these initial struggles, emigrants moved to Africa, with Jehudi Ashmun becoming an early leader. Ashmun, a teacher who hoped to become a missionary, went to Africa in 1822. In 1825 and 1826, Ashmun expanded the colony's boundaries by leasing, annexing, and buying neighboring tribal lands. Ashmun forced King Peter and other native kings to sell land in exchange for tobacco, rum, gunpowder, umbrellas, and shoes. The Americans in Africa envisioned their colony becoming a large empire that would dominate the western coast. Ashmun's death from fever in 1828, the low rate of emigration, and lack of economic viability helped squash these grandiose schemes.

Enough emigrants arrived in Africa to keep the struggling colony alive, but they struggled to survive. There were no cash crops or valuable natural resources to power the economy. The colony became a financial liability for the ACS, which was struggling with its own monetary troubles. Great Britain also menaced the colony, which was not a sovereign power or a true colony with the protection of a sovereign nation. The United States refused to claim sovereignty over the area, so the ACS had no choice but to force the colony to declare its independence. In 1847, the colony became the sovereign nation of Liberia, so named for its promotion of liberty for blacks from the United States.

The capital was named Monrovia, in honor of James Monroe, who had authorized the naval expeditions that helped found the colony.

The struggles to keep the colony alive naturally inhibited migration, and the ACS began a campaign to reeducate African Americans about the process of colonization. The ACS published the *African Repository* (1825–1909), which was filled with letters from emigrants, positive descriptions of the colony, and lists of donors. The ACS also increased its fund-raising efforts, which it saw as vital to continuing its work. It pressed the national government for funding, usually with little success. When Andrew Jackson vetoed the Bonus Bill in 1833, the federal government effectively ended any dreams of funding colonization. The Bonus Bill would have used money from sales of public land to fund colonization.

The ACS increasingly turned its fund-raising efforts to state governments and private individuals. Virginia, for instance, in 1850 set aside \$30,000 annually for five years to fund colonization. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Maryland also funded the ACS. Life memberships, which sold for \$30, were a popular way to raise money from private individuals. Purchasers received a certificate with their purchase, a popular gift for ministers. The ACS claimed to raise \$50,000 in 1825 from the sale of such memberships. A few slaveholders contributed money to the ACS as a stipulation of their wills, which might free their slaves on the condition they be transported to Africa. Despite the best efforts of the ACS, it was chronically short of funds.

Not only did financial problems bedevil the organization, but it also faced increasing opposition in both free and slave states. Some residents of the free states became increasingly hostile toward the ACS. William Lloyd Garrison, the prominent abolitionist, denounced colonization as a tool of slaveholders to perpetuate slavery. The Anti-Slavery Society was formed in part to prevent colonization. More radical ACS members left the organization and joined various antislavery organizations. These developments confirmed the fears of many slave owners, who had suspected all along that the ACS was really an antislavery organization. It became more difficult for the ACS and its state auxiliaries to continue to exist in slave states.

The ACS could not function effectively in the deepening sectional crisis. Despite its rhetoric about not threatening slavery, the ACS always maintained a commitment to ridding the United States of slavery. Colonization, however, was never a realistic alternative. Its supporters never

understood how deeply slavery was enmeshed in American culture. Nor could the organization convince enough African Americans to move to Africa. The ACS transported an average of about 280 African Americans to Africa each year between 1817 and 1861. State auxiliaries perhaps matched that number. Such paltry totals were a tiny percentage of the African American population in the United States. Natural population growth made sure that colonization would not make an appreciable difference in the slave or free black populations. Similarly, the ACS did not raise the number of private manumissions in the South. Most historians agree that the ACS failed to accomplish its goals.

The ACS continued to exist after the Civil War, although it was mainly a caretaker organization. Black nationalists and other advocates of the back-to-Africa movement, such as Henry McNeal Turner, built on colonizationist arguments in the late 19th century. Turner, a civil rights activist and bishop of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, became increasingly frustrated with discrimination in the United States and eventually advocated for repatriation. Although he never formally endorsed the ACS, Turner argued in favor of colonization. Marcus Garvey, the mercurial leader of the United Negro Improvement Association of the early 20th century, also endorsed colonization. Garvey used his Black Star shipping line to bring African Americans to Liberia. Even so, colonization remained more of a dream than a reality. The ACS maintained its legal existence until March 22, 1963, when it was formally disbanded.

See also: Cuffe, Paul; Liberia; Russwurm, John

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## American Moral Reform Society

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The American Moral Reform Society (AMRS) was a national organization of 19th-century African American leaders who gathered to advance the cause of moral improvement in the United States. The AMRS grew out of, and temporarily replaced, the colored convention movement. Chartered at the 1835 national black convention, the AMRS sponsored a number of local auxiliaries and convened six national meetings between 1837 and 1841. Though the society officially rejected racial or geographic distinctions, most of its leaders and members were from the Philadelphia area, and most, if not all, of its membership was African American.

During the early 1830s, many African American leaders began to espouse more abstract strategies for combating racism and slavery in the United States, including a call to reject racial language or distinctions of any kind. Those who advocated such strategies also found fault with organizations that identified themselves according to race, such as the black convention movement. According to these theorists, the black conventions explicitly acknowledged racial distinction and thereby potentially reinforced the racist assumptions of a nation that typically equated racial difference with racial inequality. Instead of fighting discrimination from the other side of the color line through black conventions, these strategists denied that the color line existed and proposed race-less organizations such as the AMRS as the proper means to combat American racism.

In its original language, the society's Declaration of Sentiments made it clear that their intent was to elevate the character of African Americans by advocating education, abstinence from intoxicating liquors, and the principles of Christian morality. At the first annual meeting of the AMRS, however, the delegates voted to strike the racial limitations from their resolutions, instead declaring their intention to redeem the *entire* nation from the sins that had corrupted it. Without any reference to the race of those who would benefit from these improvements, the AMRS resolved to create institutes for mechanical education, to support lectures on frugality and peace, and to promote moral improvement.

The AMRS considered racism and slavery to be moral problems, properly resolved through their holistic agenda of moral perfection. AMRS leaders such as William Whipper argued that moral standards were the divinely sanctioned

means of gauging human virtue, regardless of race. By living up to these standards of moral perfection, he argued, those oppressed because of their skin color could disprove American assumptions about racial difference and redeem Americans from the corrupting influence of racism.

Though consistently supported by AMRS resolutions, this highly theoretical strategy posed a number of practical problems and endured strong criticism throughout the society's existence. One of the most vocal critics was the Rev. Samuel Cornish of New York, editor of the *Colored American* and affiliate of the AMRS. Cornish emphasized the impracticality of responding to racial discrimination and race-based slavery without reference to the color-based properties of that oppression. He also argued that racial language should be used in a way that drew attention to the specific circumstances of oppression, not biological differences. William Whipper continued to defend the AMRS position against such critiques, denying race on both religious and political grounds. Whipper argued that race was an artificial distinction, one that prevented Christians from realizing their spiritual unity and Americans from fulfilling the ultimate objectives of their republican vision: equal rights for every citizen.

Many African American reformers supported Cornish's critique and distanced themselves from the AMRS. Throughout the late 1830s, a renewed interest in colonization, fallout from the society's vocal condemnation of religious denominations that failed address the slavery issue, and a state-level black convention movement won members away from the AMRS. Ultimately, it was the unresponsive racist order that brought an end to AMRS initiatives. Instead of proving their equality to the rest of America, "morally elevated" African Americans became special targets of violent reprisals in Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere. Even William Whipper recognized the failure of AMRS strategy, admitting that race was the primary factor that deprived the man of color of equal treatment. AMRS membership began to wane in 1839, and the AMRS convened its final national meeting in 1841.

The end of the AMRS signified a new direction in African American activism. Reformers turned away from the theoretical strategies of the AMRS and toward more particular and more political modes of addressing slavery and racial discrimination in the United States. The national black conventions began meeting again in 1843, and such black leaders as Frederick Douglass reinvigorated racial language

as a means of reclaiming black identity and eventually black independence.

The AMRS proved to be an accessible forum for African American leaders from different locales to exchange views on matters of race and reform. It provided a new generation of reformers the tools to shape the plans for more decisive action that arose during the 1840s. Through the public deliberations that surrounded the American Moral Reform Society and its failure to redress racial inequality through moral suasion, the next generation of African American leaders learned a number of lessons about the methods and efficacy of racial reform in the United States.

See also: Colored Convention Movement; Cornish, Samuel; Whipper, William

Eric Rose

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## American Revolution

The American Revolution has been heralded throughout U.S. history as a momentous event, an era when oppressed colonists freed themselves from the bonds of England's tyranny and gained their independence—once and for all. For people of African descent, however, the response to American independence was always more complex. For them, it was an era in which the contradiction and hypocrisy of slavery was exposed, but in the end, slavery still emerged victorious throughout most of the nation. Even so, African American men fought valiantly in the war, in hopes that their loyalty would earn them freedom and equality.

The Revolutionary era actually began shortly after 1760, when King George III of England sought to impose taxes

and other restrictions on the American colonies as compensation for financial expenses England incurred during the Seven Years War. Outraged colonists, infuriated by the new legislation, began agitating in the streets and issuing demands for independence from British rule. Ultimately, this led to a full-scale war between the English government and the colonies, which resulted in American independence. Yet beyond the specific events that led to armed conflict, the American Revolution was also inspired by the formation of new ideologies. This period witnessed the rise of the Enlightenment, which built on scientific and mathematical advancements and applied them to human government and politics as well as economics. The result of Enlightenment thought in the American colonies was a theory of natural law, the idea that the world functioned according to a set of natural laws governed by reason and logic. According to such scholars as John Locke, these natural laws included the right to life, liberty, and private property. As such, revolutionary ideology raised questions about a number of ideas that had previously been used to justify slavery, especially after the concepts of freedom, equality, brotherhood, and inalienable rights began to circulate widely throughout the colonies. The language of revolution explicitly drew on the imagery of slavery, and the rebels even likened themselves to being "slaves" of the British Crown. The rebels were further influenced by the reality of slavery during the drafting of the Declaration of Independence because, of course, the initial draft of the Declaration included a passage denouncing the slave trade as being a violation of the sacred rights of life and liberty, a section that was eventually deleted because the Southern delegates were deeply opposed to it.

Even so, American colonists did not initially see a contradiction between Enlightenment ideology and slavery, but it became increasingly clear in the years that followed, partly because black people began to raise that contradiction. Enslaved people had already been agitating for freedom prior to the Revolutionary War, but the Enlightenment was useful to their cause because the rhetoric gave them the language and the justification for their argument. Specifically, between 1775 and 1780, black people bombarded newly formed state legislatures with petitions demanding their freedom. Drawing directly on the language in the Declaration of Independence, such petitions asserted that black people were equally entitled to the "rights of man" and argued that they shared the same God-given rights to freedom and equality as their white counterparts. Activist

Paul Cuffe employed an alternative strategy in 1780, when he and his supporters submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature challenging the government's policy on taxation without representation. Specifically, he argued that the small free black population should be exempt from paying taxes because they were not allowed equal political representation. Although Cuffe's petition was successful, in 1783 the state legislature determined that the small portion of the black population that was subject to taxation should be allowed to vote, and most petitions demanding freedom were ignored or denied. Even so, the swell of black political activism continued to expand.

In fact, although black people clearly understood the contradiction within Revolutionary rhetoric, they did not remain neutral during the war. On the contrary, black people allied themselves strategically and were active on both the American and British sides. Historian Benjamin Quarles explained it best when he wrote that black people's major loyalty during the Revolutionary War was not to a particular nation, but rather to a principle. That principle, of course, was their right to freedom. The black population essentially played the British and the Americans against each other, in hopes of gaining their freedom, a strategy that for many enslaved people actually worked very well.

Those who were active on the American side were likely inspired by the early participation of black men in the war and the appeal of Enlightenment philosophy that seemed to offer the hope of freedom and equality. In 1770, Crispus Attucks, a mixed-race man of African descent, became the first casualty of the American Revolution when he was shot and killed in what became known as the Boston Massacre. Once the war officially commenced, black men fought valiantly in the early battles, including Salem Poor, whose bravery in the Battle of Charlestown in 1775 earned him official commendation from the Continental Congress. Likewise, Peter Salem fought with distinction at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775 and was remembered for killing an influential British officer. Perhaps the most instrumental black patriot was James Armistead, who posed as a fugitive slave and infiltrated the British lines at Yorktown. In so doing, he was able to provide British tactical information to the Americans at a critical juncture of the war. In fact, the information he delivered gave the Americans the upper hand and allowed them to emerge victorious from a decisive battle. As a testament to his service, the General Assembly granted Armistead his freedom at war's end. Others, such

as Peter Williams Sr., served the patriot cause without being an official member of the military. Williams Sr., an enslaved black man, heard of the impending arrival of the British and rode throughout his region, informing all residents to protect themselves. Then, despite threats of death by British soldiers, Williams refused to reveal the location of an influential white American rebel.

Even so, on July 10, 1775, George Washington decided to end the recruitment of African Americans into the military, and on November 12, he issued orders prohibiting all black men from serving in the Continental Army. Ironically, however, Washington's decision to ban black men from military service ultimately had the opposite result. In an effort to undermine the rebel cause, British leader Lord Dunmore, who at the time was governor of Virginia, issued a profoundly important proclamation. Dunmore allowed black men to fight alongside the British and bear arms against the Americans, in exchange for their freedom. In response, black men flocked to British military lines, where they were immediately armed and given military training. One famous regiment, in particular, was called "Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment," and their uniforms were emblazoned with the words "Liberty to Slaves."

Almost immediately after Dunmore's Proclamation, George Washington, sensing the disaster that would almost surely result, changed his position and ordered all recruiters to enlist any black men who wanted to fight. In fact, Washington famously declared Lord Dunmore the most dangerous man in America and warned that victory would go to whichever side could arm black people faster. Once allowed to serve, black men also heeded the call to arms in support of the rebel cause. By the end of the war, over 5,000 black men had served as soldiers in the Revolutionary War on the American side in both the army and the navy. Notably, however, black soldiers were consistently placed on the front lines more frequently than other regiments and were usually the lowest ranking and lowest paid in the military.

Beyond military service, however, black people played another crucial role in the Revolutionary War. Again, Lord Dunmore's Proclamation contributed significantly to the black experience, given that his declaration promised freedom not only to slaves who fought in the war, but also to those who sought refuge behind British military lines. Of course, this was strictly a military strategy, rather than a moral imperative. Dunmore's desire was neither to overthrow the system of slavery, nor to make war on it; instead,



he wanted to encourage the defection of blacks who would be willing to fight in order to cause white colonists to feel insecure about their safety and their economic strength. In essence, Dunmore wanted to destroy the Southern economy. In that regard, Dunmore's Proclamation was extremely successful. The hope for freedom prompted an estimated 100,000 black people to flee their plantations and seek protection with the British military. It also led to paranoia, particularly in the South, as there was an increased fear of insurrections. In fact, the threat of slave rebellions became a particular problem in the Chesapeake, the Carolinas, and Georgia, where there was a majority (or near majority) black population.

In the end, however, Dunmore's Proclamation proved to be mostly illusory. Because the British were never really committed to emancipation as a moral issue, their responses to black people were varied. As the British military became overwhelmed by black fugitives, sometimes the British greeted them with uniforms and promises of freedom; other times, they turned them away; and in some cases, they even returned them to their enraged owners. In a few instances, the British gave fugitives temporary refuge and then sold them back into slavery. Moreover, at the conclusion of the war, the British were defeated and were obviously forced to evacuate. Although they initially tried to deliver on their promise of freedom to black loyalists, in many cases, the situation turned disastrous. When the British finally withdrew from the United States, over 20,000 black people departed with them. Reports circulated of black people flocking to the harbors, hoping to be among those to escape slavery; parents threw their children on board to strangers, hopeful that their child would not have to live in bondage, and others clung to the sides of ships as they pulled out into the ocean. Yet although a lucky few who departed with the British eventually gained freedom in England, Nova Scotia, or Sierra Leone, many were brought to the British Caribbean (Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica) and were re-enslaved.

Most black men who fought with the Americans were also denied their freedom at war's end. Even emancipated black soldiers were not appreciated for their labor and willingness to risk their lives; not only were they denied the military benefits given to other veterans, but additionally, those who perished in the war were not honored with a proper burial because whites did not want to be buried alongside black soldiers. In the years that followed, many

black veterans of the Revolutionary War reflected on their experiences and sought to expose the contradiction between revolutionary ideology and slavery by using the image of their patriotism and military service as a way to fight against the immorality of slavery and the denial of suffrage.

Ultimately, however, the American Revolution had a mixed legacy for the black population. Although Enlightenment philosophy eventually inspired religious reformers and politicians to bring an end to slavery in the North, the institution of slavery expanded dramatically in the South. In fact, following the war, the slave trade was reinvigorated, and hundreds of thousands of Africans were brought to the United States where they were reduced to a permanent state of bondage. Regardless, this painful reality did not dissuade black calls for liberty. Instead, for centuries after the Revolutionary War, African Americans continued to draw on the language of the American Revolution to bolster their demands for freedom.

*See also:* Attucks, Crispus; Boston Massacre; Declaration of Independence; Lord Dunmore; Poor, Salem; Salem, Peter; Williams, Peter Sr.

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## Amistad

On July 2, 1839, off the coast of Cuba, 53 West Africans took control of the slave ship *Amistad*. Their actions and the U.S. legal trials they spurred had profound and far-reaching historical consequences. The *Amistad* case galvanized the nascent abolitionist movement in the American North, intensified U.S. tensions over slavery, prompted a former U.S. president to censure an active administration, upset diplomatic ties between Spain and the United States,

initiated Christian missionary activity in West Africa, and focused international attention on the issue of universal civil rights.

While traveling between the Cuban ports of Havana and Puerto Principe, Mende-speaking captives overpowered the crew of the *Amistad*. The crew included five Spaniards, a mulatto cook, and a black cabin boy. On the third night of the voyage, the leader of the uprising, Sengbe Pieh, who would become known to Americans as Joseph Cinque, freed himself and others from their irons with a nail he found on the ship's deck. Sengbe and fellow captive Grabeau armed the Africans with sugar cane knives. The ship's cook, who had taunted the captives, insinuating they would be eaten upon their arrival in Puerto Principe, was killed immediately, and the ship's captain was slain shortly thereafter. Ten of the Mende were killed during the uprising. Two crewmen fled via the stern boat. The cabin boy, a teenager named Antonio, was spared. Two injured Spaniards, Pedro Montes and Jose Ruiz, surrendered. Ruiz and Montes were kept as hostages to help the Africans navigate the ship back to their homeland. During the day, Montes sailed east toward Africa; at night he subtly reversed the ship's course, hoping to make landfall in North America.

After two months of a northerly zigzag course and pushed along by weather and current, the *Amistad* made landfall on the coast of Long Island, New York.

On the morning of August 26, 1839, several of the *Amistad*'s Africans came upon Montauk Point, Long Island, seeking to trade for food and water. They encountered Henry Green, an American sea captain, and his companions hunting birds. Despite a language barrier, the Africans enlisted the Americans' help, offering them the ship's gold in exchange for provisions for a transatlantic return to West Africa. As the Africans and the Americans attempted to board the *Amistad*, the U.S. Coast Guard brig *Washington* intercepted them, boarded the *Amistad* at gunpoint, and towed the vessel to New Haven, Connecticut. Sengbe attempted to swim to shore but was recaptured.

The events surrounding the *Amistad* incited a variety of legal actions. The commander of the *Washington*, Lt. Thomas Gedney, attempted to claim the salvage rights of the *Amistad*'s valuable cargo of gold, silk, wine, and saddles; his claim included the Mende captives as well. The *Amistad* Spaniards, Montes and Ruiz, filed criminal charges of piracy and murder against the Africans and claimed them as property. The Spanish ambassador insisted that the United



Africans aboard the *Amistad* kill Captain Ferrer. The captives that survived the revolt won their case in the U.S. Supreme Court and returned to Africa as free men. (Barber, John W. *A History of the Amistad Captives*, 1840)

States had no jurisdiction over Spanish subjects and demanded that the *Amistad*, its cargo, and its passengers be returned to Havana for trial.

U.S. president Martin Van Buren was anxious to comply with Spain's demands. Both foreign and domestic issues were at stake. The administration wished to appease the Spanish crown as well as avoid the possibility of exposing illegal slave trading in Cuba, thus inviting English intervention in a region of great interest to the United States. With the 1840 presidential election on the horizon, Van Buren was especially eager to maintain support from proslavery Southern democrats and protect his tenuous North-South alliance by avoiding a public controversy over slavery. Connecticut's U.S. district attorney, William Holabird, ordered a judicial hearing to determine whether the U.S. had jurisdiction over the Cuban ship and, if so, whether any crimes had been committed. After hearing the testimony of Montes, Ruiz, and the *Washington's* first mate, district judge Andrew Judson referred the case for trial and ordered the Africans into the custody of the New Haven county jail.

The presence of the 43 Africans who had survived the ordeal of the *Amistad* garnered the attention of New Englanders and other Americans. Thousands of visitors flocked to the county jail. Newspapers throughout the nation paid great attention to the case. Theaters in the Northeast staged plays about the *Amistad* uprising, and museums displayed wax figures depicting the West Africans. After the *Amistad* trials concluded, the Africans themselves gave presentations attracting American audiences. During and after their detainment, the Mende received religious instruction in English. Many learned to communicate in English, and Sengbe in particular became a renowned figure of public fascination and admiration.

Among those drawn to the *Amistad* case, abolitionist Lewis Tappan saw it as an opportunity to strengthen the region's fledgling antislavery movement. Tappan organized the *Amistad* Committee to raise funds for the detained Africans and enlisted the attorney Roger Baldwin on their behalf. The *Amistad* Committee gathered Puritan abolitionists such as Joshua Leavitt and Simeon Jocelyn who saw the arrival of the *Amistad* as a divine occurrence and an occasion to raise public awareness of antislavery as a moral issue. Ultimately, their organization would pioneer missionary abolitionism.

In September 1839, the Africans were transferred to Hartford for a circuit court trial under Judge Smith

Thompson, member of the U.S. Supreme Court. Holabird argued for the prisoners to be turned over to President Van Buren as a matter of foreign diplomacy. Baldwin argued that because the slave trade had been illegal since 1808, the Africans could not be considered the legal property of anyone. Judge Thompson concluded that because the alleged crimes had occurred in international waters and did not involve U.S. citizens, the circuit court had no jurisdiction. Thompson ruled that although the Africans could no longer be considered prisoners, they should be detained until the district court determined whether they were property and, if so, of whom.

In the months leading up to the district court trial, the defense prepared its case based on the testimony of the Africans. Yale philologist Josiah Gibbs determined that the Africans were Mende-speakers from a region of southern Sierra Leone. In an effort to locate a fluent translator, Gibbs walked New York and New Haven waterfronts counting aloud in Mende. Gibbs's recitations ultimately caught the ear of a 22-year-old Afro-British naval seaman named James Covey. Covey had been kidnapped from Sierra Leone as a child and intercepted by the British en route to Cuba. After returning to Sierra Leone, Covey joined the British navy and served on the warship *Buzzard*. Charles Pratt, also a Mende-speaker from a region south of Sierra Leone and a cook on the *Buzzard*, accompanied Covey to speak with the detainees.

As translator, James Covey revealed the experiences of the Mende captives. In January 1839, they had been kidnapped in Sierra Leone by African slavers and taken to a slave factory on the coast. They had made the two-month Atlantic crossing on the Portuguese ship *Tecora*, which carried approximately 500 West African captives to Cuba. Many died on the crossing, and those who survived were marched through the Cuban jungle to slave warehouses. Ten days later, they were taken to the Misericordia slave barracks in Havana, where Ruiz and Montes, sugar plantation owners, purchased 49 adult men, 1 boy, and 3 girls. The captives were taken aboard an American-built vessel bearing the Spanish word for "friendship," *La Amistad*.

Because an 1817 treaty between England and Spain prohibited the transport of slaves from Africa to Spanish dominions, including Cuba, the captives on the *Amistad* were accompanied by false documents. The forged papers claimed that the Africans had been born into slavery in Spanish territory before the treaty took effect in 1820.

Montes changed Sengbe Pieh's name to Jose Cinque in order to suggest his Spanish origins. However, the fact that four of the captives were children under 9 years of age belied the possibility that their birth preceded the 20-year-old treaty. The fact that none of the captives spoke Spanish was also a counter-indicator. However, despite the efforts of British patrollers to deter the trade, it was not uncommon for Spanish slavers to operate successfully with forged documents.

In October 1839, Tappan encouraged some of the *Amistad* Africans to bring charges against Montes and Ruiz for false imprisonment and assault and battery. After the Spaniards were arrested in New York City, they paid their bail and absconded to Cuba. Montes and Ruiz claimed Antonio, the *Amistad's* cabin boy, as their property. Because Antonio had been born in Spain, he was considered a slave under Spanish law; thus, the court ordered his return to Cuba. However, before the trials concluded, American abolitionists helped Antonio escape to freedom in Canada.

During the civil trial for the *Amistad* case in November, the defense presented evidence for the Africans' legal standing as free persons. Baldwin argued that the Africans had not been born into legal slavery in Cuba, but kidnapped illegally from Sierra Leone. Gibbs testified that the defendants did not speak Spanish but Mende. The British antislavery commissioner to Cuba, Richard Madden, testified to the persistence of an illegal slave trade in Cuba based on fraudulent documents. Ultimately, Madden relayed the case directly to England's Queen Victoria. Sengbe, via James Covey, testified to the Africans' experience and their brutal treatment by their captors. Sengbe's presence and charisma impressed more than a few of the Americans, and his testimony deeply moved many of the trial's observers. The attorney representing Gedney attempted to argue that Cinque was a slave trader. Several of the Mende testified, as did the Afro-Spaniard Antonio. Holabird presented testimony from the crew of the *Washington* and offered statements from the Spanish consul urging the return of the *Amistad* captives and cargo to Spanish jurisdiction.

On January 13, 1840, Judge Judson ruled that the Africans had been born free and captured in violation of international law prohibiting the slave trade and the Anglo-Spanish treaty of 1817. The decision deeply disappointed President Van Buren, who, in anticipation of a decision favoring Spanish jurisdiction, had docked the naval ship *Grampus* in New Haven so that the Africans might be

returned immediately to Cuba. Van Buren had issued secret orders that the Africans were to be returned to Cuba before an appeal could be filed. However, it was the Van Buren administration that filed an appeal. After the decision was affirmed by Judge Thompson, the administration appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

On February 22, 1841, 18 months after the *Amistad* Africans arrived in Connecticut, the case was brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. Five of the nine justices on the court were either current or former slaveholders. Tappan enlisted former president and then congressman John Quincy Adams to defend the Mende. Adams appealed to the principles of natural rights underlying the Declaration of Independence and argued that the Africans had the inherent right of freedom. He also argued that by Spain's own laws, the detainees were free persons. He reprimanded President Van Buren for dispatching the *Grampus* and for withholding and forging vital documents relevant to the Africans' defense. Adams' powerful seven-hour argument earned him the nickname "Old Man Eloquent."

On March 9, 1841, the Supreme Court, dominated by Southern sympathizers, issued a landmark ruling based on the universal right of all people to resist extreme oppression. The verdict declared that the *Amistad* Africans were free persons. The court decisions did not quell the political conflict raised by the *Amistad* case. Proslavery senator John Calhoun authored resolutions calling for the return of the Africans to Spain. President John Tyler, who had succeeded Van Buren by the time the Supreme Court rendered the decision, refused to provide a ship for the Africans' return. The *Amistad* Committee and the Mende raised money to charter a ship.

In November 1841, the 34 Africans who had survived the *Amistad* and its trials sailed to Sierra Leone aboard the *Gentleman*. They were accompanied by five American missionaries, including two African Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wilson, and three white Americans, Rev. and Mrs. William Raymond and Rev. James Steele. The *Amistad* Committee, which became the American Missionary Association in 1846, inaugurated American missionary activity in Africa when they established the Mendi Mission in Sierra Leone. One of the former *Amistad* captives, Margru, returned to the United States to study at Oberlin College to prepare for her missionary work in Sierra Leone. The establishment of mission schools in Sierra Leone had far-reaching effects. Two of their graduates, Barnabas Root and Thomas

Tucker, came to the United States in the 1860s and helped to found several of North America's first black colleges. These missionary schools also produced several graduates who became important nationalists and leaders in Sierra Leone.

Spain continued to press the United States for compensation for the *Amistad*, and controversy surrounding the issue persisted for years in Congress and diplomatic circles. Subsequent American presidents continued to support Spain's claim. However, the House of Representatives, led by John Quincy Adams until his death in 1847, repeatedly denied compensation to Spain. With the election of President Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and the defeat of slaveholding interests on the U.S. political stage, efforts to compensate Spain ended.

The actions of the Africans on the *Amistad* and the legal battles they inspired dealt a crucial ideological blow to slavery in the United States. The issues surrounding the case and the agency and assertions of the *Amistad* Africans forced participants and observers to grapple with the ethical, legal, and political dimensions of 19th-century slavery. The *Amistad* trials helped to solidify and advance a fledgling antislavery movement in the American North and placed the conflict between property rights and human rights on an international stage. The case ultimately spawned the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and inaugurated a reformist abolitionist movement that attempted to alter national policy. These efforts, directly traceable to the uprising on the *Amistad*, intensified debates over slavery and thus presaged the tensions that ignited the American Civil War and the end of American slavery.

See also: Abolition, Slave Trade; Adams, John Quincy; Cinque, Joseph; Tappan, Lewis

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## Anglo-African Magazine

Published in New York City between 1859 and 1865, the *Anglo-African Magazine* was a monthly magazine devoted to publishing African American political and intellectual thought. Among the half-dozen other periodicals launched by blacks in the pre-Civil War era, the *Anglo-African* survives as the most comprehensive and sophisticated. Including editorials, satire, poetry, sociological reports, and new fiction, the magazine provided a portrait of black intellectual diversity and depth. Whereas some periodicals devoted themselves exclusively to fiction or politics, the *Anglo-African* assembled literature, science, politics, and demography to create a multifaceted journal. While it operated, it was known as "the black man's *Atlantic Monthly*."

From the inaugural issue, publisher Thomas Hamilton promised an objective review of black America. Because the majority of blacks received their information from white media, Hamilton balanced this with an exhaustive parade of black writers and reporters, including Martin Shed Cary, Martin R. Delany, Frederick Douglass, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, John Mercer Langston, William Cooper Nell, Daniel Payne, J. W. C. Pennington, and James Theodore Holly. These authors contributed not only to a report on contemporary black life, but also to the uplift of the race itself. Although questing to provide an impartial survey of African American experience, Hamilton explicitly encouraged articles that would reaffirm race pride, such as biographies of black heroes and reviews of African history. In editorials, Hamilton repeatedly defamed the widespread

caricatures of blacks propounded by the white press and blackface minstrelsy. Furthermore, the journal carefully monitored progress within the abolitionist movement and, in particular, provided in-depth reportage of the trial and execution of John Brown.

A typical issue included everything from poetry to statistical analysis, from fictionalized descriptions to polemical realities. The April 1859 issue, for example, included "A Statistical View of the Colored Population of the United States from 1790 to 1850," a report on the relationship between meteorological climate and African American survival. Contrary to popular opinion, the writers concluded, blacks were not genetically predisposed to tropical labor; rather, they were meant to work in a temperate landscape. According to this scientific study, being forced into tropical labor worked against the black man's very biological constitution. Alongside the charts and numerical listings of this "statistical review," Hamilton included an essay addressing the "educational wants of the free colored people" and, after that, another sermon by James W. C. Pennington articulating the economic depravity of the slave trade. In addition to these treatises, Hamilton included a poem by Frances Ellen Watkins, "Gone to God," an elegy for a dying mother, and the formal minutes from the New York African Society for Mutual Relief.

Also within this issue was the serial continuation of Martin Delany's picaresque novel *Blake, or, the Huts of America*, one of the nation's first African American novels. An epic narrative of an escaped slave, *Blake* was not only a fictional tale but also an ethnographic travelogue, with the central character journeying throughout the South and the Caribbean to organize a slave rebellion. Although seemingly discordant with the statistical and expository offerings elsewhere in the journal, *Blake* coordinated perfectly with the *Anglo-African*, providing vivid fictional illustration of the political and sociological realities discussed with objective gravity in the journal. Such disparate contributions were bound by common racial cause and intellectual ambition.

Inaugurated during the height of the antislavery effort, the publication of the *Anglo-African Magazine* continued on and off throughout the war, despite the death of Thomas Hamilton. Thomas's brother Robert took over editorial responsibility and assembled a team of war journalists. During the war, the journal published whenever enough reports accumulated; in addition to battle descriptions, Robert included letters home from black soldiers. Eventually, Robert Hamilton even named controversial abolitionist Henry

Highland Garnet the editor of the journal's "Southern Department." Garnet accepted the post, hoping to develop a site for Southern black intellectual expression. Before that bureau could fully take shape, however, the magazine closed its doors in December 1865. In its final issue, writers admonished Northern blacks, encouraging them to resist the comforts of urban economy and to travel instead southward. There, they explained, Northern blacks could be in service to the formerly enslaved.

Reaching and publishing the most prominent names in mid-19th-century African America, the *Anglo-African* indisputably became the most influential black journal during its brief tenure. Covering everything from astronomy to chess, from black literature and abolitionism, it offered a stunning profile of black accomplishment in a divided nation.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Delany, Martin R.; Garnet, Henry Highland; Pennington, James Williams Charles

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## Antislavery Societies

Antislavery societies were institutions involved in fighting for the natural rights of liberty and equality for black people in America. The battle against slavery commenced prior to the Revolutionary War, when African Americans organized and protested against slavery through petitions. In fact, there are petitions on record dating as early as 1661 in which blacks collectively ask for their freedom. The earliest African American organizations, called mutual aid societies, focused on many issues in addition to slavery and were secular in nature. In 1775, Philadelphia Quakers organized the first antislavery society. Blacks and whites in the early years, however, operated in segregated organizations because whites eschewed black participation or even attendance in their meetings.

In 1791, Prince Hall founded one of the earliest organizations, the Prince Hall Grande Lodge, and made antislavery part of the Masonic lodge's platform. Although most early free black societies were established by and for men, black women formed organizations such as the Benevolent Daughters, the Daughters of Africa, and the American Female Bond Benevolent Society. In addition, the black church quickly emerged as the stronghold of black activism by the end of the 18th century. Such religious leaders as Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Daniel Coker housed antislavery activities in their churches and were instrumental in the formation of the colored convention movement.

The insurrectionary attempts of Gabriel Prosser, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey in Virginia and South Carolina evidence a revolutionary-minded disposition among the slaves who sought to assert their right to be free. They shook the foundation of slavery and white Southern society, making black insurrection another reason that slavery was a bad idea to white antislavery activists.

After the American Colonization Society (ACS) revealed their pro-colonization ideas, the free black population protested, taking the lead in condemning an organization that they argued contributed to black oppression and upheld enslavement as reasonable. Organizing against the ACS led to the mobilization of the black abolitionist movement. African Americans banded together in local groups to protest expatriation and called for the immediate abolition of slavery and racial inequality. David Walker established the Massachusetts General Colored Association in Boston in 1826, which began a correspondence with other Northern black leaders. The New York based *Freedom's Journal* functioned as a liaison between black communities from Washington, D.C., to Maine.

By 1830, black abolitionists had begun to challenge the principles that sustained white antislavery activity, namely colonization and gradualism. William Watkins, Jacob Greener, and Hezekiah Grice invited a young white abolitionist named William Lloyd Garrison to the 1831 Colored Convention, which transformed Garrison's views and led him to denounce the ACS and gradualism as well. It was this demonstration of leadership that led the newly formed American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) in 1833 to ask African Americans to form auxiliary societies.

From the very beginning, though, black leadership's fusion with Garrison's organization was problematic. At the first meeting, the public record indicates that the six blacks

seated had limited involvement in the debates and the formation of policies and procedures. Likewise, they did not hold positions of authority as officers, nor were they on any executive committees; this trend continued through the Civil War. It appears that, despite Garrison's endorsement, there was still considerable controversy over whether blacks should be allowed membership in the societies or even be allowed to attend the meetings, and the same tension existed in the female antislavery societies.

Black Americans, however, did benefit greatly from white abolitionists efforts as they advertised black businesses, offered assistance in getting black inventions patented, and in general gave black Americans the broader public avenues for expression they so desperately needed. Traveling orators such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, William Wells Brown, Sarah Mapps Douglass, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, William and Ellen Craft, and others were hired by the AASS to make the case that slavery and racism were indeed a national issue that needed resolution.

By 1838, the AASS had almost 250,000 members and 1,350 affiliated societies. They published antislavery tracts and slave narratives that portrayed the horrors of slavery in vivid fashion. They sent over 1 million petitions to Congress in 1835, leading the House of Representatives to adopt the "gag rule," which prohibited the reading of petitions on the subject of slavery from 1836 to 1844. Eventually, the gag rule was overturned with the help of former president John Quincy Adams.

Over time, black abolitionists came to feel that white abolitionists were more concerned with theoretical ideas of equality and freedom. They determined that more powerful opposition was needed to effect the necessary structural changes within America, and they increasingly lost hope in the idea of a peaceful end to slavery. From the middle of the 1840s until the Civil War, many African American abolitionists called for the use of force and revolution as the only way to ascertain the liberation of those still enslaved.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS)

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## Attucks, Crispus

A runaway slave turned sailor and ropemaker, Crispus Attucks (c. 1723–1770) is the best-known victim of the Boston Massacre and is generally regarded as the first casualty of the American Revolution.

Little is known about Attucks's life prior to the massacre. He probably was part African American and part American Indian and was likely born near Framingham, Massachusetts, in Mashpee, a Natick Indian community. Attucks is presumed descended from a community of Natick Indians that converted to Christianity in the 17th century. New Englanders economically and socially marginalized native peoples in the 18th century, and New England's Christian Indians intermarried frequently with the comparatively small African American population. Local Native Americans also frequently were in some form of bondage, either as long-term indentured servants or as slaves. Attucks seems to have belonged to the latter category, and some accounts relate that he was skilled in cattle trading. Attucks escaped from slavery sometime before 1750; a bulletin was published that year, offering a physical description and seeking his return. From the description on the poster, we know that Attucks was unusually tall for a man of his time, described as 6'2".

Men such as Attucks had any number of possible grievances against the British, most connected with their livelihood, although, given that he left no written record, his motivations for participating in the mob on March 5 can only be surmised. As a sailor, Attucks was constantly in danger of being impressed, or forcibly conscripted, into the Royal Navy. Because his livelihood depended on trade, any British regulations that limited trade necessarily limited his chances to obtain employment, a situation compounded by the Boston radicals' non-importation attempts. Attucks was also a part-time ropemaker, performing this labor in between voyages, which made him a part of a laboring class

in Boston that was directly affected by the presence of the soldiers garrisoned in the city. Soldiers competed with locals for work along the waterfront and in workshops, offering their labor when off-duty in order to supplement their income. In the days before the Boston Massacre, locals and soldiers clashed along the waterfront over this employment conflict. An altercation between soldiers and laborers on March 2 exacerbated an already tense situation, and that conflict was revived three nights later.

The preponderance of witness accounts places Attucks at the front of the mob and the first to be killed by the soldiers, although his precise role in the mob is unclear. Some accounts hold that Attucks was a leader of the mob, brandishing his cordwood staff above his head, exhorting townspeople to rally behind him, and alternately assaulting soldiers and striking at their muskets with his staff before he was shot. Other accounts maintain that Attucks was leaning on his staff when he was struck in the chest by two lead balls.

During the trial of the soldiers in November 1770, Attucks was presented by the defense as the soldiers' chief antagonist. John Adams, future president and lead defense counsel, relied on racial stereotypes in his attempt to justify the soldiers' actions as legitimate responses to provocation. Reminding the court of Attucks's unusual size, Adams took care to portray Attucks's behavior as irrational and threatening. Casting most of the blame for the event on Attucks, Adams claimed that the combination of the man's size and his behavior was enough to frighten the soldiers sufficiently that they needed to use force in order to defend themselves. At the same time that John Adams was making his case in court, however, his second cousin, Samuel Adams, was busily trying to lionize Attucks in the pages of the *Boston Gazette*. Samuel Adams had an agenda of his own in trying to discredit the witness testimony that Attucks provoked or attacked the soldiers. Choosing to emphasize the reports in the *Gazette* that held that Attucks was resting on his staff when he was shot, Samuel was using Attucks to try to debunk the argument that the soldiers had any justification for firing and was trying to keep the passions of Boston's citizenry inflamed against the occupying British regiments.

The fact that Attucks was the first to fall in the Boston Massacre made him a martyr in the minds of many of his contemporaries, and he was remembered as such. Until the signing of the Declaration of Independence six years later, March 5 was known in Boston as "Crispus Attucks





*Crispus Attucks, an African American victim of the Boston Massacre, became a symbol of the American struggle for independence. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

Day,” and in 1858, a group of black abolitionists reestablished “Crispus Attucks Day” as a celebratory occasion. Despite laws regarding burial of African Americans, Attucks was interred in Park Street cemetery, on March 8, 1770, alongside three of the others killed that evening. In 1888, a monument to Attucks and the other victims of the massacre was erected on Boston Common. The first casualty of the American Revolution, Crispus Attucks is remembered both as a martyr to the cause of liberty and as the first in a long line of African Americans who died in the name of liberties they themselves did not equally enjoy.

*See also:* American Revolution; Boston Massacre

*Anthony Santoro*

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## **August First Celebrations**

August First celebrations, commonly known as Emancipation Day, August First Day, and West India Day celebrations, refer to the emancipation festivals that took place in various parts of the Atlantic world, including the British West Indies, Canada, and the United States.

The enactment on Friday, August 1, 1834, of the Abolition of Slavery Bill passed by the British Parliament in 1833 was the catalyzing event prompting the liberation of enslaved peoples in the various aforementioned places and the subsequent celebrations. Though commemorative of a shared experience of emancipation, August First celebrations reflected and took on the unique historical, cultural, and political nuances of the locales in which they were celebrated. These celebrations often displayed the multitude of constituencies that existed and their feelings about emancipation based on their relationship to, and status within, the former system of enslavement. Colonial administrators, for example, in British Guiana, in a last ditch effort to assert whatever remaining influence they might have, chose to celebrate and encourage others (primarily soon-to-be freedmen and women) to celebrate emancipation through what were clearly precautionary thanksgiving celebrations that were to be marked by religious devotion and solemnity in order to prevent the chaos and debauchery that they anticipated and dreaded. Similarly, missionaries in Jamaica often engaged in emancipation celebrations by hosting religious watch nights, conducting traditional worship services as well as proselytizing to the newly emancipated freedmen and women. Though former slaves in such places as Antigua and Jamaica did attend the religious-based celebrations such as daytime church services and watch nights, after these ended, many indulged in more festive ceremonial activities such as shouting, dancing, singing, and imbibing.

Emancipation celebrations not only spoke to the multitude of constituencies that existed but also revealed the unique characteristics of the places in which they were carried out. In some countries, certain preexisting holidays became adapted and adopted into the celebrations of August First. In Jamaica, for example, Jonkonnu, a celebration marked by elaborate costumes, consisting of activities such as serenading, parading, drinking, feasting, and dancing, that usually took place around large public holidays such as Christmas, became implemented into emancipation

celebrations. Similar to Jonkonnu in Jamaica, Trinidad's crop-over festival was also usurped for the emancipation celebratory purposes. Crop-over festivals, which were celebrated at the sugar crop harvest's end, consisted of gangs gathering at the boiler house, where they would receive special provisions of various food items such as salt and rum and then commence to partake in various forms of reveling and jocularity to the accompaniment of a fiddle. Although some celebrations of subsequent years (those following the 1834 date of emancipation) were marked by an incorporation of preexisting forms of festivity, August First Day celebrations were also carried out in original and spontaneous ways.

While the 1834 emancipation of almost 700,000 in the British West Indies was marked by an abiding excitement among newly freed men and women on those islands, for many African Americans the news of their brethren's emancipation and subsequent festivities were initially met with less than celebratory responses. Events such as the July Fourth Protest held in New York City just weeks before, resulted in rioting after African Americans realized that freedom would not be immediately enacted, but rather it would be a gradual process of apprenticeship in which many of enslavements most dehumanizing and horrific acts such as physical brutality, psychic belittlement, would continue unfettered.

Despite the lackluster African American reaction to the initial August First Day, by the 1850s, African Americans' celebration of August First Day had gained larger and wider significance; festivities to commemorate the day took place as far west as California. For African Americans, August First celebrations played a central role in fostering and organizing traditions of commemoration by offering an alternative to the mockery and utter inapplicability inherent in July Fourth celebrations of independence and a more substantive celebration in place of the fleeting optimism presented by the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808.

August First celebrations, despite being grounded in substantive and concrete events, should be understood not as static freedom festivals, but rather as dynamic and ever-changing to accommodate and reflect the peoples and locales in which they took place. Despite various cultural and national nuances, the transnational element of August First celebrations speaks to the importance of abiding freedom for people throughout the African Diaspora. August First

celebrations continue to take place, especially throughout the Caribbean, to this day.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture

*Christina Bush*

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## **Ball, Charles**

Charles Ball (1780–?) was a slave who in collaboration with Isaac Fisher published his memoir, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball*, in 1837. Ball was born sometime after 1780 in Calvert County, Maryland. His grandfather, Ben, claimed kindred to royalty in Africa and had been a great warrior in his native country before being sold into slavery around 1730. His mother was a slave, as was his father. When Ball's mother's master died, he, his mother, and siblings were sold to different masters in 1785. Ball remained in Calvert County, as did his father, who lived on the Hantz plantation. After Ball's mother was sold away to a Georgian trader, his father, no longer able to cope with the demands of enslavement, ran away. The only family member that 4-year-old Ball had left was his 80-year-old grandfather who lived in a small cabin on the Mauel family land. Ben expressed great affection for his grandson and shared many stories with Ball about his life in Africa.

Ball's narrative is particularly useful because he provided accounts about the African slaves with whom he became acquainted. From these sources, Ball learned about African religious beliefs; wartime practices; social customs; the slave trade, including experiences during the Middle Passage and suicide; and African attitudes about enslavement.

This is also true for Ball's descriptions of slavery in America, which accurately detail the attitudes of slave owners and domestic slave traders, the effects of the cotton gin on the institution of slavery, and what slavery was like for those enslaved. Ball analyzed slavery from a regional perspective,

comparing slavery in Maryland and Virginia, where slaves cultivated tobacco, with the cotton states of South Carolina and Georgia where slavery was the most rigorous and harsh. Although slavery was much the same everywhere, Ball noted that the slave owners who lived on their plantations were better masters, their presence creating greater oversight and the intervention of mistresses whose compassion generally resulted in better care for the slaves.

Ball married a woman by the name of Judah. They had three children, but in 1805, Ball was sold away from his wife and family to a cotton plantation owner in South Carolina. Ball gained firsthand knowledge of the brutality of cotton agriculture and determined to make his escape. Significantly, Ball described how communalism enabled those enslaved to survive the conditions of malnutrition and overwork, limited clothing, and the ill-treatment of mothers and infants. After several escape attempts, Ball returned to his family in Maryland shortly before the War of 1812. Ball enlisted and worked for Commodore Barney during the War of 1812 until 1814, sometimes as a seaman and sometimes as a cook onboard ship.

After his first wife died in 1816, Ball married a woman named Lucy in 1823 and had four more children. He and his second wife were seized in 1830 and sold to a slave-dealer. Ball was enslaved in Georgia, but he eventually made his escape. He went to Philadelphia where he met Isaac Fisher, a white lawyer, but fearing recapture, he left Philadelphia. There is no record of when or where he died. Although many slave narratives are believed to be antislavery propaganda, Ball's autobiography is considered authentic. It was republished in 1859 under the title *Fifty Years in Chains*.

*See also:* Fugitive Slaves; Slave Culture

*Kay Wright Lewis*

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## Banneker, Benjamin

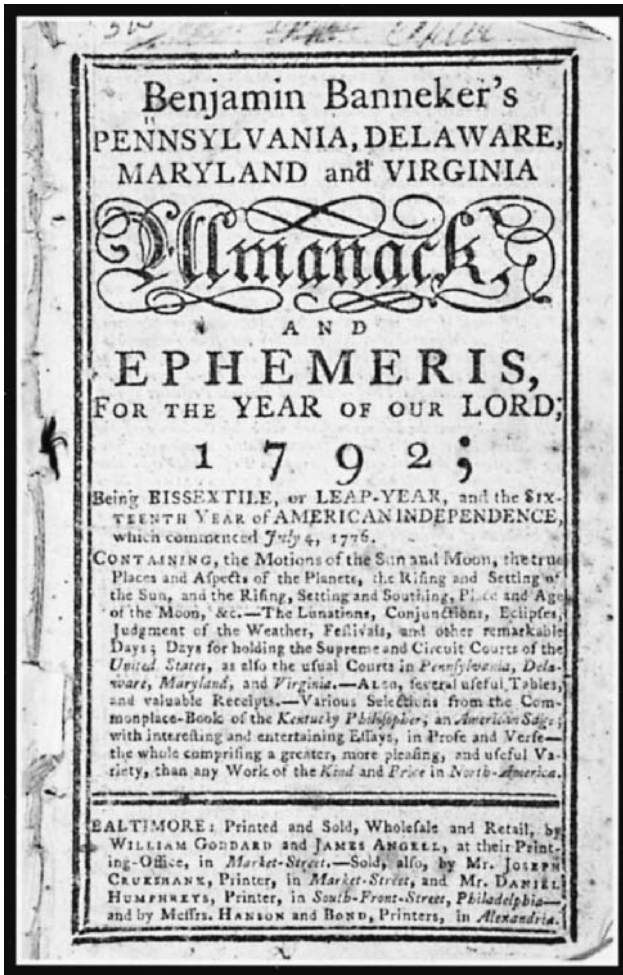
Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806), a farmer, astronomer, and mathematician, was born free at present-day Oella, near Elliott's Mills, Maryland. Banneker was notable for his

achievements in the publication of his astronomical almanacs (1792–1797), his scientific contributions for the 1791 Capitol City Boundary survey, and his crucial letter to the secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, challenging Jefferson's view on racial inferiority (1791).

Banneker's father, Robert, was a former slave from West Africa who achieved freedom from his planter owner. Banneker's mother, Mary, was the daughter of an English woman, Molly Welch, and "Banneka," a West African prince taken as a slave. Banneker's white grandmother was transported from her native England to the New World after being wrongfully convicted of stealing milk. After seven years as an indentured servant, Banneker's grandmother acquired her freedom from her Quaker owner and began farming nearby. She purchased two slaves newly arrived from Africa to help her with the land, located near the mouth of Maryland's Patapsco River. Banneker's grandmother later freed these two slaves, including her future husband, "Banneka," whom she married around 1696.

Banneker was devoted to his family's farm. With frugality, industriousness, and productive crops, Banneker's family purchased the original land and nearby farms. Banneker, who never married, inherited portions of the land upon the death of his father in 1759. A variety of crops—wheat, herbs, vegetables, and tobacco—were grown. Banneker made the switch from tobacco to wheat as his main crop. Educated by a Quaker schoolmaster, Banneker was self-taught on advanced subjects. Mathematics and astronomy were his favorites. To seriously pursue astronomy, Banneker adjusted his schedule by farming during the day and performing scientific research after nightfall. He recorded detailed notes of scientific findings in his journal (e.g., the timing of ocean tides, the earthquake of 1790, and the locust life cycle). Respectful and modest, Banneker was religious, preferring the Society of Friends.

The Banneker family greatly valued their freedom. Yet they were aware of the perils of slavery and the growing restrictions on free blacks. As a child, Banneker witnessed how his white grandmother saved a group of free black children from being taken away. In 1743, Banneker tried selling tobacco for a better price out of their area, by taking a fateful trip into Baltimore. He and a free black neighbor were stopped; the neighbor (who had forgotten his free papers) was taken away. Banneker continued alone to Baltimore, where he was denied funds and his tobacco crop was taken away from him. A Baltimore merchant, a Quaker named William Qualles, witnessed this incident and befriended



Benjamin Banneker's Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia Almanack and Ephemeris, for the Year of Our Lord 1792. . . . Banneker was a free African American scientist and publisher. (Library of Congress)

Banneker. The merchant invited him to his Baltimore home, where Banneker saw his first watch, given to him as a loan. From this watch, Banneker studied timekeeping and its mechanism. He then built and carved a wooden clock, finished in 1753. A marvel to his neighborhood, Banneker's clock regularly struck on the hour for 50 years.

Banneker's scientific contributions flourished after he became acquainted with a fellow astronomer, George Elliott, whose family established a grain mill business that became Elliott's Mills. As Quakers, the Elliott family opposed slavery and believed in human equality. As a neighbor and customer, Banneker regularly took his wheat crops to Elliott's Mills, purchased goods from its store, and conferred with Elliott on scientific matters. Banneker was provided with advanced books and instruments that allowed him to pursue astronomy professionally on his own. Elliot

recommended that Banneker work with his uncle (surveyor Maj. Andrew Elliott) as the astronomer for the initial Capitol City's 10-mile-square boundary survey (1791). The 60-year-old Banneker spent two months in the wilderness that later became the District of Columbia, solely responsible for the astronomical measurements essential for the survey's success. Washington, D.C., named one of its parks after Banneker.

Back on his farm, Banneker prepared his almanacs, first published in a 1792 edition and continued annually until 1797. These almanacs, containing antislavery information, were also valuable weather aids, purchased by farmers and mariners. In 1791, Banneker wrote to Thomas Jefferson, giving his perspective as a free educated black person that slavery was wrong and blacks should be treated with equality. Banneker's prepublished almanac supplemented the letter, as an example reflecting his scientific expertise. Jefferson acknowledged in a prompt but brief note. Banneker's letter and Jefferson's response were published with the 1793 almanac.

Now known to proslavery forces, Banneker was harassed in his last years. Declining health forced Banneker to reduce his farming and scientific pursuits. On a daily walk on his beloved farm, Banneker became ill, and he died peacefully on October 9, 1806. During his funeral, Banneker's home burned to the ground. Before the funeral, Banneker's nephew had retrieved selected items from Banneker's home and given them to the Elliott family, as instructed by his uncle. Among these items—the only ones that survived—were books, tools, instruments, and Banneker's journal. The Banneker farm site is now the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park.

See also: Jefferson, Thomas

Margaret Prentice Hecker

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## Bell, Philip A.

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Philip A. Bell (1808–1886) was born free in New York City, in the year of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. As a young boy, Bell attended the African Free Schools, and he eventually used his education to launch his career as a journalist and abolitionist. Although Bell is best known as a newspaper editor, he was also politically active and concerned himself with a range of issues, including abolition, the protection of fugitives, anticolonization, and suffrage. In fact, Bell's first known public appearance was at the 1832 Colored Convention, where, along with the rest of the New York City delegation, Bell spoke adamantly against the notion of Canadian migration. He insisted that emigration was a serious strategic error that threatened their efforts to gain citizenship in the United States. Significantly, Bell remained consistent in his anticolonization position, as evidenced by his speech on January 8, 1839, in New York City protesting against the “scheme” of African colonization.

Following his appearance at the 1832 Colored Convention, Bell apparently won the respect of his peers because he was allowed to join the African Society for Mutual Relief, which was the most influential black organization in New York City. Initially established as a mutual aid society, African Society members eventually became involved in every leading political issue affecting their race in the 19th century. Bell's commitment to abolition soon led him to the occupation that became his life's work. After William Lloyd Garrison began to publish the *Liberator*, an antislavery newspaper, Bell learned about the power of the press and became the paper's main agent in New York City. By 1837, however, Bell had made the critical decision to launch his own newspaper, which he named the *Weekly Advocate*. Shortly thereafter the paper was renamed the *Colored American* and became committed to Christianity, suffrage, education, and anticolonization. Significantly, the paper was financed and printed by fellow African Society members, Thomas Jennings and John J. Zuille. Unfortunately, the paper quickly developed financial problems, and Charles Ray assumed editorship of the paper. However, Bell rebounded, and between 1837 and 1842, Bell and Samuel Cornish co-edited the lesser-known *Colored Man's Journal*.

The year 1837 was also decisive for Philip Bell politically. During that year, he joined the Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society and also became committed to the quest

for black male unrestricted suffrage rights. In fact, black activists in New York City hoped to create a statewide alliance among black men to fight for suffrage, and in August 1837, they decided to send Philip Bell on a tour through other New York counties to garner support. Specifically, Bell was asked to encourage men throughout the state to overwhelm the state legislature with petitions regarding the suffrage. Bell's efforts must have been somewhat successful, for they led to a series of suffrage conventions in the 1840s. In 1840, he actively supported the movement for a statewide convention of black men to unite for suffrage rights. Although there was some debate in the black community about the efficacy of conventions, Bell pushed for the meeting and served as chairman of the meeting where delegates were selected. Bell attended the gathering; however, the New York State Legislature routinely denied their petitions. Even so, Bell's efforts to gain suffrage continued in the 1850s, when he created a Franchise Committee of Colored Voters and attended another state convention in Troy, New York, in 1855.

Despite his commitment to suffrage, Bell agitated on behalf of a range of issues during the 1850s. Following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, Bell joined the Committee of Thirteen to assist in the protection of fugitives. In addition, after a young black woman was ejected from a streetcar in September 1850, Bell wrote in the *New York Tribune* about the discriminatory nature of segregation in public facilities. Yet his most profound decision of the 1850s came when Bell decided to migrate to San Francisco, California. Upon his arrival, Bell immediately made a place for himself in the black community—becoming active in black organizations and agitating on behalf of fugitives. Bell also brought his experience in the National Colored Conventions to assist in the creation of a series of colored citizens conventions held in San Francisco and Sacramento between 1855 and 1857, and again in 1865. However, Bell was best known in the Bay area for creating two black newspapers: the *Pacific Appeal* and the *Elevator*. Along with his colleague Peter Anderson, Bell founded the *Pacific Appeal* in 1862 in San Francisco, and it sought to be the voice of black people in the West. However, by 1865, Bell and Anderson were engaged in a political feud that severed their relationship. Shortly thereafter, Bell started a rival newspaper, the *Elevator*, which served the black community for two decades. After a lifetime as an activist and journalist, Philip Bell died in 1889.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; *Colored American Newspaper*; Colored Convention Movement; *The Elevator*

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Benevolent Societies

Benevolent societies were organizations in the 19th century dedicated to racial advancement. These associations took a number of different forms—mutual aid societies, burial and insurance organizations, fraternal organizations, educational groups, or community groups—and each developed to help meet the needs of its members in the community. Prior to the Civil War, such groups were established in the slave states among the free people of color, generally among the elite of the cities, to fill the void of services they could not acquire within white society. Frequently, these organizations provided a burial location for members and their families, death benefits and educational assistance for the widows and children of members, and relief for the disabled and elderly among their ranks.

In the Northern states, benevolent societies sprung up alongside the African American churches—or in place of churches—where they developed as institutional centers of the community for organization. As with the prewar societies of the South, these organizations were formed to meet the needs of their collective membership and their families—many of which could not be met in the larger, white community. Benevolent societies were formed to provide burial sites and death benefits to the members and their families, as well as educational programs and relief for members in need. However, the work of such organizations

took on much more of a community focus as the black freedmen, many from the generation of the American Revolution and with a full belief in the Declaration of Independence, worked to abolish the aspects of slavery that were extant in their communities and for the manumission of the enslaved populations of their states. In fact, many of these organizations began to push for an end to the Atlantic Slave Trade and for the abolition of slavery in the United States.

As more people gained their freedom—whether through legislation and/or gradual emancipation in Northern states or through the mass emancipation that followed the Civil War in the Southern states—benevolent societies continued to work for the benefit of their communities, providing support in a variety of ways. It was often through the standards set in these organizations and the training received there that the new freedmen acquired the tools they would need to survive in their new environment. Many of these organizations taught the life skills and deportment that members would need to be successful in the outside world. Further, although the majority of benevolent societies were strictly secular organizations, most stressed a rigorous adherence to Christian moral character to its members.

While providing leadership, guidance, and education for newly freed slaves, these organizations also provided leadership roles and upward mobility for the founders and leaders of those organizations. As they worked to improve the quality of life for their membership, in many cases these individuals were able to move their own families into the higher echelons of society. They also became community leaders on a broader scale as they advocated for the full equal rights of citizenship for African Americans.

Most early benevolent societies admitted men only to membership. Some of the earliest were a mutual aid society formed in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1780; the Free African Society in Philadelphia established by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones in 1787; and the Brown Fellowship Society organized in Charleston in 1790. In the 1790s, organizations began to appear that admitted women. The Free African Society in Philadelphia turned over its welfare operations in 1793 to the Female Benevolent Society of St. Thomas. Richard Allen’s wife, Sarah, organized the Benevolent Daughters in 1796. Other early societies with women members include the Daughters of Africa, formed in 1812, and the American Female Bond Benevolent Society in 1817.

See also: African Dorcas Association; Antislavery Societies; Brown Fellowship Society; Free African Society; Prince Hall Masonry

Jane M. Aldrich

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## Birney, James

James Gillespie Birney (1792–1857) was one of the leading white abolitionists of his time and twice ran for president on the Liberty Party's ticket. Birney's growth into abolitionism was gradual. Born in Kentucky to Irish immigrants James Birney and Martha Read (who died when Birney was three), Birney was raised in a slaveholding family, although his father favored gradual emancipation, and the aunt who raised him had abolitionist sympathies. Birney himself became a slaveholder at age six when he received a boy named Michael as a companion; he owned Michael until his full conversion to abolitionism in the 1830s, when he freed him and helped him establish a business of his own.

Birney attended Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), from which he graduated in 1810. After reading law in Philadelphia under Alexander J. Dallas, he established a thriving law practice in Danville, Kentucky, and married Agatha McDowell (daughter of a district judge) on February 1, 1816. During this time, he gained several additional slaves through his marriage, and his prominence increased. Most significantly, in August 1816, Birney was elected to the Kentucky legislature. In 1818, the family moved to Madison County, Alabama. Birney served a term in the Alabama legislature and remained a well-known attorney, but financial losses (brought on in part by gambling) forced him to sell his Madison County plantation and several slaves. The Birneys relocated to Huntsville, Alabama, where they prospered and where Birney was elected mayor in 1829. He left the Episcopalian church of his childhood, became a Presbyterian, and embraced several reform causes: education, Sunday schools,

and temperance. He also worked as an attorney for the Cherokee and, in 1832, as an agent for the American Colonization Society. Birney's work for colonization—including supervising the Liberia-bound voyage of 150 African Americans aboard the *Ajax*, his subsequent efforts to raise money for the society in Alabama, and a visit to New England—led him to become a stronger voice for gradual abolition.

Returning to Kentucky, he freed his six remaining slaves in 1834, joined the state's Society for the Gradual Relief of the State of Slavery, and began to consider more immediatist approaches, including those advanced by the American Anti-Slavery Society. Birney's growing sense that colonization was based more on racism than charity—and then his willingness to publicly assert as much in documents such as his key “Letter on Colonization”—led him to move to the free state of Ohio in early 1836 and to become more enmeshed in the abolitionist world. Working with Gamaliel Bailey, he edited and published the *Philanthropist*, a newspaper through which he argued for a politically involved approach to immediate abolition. Southern Ohioans were almost as unfriendly to his work as Kentuckians, and on several occasions, he received death threats. Still, he spoke regularly for the abolitionist cause, continued the *Philanthropist* until September 1837, and published a number of brief pamphlets and letters on abolitionism.

Elected secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society in late 1837, Birney moved to New York City, where he continued to write—including the important 1839 “Letter on the Political Obligations of Abolitionists,” which was published in the *Emancipator* and later as a pamphlet. This work, as well as Birney's opposition to allowing women to fully participate in antislavery organizations, placed Birney alongside the Tappan brothers and against William Lloyd Garrison in the extended debate that ultimately split American abolitionism.

As early as a November 1839 convention of antislavery factions favoring political abolitionism held in Warsaw, New York, Birney's fellows were talking about running him as a candidate for president of the United States. But Birney resisted such attempts until a larger April 1840 convention at Albany nominated him as the first presidential candidate of the newly formed Liberty Party. Birney did not campaign actively, and he polled badly—gaining fewer than 8,000 votes. However, he was fast becoming an international figure. From May through November in 1840, he worked with the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, which

named him a vice president. He also published his best-known antebellum work, *The American Churches the Bulwark of Slavery*, in 1840; the volume was reissued in 1842.

Birney's first wife died in 1839; most of their children were already becoming active in politics and the military. He remarried in 1840 to Elizabeth Fitzhugh, a niece of his friend and fellow abolitionist Gerrit Smith. The couple settled in Bay City, Michigan, a year later. Birney ran unsuccessfully for the Michigan governorship in 1842 and was again nominated as the Liberty Party's 1844 candidate for president. This time, his campaign was much stronger: more 62,000 Northerners voted for him, even though a forged letter (the "Garland Letter") that was probably circulated by Whig activists purported to offer evidence that Birney was secretly a Democrat. Some historians have also suggested that Birney acted as a "spoiler" in the race between Whig Henry Clay and Democrat James K. Polk. Regardless, Birney came out of the campaign a major figure in American abolitionism, though several (including Frederick Douglass, who was moving more toward political abolitionism) remained skeptical because of his slaveholding background.

Birney was partially paralyzed when a horse threw him in the summer of 1845, and he largely withdrew from public life. He moved to a communal settlement in Eagleswood, New Jersey, in late 1853 and lived there for the rest of his life.

*See also:* American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); American Colonization Society; Douglass, Frederick; Garrison, William Lloyd; Liberty Party; Smith, Gerrit; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis

*Eric Scott Gardner*

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## Boston Massacre

The Boston Massacre was a violent clash between American settlers and British soldiers and is usually considered to be the first conflict in the American Revolution. Tensions

that had accumulated over a period of months and years erupted into violence on March 5, 1770, when a small detail of British soldiers fired on a mob of Bostonian citizens, killing four, mortally wounding a fifth, and wounding six others. Known as the Boston Massacre, the event helped solidify colonial resistance to British rule. The first to be killed that evening, Crispus Attucks, has since come to be known as the first casualty of the American Revolution.

At the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763, the British Parliament, seeking to repay debts incurred during the war and cover the high costs of maintaining its North American military forces, imposed on the colonies a series of unpopular taxes, including the Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, and the Townsend Acts of 1767. Protests raged throughout the colonies, and Boston in particular was an epicenter of protest, such that Gen. Thomas Gage, commander in chief of British forces in North America, dispatched two regiments of soldiers to Boston in 1768. The soldiers were to restore order and facilitate tax collection, but their presence only caused further problems. Boston's citizens took exception to the quartering of troops in their city during peacetime, and the protests continued. The citizenry regarded the troops as threats to their homes, families, and livelihoods, given that townspeople and off-duty troops competed for work. There were also reports that Captain John Wilson of the 59th regiment tried to provoke a slave revolt in the city, encouraging slaves to rise up against their masters and promising safety for any individual who made it to his barracks. Confrontations between citizens and soldiers were frequent, and a number of brawls erupted in the months before the Boston Massacre.

On March 5, 1770, Private Hugh White, a sentry posted to guard the Customs House, struck with the butt of his musket a barber's apprentice when the apprentice accosted him regarding a failure to pay for a haircut. The crowd continued to grow in size, accosting White with snowballs and chunks of ice. To protect White, Captain Thomas Preston, commanding officer of the 29th infantry regiment, led a small detail of men through the assembled crowd and into a semicircular defense perimeter in front of the Customs House door. In the midst of the commotion, Private Hugh Montgomery was struck down by a club thrown at his head. Regaining his feet, Montgomery urged his comrades to fire on the crowd and, leveling his musket, did so. Shots staggered out, and 11 bullets in all struck members of the crowd. The shots killed four—Crispus Attucks, James



Caldwell, Samuel Gray, and Samuel Maverick—and fatally wounded a fifth, Patrick Carr. Attucks, half African American and half American Indian, was, by some accounts, the leader of the crowd and was the first to be killed. He was immediately lionized in the local radical press and memory, becoming a martyr for the cause of colonial liberty.

Captain Preston was arrested in the early hours of March 6, 1770, and six of his soldiers were subsequently arrested and removed from Boston pending trial. The trials of the soldiers took place between October 24 and December 5, 1770. Defended by future president John Adams and Josiah Quincy Jr., Captain Preston and six of his men (Privates John Carroll, James Hartigan, William McCauley, William Warren, William Wemms, and Hugh White) were acquitted, and Privates Hugh Montgomery and Matthew Killroy were convicted of manslaughter. Montgomery was convicted of shooting Attucks, despite the fact that Wemms had been explicitly charged with that killing. Pleading benefit of clergy, the two men were branded on the thumb and released.

During the trials, the court took the unusual step of allowing African Americans to testify. Andrew, a slave owned by merchant Oliver Wendell, recounted what he had seen that evening, beginning with events before the arrival of Preston and his men. His testimony cast doubt on claims that Preston had given the order to fire and, his reliability being sworn to by Wendell, helped discredit the case against Preston. Andrew also testified that he believed that Attucks struck Killroy with his staff, provoking a response from the soldiers. Jack, a slave owned by Dr. James Lloyd, also testified to the crowd's provocation of the soldiers. Newton Price, a free black pastry cook originally from the British West Indies, testified that he witnessed the crowd taunt and assault the soldiers, that the mob taunted the detail to fire upon them, and that he saw Preston position himself between the mob and his men's muskets, further casting doubt on the claim that Preston gave the order to fire, an order that, given where he stood, would have seriously injured or killed him. The testimony of these three African Americans



*British soldiers open fire on townspeople during the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770. The first to be killed that evening, Crispus Attucks, has since come to be known as the first casualty of the American Revolution. (National Archives)*

was vital to the defense and helped secure acquittals for Preston and four of his soldiers.

The Boston Massacre fueled a great deal of anti-British propaganda throughout the colonies and provided radicals such as Samuel Adams with an event around which to rally and sustain opposition to the British crown. The massacre also produced the first martyr of the cause of American independence in Crispus Attucks, who is regarded as the first casualty of the American Revolution.

*See also:* American Revolution; Attucks, Crispus

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## Boyer, Jean Pierre

Jean Pierre Boyer (1776–1850) was born on February 28, 1776, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. His parents were a wealthy Frenchman and a former slave. Boyer was educated in France and later worked as a close aide to Haitian President Alexandre Petion, whom he succeeded in 1816. Boyer united both the northern and southern parts of the Republic of Haiti in 1820 and, two years later, annexed the Spanish and eastern sections of the island. He also earned an important place in African American history through a project of colonization involving American blacks.

In 1816, a group of whites, including Bushrod Washington, Henry Clay, and John Randolph, organized the American Colonization Society with the purpose of settling free blacks in Liberia. Within a decade, thousand of blacks had settled in Liberia. Nevertheless, the African scheme failed because it was too costly and never received the full support of the African American community. However, rejection of the African scheme did not mean that blacks were against the idea of leaving the United States in principle. Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803), a Haitian military genius, had won the admiration of American blacks, and with political freedom newly won from France, Haiti was deemed the best possible destination for oppressed African Americans. Sensing

the failure of the Liberia experiment, in 1824, Loring Dewey wrote to Boyer asking about opportunities for potential African American settlers. Boyer welcomed this overture because Haiti reported a shortage of agricultural workers. Though male Haitians had been given small plots of land, they were unwilling to become again the human machines of mass production that they had been under the French.

Envisioning a bargain in African American settlement, Boyer promised Dewey that immigrants willing to work the land would be given free transportation to Haiti and 30 acres per groups of 12. On the other hand, migrants who wanted to work the mechanical arts or any other trade would have to reimburse the government after six months. In the summer of 1824, Boyer sent a special representative, Jonathas Granville, to promote the Haitian scheme in America. Granville traveled to several cities and convinced black leaders to endorse Haitian colonization. About 6,000 American blacks settled in Haiti through the Boyer scheme between 1824 and 1825. Altogether, some 13,000 American blacks moved to the island during the same period, most of them on their own. African Americans became disappointed about their stay in Haiti. They did not want to work the land and faced a linguistic barrier because they did not speak French, the official language of Haiti then. Most of the emigrants returned to the United States. In April 1825, the Haitian government discontinued the sponsoring of emigrants by withdrawing financial support.

With the issue of black emigration “settled,” Boyer further concerned himself with winning diplomatic recognition from France, which he finally negotiated under the threat of naval invasion and at the cost of 150 million francs in 1825. Boyer remained president until a major insurrection forced him to leave for Jamaica in March 1843. Five years later, he moved to France, where he died on July 9, 1850.

*See also:* Destination, Haiti; Haitian Revolution; Louverture, Toussaint

*David Michel*

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## Brown, John

John Brown (1800–1859) was a staunch and radical abolitionist who professed the utter destruction of the slaveocracy through slave insurrection. On two occasions, in Kansas and Harpers Ferry, Virginia, Brown led radical abolitionists to fuel the tensions between the North and the South over the issue of slavery.

John Brown was born in Torrington, Connecticut, on May 9, 1800. His parents, Owen and Ruth Mills Brown, were pious and conservative Calvinists; his father, in particular, held especially inflexible religious views, including his belief that slavery was immoral. Like many Calvinists, the Browns assumed that religious crusades were the solution for the eradication of slavery. When young John was five years old, Owen made a decision that transformed John into a young abolitionist. In 1805, the Brown family moved to Hudson, Ohio, a town renowned for possessing a virulent abolitionist movement. During his time in Hudson, John personally



*A militant U.S. abolitionist, John Brown led an unsuccessful raid against the federal arsenal in Harper's Ferry, (West) Virginia, hoping to spark a local slave rebellion. This event contributed to the growing tensions between the North and South that led to the American Civil War in early 1861. (National Archives)*

witnessed a slave being abused by his master while strolling one day on the outskirts of the city, an event that reportedly propelled Brown into the radical abolitionist camp.

Beginning in 1816, John Brown received education in Massachusetts and Connecticut, but ill health required him to return before he completed his studies. He returned to Ohio, where he worked for his father's business and eventually married Dianthe Lusk in 1820. Approximately one year later, their first child, John Jr., was born, and in 1825, Brown moved his young family to Pennsylvania where he established a farm and tannery. Over the next several years, John Brown faced a series of painful tragedies; his businesses failed, and his wife and newborn son died. In 1833, however, Brown married again, this time to Mary Ann Day, with whom he eventually had 13 children. Combined with the offspring from his first marriage, Brown had a total of 20 children, 12 of whom survived past childhood.

For much of the 1830s, Brown's political views remained in obscurity. Yet beginning in 1837, it became clear that Brown would eventually become an ardent abolitionist. In 1837, Elijah Lovejoy, a minister, abolitionist, and newspaper editor, was murdered in Alton, Illinois. He was attacked by an angry proslavery mob, an event that propelled Brown to action. In the wake of Lovejoy's death, Brown pledged that he would dedicate his life to the destruction of slavery. Thus, Brown flooded his household with abolitionist ideology, and his surviving children became abolitionists. While in Pennsylvania, he established havens for African American children to receive an education. In addition, he constructed additional refuges in Ohio and Massachusetts with the intent of intellectually freeing the former slaves. Brown also intended to go to Oberlin College in Virginia to found an African American colony of small-scale farmers.

Unfortunately, the abolitionist cause did not pay well for John Brown. By 1842, after numerous failed jobs, John Brown declared bankruptcy. Subsequently, his solitary purpose was the eradication of slavery in the Union. In 1849, Brown moved to the newly created African American community of North Elba, New York. The community had been created when a wealthy and prominent abolitionist named Gerrit Smith donated 120,000 acres of his personal property to black families who were disposed to clearing and farming the land. Brown offered to build a home in the community and assist the local families. Unfortunately, North Elba struggled in the years that followed, in part because the land was not designed for agriculture and in part because residents

were harassed by their neighbors. Even so, by the early 1850s, John Brown was known within the abolitionist circles.

He was a sponsor of Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad and helped establish the League of Gileadites, an organization that offered to assist the free black population and to a certain degree mirrored Brown's increasing radicalism. Important national events in the West, specifically in Kansas, gained his immediate attention. In 1854, Congressman Stephen Douglas proposed a congressional bill to prepare parts of the Louisiana Purchase for possible statehood. The Kansas-Nebraska Act stipulated that the northern part of the territory would be Nebraska, and the southern part would be Kansas. Under the guise of popular sovereignty, the settlers of the territories assumed the right to choose whether slavery would exist in their territories. Many Americans assumed that Nebraska would be a "free" state. Kansas, a neighbor of slave state Missouri, posed a problem. Many "border ruffians" from Missouri entered Kansas to establish slave towns to act as pressure points before admission. Abolitionists led by Henry Ward Beecher created companies to send abolitionists into Kansas. Influenced by the events in Kansas, John Brown decided to migrate to the hotly contested terrain. John Brown's immediate reasons for migrating stemmed from the passage of his five sons to the region.

Brown's radicalism entered into a new phase in May 1856. On May 21, 1856, Sheriff Samuel Jones and his posse of mostly Missourian proslavery men ransacked the free town of Lawrence, Kansas. Jones and his men bombarded the *Free State Hotel*, which was owned by the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Along with the destruction of the hotel, Jones destroyed two newspapers and killed one man. The "sack of Lawrence," as it came to be known, angered many abolitionists in the region, including John Brown. On May 24, 1856, Brown retaliated in Pottawatomie, Kansas. Brown and his posse, consisting primarily of his sons, sacked this proslavery town and murdered five proslavery men in the process. The Pottawatomie Massacre catapulted Brown into the national spotlight as a violently radical abolitionist. Immediately after the incident, the U.S. Army and local militia began to hunt Brown. He traveled to the friendly confines of the east. Over the next two years, a secret abolitionist group called "The Secret Six" funded John Brown and his plans for slave insurrection.

In 1859, Brown hatched a radical plan to liberate all of the slaves in the South. His plan called for raiding a national

armory and then distributing those arms to the slaves so that they could kill their masters. He spent months traveling to meet with abolitionists, including renowned black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, in an effort to garner financial and physical support. Few were willing to give Brown's scheme much legitimacy, but the funding he had previously received from the Secret Six proved to be enough to enact his plan.

Thus, on October 16, 1859, Brown unleashed his attack at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, with 21 men, including 5 blacks. Initially, Brown was able to conquer the federal armory, but the local citizenry, aided by Col. Robert E. Lee of the U.S. Marines, thwarted his plans. In the ensuing attack, most of Brown's men were killed or wounded, including his sons Oliver and Watson. The Marines gave Brown the opportunity to surrender peacefully, but he refused. Instead, Brown was taken prisoner; in total, 10 of his men were killed, 7 were captured, and 5 men (including his son Owen) escaped. John Brown was held captive at the armory, where he was questioned by the Virginia governor, Henry A. Wise, and two other congressmen. His trial commenced on October 27; Brown was charged with murder, treason, and inciting slave rebellion. One week later, after only 45 minutes of deliberation, the jury found Brown guilty on all counts. On December 2, 1859, John Brown was hanged in Virginia.

Although John Brown did not live to see the end of slavery, many scholars (and even some of his contemporaries) have indicated that Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry hastened the coming of the Civil War. It did indeed serve to polarize the growing divide between North and South. Southerners blamed abolitionists for the attack, and abolitionists celebrated Brown as a fallen martyr, a decision that served to further enrage proslavery forces. In the end, although John Brown's raid did not immediately end the institution of slavery, it brought nation closer to the brink of civil war.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Slave Resistance; Smith, Gerrit

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## Brown, William Wells

William Wells Brown (1815–1884) escaped from slavery in 1834 and became a noted antislavery activist and author. He was the most prolific African American author of the mid-19th century and second in public visibility to Frederick Douglass. Brown was born on a plantation near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1814, the son of a slave mother and a white father. He worked a variety of jobs for a series of masters who often hired out his time. Brown was even hired out to Elijah Lovejoy, who later became an abolitionist and was martyred for his beliefs. If Lovejoy was Brown's best master, he also endured a series of difficult owners. Brown wrote frequently of masters who doled out drunken beatings or whippings for no apparent reason. He was eventually purchased by a slave trader who forced Brown to assist him in transporting slaves down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Brown was forced to alter the appearance of some of the slaves—plucking their gray hairs or rubbing grease into wrinkles to make them look younger.

Brown was not content to remain in bondage and became aware of the possibilities of a world outside of slavery once he started moving up and down the Mississippi River. In St. Louis, Brown snuck off to listen to Fourth of July Speeches about liberty and became determined to seek his own independence. He convinced his mother to escape with him, and in 1833, they fled. Both were quickly recaptured and sold to new owners. Brown's mother was "sold down the river" to Louisiana and never saw her son again. A St. Louis merchant and steamboat owner named Enoch Prince purchased Brown and put him to work on his boat. Brown wasted little time in running away again, but he used the previous experience he had gained to good effect. When Prince's steamboat docked in Cincinnati, Brown fell into line with the roustabouts who were unloading the steamer's cargo. He casually carried a trunk on shore and kept walking from the boat. Once in the woods, he followed the North Star, walking at night and sleeping during the day. After about three weeks, he was exhausted and starving, so he approached two men on an isolated road. One, a Quaker named Wells Brown, helped the fugitive travel to Cleveland.

The slave thanked the man the only way he knew how, by using his name as a badge of freedom.

Brown worked on Lake Erie steamboats, married Elizabeth Schooner, and became active in the Underground Railroad. He also became fervently committed to temperance reform, arguing that alcohol could become its own kind of master and alcoholics a type of slave. Brown moved to Buffalo, a safer location because it was not so close to the South. There he continued his involvement in helping fugitive slaves and became a lecturer for the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society in 1843. He was an immediate success as a speaker and moved to Boston to become a paid lecture for the Anti-Slavery Society. The fugitive slave gave literally thousands of speeches denouncing slavery and became one of the Anti-Slavery Society's most successful orators. Brown's success on the lecture tour encouraged him to write his life story. The book was an immediate success; Brown became second only to Frederick Douglass as the most influential escaped slave.

The man who claimed to own Brown took notice of the escaped slave and wrote the Anti-Slavery Society offering to sell Brown for \$325. Brown rejected this offer, saying that God had made him as free as his owner. Even though Brown refused his owner's offer, he had to be concerned with being arrested by slave catchers. He traveled to Europe in 1849, a journey that was unexpectedly extended after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Brown gave speeches in England, attended the Paris Peace Conference, and wrote the first African American travel book.

Brown also became the first African American to write a novel when he penned *Clotel; or the President's Daughter* while he lived in London in 1853. The novel incorporated large portions of contemporary writing, sections of Southern newspapers, and elements of Brown's own life. The novel was based on rumors that Thomas Jefferson had fathered several children with one of his slaves. The book began with the auction sale of Jefferson's slave mistress and two of their children. The three women were split up and lived in various parts of the South, giving Brown an opportunity to discuss Southern regional differences and the poisonous effects of slavery. *Clotel* anticipated many themes in modern African American scholarship—categories of race, the interstate slave trade, Thomas Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings, and slave resistance. In one of the play's most memorable scenes, a slave says he participated in the Nat Turner rebellion after he heard his master read the Declaration of Independence.

In 1854, Brown quietly returned to the United States after members of the Anti-Slavery Society purchased his freedom. He continued his literary career, finishing a drama and a play before the Civil War. During the war, he helped recruit African American soldiers for the Union Army, including some for the celebrated 54th Massachusetts infantry. Before the war was over, Brown turned his talents to history, writing three major volumes in black history that were intended to debunk the myth of racial inferiority. His life, indeed, is a testament to the achievements of African Americans, and he was looked upon as a latter-day Benjamin Banneker. Brown worked as a physician in the Boston area for the final two decades of his life.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Douglass, Frederick; Fugitive Slaves; Jefferson, Thomas; Slave Culture; Underground Railroad

*Robert Gudmestad*

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## Brown Fellowship Society

The Brown Fellowship Society (BFS) was formed in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1790 and was initially intended to serve as a burial association. Black members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church could take part in religious worship and the Episcopal Church's sacred rites, but as people of color, they could not be buried in its cemetery. As a result, a group of elite men of color formed the Brown Fellowship Society to establish a cemetery and provide death benefits for its members and their families. Over time, however, the organization also evolved into an elite men's society. Members were involved in educational and cultural pursuits—for example, the Holloway Family Scrapbook, which holds memories of one of the organization's most prominent families and contains clippings that promote concerts and other cultural events held during the mid- to late 1900s at the BFS Fellowship Hall, next to the organization's cemetery.

The Brown Fellowship Society has been examined in numerous historical studies of race and identity in the American South. Because the preamble to the organization's *Rules and Regulations* indicated that the members were “free brown men,” many historians have cited the BFS as an instrument through which Charleston's mulatto elite separated themselves into a separate societal stratum from darker-skinned free people of color. In particular, they argue that the BFS helped to establish a racial pecking order in the Lower South that was contrary to the racial solidarity that existed among blacks in the Upper South and North in the 19th century. However, others suggest that the use of the term “brown” should not be taken so literally; they note that “brown” was used only to distinguish the organization from another, older organization that existed at St. Philip's, the “Fellowship Society,” made up of white members of the congregation.

Among the tenets of the society was the notion that no controversy should be broached under the umbrella of the BFS or during the members' monthly meetings. Even in the wake of the Civil War, factions of the organization struggled to maintain this policy of avoiding any controversial topic from crossing into the BFS meetings. After the Denmark Vesey incident in 1822, Charleston's free people of color were banned from meeting as organizations—with the exception of the BFS. A review of their minutes by local authorities deemed the organization nonthreatening, and they were allowed to continue with their activities. An early 19th-century historian, Charlestonian Theodore Dehon Jervej, praised the excellent environment that the pre-Civil War Charleston had provided for African Americans exemplified by the freedom and superior actions of members of the Brown Fellowship Society as compared to free people of color in the North. In his proslavery argument, the BFS was proof that the system of slavery and Charleston's treatment of the free people of color in its community had worked.

The Brown Fellowship Society flourished throughout the 19th century, although the society changed its name to the Century Fellowship in 1893. After 1916, the BFS continued to meet, although it conducted business only on a limited basis. In 1990, the Brown Fellowship Society celebrated its bicentennial.

*See also:* Benevolent Societies

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**Carpetbaggers**

"Carpetbagger" was a negative term applied to white Northerners who moved South after the Civil War; the name derives from a reference to an inexpensive type of luggage. These men have traditionally been viewed as white Northern profiteers who arrived in the defeated South with nothing more than an empty carpet bag and the clothes on their backs, intent on returning to their Northern homes rich and influential. The stereotypical image of the carpetbagger has its origin in the reactions of upper-class Southerners to Radical Reconstruction (also known as Congressional Reconstruction), but it was through the research of the historian William A. Dunning in the early 20th century that this stereotype was legitimated.

The Dunning or Columbia school's interpretation of Reconstruction viewed the carpetbagger as part of a misguided Northern attempt to re-create the South in its own image. Dunning school historians saw Radical Reconstruction as a tragic period in Southern history where "foreign"-born Northern carpetbaggers, lower-class Southern scalawags, and illiterate freedman "hijacked" the government of the defeated Southern states for their own personal gain. Thus, they viewed the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the beginning of the period of "redemption" in

a positive light. Redemption, in their view, returned power to the hands of those who were fit to govern, men who just happened to be white, Democrat, and closely tied to the former confederacy.

The beginning of the Civil Rights movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s led to a reassessment of Radical Reconstruction. Post-Civil Rights era historians tend to view Radical Reconstruction as a predecessor to the 20th-century Civil Rights movement, a period containing potential for social change that was unfortunately not realized because of the virulent racism of the time. Reassessment of Radical Reconstruction in turn made a reexamination of the carpetbagger necessary in order to determine who exactly these Northern migrants to the South were and what their role was in the attempts to create a new postwar South. Current historical research on carpetbaggers reveals that white Northern migrants to the postwar South were a diverse group, with each man having his own personal reasons for Southern migration. This makes it hard to form any meaningful generalizations about them as a group.

Northern migrants to the South, however, were no better or worse than any other migrant groups of the late 19th century. If anything, they were far more idealistic than the average migrant of the age, retaining a commitment to the ideals of the wartime Republican Party when those ideals were becoming increasingly unfashionable. Among those ideals was a commitment to improving the fate of freed people. In particular, white Northern migrants to the postwar South were interested in giving freed people fair play: equal access to the law, a chance to vote, and the ability to earn their own wages. Few, if any, suggested complete equality with former slaves, but nonetheless, what these Northern migrants did suggest was enough to brand them as radicals in a region devastated by war and stunned by defeat. Many carpetbaggers saw themselves as missionaries attempting to convert a resistant and often hostile population to the Republican Party's gospel of "free soil, free labor, and free men."

Looking back on his experiences in the South in several novels and works of nonfiction, the Northern migrant Albion Winegar Tourgée (1838–1905) tried to make sense of the failure of Reconstruction and the emergence of the solid South under its redeemer governments. He also tried to defend himself as a carpetbagger, arguing that he was guiltier of being an idealistic fool than a corrupt profiteer. Although Tourgée's writings certainly contain a Northern bias, his

experience reveals that carpetbaggers were a convenient scapegoat. Their misdeeds, some real and some imagined, were used to help explain the failure of Reconstruction and the waning influence of the Republican Party in national politics in the last two decades of the 19th century. Carpetbaggers also bore the brunt of corruption charges leveled at Republican politicians and came to represent the heavy-handedness of a group of so-called Radical Republicans.

Northern migrants to the postwar South thus became known as carpetbaggers not just because of Southern resentment at Northern occupation, but also to mask Republican embarrassment at the failure of its policies for the postwar nation. What the carpetbagger shares with the freedmen he once championed is the fact that he was demonized in order to avoid the full implications of the Civil War and Reconstruction. In the case of the freedmen, the war and its aftermath raised the prospect of eventual racial equality. The carpetbagger, in contrast, was the vocal proponent of an outmoded gospel of political economy and thus unwittingly the herald of a new and larger nation state that was emerging from the ashes of the war.

See also: Congressional Reconstruction; Ku Klux Klan; Radical Republicans

John A. Casey

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## Cary, Mary Ann Shadd

Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893) was a journalist, lawyer, educator, suffragette, and civil rights activist. She achieved prominence largely because of her antebellum work on black immigration to Canada West and through

her journalistic endeavors. Shadd Cary was the country's first black woman newspaper publisher. She was born the eldest of 13 children to free, property-owning mulattoes in Wilmington, Delaware. Her father, Abraham Shadd, was a well-known abolitionist and was involved in the Underground Railroad, helping fugitive slaves. Because of the oppressive racial environment for blacks, the Shadds moved to West Chester, Pennsylvania, where Mary Ann was privately educated. After Shadd completed her studies at the age of 17, she relocated to Wilmington and opened up a school for black children. Mary Ann taught there and in a number of abolitionist towns such as Trenton, New Jersey, and West Chester until 1849.

Shadd began writing and publishing her work in 1849. Her first printed letter appeared in Frederick Douglass's *North Star* newspaper, and she also published a pamphlet titled *Hints to the Colored People of the North*. Shadd discouraged blacks from imitating American consumerism and urged blacks to work hard and be thrifty to escape poverty and the vestiges of racism. One year later, she moved to New York to teach and also became politically involved in black political conventions. Even though Shadd was a woman, and American society frowned upon female political activism, her family's connections within abolitionist and activist circles allowed her access to powerful and well-connected white and black abolitionist leaders. In 1851, Shadd attended a convention with pro-emigration activists and abolitionists Martin Delany, John Scoble, and Henry Bibb in Toronto, Canada. She was so moved by the messages of these leaders that Shadd moved to Windsor, Canada West, in 1851.

Black emigrationists believed that America offered no real hope for black freedom and advancement because of slavery and severe racism. These activists advocated for blacks to relocate to other countries, such as Canada, Mexico, and Haiti, and some pro-emigration leaders wanted a black return to West Africa. Shadd argued that Canada West was best for black migration because of its close proximity to the United States, similar climate, and economic opportunities. Shadd worked to improve life for Canada West black émigrés, and in 1851, she opened a racially integrated school for black and white students. She taught there under the auspices of the American Missionary Association, serving as the sole black missionary.

A year later, she published *A Plea for Emigration or Notes of Canada West, in Its Moral, Social and Political*



*Aspect, with Suggestions Respecting Mexico, W. Indies and Vancouver's Island, for the Information of Colored Emigrants*, urging blacks to leave the United States. Because of her activism and outspokenness, she was fired from her job, and her school was forcibly closed in 1853. As a woman, Shadd held a very unique and contested role in publicly addressing black political concerns to overwhelmingly male audiences. Yet Shadd was undaunted and entered journalism.

In 1854, Shadd published the first edition of the *Provincial Freeman*, an abolitionist newspaper. Shadd named Samuel Ward as the editor and Rev. Alex McArthur as coeditor in name only because newspaper publishing was viewed as men's work. Shadd was not discouraged because of the prevailing sexism and served as the business manager and editor of the newspaper. Shadd became an orator and fund-raiser mainly to raise funds for her paper. Shadd began publicly speaking against migration to Africa and encouraging black migration to Canada West. Shadd thought that blacks would be strangers in Africa because they had lived in America for many generations. Her beliefs were based on several factors including language, environment, and religious differences.

After several months of publishing her newspaper, Shadd revealed that she was the editor. The *Provincial Freeman* became extremely popular throughout Canada and the United States. Because of the importance of the black press within black communities, Shadd and other black Canadians formed the Provincial Union to aid the black Canadian press. Less than a year later, a fire destroyed her office, and she resigned her post as editor. Readers began to criticize Shadd as a female editor and she named a man as the new editor of her paper.

Shadd endured heavy criticism because of her gender and the political work she performed, yet she still sought leadership positions in black civil rights organizations. On October 13, 1855, Shadd attended the Colored Convention in Philadelphia and became the convention's first female corresponding member. After Frederick Douglass publicly lauded her work, Shadd's status increased even more. Though she remained busy with public speaking, teaching, and working for her newspaper, she married Thomas F. Cary, a barber, in 1856 and became a stepmother to his three children. Shadd Cary eventually bore two children during their four-year union. Thomas Cary died in 1860. By this time, the death knell had also sounded for the *Provincial Freeman*, and its last issue was published in 1860.

Prominent black nationalist Martin Delany's association with her paper could not save it from closing.

Shadd Cary remained active throughout the Civil War and served as a Union Army recruiter in 1864. She returned to live in the United States four years later and began teaching in Detroit and Washington, D.C. In 1869, she enrolled in Howard University Law School. Shadd Cary's enrollment marked the first time in the nation's history that a black woman had gained admission into law school. As a law student, Shadd Cary became actively involved in the suffrage movement to secure women's right to vote. She addressed the House Judiciary Committee on women's suffrage in 1871. Simultaneously, she was still teaching and served as principal of a local Washington, D.C., school for black children. Shadd Cary earned her law degree in 1883 from Howard University Law School, becoming the second black woman to do so, after Charlotte Ray. Though Shadd Cary accomplished much in her life, she constantly fought battles because of her gender and race. In 1872, the Bar Association of Washington, D.C. refused to admit Shadd Cary because of her gender. Fortunately because of Shadd's activism, Charlotte Ray was allowed to enter the Bar Association of Washington, D.C. shortly thereafter. Shadd Cary died of stomach cancer in 1893 in Washington, D.C.

*See also:* Colored Convention Movement; Delany, Martin R.; Destination, Canada; Douglass, Frederick; Shadd, Abraham

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## Cinque, Joseph

In 1839, West African Joseph Cinque (1813–1897), a name given by the Spanish to the captured African, garnered international notoriety when he led a slave mutiny on the slave ship *Amistad*. Before this rebel, mutineer, rice farmer, trader, and slave catapulted into historic lore, he was born the son of a Mende headman in present-day Sierra Leone, a

country nestled between Liberia and Guinea and anchored by the Atlantic Ocean. Groomed to assume his father's position, Cinque met an unpredictable fate. The man, described as having a powerfully built 5'8" frame, with a head measuring 22¾ inches and a benevolent temperament, was stolen into captivity after he engaged in a 10-day march to the coast in his mid-twenties. He left behind a wife and three children. A rival group of Africans known as the Ley wanted a delinquent account absolved and decided to take Cinque as their payment. The Ley sold Cinque to a Spanish slave trader named Pedro Blanco, who resold the captive to another buyer, who manned the slave ship *Tecora*. With the cargo onboard, and the ship tightly packed with slaves embarking from Lomboko Island at the mouth of the Gallinas River, the *Tecora* weathered the seas to reach Havana, Cuba, where Cinque was held before being sold to Pedro Ruiz, who captained a ship called the *Amistad*, with 49 other men and 4 children. Along with the captured, there was a captain, two Spanish crewmen, two slave owners named Montes and Ruiz, a Creole slave, and a mulatto slave who served as the cook.

With its full complement, the *Amistad* set sail on June 27, 1839, and embarked on its two- to three-day journey. Events failed to go as planned. Weather-related conditions disrupted the ship's progress and therefore forced the captain to issue an unsuccessful rationing policy on the ship's third day at sea. Abuse also ran rampant. Crewmen began flogging slaves for requesting additional food and even told them that they faced extinction by cannibalism. Believing that they would be eaten, the self-proclaimed leader Cinque resolved to assume control of the ship, should the opportunity present itself. It did. On June 30, 1839, three days after the ship set sail, Cinque, who acted as interpreter and who was rumored to have inflicted lashes on his compatriots, consulted with several comrades before inciting the slaves to revolt. As the story goes, Cinque found a loose nail on deck while he ate. He took that nail and carefully ensconced it. He then used the nail to unlock the shackles that bound him and others below deck. Once freed from their irons, these Africans armed themselves with the sugarcane knives found in crates in the cargo area. Casualties included the captain Ramon Ferrer and a cook. Both victims slept on the deck, but the captain woke long enough to fight his assailants before ultimately succumbing to Cinque's brutal force. Others, such as the slave owners, faced imprisonment. The two Spaniards fled.

Once they had gained control of the ship, Cinque thought that they could return to Africa, so he had Montez pilot the schooner and head in an easterly direction. That was a mistake. Montez tricked the embattled slave by steering east during the day and west during the night. The boat zigzagged up and down the North American coast for 63 days, and eventually, the U.S. vessel *Washington*, under the leadership of Lieutenant Gedney, captured the ship off of Long Island's Montauk Point. At the time of capture, Cinque was onshore foraging with others. With Cinque identified as the ship's leader by Ruiz and Montes, sailors from the *Washington* took Cinque aboard their vessel, where the leader tried to further incite the Africans he led but to no avail. Instead, Cinque's new captors escorted them to New Haven, Connecticut, where they endured charges of piracy and murder. An international case on slavery and its implications emerged. Spanish officials insisted that the mutineers return to Cuba, and Ruiz and Montes tried to reclaim possession of the slaves. A sympathetic President Martin van Buren argued that the men should face the law and be tried for murder. Lewis Tappan and James Pennington represented the captives and prepared their landmark case. Together Tappan and Pennington argued that although slavery was legal in Cuba, importation of slaves from Africa was not. The judge listened intently to the statements and concurred with the legal team that the Africans underwent kidnapping and therefore were within their legal rights to escape from captivity. This decision fell on deaf ears. The U.S. government appealed the decision, forcing the case to appear before the Supreme Court.

For the appeals trial, former president John Quincy Adams, who was sympathetic to the slaves' plight, volunteered his services. At age 73, Adams rendered an impassioned eight-hour speech that ultimately won the mutineers their freedom. In his defense, Adams charged the federal government with obstruction of justice and wrongful interference. Adams also allowed Cinque to testify. In his testimony, Cinque explained how he was captured and that he had not engaged in the selling of humans prior to his unceremonious departure from his homeland. Other slaves also took the stand and corroborated Cinque's story. Adams litigated the case flawlessly. Finally, on March 9, 1841, the courts ruled in favor of the abolitionists and liberated the Africans.

The trial emerged important for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that it involved three countries: the United States, Cuba, and Spain. These countries adhered



Portrait of Joseph Cinque, 1839. (AP Photo/New Haven Colony Historical Society)

to different practices regarding slavery's maintenance. Britain had placed a ban on slave exportation as far back as 1808, and other countries soon followed; however, Spain defied international protocol by continuing to supply labor for Caribbean plantations. With these countries operating under a different set of rules, questions loomed. Slavery's inhumanity, the masters' punitive disciplinary measures, and slavery's illegality forced the American Colonization Society and other antislavery activists to lobby for the institution's demise. Furthermore, with this being a widely publicized event, newspapers such as *Herald of Freedom*, *New York Herald*, and the *Colored American* often debated about the issue of slavery and about Cinque's physiognomy. Reporters anxious to witness "the specimen" courted readers with topics ranging from Cinque's physical appearance to his demeanor. Chroniclers, who focused on Cinque's appearance, underscored the prevailing racial ideology of the time. This focus further demonstrated how Cinque's appearance made the African leader different, objectified, and demonized. Even so, others, such as abolitionist and activist Henry Highland Garnet, lauded Cinque, whom he considered an American patriot in speeches that he rendered and published a decade later.

Once Cinque acquired his freedom, he boarded a ship sponsored by the American Mende Mission and headed

back to his homeland. Cinque searched for his family only to find out that a series of slave wars had annihilated them. Faced with the daunting task of restarting his life, Cinque entered the marketing arena and began selling goods that he procured along the coast of Sierra Leone. His haggling within the coastal market appears to serve as the former slave's last official record. Lessened communication with the mission contributed to this lack of information and aroused speculation about his occupation, his longevity, and where he passed away. Cinque reportedly became a trader, slaver, tobacco merchant, chief, or mission interpreter. Another source contends that Cinque died an elderly man at the abolitionist station in 1879 where he requested and received a Christian burial, but there is no actual proof of his passing at this location; in fact, no one really knows what happened to the legendary figure.

What is known, however, is the impact Cinque had on people of African descent. A statue outside New Haven's City Hall, where the famous *Amistad* mutiny trial occurred, provides a life-size testament to this proto-freedom fighter. In Cinque's native Sierra Leone, a \$5,000 bank note captures his masculinity and countenance. Because of the memory of his valiant efforts, and his immortalization in print and sculpture, Cinque's lasting fame for his unwavering dignity, integrity, and manhood has endured.

See also: Adams, John Quincy; *Amistad*; Pennington, James Williams Charles; Tappan, Lewis

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## Clarkson, Thomas

Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846) was one of the most influential British abolitionists. He was born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, and entered Cambridge University in 1780

with the intention to become a minister. While completing a graduate degree at Cambridge, he entered the university's essay-writing contest. The contest required students to answer the question, "Is it lawful to make slaves of others against their will?" Clarkson had not previously thought much about slavery. He began to research slavery, which included interviewing other students who had come into contact with slaves. His essay won the contest and began Clarkson on his lifelong quest to end slavery.

In 1786, while traveling to London to find a publisher to print his essay, Clarkson believed that he received a message from God to commit his life to ending slavery. His essay, titled "An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African," was published and received a wide audience, both in England and in America. In London, Clarkson met several other abolitionists, including John Wesley and Granville Sharp. In 1787, Clarkson helped found the Committee for Abolition of the African Slave Trade. His responsibility within the committee was to gather evidence that would compel the British government to ban the slave trade.

For the next two years, Clarkson traveled Britain, collecting evidence of the brutality of the slave trade. In particular, he visited the slave ports of Bristol and Liverpool. He interviewed over 20,000 sailors who worked on slave ships, and he obtained various equipment used on slave ships, including handcuffs, leg-shackles, thumb screws, tools for forcing open slaves' jaws, and branding irons. He also made numerous detailed drawings of slave ships. Clarkson's evidence was turned over to Parliament, which began to debate the slave trade. He published several books on slavery between 1787 and 1794. In 1789, he traveled to Paris, where he lobbied the French government to abolish the slave trade. Clarkson returned to Britain in 1790. Public interest in ending the slave trade was not strong, and the issue had made little progress in Parliament. As a result, he campaigned tirelessly against the slave trade for the next four years. In 1794, Clarkson suffered health problems because of his activities, and he was forced to temporarily retire from the abolitionist movement.

In 1803, the Committee for Abolition decided to again promote ending the slave trade. This energized Clarkson, and he resumed campaigning against the slave trade. Public interest grew, which resulted in Parliament passing the Abolition Bill in 1807, ending the slave trade. In part, this prompted the U.S. Congress to also ban the importation of slaves the same year. Clarkson played a significant role in

ending the slave trade in Britain, and he became a very popular figure. He joined with another prominent abolitionist, Thomas Fowell Buxton, and founded the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1807.

In 1823, Clarkson became the vice president of the world's first human rights organization, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Because of his health, he was not as active in this movement as he had been previously. However, Clarkson again helped to build public support for ending slavery, which resulted in Parliament passing the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, outlawing slavery.

Clarkson continued to write antislavery pamphlets and books in the 1830s and 1840s. He wrote two pamphlets directed at encouraging planters in America to free their slaves. In 1840, he gave a speech to an international anti-slavery meeting, which many in attendance considered to be his most articulate speech ever.

In 1846, Thomas Clarkson died in Suffolk, England.

*See also:* Abolition, Slave Trade; Equiano, Olaudah; Wilberforce, William

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## Clay, Henry

Henry Clay (1777–1852) was born on April 12, 1777, in Hanover County, Virginia. He served in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate for most of his entire adult life. Over the course of his career, Clay unsuccessfully ran for president five times. The most prominent issues in national politics in which Clay was directly involved were the protection of American business and slavery. Early in Clay's career, he read and studied law at the law office of George Wythe in Richmond, Virginia. In 1797, Clay was admitted to the bar and moved to Lexington, Kentucky, to practice law. Clay was deeply involved in Kentucky state politics, and during his early political career, he served in the U.S. Senate from 1807 to 1808, the Kentucky legislature from 1808 to 1809, and the U.S. Senate from 1810 to 1811. At the

age of 34, Clay was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and became the House Speaker on the first day. From his earliest appointment in the U.S. Congress, Clay was known as the “Great Compromiser” because of his ability to bridge the gap between Northern and Southern interests over issues often related to African Americans. He also supported a ban on the further importation of any slaves into the United States.

Clay was responsible for the Missouri Compromise, which served to delay much heated disagreement over slavery. The Missouri Compromise of 1821 disallowed the spread of slavery into and beyond the territory of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. It allowed slavery to exist in Missouri; however, it disallowed it in the newly admitted state of Maine. It also set the 36/30 parallel as the point at which slavery was prohibited from spreading. Clay adamantly opposed slavery and tried to force Kentucky to free its slaves whenever it was admitted to the Union as a state. He publicly stated his appreciation that most democracies in South America had abolished slavery. Clay was not beyond criticism regarding his relationship to African Americans, though, for he also helped to pass laws that aided in the capture of runaway slave and failed to support England’s quest to eliminate the slave trade. Clay also demanded that Canada return all runaway slaves to the United States. While serving as the U.S. secretary of state under John Quincy Adams from 1825 to 1829, Clay wanted slavery abolished gradually with the least amount of resistance possible and with limited negative effects on the American economy. Clay led the American Colonization Society, an organization that advocated for free African Americans to be removed from the United States and sent to Liberia.

Clay was elected again to the U.S. Senate in 1831 and supported the abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C. He adamantly opposed President John C. Calhoun’s policy to ban the U.S. Postal Service from delivering any documents related to abolition and maintained that slavery should be discussed and debated openly. Clay was reluctant to admit Texas as a state because he feared slavery would be allowed there. His positions were often seemingly contradictory, stating that he opposed slavery while at the same time condemning abolitionists for dividing the nation.

After the Mexican-American War from 1846 through 1848, Clay was responsible for bringing a divided nation together with the Compromise of 1850. The essential issue

during this period was whether and to what extent slavery would be allowed not only in Texas, but in all of the territory west of the Mississippi River. The Texas boundary line was also questioned. Congress debated on whether the Rio Grande should be the boundary to divide Texas and Mexico. Coming out of retirement, Clay introduced a plan that allowed Southern slaveholders to run down fugitives in the North and allowed slavery to be maintained in Washington, D.C., and Texas and in which New Mexico and Utah were left to decide the “slavery question” for themselves, and California was admitted as a free state. The sale of slaves was abolished in the District of Columbia. Texas had to relinquish a large portion of its territory in return for the payment of \$10 million. The legislation stalled in Congress for many weeks to no avail. It appeared as though the bill would not be passed. But after weeks of wrangling, it was accepted. Although it was not popular in any state, it did delay the Civil War by a decade. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, in the long run, probably helped to escalate feelings of hatred in the North that eventually led up to the Civil War. Some scholars hold Clay’s Compromise of 1850 personally responsible for putting antislavery issues at the forefront of the nation’s concerns. Clay died on June 29, 1852, in Washington, D.C.

Henry Clay’s philosophy concerning slavery and his attitude toward African Americans in retrospect are very paradoxical in nature. Although throughout his lifetime he repeatedly discussed the evils of slavery and is on record for the support its abolition, Clay himself owned slaves throughout his life.

*See also:* Compromise of 1850; Missouri Compromise

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## Coker, Daniel

Daniel Coker (1780–1846), African American Methodist churchman and memoirist, authored a famous refutation of slavery in 1810. Born on a Maryland plantation, Coker was the product of a union between a black slave and a white servant woman. To conceal his heritage, he was registered as a son of a mulatto slave woman. As a boy, Coker received an unusually good education as the companion of his master's son. Sometime in the last years of the 18th century, Coker escaped to New York; there, he completed his education and joined the Methodist Church. With the help of several white patrons, he purchased his freedom and settled in Baltimore, where he quickly cultivated a reputation as a competent church organizer, fiery orator, and avid abolitionist.

The publication of *A Dialogue between a Virginian and an African Minister* (1810) solidified Coker's reputation as an intellectual leader in the fight against slavery. Written in the form of a Socratic dialogue, *Dialogue* offers a discussion between a black minister and a white slaveholder. The white Virginian has sought out the black preacher in an effort to refute his reputed opinions on the equality of the races. Thus, the slaveholder proceeds to articulate every proslavery argument imaginable, including arguments derived from legal precedent, historical example, and most importantly, scriptural evidence. Although Coker's black minister adroitly defeats every proslavery argument, it is with the biblical evidence that he has the most triumphant success. Coker represents the black preacher as possessing a superior command of the scriptures; at one point, the minister even teaches the slaveholder how to use a concordance so that the Virginian can manage his biblical citations. Coker thus establishes the African American minister as a significant intellect to be reckoned with; civil and sophisticated, the preacher embodies the highest standards of rhetorical engagement. Furthermore, he is compelling: by the conclusion of *Dialogue*, the white Virginian has agreed to offer freedom to his slaves.

Underlying Coker's dialogue was a common white fear: that blacks were simply too sinful and too incompetent to be freed. *Dialogue* argued effectively that it was slavery that fostered black sin. Throughout his life, Coker labored to demonstrate the morality of African Americans despite their continued subjugation. As a leader in the AME

church, he celebrated its independence from white denominational masters with a rousing sermon comparing African Americans to the Israelites and the denominational split to the end of the Babylonian captivity. Just three years later, Coker took that parallel to its logical conclusions and embarked for Africa as a missionary under the auspices of the African Colonization Society. His journal of these travels provided the society with a rare voice of African American support, given that most blacks felt the society was forcing repatriation on African America. Coker embraced a new life in Sierra Leone and was enthusiastic about the missionary and commercial opportunities of his ancestral home. He remained there until his death in 1846.

*See also:* African Methodist Episcopal Church; American Colonization Society; Destination, Sierra Leone

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## Colored American Newspaper

The *Colored American* was an African American newspaper published between 1837 and 1841. Based in New York City, the paper's stated mission was racial advancement morally, socially, and politically. Most importantly, it was committed to full emancipation. Like most antebellum newspapers, the *Colored American* had its ups and downs. Published weekly, the *Colored American* was four to six pages in length and started off with less than 100 subscribers who each contributed two dollars annually. By its second year of publication, the editors boasted nearly 2,000 new subscribers and more than 10,000 additional readers. Nevertheless, barriers such as lack of sufficient revenue from advertisements and

subscriptions were compounded by ideological conflicts among the publishers and editors. Ultimately, the *Colored American* circulated for five years but was unable to maintain publication because of lack of financial support.

Originally adapted from a paper called the *Weekly Advocate* established by New York City native Philip Alexander Bell, the *Colored American* changed hands several times. Before establishing the *Weekly Advocate*, Bell gained valuable journalistic experience while working for William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper the *Liberator*. Launched on January 7, 1837, the main goal of Bell's publication was to educate his readers, a strategy he hoped would assist free persons of color in competing with whites in commerce and daily life.

It was not long before Samuel E. Cornish, the spirited and articulate former editor of *Freedom's Journal*, which was the first African American-owned and operated newspaper published in the United States, joined Bell. On March 4, 1837, issue number nine of the *Weekly Advocate* was published under the name the *Colored American* with editorial credit attributed to Cornish. Born to free parents in Sussex County, Delaware, in 1795, Cornish initially worked as a Presbyterian minister. However, he is most recognized for his efforts to abolish slavery through involvement in the American Anti-Slavery Society beginning in 1833 and editorial work with both *Freedom's Journal* and the *Colored American*. Cornish explained that the change in name was necessary in order to catch the attention of black constituents, and because all other words describing African Americans at the time had developed negative stereotypes, Cornish found "colored" to be relatively innocuous. In addition to the name, Cornish modified the goals of the paper. Along with fostering education and awareness, the paper would serve as an organ of protest against slavery and colonization

Also joining Bell and Cornish in the early days of publication was a clergyman named Charles Bennett Ray. Collaborator in the efforts of the Underground Railroad, and distinguished member of both the New York Vigilance committee and the American Anti-Slavery Society, Ray was a talented speaker and initially served the newspaper as a traveling spokesperson and public relations specialist. Not long after Cornish and Ray had assumed charge of the editorial department, Philip Bell left the paper, relinquishing proprietary rights to Ray.

There were many contributors to the *Colored American* besides Bell, Cornish, and Ray. One of the most notable

was Dr. James McCune Smith. Born to a self-emancipated mother and a white father who worked as a merchant in New York City, Smith became the first African American in the United States to practice medicine. After being denied admission to American colleges, Smith raised enough money to attend the University of Glasgow in Scotland, where he obtained his bachelor's, master's, and medical degrees by 1837. When he returned to New York, he opened a pharmacy on West Broadway in addition to practicing medicine. Smith was also a prolific essayist and contributing editor to the *Colored American*, and he used his vocational expertise to argue for the equality of the races as well as the abolition of slavery and civil rights for all.

By the spring of 1839, Samuel Cornish and Dr. James McCune Smith had both resigned as editors of the *Colored American*, and Charles B. Ray became the sole editor and publisher. According to an article released by Ray on Saturday, June 22, 1839, both men found it impossible to continue contributing because of the lack of compensation. In addition, professional obligations beckoned Dr. Smith, and Cornish had a family living in New Jersey to support. Ray took it upon himself to assure readers that the same high ethical and idealistic standards would be followed despite the changes in the editorial department. Aware that money was the chief obstacle to the perseverance of the newspaper, Ray concluded with the hope that the black community would sustain the papers. He steadfastly kept the presses running for two and a half more years, publishing the final issue of the *Colored American* on Christmas Day in 1841.

Over the years, the *Colored American* addressed many important goals, which Cornish eloquently outlined in his premier editorial published on March 4, 1837. Four precise aims of the newspaper emerged and were constantly elaborated on and reaffirmed over the ensuing years of publication. The first objective was to use the printed word to agitate for emancipation. Cornish's second stated aim was to reach free blacks living in both urban and rural areas of America and to unify the race in support of racial improvement. Specifically, the editors gave their readers examples by which to live by spreading news of activism through legislative action. For example, in March 1837, the editor reported to his readers the contents of four petitions submitted to the New York state legislature. They asked for an end to slavery; the right for a person charged with being a fugitive slave to have a trial by jury; the right to vote for all

persons of the state, regardless of complexion; and provisions giving African Americans more opportunities to undertake educational endeavors.

Third, Cornish emphasized that blacks must be the ones to achieve these goals. After acknowledging the work of white abolitionists in the cause to end slavery and the achievement of full citizenship for free blacks, Cornish emphasized that the cause belonged to black people. To be sure, one of the most divisive issues among black abolitionists was the presence and the help of white abolitionists. Although Cornish and other contributors to the *Colored American* respected the efforts of white abolitionists such as the Tappan brothers and William Lloyd Garrison, they emphasized that whites could not truly feel the burden of race as a black person did. In the editorial published to celebrate the first year of publication, Cornish depicted the relationship between white and black abolitionists as analogous to a relationship between a doctor and patient. Although a doctor may understand the nature of an illness, only the patient suffers the pain.

Education was the chief means of adhering to the fourth objective, and the subject frequently occupied the pages of the *Colored American*. For free black males, the newspaper promoted expansion of studies to include curriculum in philosophy, history, chemistry, rhetoric, astronomy, and composition. An editorial published on May 27, 1837, persuaded black men to enroll in universities. On the other hand, the education of black women was much less progressive. In March 1837, Charles B. Ray wrote that because young women were destined to become only wives and mothers, all they needed was curriculum addressing domestic issues. Ironically, Ray managed to further establish gender stereotypes while attempting to eliminate discrimination and labeling by race.

Finally, Cornish asserted that the newspaper would have the power to inspire its readers to join the fight against slavery. The editors of the *Colored American* claimed the rights of citizenship promised by the founders of the country in order to strengthen their case for the emancipation of slaves as well as to enjoy the same civil liberties as white Americans. Even the name of the newspaper underscored this passion. In an era of increasing immigration of people from Europe to the United States, Cornish declared that free people of color and slaves were more American than most whites, especially recent immigrants. By asserting ownership of the founding principles of the country, the editors

sought to inspire and empower their readers to further assert their birthrights.

In addition to sanctioning the activism of free black abolitionists, the paper provided a forum for opposition to so-called abolitionists who advocated an end to slavery predicated on the eventual removal of all black people back to Africa or to Canada. The case against emigration had many levels, and the editors directed initial protest against the early colonizers. In an article published on April 15, 1837, the editors argued against those who abandoned the abolitionist cause in the United States by fleeing for other countries. A year later, in response to the claims published in the newspaper of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, the editors of the *Colored American* denounced the policy of emigration as hypocrisy. Despite the changes in ownership and editorial contributions, the opinions reflected in the *Colored American* on emigration and colonization did not change.

The encouragement of education for young people was paramount to the editors, and after Charles B. Ray took over ownership and writing in 1839, he saw fit to establish a special column designated "The Youth Department." The column encouraged young adults to value education, be kind to others, show respect for elders, and live temperate and industrious lives. The most frequently used teaching tools came in the form of such tales as "The Robin and the Squirrel" or "The Lost Child" that imparted lessons in prudence, obedience, and humility.

Black publishers, editors, and reporters were some of the most influential agents of change in the history of American race relations. Collectively, they were prolific, steadfast, and courageous in using the written word to educate and influence the thoughts and actions of a nation. The *Colored American* was one of the most respected among these. With a reputation for impeccable ethics and a commitment to providing inspiring commentary on current events in America, it provided a solid foundation for further activism through journalism.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Bell, Philip A.; Cornish, Samuel; Ray, Charles; Smith, James McCune

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## Colored Convention Movement

The colored convention movement was a series of conferences held by northern blacks in the 19th century. Initially, the colored conventions were designed to settle a fundamental question within the black community: should free blacks emigrate from the United States and relocate in a more welcoming country, or should they fight for abolition and citizenship in the United States? Ultimately, the delegates resolved to stay and agitate for their rights in the United States, and thus, the conventions served as an opportunity to articulate the black leadership's views on a wide variety of issues ranging from education and morality to abolition and suffrage.

By 1830, 319,000 free blacks lived in the North, resulting from manumissions in the South and Northern gradual emancipation. Cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Cincinnati grew exponentially. Northern African Americans used their conventions to combat the prejudice spurred by job competition from immigrants of European and Mexican descent, poverty and crime in the cities, and the ideas of black inferiority used to justify racism and black oppression and to separate themselves from white antislavery societies whose agendas were often riddled with contradictions and who often incompletely addressed the issues facing the entire black community. In short, black men and women in the convention movement sought to reform American society in how it viewed race, black suffrage, and the processes by which full equality could be achieved.

Contrary to popular belief, the origins of the colored conventions emanated from within New York City's black community. Early in 1830, a group of black activists, including Peter Williams Jr., Thomas L. Jennings, and Theodore Wright, formed the Wilberforce Colony Society for the

purpose of investigating the possibility of Canadian migration. Shortly thereafter, they commenced their most influential activity; they issued a call for Northern black leaders to craft a unified position on colonization and emigration, either to collectively remain or to leave. Among those to receive the appeal was Hezekiah Grice, a well-respected activist in Baltimore who had been a longtime supporter of emigration. Grice replied enthusiastically to the idea and sent a circular to his brethren throughout the North requesting their attendance at a convention to discuss the black community's destiny. In response, Grice received an urgent message from Bishop Richard Allen of Philadelphia. Apparently, Allen had seen the letter from New York activists endorsing the conference and expressed concern that the New York contingency would gain the upper hand. As a result, Allen and a group of local leaders immediately organized a national convention to be held in Philadelphia later that year. These events ultimately served as the foundation for a series of meetings that brought black leaders together from across the North for the first time in history. However, a cloud of division hung over their endeavors from the beginning, given that New Yorkers boycotted the first round of proceedings out of disgust for the Philadelphians' attempt to hijack the movement.

As a result, the first three national conventions were held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Although the first convention was not widely attended, it gave birth to the idea that it was important to communicate with the black community nationwide. On September 20, 1830, 40 delegates attended this first convention. They arrived from seven states and met at the historic Bethel Methodist Church in Philadelphia. Richard Allen, the Bishop of the Negro Convention, was elected president. Recognizing that they were risking their lives and threatened by violence, the members met in secret the first five days and then decided as a convention to operate in open session. Concerns about the dangers of holding a national convention were not unfounded, considering that two years later, at the third convention meetings, the governor of Virginia, John Floyd, had a spy reporting back to him the substance of the discussions and the names of all that attended.

The convention organized the "American Society of Free Persons of Colour, for Improving Their Condition in the United States; for Purchasing Lands; and for the Establishing of a Settlement in Upper Canada," with auxiliaries to be established in every community. Each auxiliary was

to send five delegates to the annual conventions; unorganized groups were to send one delegate. However, by 1834, the delegates rejected emigration and established that their goal was to support black civil rights and the mutual protection of all black people.

The broader purpose of the convention was to galvanize all free black Americans to fight to raise their status in America and to fight vehemently against slavery. Convention members affirmed that they were against the American Colonization Society (ACS), an organization dedicated to the expatriation of blacks to Liberia, by stating that it was beneath barbarism to force a harmless people to leave the land of their birth and that Africans would surely reject this form of Christianity. By unequivocally stating that they viewed America as their home, they hardly rejected the ACS's claims that African Americans were outsiders and not fit for citizenship.

The phrase "we the people" recurs frequently in the convention's appeals for unity, cooperation, and mutual aid, reflecting an early Black Nationalism. Their constitution articulated the ways in which economic, social, and education gains could be achieved. Again reflecting the ideals of Black Nationalism, the convention members argued that they needed black-led initiatives not only to improve education, but also to inform white America of the injustices that plagued the black community across the nation.

They were particularly concerned about how effectively the ACS used racial hatred to harness the opinions of white citizens into believing that blacks were innately inferior and depraved and into believing in the divine sanction of slavery. Benjamin Lundy, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Gerrit Smith, Henry Clay, William Lloyd Garrison, and a host of other white abolitionists all believed in the mission of the ACS and questioned why blacks would want to stay in a country where they were not wanted. Black leaders understood that unless they did something to counter the propaganda of the ACS, their condition would become institutionalized into the American social and ultimately civil fabric of the nation. Again, their fears were not unfounded; the language of the ACS certainly encouraged the pogroms of the 1830s that plagued the northern black community in such cities as Manhattan, Cincinnati, Providence, and Philadelphia.

When William Lloyd Garrison was invited to attend the second colored convention in 1831, it transformed his views on the ACS and gradual emancipation, and thereafter,

he strongly supported the colored convention movement. Lewis Tappan stated that the colored conventions transformed the white antislavery movement. Men such as Cornish, Forten, Theodore S. Wright, William Hamilton, and many others clarified for many whites why colonization was wrong and what ulterior purposes the ACS really served. Even William Wilberforce, the leading abolitionist in England, was influenced by the reports and letters he received from the colored convention members, leading him to renounce the ACS as well.

It was this demonstration of organizational ability that led the newly formed New England Antislavery Society in 1833 to ask African Americans to form auxiliary societies. From the very beginning, though, the black leadership's fusion with the Garrison-led American Anti-Slavery Society was problematic. At the first meeting, the public records indicate that the six blacks seated had little to no involvement in the debates and the formation of policies and procedures, nor did they hold any positions of authority as officers or serve on any executive committees. And this trend was to continue up through the Civil War. It appears that despite Garrison's endorsement, there was considerable controversy over whether blacks should be allowed membership in the societies or even be allowed to attend the meetings. The same tension existed in the female antislavery societies.

The lack of progress overall from the apolitical and pacifist philosophy espoused by Garrisonians led many African American leaders to go their own way by the late 1830s. The formation of the AASS's doctrine of pacifism and their entreaty to those enslaved to reject violence as a means of obtaining their freedom was influenced by David Walker's pamphlet in 1829 and Nat Turner's insurrection in 1831. *Walker's Appeal* called for white Americans to abolish slavery, or else blacks in militant self-assertion would do so through force. The broad support and participation of blacks within the American Anti-Slavery Society and their adherence to the principles of the organization successfully suppressed the message of the black visionaries that emerged at the time, diffusing black radical autonomous thought. Yet at the last national convention in 1835, the first institutional rejection of pacifism occurred, calling for active resistance and civil disobedience.

From 1835 onward, there was a shift in the black leadership's relationship with the AASS, and by 1840, some blacks were participating in the Liberty Party, a third party movement founded in 1840 by abolitionists who were supportive

of political action. Engaging in political reform, however, meant that black leaders would have to separate themselves from Garrisonian abolitionists, who were staunchly anti-political. This was particularly true in Boston where Garrison resided, but the chief centers of black activism by this time were in New York and Philadelphia.

The dysfunction of the national conventions gave space for the formation and emergence of the American Moral Reform Society (AMRS) and state conventions. The AMRS was developed at the 1834 and 1835 national colored conventions. At their first meeting in 1836, they admonished black churches to speak out and denounce slavery and the protection it received from the Christian church. They called for Americans to operate under the principles of a “higher law” that they believed should dictate American responses to the universal right to liberty. Eventually, by 1841, the demand for church reform on the issue of race and slavery led to a condemnation of the institution itself. Members were also urged to boycott slave-made products and to only use free-labor products to support the free-labor stores whenever possible.

Many state conventions emerged to address particular needs, such as temperance and education, but quickly expanded their agenda to address all issues adversely affecting the black community, including employment, slavery, and the equalization of the suffrage requirements. The Albany State Convention in 1840 was the first to demand political equality and to stress self-help and agitation. It was also the first state convention to send an appeal to a state legislature and the first to declare freedom from whites. Those black leaders that continued to support a Garrisonian approach to black freedom and equality provoked internal struggles in intrastate cooperation, but fortunately the call once again for a national convention in 1842 helped to organize and diffuse localized power struggles.

The agenda for the 1842 National Convention was temperance; economic opportunity; agricultural and mechanical trades; development of a manual labor school; a petition for a grant of land from Congress for farming and other purposes for the use of African Americans; and emigration. A riot in Philadelphia in 1842, however, forced the organizers of the convention to drop their plans for safety reasons. The organization of a convention in the subsequent year was largely accomplished by those affiliated with the Liberty Party. In August 1843, more than 50 black delegates from across the nation met in Buffalo, New York, for the first time in seven years.

At the 1843 Buffalo National Convention, the president, Samuel H. Davis, in support of Henry Highland Garnet, articulated an aggressive call to action that called for violence. Davis encouraged African Americans to use the American Revolution as the model of how to free themselves, using the tactics that white Americans had used in their struggle for independence, such as resistance to unjust laws. Even acts of war against the oppressor, Davis believed, would be looked upon favorably by God and his desire for a moral government.

Advocacy for the use of force emerged as early as 1838 at the state conventions in Maine and in 1841 in New Hampshire, but the formation of a radical nationalist sentiment within the black community surfaced with the revival of the colored national conventions. In the absence of government protection, the notion of violence developed in direct response to the black community’s needs for protection. In 1843, 23-year-old Henry Highland Garnet delivered his speech “An Address to the Slaves of the United States” at the National Convention and submitted it for approval to the members and for mass distribution. Garnet’s address was circumvented from publication, however, by one vote, but five years later, it was published along with David Walker’s pamphlet *Appeal*.

Garnet suggested not that the slaves immediately use force to obtain their freedom, but rather that they talk with their masters and, if that did not work, cease to perform any additional labor as slaves and, if that did not work, then fight for their freedom, even if it meant death. Garnet did not specifically advocate insurrection but argued that those enslaved needed to take control of their own destiny and that they should not allow themselves to be terrorized and victimized by slaveholders because it was their moral responsibility to try by every means to escape.

The convention leaders, however, were uncomfortable advocating that slaves use force, and Frederick Douglass morosely predicted that an insurrection of the slaves would end in their death, which was inappropriate for the convention to sanction. Other Garrisonians rejected the appeals of Davis and Garnet and believed that the ballot and the politicization of the abolition of slavery would lead to war and all-out combat. The convention was evenly divided on the issue of using physical force, but times had changed, and Garnet and other younger leaders no longer looked for the approval of black leadership or of white antislavery activists, moral suasion representing the old order of advocacy.

At the 1847 National Convention, the prospect of developing a national press resurfaced, an idea that was originally proposed in 1843. *Freedom's Journal* and the *Rights of All* had attempted to develop a national readership at the end of the 1820s. The *Liberator* became a national vehicle for the concerns of the African American community in the beginning of the 1830s. Over time, as African Americans sought to gain control of their own political agenda, they discussed developing another newspaper that would represent their interests and activism. Philip A. Bell began the *Struggler*, and then in 1837, the *Weekly Advocate* emerged and later became the *Colored American*, and this paper for several years was the national voice for African Americans. The 1843 National Convention members, because of the financial difficulties that all of these papers faced, resolved to either establish a newspaper that would have national readership or support an already existing one. Not all convention members supported the idea of a national press, however. Douglass, who was just about to put out his paper the *North Star*, and Thomas Van Rensselaer, editor of the *Ram's Horn*, both rejected the idea of a national press. Douglass feared that a national press would come to be influenced by a few men rather than the concerns of the black population at large. At the National Convention in Cleveland in 1848, the issue of a national press was resolved by the decision to name Douglass's paper, the *North Star*, the representative organ for the official black press, and for the next decade Douglass's paper was recognized as the voice of the African American people. It was not until the reemergence of emigration as a solution to the problem of racism and inequality that other papers were developed to challenge Douglass's advocacy that African Americans should remain in America.

Black convention members expressed a continued interest in developing cooperative agricultural communities in 1843. Farming on the frontier, they believed, would solve the problems of the black community by providing economic independence and prosperity. Four years later, at the 1847 convention, Gerrit Smith offered 140,000 acres of land in New York to some 3,000 blacks, making them eligible for the franchise. This project never took hold, however, because most blacks lacked the necessary capital to relocate and develop their land.

By 1848, African Americans had held conventions for 19 years. At the 1848 convention, the rights of women to fully participate in the colored conventions were debated

and discussed after one woman fought for the right to equally participate. She made a motion that the organization give women rights as voting members, which was seconded by Martin Delany and Frederick Douglass. The convention determined that the word "persons" did include women, and that opened the door for the more active involvement of women. Yet, the role of women at these conventions would be plagued with ambiguity until the Civil War, and there was great inconsistency in the adherence to this new resolution from state to state, as women met with varying degrees of acceptance or hostility.

Black women faced powerful opposition as they projected themselves into the male sphere of public life. Yet they also ignored the barriers to the public sphere not only by attending the male-dominated antislavery meetings and conventions but also by organizing other public forums and literary societies in which male and female speakers participated. For example, Maria W. Stewart was the first American woman to speak in public to a mixed audience in 1832, an event she helped organize. And Mary Ann Shadd Cary insisted on being seated at the National Colored Convention in Philadelphia in 1855, forcing them to vote on whether she could address them, and by 15 votes cast in her favor, she was allowed to do so.

The end of the 1848 convention marked the beginning of a new decade, with members sanctioning the use of violence to free the slaves. By 1849, even Douglass, Garnet's foremost adversary in the fight to galvanize revolutionary action, admitted that the long-suffering slaves would be justified if they should murder their masters. The 1850s bred a growing militancy that expressed strong animosity against the U.S. government. Whereas some members endorsed violent confrontation to resolve the problems facing the slaves and the Northern black community, in part to taunt those in power with the potential of a cataclysmic slave insurrection, a small contingency of black convention members began to look once again beyond the borders of America.

In the 1830s, black convention leaders believed that blacks needed to remain in the United States to fight on behalf of the enslaved. Over time, assertions of the necessity of emigration for the positive good of the black community emerged. These ideas increasingly became popular as the conditions of American life deteriorated in the 1850s. The 1847 National Convention was the first to seriously place emigration back on the agenda, and economic opportunities

for black business in Jamaica, the United States, and Africa were discussed in great detail. Delegations were sent to Liberia from Ohio and Kentucky to inspect the settlement. The independence of Liberia in 1847 no doubt influenced the more positive attitude toward Africa.

Martin Delany, a former anti-emigrationist, by 1852 had become a stalwart supporter of emigration. In 1854, Delany wrote a pamphlet that he presented at an emigration conference in Cleveland titled *The Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent*. Delany argued for the political necessity of separatism and the impossibility of achieving freedom in America. His solution was for blacks to emigrate from the United States to the West Indies and Central or South America, where they could live in safety and participate in the governing process and thereby control their own destiny. Men such as Samuel Cornish who in the 1830s believed emigration to be an act of self-interest reasoned by the 1850s that emigration would benefit the individual. But like other conservative and established leaders, Cornish never advocated collective emigration of the entire African American population. The emigration movement peaked in 1861, but from 1854 onward, there was an aggressive push for black-led emigration and Black Nationalism as the ideas of self-determination became the goal of the majority and as African Americans began to envision emigration as a source of potential wealth and potential power.

What emerged in response to the vocal yet small minority of emigrationists by the 1850s was a black nationalist call for the organization of a black state within America. The Rochester National Convention called by Frederick Douglass in 1853 exemplifies this shift. They established a national council, consisting of 21 members, that would coordinate and organize the efforts of African American uplift through four committees that were responsible for managing and developing a manual labor school, a library, the press, an employment agency, the promotion of black products, and the arbitration of civil disputes. This initiative was unique because for decades conservative black leaders such as Douglass, James McCune Smith, and James W. C. Pennington had preached assimilation and integration. Now they had developed a plan that replicated the Black Nationalism of the emigrationist, only they sought to do it in America.

These ideas never made it beyond the planning stages of the first convention. Only the school project survived for

the next two years, but black leaders were never able to galvanize financial and practical support to enable the project to materialize. By 1855, only a smattering of representatives from states other than New York attended the gathering of the National Council, but conservative members did consider emigration seriously for the first time, demonstrating ambivalence about America and their future in it.

By the close of the 1850s, emigration was on the minds of most of the African American community. Even older establishment abolitionists, such as Douglass, William Watkins, and William Wells Brown, changed their position on emigration when they became disillusioned with the 1860 presidential election and the Republican Party's desire to preserve the Union rather than take a stand against slavery and racial inequality. Douglass, though, never did favor emigration en masse.

The emigration movement lost steam in 1861 because of organizational conflicts over direction and leadership, African tribal disputes, and continued opposition from those who felt that emigration would leave slaves even more vulnerable and because the newly elected president, Abraham Lincoln, attempted to use mandatory colonization as a means to appease the South. The subsequent Civil War allowed for violent confrontation to become the vehicle of freedom, and the war gave space for black aggression to be expressed and visualized, thus affecting the necessary changes within America and its institutions that the colored convention men and women had championed for decades. *See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Colonization Society; Douglass, Frederick; Garnet, Henry Highland; Jennings, Thomas L.; Williams, Peter Jr.; Wright, Theodore S.

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## Compromise of 1850

The Compromise of 1850 was a legislative agreement forged in the halls of Congress, designed to resolve the question of the extension of slavery into the territories. The debate over the expansion of slavery had begun with the outbreak of the Mexican War and the belief that America would soon be gaining new territory. When President Polk requested money from Congress to purchase land from Mexico, the antislavery forces presented a resolution in the House of Representatives to exclude slavery from any newly acquired territory. The resolution, known as the Wilmot Proviso, was passed by the House of Representatives, defeated by the Senate, and debated vigorously throughout the nation. Leagues favoring and opposing slavery were formed, and the slavery issue became a sectional issue. Northern antislavery forces contended that Congress could exclude slavery from any newly acquired territory, and the Southern interests favoring slaveholdings took the position that, because the Constitution recognized slavery, slavery should be protected in the states as well as in the territories in order not to discriminate against slaveholders. Others who were willing to compromise the issue believed either that the newly acquired territories should decide the issue for themselves or that the territories could be divided into free and slave states by extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean.

As new states entered the Union, sectional interests were concerned that the voting balance in the Senate would be upset if an equal number of slave and free states were not admitted to offset voting power. The resolution of the slavery issue in the new territories became even more important when states began to threaten secession, and as a result, the more influential political leaders avoided the

slavery issue during the election of 1848 to help keep the Union intact.

A new third party, the Free Soil Party, gained enough strength in the election of 1848 to force a resolution of the issue of slavery in the new territories. California and New Mexico had become annexed, gold had been discovered in California, and settlers were rapidly descending on western lands. Zachary Taylor was elected President in 1848 and encouraged California and New Mexico to draft constitutions and seek admission to the Union. California complied quickly and asked for admission as a free state. Several months later, New Mexico also petitioned for statehood as a free state. Southerners were angry that the balance of power would be shifted to non-slaveholding states, and talk of secession became more prevalent.

In January 1850, Sen. Henry Clay of Kentucky presented several resolutions to the Senate in an attempt to resolve various aspects of the slavery issue. Clay proposed the following stipulations: (1) California would enter the Union as a free state; (2) territorial governments would be established in the remainder of the territory acquired from Mexico without any restrictions as to slavery; (3) the western boundary of Texas would be defined, and Texas would relinquish any claim to New Mexico; (4) slavery would not be abolished in the District of Columbia without the approval of the people of Maryland; (5) the slave trade would be prohibited in the District of Columbia; (6) a more stringent fugitive slave law would be enacted; and (7) Congress would not have power to intervene with the slave trade between the states.

Daniel Webster joined Henry Clay in supporting the compromise in order to save the Union. John C. Calhoun and William H. Seward, a young senator from New York, spoke against the resolutions. For approximately eight months, the resolutions were referred to and discussed in committee and then returned to the Senate floor for further debate. Passage of the compromise remained in doubt until Sen. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois divided the resolutions and presented them as separate bills so that each could be voted on individually and accepted by different majorities. The division resulted in the acceptance of each of the several component parts of the resolution, and five laws made up the Compromise of 1850 that was eventually signed into law by President Millard Fillmore. The compromise resulted in the following: California was admitted as a free state; New Mexico and Utah were created as territories with the question of



*Henry Clay addresses the Senate during debates over the Compromise of 1850, legislation that attempted to reconcile Northern and Southern interests in the years before the Civil War. (North Wind Picture Archives)*

slavery in each being determined by popular sovereignty; the claim of Texas to New Mexico's territory was indemnified by payment of 10 million dollars from the U.S. Treasury; Southerners could more easily recover their fugitive slaves; and the slave trade was abolished in the District of Columbia.

Southern response to the Compromise of 1850 was largely condemnation, but the states were unwilling to risk secession because they believed the compromise might actually resolve the sectional controversies and preserve the Union. Northern response to the passage of the compromise was supportive with the exception of those who believed that the new Fugitive Slave Act was too harsh.

Proponents of the compromise wanted to believe that the act would be the final settlement of the slavery question, and many members of Congress, representing both major political parties in the North and the South, signed a pledge to oppose candidates for public office who did not

accept the finality of the compromise. The compromise did permit Congress to avoid slavery issues for several years, and initially the compromise seemed to serve the purpose for which it was passed. During the election of 1852, the Democrats were united in accepting the compromise. The Whigs, although more neutral in accepting the compromise, indicated that they reserved the right to consider further legislation if it were needed at a future time. Most political leaders of the major parties talked about the slavery issue as if it had been settled, but four years after the Compromise of 1850 had been enacted into law, the slavery issue was revived when Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

*See also:* Clay, Henry; Destination, Canada; Free Soil Party; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Missouri Compromise

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## Confederate States of America

The Confederate States of America was created in February 1861 as a result of decades of tension between slave and free states over issues connected to the expansion of slavery into the territories and economic differences. After Abraham Lincoln's victory in the presidential election of 1860, many slaveholders believed Lincoln not only would prevent slavery from expanding into the territories but also would eliminate slavery everywhere. Many white Southerners believed that after decades of compromises, the only way to protect slavery was to secede and create a Southern confederacy. Initially, the Confederacy consisted of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Texas, but after the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers, North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, and Tennessee joined the Confederacy. The new government's constitution protected the institution of slavery and regarded it as a basic liberty for white Southerners. The new Confederate constitution also forbade the Atlantic slave trade and continued the use of the three-fifths clause (part of the original U.S. Constitution), stating that three-fifths of a state's slave population would be counted in the total population of the state to determine representation in the Confederate legislative branch.

After the Civil War began, Confederate officials feared that many of the South's nearly 4 million slaves might rise up in rebellion. Thus, the Confederate government and local authorities increased slave patrols and established home guards (units of local residents organized to maintain peace and order in a community) to patrol the slave populations as well as the free black populations. When these special patrols discovered attempts to create a slave uprising, masters punished the slaves severely. As the war continued, and it appeared that the Confederacy's defeat was imminent, however, the concern over slave insurrection diminished, and men who served in home guards and slave patrols aided the Confederacy in other capacities.

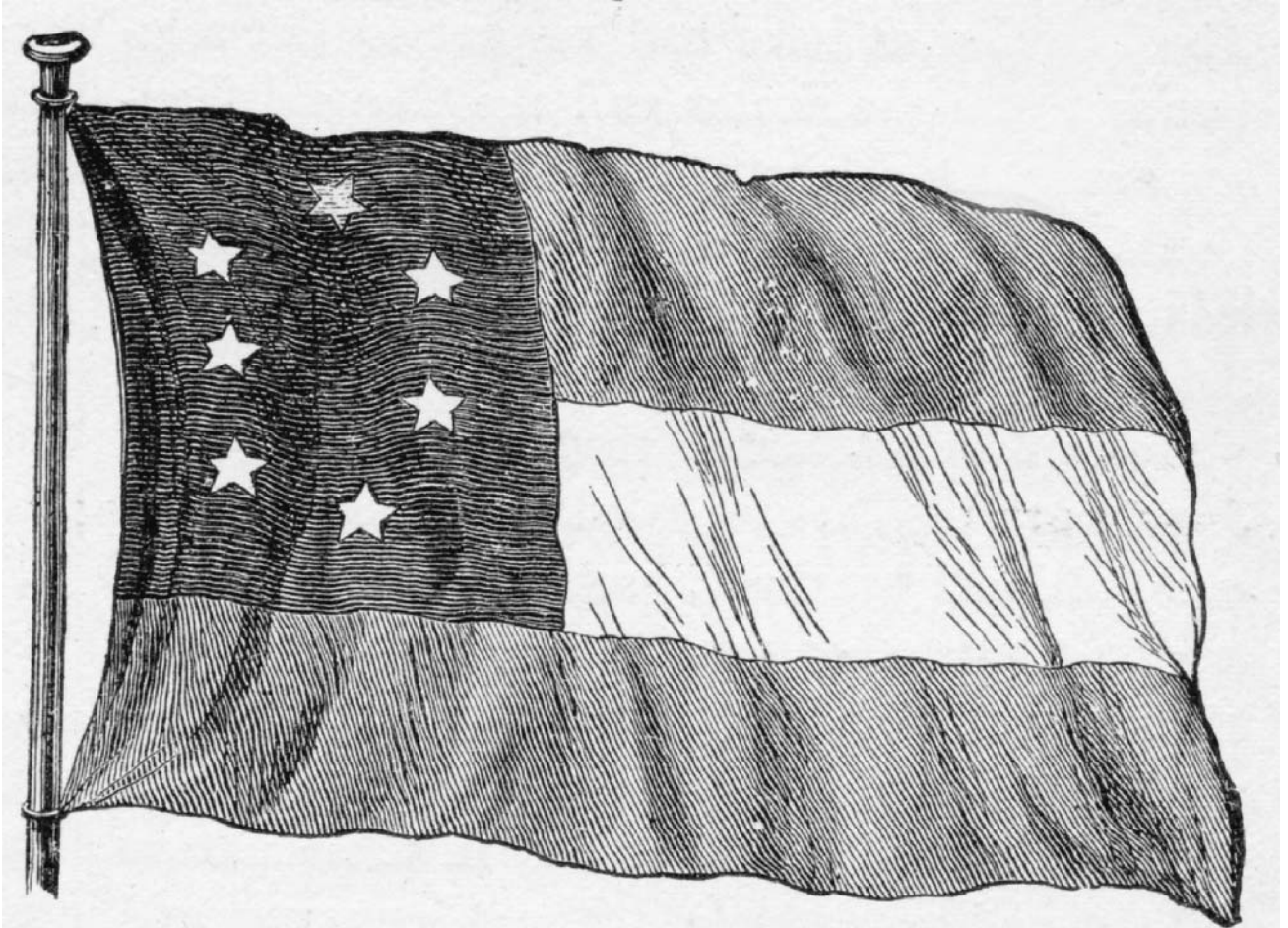
Even though many Confederates initially feared a slave revolt, a large majority of government officials viewed slaves as an important labor source. With many of the South's men gone off to war, laborers would be needed to operate plantations, farms, and local businesses. Slave labor was also vital in other areas to support the Confederate war effort. Throughout the conflict, slaves were used for many tasks such as building fortifications and other defenses. They also labored in factories vital to the Confederate war effort. Various places such as the Tredegar Ironworks in Richmond, Virginia, used slave labor to manufacture arms and munitions. Slaves worked in the Confederacy's iron mines as well. By 1864, more than two-thirds of the laborers in the Confederacy's iron mines east of the Mississippi River were slaves.

At the outset of the Civil War, many Southern slave owners loaned out their slaves to aid in the Confederacy's war effort, but not all slave owners did so willingly. The Confederate government recognized the unwillingness of some slave owners to loan their slaves and decided to levy a "tariff of assessment"—1 out of every 20 slaves on a plantation could be drafted by the Confederate government for the benefit of the war effort. Resistance to this policy increased as the war continued. By 1863, as slave owners were driven from their homes and became refugees of war, they became more reluctant to loan their slaves to the Confederacy, given that slaves were the only property refugees had left.

Although the bulk of the South's African American population—both slave and free—served the Confederacy unwillingly, a small portion did so voluntarily. At the outset of the Civil War, more than 1,000 free blacks from Louisiana organized themselves into the 1st Regiment Louisiana Native Guards and offered their services to the Confederacy. Confederate newspapers and politicians praised the patriotism of the Louisiana Native Guards. Although at first applauded by many in the Confederacy, the reality of arming free blacks frightened many whites because they believed that this might be an attempt to start a massive revolt. Others realized that accepting the service of the Louisiana Native Guards would undermine the foundation of the slave system and the Confederacy.

Denied the ability to fight for the Confederacy, some members were put to work building defenses, and others waited for an opportunity to fight for the Confederacy, but it would never come. After New Orleans surrendered





*The “stars and bars” that formed the first flag of the Confederate States of America were designed to resemble the flag of the United States of America. The first of five confederate flags, this national flag evolved into the Confederate Battle Flag that displayed a crossed “stars and bars” formation. (Ridpath, John Clark, Ridpath’s History of the World, 1901)*

to Union forces under Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, a Massachusetts native with abolitionist leanings, on April 26, 1862, Butler needed reinforcements to control the civilian population. With no white troops available to strengthen his forces, Butler received permission to recruit African Americans. Many of the men he approached were former members of the Louisiana Native Guards. Eager to fight, the 1st Regiment Louisiana Native Guards was mustered into service on September 27, 1862, to fight for the Union.

One such free black who enlisted and served with the 8th Louisiana Infantry was Charles Lutz. He was identified in the 1880 and 1900 census records as white but was recognized during the antebellum period and the Civil War as a free black. Those who chose to enlist may have done so because of state loyalty or because they believed that a Union occupation of their community could mean

a destruction of their livelihood. However, the free blacks who enlisted for those two reasons are an extremely small part of the free black population. Many free blacks who served the Confederacy offered their services only because they feared being impressed into service or viewed it as an opportunity to gain freedom for loved ones who were still in slavery. Throughout the course of the Civil War, many free blacks were rounded up by local officials and forced into slavery. During the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863, hundreds of runaway slaves and free blacks were rounded up by Confederate soldiers, sent south, and returned to slavery.

African Americans served the Confederacy in other ways, including as cooks, servants to officers in the field, teamsters, hospital attendants, and ambulance drivers. At certain times during the conflict, servants fought on the field, and when a chance presented itself to flee for freedom,

some slaves did not seize the opportunity. Followers of the Confederacy's Lost Cause—an explanation for the causes of the Civil War and the reasons the Confederacy lost—believe that this only strengthens their argument that slaves were happy with their status. However, most slaves remained as servants in the field for fear of retaliation against their loved ones and friends on the home front.

Although slaves who served the Confederacy did not always seek their liberation when the chance arose, many slaves seized the opportunity for independence when Union armies occupied parts of the Confederacy, especially after President Lincoln issued his final Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Emancipation sparked outrage in the Confederacy. Many Confederate and state officials viewed this as an attempt to incite insurrection. Confederates became outraged even more when they learned of the successful attempts to raise all-African American regiments in the North.

When Confederate officials and officers in the field learned that the U.S. government would raise entirely African American regiments, the Confederacy made it known that they would not treat captured African American soldiers as prisoners of war; rather, they would be executed or returned to slavery. Furthermore, white officers who commanded African American regiments, if captured, would be executed on charges of attempting to incite a slave revolt. After the U.S. government learned of this horrible treatment awaiting those connected with African American regiments, it informed the Confederacy that for every African American killed, a Confederate prisoner of war would be executed. To evade this issue, Confederate officials directed officers in the field to take no prisoners. Confederate general Kirby Smith informed his subordinate commanders to not take prisoners and to give no quarter to armed African American troops. Orders such as this one created barbaric scenes throughout the South as hundreds of African American soldiers were executed after they offered to surrender. Perhaps the most noted of these horrific events is the Fort Pillow massacre that occurred in Tennessee on April 12, 1864. Scores of African American troops were executed by Confederates commanded by Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who, after the war, played an important role in the organization of the white supremacist group the Ku Klux Klan.

As the Civil War entered its final months, and the ranks of the Confederate armies were depleted by death,

wounding, capture, or desertion, some Confederate officials looked to find a solution to the problem. For some, the answer was to use slaves on the battlefield.

After the Confederate defeat at Chattanooga in December 1863, some Confederate officers in the Army of Tennessee supported Gen. Patrick Cleburne's proposal to arm slaves. In the months that followed, state governors pondered the idea. In October 1864, the governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida met in Augusta, Georgia, and passed a resolution stating that the Confederacy would use slaves in the field and financially compensate owners. One month later, Governor Charles Clark of Mississippi received a proposal that slaves be conscripted to serve in the cavalry so that they could hold the horses while troopers fought on foot. Because one man held four horses when cavalry fought dismounted, it was believed this would free a considerable number of soldiers for combat.

The proposal to use slaves in roles as soldiers frightened many, and some argued that it could not be done because it would undermine the notion that slaves had no more mental capacity than children. Despite those who disliked the idea, some Confederate politicians felt that three things could be gained from recruiting slaves to fight. First, some Southerners believed that, because more Union armies were occupying areas throughout the South, enlisting slaves in the Confederate Army would distract slaves from revolting. Second, if slaves who fought were emancipated, this could be seen as a way to remove slavery as the major obstacle in the Confederacy's bid to earn foreign recognition. Third, and perhaps most obvious, was that the use of slaves in the field would allow the Confederacy to replenish their armies. After much debate and discussion, and with the support of such decision makers as Gen. Robert E. Lee and President Jefferson Davis, the measure to allow slave recruitment passed the Confederate Congress on March 13, 1865. The measure had little impact because General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. After this, the war ended, and all slaves were officially emancipated with the Thirteenth Amendment.

*See also:* Davis, Jefferson; Emancipation Proclamation; Fort Pillow Massacre

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**Confiscation Acts**

On August 6, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed the first of two confiscation laws designed to punish secessionists by confiscating the property of rebel citizens. The Confiscation Acts were important not because they were effective measures of economic warfare or retribution—they had little effect on the Confederate economy or many rebels—but because by calling for the confiscation and freeing of rebel-owned slaves, they helped create a favorable political climate in the North for Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

In May 1861, Gen. Benjamin F. Butler forced the issue of confiscation of slaves by ordering his troops to allow escaped slaves to remain within Union lines as “contraband of war.” Butler employed the “contrabands,” as the escaped slaves soon came to be called in the North, as laborers for the Union Army. By July, several hundred contrabands were living within the area of Butler’s command.

Republican support for the contraband order and news of the Union defeat at Bull Run on July 21, 1861, increased popular support in the North for confiscation legislation. Congress passed the First Confiscation Act on August 6, 1861. Offered as a bill by Sen. Lyman Trumbull, an Illinois Republican, the First Confiscation Act authorized the president to order the seizure and confiscation of the property of anyone who actively engaged in or supported insurrection against

the United States. Seized property would be adjudicated in civil court according to the laws of prize and capture, which traditionally applied to maritime seizures of smuggled goods but would now include the seizure of rebel property on land as well as sea. The act allowed the confiscation of slaves whose owners employed them in support of the Confederacy.

Most Northerners believed the First Confiscation Act was too weak; they wanted to punish anyone who supported the rebellion, not just those engaged in military activity. Republican newspapers praised Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont when he ordered his troops to confiscate the property of all armed rebels and free their slaves. Lincoln feared Fremont’s order would encourage the border states to join the Confederacy and revoked the general’s confiscation proclamation. However, the popularity of Fremont’s order showed that most Northerners wanted to pursue a harsher war policy against the South. After Fremont’s proclamation, there was increased support in Congress to strengthen the original confiscation law.

In December 1861, Senator Trumbull proposed a new confiscation bill that eventually became the Second Confiscation Act. Trumbull’s second bill was considerably more punitive than the First Confiscation Act: the confiscation of rebel property and slaves would be permanent and apply to all rebels, not just those in the military or those who supported Confederate military efforts; proceeds from confiscated property would be used to repay loyal citizens for property and money lost to the rebellion; and all rebel-held slaves, not just slaves engaged in military labor for the Confederacy, would be freed.

When President Lincoln signed the final version of Trumbull’s bill on July 17, 1862, it included amended language that congressional moderates (and Lincoln) had insisted on. The Second Confiscation Act expanded the reach of the first act to include all rebels and persons aiding rebellion, not just those engaged in military action against the Union. All such persons risked losing their property to confiscation, enduring prison sentences and fines, and having their slaves freed. Unlike Trumbull’s original version, the final act did not include the permanent confiscation of rebel property. This omission made it difficult for the United States to use confiscated land for the benefit of freed slaves after the war. Except for six categories of Confederate officials and Northern insurrectionists whose property the President could confiscate without trial, all other confiscation cases had to be heard in court. Given the overwhelming

number of Americans engaged in the rebellion, it was unlikely that more than a fraction of confiscation cases could or would be brought to trial.

The most significant result of the Second Confiscation Act was its impact on the debate on the future of slavery. During the long months of debate on the second bill, Congress considered the effect of confiscation on slavery. The second act made it clear that confiscated slaves would not be returned to bondage, but they were not officially free either. Instead the act encouraged the president to employ the former slaves in support of the Union war effort but made no reference to their future status beyond allowing the resettlement of any former slave who wished to immigrate. At the same time, although confiscation was clearly not emancipation, it served as an important step in that direction by forcing the North to consider a future United States without slavery.

After the war, President Andrew Johnson used the threat of confiscation to force leading Confederates to accept presidential pardons that required them to renounce rebellion and swear loyalty to the United States. Johnson did not, however, use confiscation to help freedmen acquire land. He favored returning confiscated land to pardoned rebels rather than free blacks. In September 1865, confiscation ended when Johnson suspended the acts and ordered the Freedmen's Bureau to return most of the confiscated property being held for the benefit of freed blacks to pardoned rebels.

See also: Confederate States of America; Emancipation Proclamation

*Ridgeway Boyd Murphree*

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## Continental Army

During the course of the American Revolution, each colony (and after 1776 each state) established militias to defend the colony/state against the British. In addition, in 1775, the

Second Continental Congress authorized the establishment of a Continental Army that would recruit soldiers from each colony/state under the unified command of Gen. George Washington. Although some blacks did fight in the militias, a significant number joined the Continental Army.

When recruiters began enlisting soldiers into the Continental Army in the summer of 1775, George Washington issued a policy excluding all blacks from military service. As a slaveholder, he held the view that blacks were inferior and could not perform well in battle. There was also the fear, given that slavery remained legal in all 13 colonies, that slaves might try to enlist in the Continental Army without their master's permission. The Second Continental Congress endorsed Washington's policy when it barred both slave and free blacks from the Continental Army. The few blacks who had enlisted prior to Washington's policy, though, were not dismissed.

Circumstances in the war forced Washington to reconsider his policy. Most significantly, faced with a shortage of soldiers, in the fall of 1776, Congress created quotas for the number of men each state had to enlist in the Continental Army. In addition, in November 1775, Lord Dunmore, the British governor of Virginia, had promised freedom to slaves able to escape and join the British army. As states fell short of congressional quotas, and fearing a massive enlistment of blacks into the British army, Washington reconsidered his policy banning black soldiers. In January 1777, Washington allowed free blacks to be mustered into military service. The ban on recruiting black slaves remained out of fear of slave rebellion and concern over property rights for slave owners. Using the new policy to avoid military service, many whites hired free blacks to take their place.

The problem states faced filling their soldier quotas led some states, particularly the New England states, to enlist slaves in addition to free blacks. In February 1778, in order to meet soldier quotas, the Rhode Island legislature passed a law allowing black slaves to enlist in the Continental Army with compensation to slave owners. Although the public outcry against the law led to its reversal in June 1778, more than 200 blacks from Rhode Island enlisted in the only mainly all-black regiment within the Continental Army. The 1st Rhode Island Regiment distinguished itself in August 1778 at the Battle of Rhode Island when it repelled three assaults of Hessian and British troops. Other New England states allowed slaves to serve in the Continental Army, but to calm fears about arming blacks, they

integrated blacks rather than segregating blacks into separate troops.

Maryland, in order to meet its soldier quota in 1780, became the only Southern state to allow slaves to serve in the Continental Army. An aid-de-camp of George Washington, Col. John Laurens, after the British invasion into the Lower South in 1778, did suggest that Georgia and South Carolina raise black battalions. Although Congress approved of the plan in 1779, the Georgia and South Carolina legislatures rejected it. Both legislatures did, however, permit the sale of slaves taken from Loyalists to be sold for the needs of the Continental Army. Some slaves from Southern states did nevertheless serve when their owners enlisted them by presenting them as free men.

Historians estimate that about 5,000 blacks served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. In general, they served much longer than whites—three and a half years as opposed to one and a half years. At any one time, blacks made up a significant proportion of the Continental Army. In February 1778, for example, of the 7,600 soldiers enlisted in the Continental Army, the 755 blacks made up 10 percent of the entire army. Paintings of the American Revolution, such as Emanuel Leutze's *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, also depict blacks as being a central part of the war effort.

Blacks eagerly joined the Continental Army. For slaves, a promise of freedom for military service was too enticing to ignore. Although many veterans from Northern states were later emancipated by their legislatures after the war, others had only verbal promises from their masters, some of which were not kept. In 1783, the Virginia legislature did emancipate slaves who served in the Continental Army. Free blacks joined for reasons similar to whites, for promises of money or land and a belief in the principles of the American Revolution.

Most blacks in the Continental Army were designated privates and served as infantrymen without arms, assigned as orderlies or in duties that supported combat operations. A few served in artillery regiments, several winning special notice for military valor. Others served behind the lines as cooks, wagoners, drummers, and military laborers. Black soldiers in general had very high morale and embraced their long-term enlistment.

*See also:* American Revolution; Poor, Salem; Salem, Peter

Daniel P. Kotzin

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## Cornish, Samuel

Samuel Cornish (1795–1858) was born to free parents in Sussex County, Delaware. In 1815, he moved to Philadelphia, where John Gloucester, who founded the first Black Presbyterian Church, provided Cornish with education and training for the ministry. Three years later, Gloucester fell ill, and Cornish began preaching to his congregation every Sunday. In October 1819, Cornish was licensed to preach and spent six months working as a missionary among enslaved Africans in Maryland. He was sent to New York City in 1820 to establish a mission in the heart of the one of the city's most impoverished black neighborhoods. Within two years, Samuel Cornish was ordained as a minister and established the New Demeter Street Presbyterian Church. In 1824, Cornish married Jane Livingston, and they had four children: Sarah Matilda (1824–1846), William (1826), Samuel (1828–1838), and Jane Sophia Tappan (1833–1855). Only three of his children lived past infancy, and even the surviving children died young; his son drowned at the age of 10, and his daughters both died at the age of 22. In 1828, Cornish resigned from the church to work as an itinerant preacher and missionary.

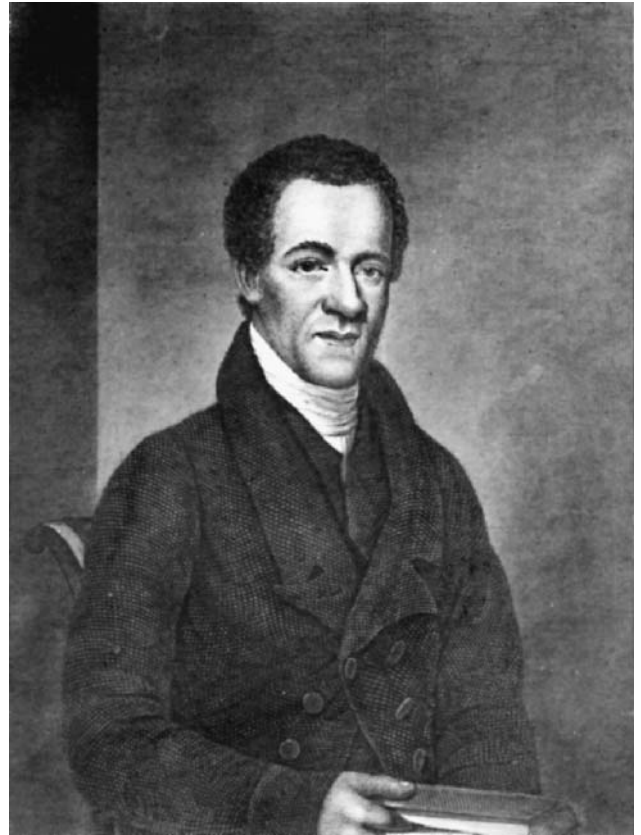
Samuel Cornish was best known for his commitment to a range of political issues, including abolition, colonization, and suffrage. In 1824, Cornish, along with Peter Williams Jr., founded the New York City Haytien Emigration Society, an organization that actively recruited free blacks to relocate to the newly formed Haitian republic. Three years later, in March 1827, Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm were chosen as coeditors for the first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. The black leaders who founded *Freedom's Journal* hoped that the paper would be a powerful weapon, one that could refute the racist arguments designed to deny them equal justice and also defend their cause before the

American nation. In particular, they wanted to challenge the racist depictions of blacks that regularly appeared in mainstream newspapers. There were a few journalists, including Mordecai Noah and John Jacob Flournoy, who were particularly well known during this era for their unmerciful persecution of blacks in their articles. Noah, for example, openly accused blacks of being thieves and beggars, and Flournoy blanketed New York City with his assertions of black ignorance, obscenity, and viciousness. In response, black leaders such as Cornish and Russwurm believed that *Freedom's Journal* could offer an alternative vision of the race.

Although the establishment of *Freedom's Journal* was partly a response to the virulent racism of the day, it was also a proactive effort to create an independent black institution. For the initial supporters of the paper, *Freedom's Journal* was another striving for race uplift. Cornish and Russwurm stressed their desire to improve the moral, social, and economic conditions in their community, and they believed that a newspaper dedicated to disseminating information about moral and religious improvement could be an effective race uplift strategy.

Despite their strong beginning, the alliance between Cornish and Russwurm was destined to crumble. Initially, both John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish had originally been staunch supporters of emigration and wanted to use *Freedom's Journal* to promote the cause. However, by late 1827, the rising tide of racism within the colonization movement caused Cornish to reconsider his position. In fact, Cornish began using *Freedom's Journal* to speak out against colonization, and as an alternative, he advocated black settlement in rural areas. For months Cornish advertised land for sale in upstate New York, hoping to entice black New Yorkers to flee urban life. On the contrary, John Russwurm continued to endorse emigration, and their conflicting ideologies collided. By September 1827, Cornish had resigned from the paper, and Russwurm continued to edit *Freedom's Journal* on his own until the paper ended in 1829. Samuel Cornish briefly revived the paper under the name the *Rights of All* in 1829, but financial problems caused it to fold within months.

Following his work with *Freedom's Journal*, Samuel Cornish became involved in the education movement. In 1827 and 1828, he served as an agent for the New York African Free Schools and actively supported the African Dorcas Association, a women's organization committed to



Rev. Samuel Cornish was an ardent abolitionist and founding editor of *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States. (Schomburg Center/Art Resource, NY)

children's education. In 1831, Cornish was also selected by the delegates of the Colored Convention to collect funds for the creation of a black college in New Haven, Connecticut, a project that ultimately failed because of racist opposition. Cornish's support for education was only one part of his larger commitment to moral improvement. While editing *Freedom's Journal*, he had used the paper as an opportunity to regularly issue appeals for moral uplift strategies among his race. Likewise, after the decline of the colored convention movement in the 1830s, Cornish supported the creation of a new organization called the American Moral Reform Society in 1835.

In 1832, Cornish briefly left New York to return to Philadelphia and resume leadership of the First African Presbyterian Church, but he soon went back to New York City, where he assumed a position on the board of managers in the New York Anti-Slavery Society, a branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS). Following the internal division within the abolitionist movement, Cornish defected from the AASS and joined the American and

Foreign Anti-Slavery Society along with most of the black New Yorkers.

From 1837 to 1839, Cornish again became a newspaper editor and helped to establish the *Colored American* along with Philip Bell. While editor of the *Colored American*, Cornish participated in the naming debate; he openly advocated for black people to refer to themselves as Colored Americans in order to assert their right to American citizenship, while retaining their racial distinctiveness. He also became increasingly active in the causes of voting rights and abolition. In February 1837, Samuel Cornish helped draft a petition arguing for their right to equal suffrage, but the petition failed to pass the state legislature and indeed was overwhelmingly defeated, with only 11 affirmative votes. Later in 1837, Cornish helped to create the United Anti-Slavery Society. Cornish moved to Belleville, New Jersey, in 1838 and then to Newark in 1840. However, he remained active in New York City politics, particularly colonization. In 1839, the black community convened the “Great Anti-Colonization Meeting,” and Samuel Cornish offered an unequivocal manifesto on the horrors of colonization. He also coauthored *The Colonization Scheme Considered* with Theodore S. Wright in 1840, in which they challenged the American Colonization Society to resolve its prejudice and treat black people as equal citizens.

In 1844, Cornish’s wife died, and he returned to New York City, where he organized the Emmanuel Church, an institution he led until 1847. In addition, he revived his activism in the education movement. In 1846, he helped create the New York Society for the Promotion of Education Among Colored Children, which was designed to improve the educational environment for black youth. Throughout the 1850s, Cornish dedicated most of his attention to anticolonization and the cause of fugitives. In particular, Cornish strongly opposed the Liberian Agriculture and Emigration Society, founded in 1851, and argued eloquently against Liberian migration, stating that there were too many problems in Liberia, and African Americans had better hopes for a future in the United States. By 1855, Samuel Cornish was in declining health, and he moved to Brooklyn, where he died in 1858.

See also: American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); American Colonization Society; *Colored American* Newspaper; *Freedom’s Journal*; Moral Uplift; Russwurm, John

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Craft, William and Ellen

William Craft (1824–1900) and his wife Ellen (1826–1891) escaped from bondage in Georgia in perhaps one of the most inspiring and thrilling slave escapes of the 19th century. The couple made their way north with Ellen disguised as a white male planter and William as her manservant. The 1860 narrative of their flight, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, details their harrowing experiences and near capture as well as their lives after enslavement.

Ellen was born in Macon, Georgia, to her white master, James Smith, and her enslaved mother, Maria. Because of her virtually white skin (which would ultimately aid in her escape), Ellen was often mistaken for a white child of the family. This frustrated her white mistress, who gave Ellen to her daughter Eliza as a wedding present when Ellen was only 11 years old. Eliza was married to Robert Collins, a prominent member of the Macon community and owner of the Monroe and Bibb Railroad and Banking Company.

William Craft, the child of enslaved parents, was apprenticed to a cabinetmaker, which allowed William some freedom and a respite from the hard labor of plantation life. William later became the slave of Ira Taylor, a cashier in the bank owned by Robert Collins, Ellen’s master. It was in this way that Ellen and William became acquainted and eventually married.

In December 1848, after years of patient waiting, the couple seized an opportunity to escape. Both William and Ellen were able to obtain short travel passes from their owners because it was customary in some households for slaves to be given a few days off for the holiday season. These passes would give them a few days’ head start before their owners would notice their escape.

Ellen could easily pass for white, but they both knew that a white woman traveling alone with a black man would raise suspicions. Instead, they decided that she would disguise herself as a male slaveholder, and William would act as her manservant. William and Ellen knew that successful escape from the Deep South was unlikely, so they planned their escape to the last detail. Ellen would pose as an invalid traveling north for medical treatment, which would explain her marked dependence on her slave companion. Also, they decided to bandage her arm to account for her inability to write or sign her name, and they covered her face with a handkerchief to hide her clear, smooth complexion.

The pair made their escape early in the morning. Ellen used some of their savings to purchase tickets for herself and William on the next train heading to Savannah. From Savannah, they continued traveling by sea and by land until they arrived in Philadelphia on Christmas Day. Although they had escaped successfully, they had only narrowly avoided detection.

After arriving in Philadelphia, they could safely rejoice in their newfound freedom. William and Ellen spent the next three weeks with a Quaker family, where they learned to read and write. The Crafts then headed further North, joining the large free black community in Boston, where William set up a furniture business, and Ellen worked as a seamstress. In Boston they befriended many prominent abolitionists and became popular lecturers on the abolitionist circuit.

Their life in Boston was disrupted, however, when Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. The Fugitive Slave Law authorized newly appointed slave commissioners to retrieve escaped slaves who had fled to the North and return them to bondage in the South. Shortly after the law's passage, two bounty hunters, John Knight and Willis Hughes, came to Boston with warrants to bring the couple back to Macon. When word of their arrival reached the Crafts and their abolitionist colleagues, the Boston Vigilance Committee, founded in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law, vowed to protect the couple. Ellen hid in the home of Theodore Parker, a prominent Unitarian minister and radical abolitionist, while William stayed with a black abolitionist named Lewis Hayden. The Boston Vigilance Committee harassed Hughes and Knight incessantly, and they eventually returned to Georgia empty-handed. However, William and Ellen no longer felt safe, even in Boston, so they decided to leave the country

and settle in England. The Craft case was one of the first Northern victories against the Fugitive Slave Law and served to encourage further radical abolitionist activities in the Boston area.

Once in England, William and Ellen began a family and worked as abolitionist lecturers, speaking against slavery throughout England and Scotland. In 1870, after the Civil War, the Crafts returned to Georgia, settling down outside of Savannah to start a farming school for freed slaves. The school closed from lack of funding, but William and Ellen stayed on their farm until 1890, when they moved into their daughter's home in Charleston, South Carolina. Ellen passed away in 1891, and William died nine years later at the age of 76.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Underground Railroad

Kristen K. Epps

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## Crandall, Prudence

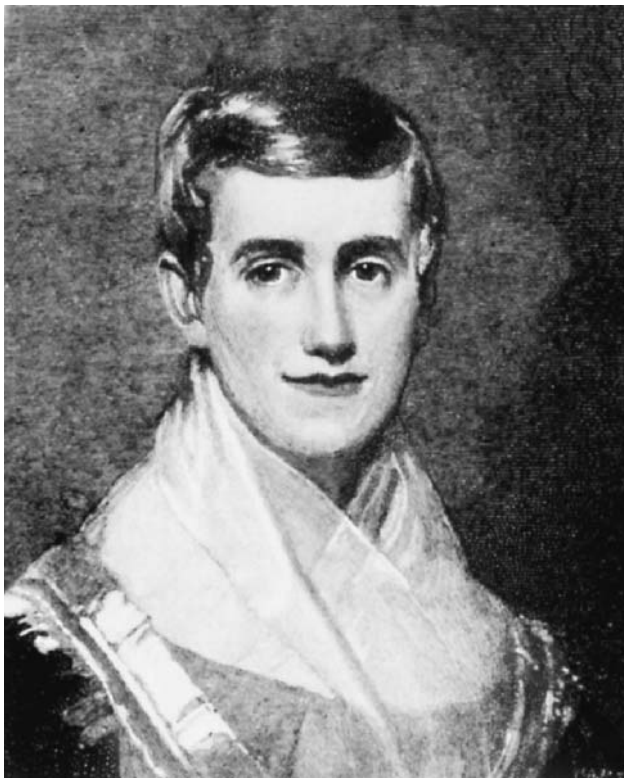
Prudence Crandall (1803–1890) was a New England educator who challenged racial boundaries in the antebellum education system when she attempted to educate African American girls. Born to a Quaker family in Hopkinton, Rhode Island, Crandall received her schooling at a boarding school operated by the Society of Friends in Providence. Initially, Prudence Crandall ran a school for girls in Plainfield, Connecticut, but she later moved to Canterbury, Connecticut, where she established a school for the female youth of the town in November 1831. When Crandall first arrived, she was warmly welcomed by the people of Canterbury, though the popularity that she initially enjoyed in the



town was short-lived. She entered into a bitter conflict with the people of the town in early 1833 when she admitted Sarah Harris, an African American girl from an upstanding family, into her school. Outraged, citizens of Canterbury protested and threatened to pull their children from the school, thinking that Crandall would quickly back down from her controversial decision.

Instead, Crandall responded to their threats by transforming her school into a facility for exclusively African American girls. Most people living in Canterbury were supporters of the American Colonization Society, whose members argued that free blacks should be sent to Africa. They feared that by admitting African Americans into a school in Canterbury, they would attract more free black women and men into the town. Crandall further angered the inhabitants of Canterbury in March 1833 when she publicly advertised her school for young African American girls in the radical antislavery newspaper the *Liberator*, edited by William Lloyd Garrison.

While working to build a school for exclusively black girls, Prudence Crandall became increasingly involved with



Prudence Crandall, an educator in the mid-1800s, faced down a community's hate to bring education to African American girls. (North Wind Picture Archives)

abolitionist leaders, particularly Garrison and Samuel J. May, who helped her find students from cities such as Providence, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In April 1833, Crandall's school for African American girls opened with 15 students. City elders, led by town selectman Andrew T. Judson, appealed relentlessly for Crandall to close her school, but Crandall was unflinching in her determination to administer a school for black children. The teacher and her students faced harassment, and the schoolhouse itself was frequently vandalized. Shortly after Crandall opened her school, appeals from the citizens of Canterbury led the Connecticut state Senate and House of Representatives to quickly pass a law, known as the "Black Law," prohibiting out-of-state African Americans from attending Connecticut schools. As a result, in June 1833, Crandall was arrested under the newly written law and briefly imprisoned. The image of Prudence Crandall in a prison cell became frequently used in the abolitionist cause.

Crandall and her supporters ultimately were successful in appealing the charges against her, and she was subsequently released. Despite her legal success, Crandall was unsuccessful at continuing to teach African American girls in Canterbury. Soon after she married Calvin Philleo in March 1834, someone attempted to burn down the schoolhouse while Crandall and her students were inside, and not long after the attempted arson, several citizens of Canterbury attacked the school with clubs and crowbars, finally compelling Crandall to close her school permanently. After she lost her school, Crandall faded into the background in the struggle for African American rights, but her efforts to educate African Americans became a powerful component of antislavery rhetoric. Crandall's struggle to empower free African American girls demonstrates how issues of race in antebellum America went beyond the debate over slavery.

See also: Abolition, Slavery

David M. Greenspoon

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## Crummell, Alexander

Alexander Crummell's life (1819–1898) spanned much of the 19th century. Born free in New York City on March 3, 1819, to Boston Crummell and Charity Hicks, he lived through and was an active participant in the Northern antebellum black church movements, the black convention movement, and the back-to-Africa colonization and pro-Liberia movements of the 1860s. Returning to the United States in the 1870s, he developed, built, and founded a number of important institutions, from St. Luke's Church in Washington, D.C., to the Minister's Union of Washington, D.C., to the Conference of Church Workers among Colored People. In the final decade of his life, he also oversaw the establishment of his brainchild, the American Negro Academy. The American Negro Academy formalized his position as an intellectual leader and provided an explicit challenge to Booker T. Washington's industrial education program by advocating that higher education and advanced scholarship were fundamental to racial uplift and civil rights. On September 10, 1898, in his 80th year, Crummell passed away after battling several bouts of exhaustion due to overwork. Trained as a minister and dedicated to lifelong learning, Crummell was a leading intellectual, a staunch emigrationist and Africanist at midlife, an advocate of black advancement through racial uplift and character development, a devout Episcopalian who believed that Christianity was the source of all progress, and near the end of his life, a Pan-Africanist who believed that African Americans were a nation within a nation and yet essential to American progress and democracy.

Alexander Crummell grew up in New York City just as Northern slavery was nearing its extinction as a result of the gradual emancipation policies adopted throughout that region in the 1790s and 1800s. Although his mother was born free, his father, who had been kidnapped in Africa, was brought to the Americas by Episcopalian missionaries in his early teens. As a free man, Boston Crummell worked as a grocer and an oysterman to support his small family and invested a considerable portion of his earnings in his children's educations. When he was a youngster, Alexander Crummell's parents quickly enrolled him in the African Free School, employed white tutors to supplement his education, and were active participants at St. Philip's Episcopal Church. Alexander Crummell's childhood was spent

among an aspiring class of blacks in New York. His parents' and community's commitments to the church and to education had a lasting impact on his life, inspiring his belief that both were vital to blacks' racial advancement.

Secular and sacred education were at the center of Crummell's life, from his childhood to his death. In 1835, the Crummells enrolled Alexander in the Noyes Academy, an interracial boarding school in Canaan, New Hampshire. However, he did not remain at the school for long. Although New Hampshire was amongst the first states to abolish slavery, many members of Canaan's community were unwilling to tolerate this experiment in interracial education. Crummell and several of his friends were compelled to leave the school soon after their arrival and were virtually driven out of town. This confrontation with the realities of Northern anti-black sentiment was not new to Alexander, nor did it squelch his scholarly determination. He enrolled at the Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York, soon after his return. During his tenure at Oneida, he experienced a religious awakening. Feeling called to the ministry, he left Oneida in 1838, without graduating, and applied for admission to the Diocese of New York. In 1839, he felt the sting of anti-black prejudice in the North once again. His application for admission to the General Theological Seminary was denied on the basis of his race. This time, Crummell refused to accept his expulsion and fought for, but failed to win, full admission to the General Theological Seminary in New York. For the next few years, Crummell continued his theological studies, eventually attending the Yale Theological Seminary.

In 1841, Crummell left Yale without graduating, but with great ministering aspirations. In that same year, he married his first wife, Sarah Mabbit Elston. Ministering and marriage, however, proved to be more difficult than Crummell had imagined. Over the next six years, he worked in three churches with very little success. He was first charged with ministering to the Christ Church, a black Episcopal congregation in Providence, Rhode Island. He maintained that position for a year and a half before being called to South Philadelphia to organize St. Bartholomew's. In 1845, he returned to his hometown of New York City, to reorganize St. Matthew's Church into the Church of the Messiah, the second black Episcopal Church in New York. These were very difficult years for Crummell both personally and professionally, and the two areas of his life bled together. Not only did Crummell have trouble connecting with his

various congregations, but he also had trouble supporting his family in three failing ministries. Attending to impoverished churches impoverished his family, and during his tenure at the Church of the Messiah, his firstborn died from malnutrition.

For much of the 1840s, Crummell moved from one church to the next, never quite finding his ministerial feet. Still, he remained an outspoken advocate for black rights, first in the United States and eventually in England. He frequently connected the abolitionist movement to free blacks' struggles for civil rights in the North. Moreover, he asserted that black freedom was contingent upon access to education, especially the formation of black colleges. Although he was a frequent speaker and participant in the black convention movement, much of his energy was devoted to maintaining the Church of the Messiah. At this same moment, a number of black lecturers and abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass, were traveling to England in an effort to fuel the domestic and foreign abolitionist movements. Looking to save his church and experience the racial freedoms available to blacks abroad, Crummell sailed to England in 1847 in search of funds to support his congregation. He traveled across the country making speeches and collecting donations.

What began as a brief sojourn evolved into an extended stay; when his move reopened the door to educational advancement, Crummell quickly stepped through that door. In 1849, at 30 years of age and with the help of English friends, Crummell was admitted to Queen's College in Cambridge. Although financial difficulties might have been the premise for his trip to England, when his English friends offered to send him to Cambridge to continue his education, he quickly accepted their invitation and support. He relocated his wife and two children from New York City to London and, in 1849, entered Queen's College. At Queen's College, Crummell balanced his study of Greek, Latin, and math with his obligations to the New York church and to his growing family. This demanding lifestyle frequently undermined Crummell's health because he often worked to the point of near exhaustion. Moreover, he had struggled with heart problems and varicose veins since early adulthood. Poor health, the increasing difficulty of balancing rigorous studies with advocacy work lecturing on the abolitionist circuit, and the demands of maintaining a growing family contributed to his decision to leave the Church of the Messiah in 1851.

Living abroad and studying at Queens' College, however, did not diminish Crummell's commitment to the antislavery movement. In an "Address to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society" published in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* in 1851, he condemned the recently renewed Fugitive Slave Act and drew an unfavorable comparison between U.S. democracy and Russian autocracy. He asserted that two centuries of slavery had degraded African Americans, depriving them of religious instruction, education, and political prerogatives. Moreover, he connected the conditions of enslaved and free blacks, arguing that the South's cruel legal oppression was mirrored by a Northern system of racial prejudice that undermined the advancement of free blacks. Thus, he urged abolitionists to concern themselves equally with antislavery and pro-education advocacy.

Interestingly, he also touched on the topic of Liberian migration in this address, weighing in against the Liberian colonization movement, against the idea that Liberia would be the saving grace of Africa, and against the idea that black men had either a "fellow-feeling" or obligation to Africa. There was clearly a split on the colonization question in the antislavery movement in the mid-19th century, and although Crummell made a fairly strong anticolonization statement in this speech, some two years later, he immigrated to Liberia, committing himself to the spiritual and material renewal of Africa through the colonization of free men of color to Liberia, who, he came to believe, through their membership in the African Diaspora, had certain obligations and duties to that continent and colony. So in the course of two years, Crummell's estimation of Liberia and its importance to Africa and connection to African Americans changed drastically.

Setting sail for England clearly changed the course of Crummell's life, but even with these changes, he maintained his commitments to the church and education. He lived abroad for much of the next two decades (1849–1872). Having struggled as a minister in the United States throughout the 1840s, and having preached, lectured, and studied in England through the early 1850s, he spent the next 20 years educating and ministering to Liberians and promoting Liberia. Shortly after cutting ties with his New York congregation, and as he completed his studies, he applied for a position in Liberia through the Protestant Episcopal Church and was granted a missionary appointment. In 1853, he graduated from Queen's College and moved to Monrovia, Liberia, with his wife, his three children, and a

servant. Although Crummell might have imagined Liberia as a new frontier without racial limits, he served under a white Southern bishop who saw Crummell's vision of building a church and college in Monrovia as radical and had to attend to a native population who saw his emphasis on emulating whites as troubling and conservative. At the same time, Crummell and his family struggled with their health and finances. Suffering from fevers, Sarah and Alexander Crummell lost a baby that first year. Still, he took charge of St. Paul's Church in Monrovia for his first four years, resigning in 1857 because of a dispute with the bishop. In 1858, he accepted a teaching position at Mount Vaughan High School at Cape Palmas but remained in that position only until 1861.

Though Crummell struggled in terms of his health, finances, and occupation, he remained confident that Africa, and Liberia, in particular, had much to offer to African Americans and the world. In the early 1860s, he dedicated much of his time to promoting African American immigration to Africa. He worked with the American Colonization Society and the Liberian government to promote African American emigration. During the early 1860s, just as the Civil War was breaking out, he traveled back and forth between Liberia and New York promoting the fledgling colony. Like James T. Holly, Henry Highland Garnet, Martin Delany, and Edward Wilmot Blyden, Crummell was one among a group of early black nationalists who claimed that the time had come for blacks to bring Christianity and civilization to Africa. Whereas some nationalists demanded African Americans sever their relationship with the United States and embrace Africa fully through emigration, Crummell took a middling path, arguing that all members of the African Diaspora, especially successful Christian free men of color, had an obligation to restore Africa and fulfill their manly obligations to Africa. Extolling an African American version of manifest destiny, he contended that duty and divine Providence demanded their response. The twin choruses of manhood and Africa echoed throughout the 19th century. On the other side of the debate, David Walker, in his *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, and Frederick Douglass, like Anna Julia Cooper, believed that the United States was the rightful home of African Americans and the nation where their manhood and womanhood would finally be realized. On the other side were black nationalists. Crummell, however, managed to straddle both fences. He demanded African American initiative and participation in

Liberia's material and religious development but still recognized African Americans' commitments within the United States.

For example, in an extended letter to Charles B. Dunbar, MD, Esq, of New York City, published in 1861, Crummell described at length *The Relations and Duties of Free Colored Men in America to Africa*. He explained how free colored men might benefit Africa, fulfilling their "duty of self-respect," and how Africa might benefit free colored men, fulfilling their "duty of interest." He recognized African Americans' allegiance to America, but in a masculinist language, he made clear that "*all* men hold some relation to the land of their FATHERS" and outlined quite clearly the global manhood duties of African American men, whom he referred to as the sons of Africa. His letter was equally an appeal for secular and sacred guidance for Africa. He was interested in attracting the attention of "adventurous, enterprising, colored men" who would employ science to maximize the production and trade of natural resources, such as palm oil, cotton, sugarcane, and maize. Explaining that whites were reaping the rewards of Africa's treasures, he suggested that black men pool their financial resources and skills and enjoy the wealth that African investments might afford. Convinced that Africa needed "men, learning, and wealth," Crummell saw African American capitalists as a "man-force" vital to Liberia's success and inseparable from the eventual repossession of Africa for blacks. As far as Crummell was concerned, Liberia offered the "finest opportunities for manly achievement" in both the secular and the sacred sense. While black capitalists built the financial infrastructures, black ministers were needed to convert the masses. Moreover, Crummell made clear that black men's proselytizing duties did not end at the United States' borders. Thus, he proposed that young black missionaries from a variety of denominations attend to the Liberian masses. Finally, Crummell was confident that African American men had not only a duty to restore Africa but also the ability and the power to do so. Crummell also took his own advice, and between his missionary work and teaching, he spent portions of his time in Liberia working as a farmer and small businessman to augment his salary and the Liberian economy.

Crummell spent 1861 and 1862 promoting emigration in the United States. But the promise of the Civil War and especially the Emancipation Proclamation muted the appeal of this movement for both free and enslaved African

Americans. The potentials of this changing political and racial climate, however, did not decrease Crummell's fervor for emigration. And in 1863, he returned to Liberia when a teaching position at the newly established Liberian College became available. Given his lifetime commitment to building a black college, it is somewhat ironic that he taught there for fewer than three years. Salary disputes and his lengthy trips to the United States resulted in his eventual resignation. When his college career failed, Crummell returned to ministering, spending many of the next few years proselytizing to native Liberians in remote areas. Political instabilities and violence, however, forced him and his family to flee from Liberia for good in 1872.

Crummell had left the United States in the 1840s as a struggling minister and had spent a great deal of his career abroad encouraging emigration. Still, he settled back into American life and the African American community fairly quickly. Unable to find a position in New York, in 1872, he took over St. Mary's Church in Washington, D.C. Over the next few years, he succeeded in building St. Luke's, where he served as a rector until 1882. During these years, his wife Sarah passed away (1878), and in 1880, Jennie Simpson became his second wife.

In the last decades of his life, Crummell was nearly as active as he was in his youth. He remained enmeshed in the politics of running St. Luke's until the 1890s. He presided over the interdenominational Minister's Union of Washington, D.C., and founded the Conference of Church Workers among Colored People. He also received two honorary degrees, a doctorate in divinity from Lincoln University and a doctorate of law from Liberia University. In his last two years, he founded the American Negro Academy, his response to what he saw as Booker T. Washington's overemphasis on technical training at the expense of higher learning. Bringing together many of the brightest black thinkers, the American Negro Academy, a precursor to W. E. B. Du Bois' "talented tenth," was charged with uplifting and educating the masses. In his 80th year, Crummell died peacefully with his wife by his side. He was laid to rest at St. Philip's Episcopal Church and was remembered by many, including W. E. B. Du Bois, who dedicated a chapter in *The Souls of Black Folk*, "Of Alexander Crummell," to his memory.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; African Free Schools; Cooper, Anna Julia; Crummell, Boston; Delany, Martin R.; Douglass, Frederick; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850;

Garnet, Henry Highland; Liberia; Walker, David; Washington, Booker T.

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## Crummell, Boston

Boston Crummell was born in the region of Timanee, West Africa (which eventually became part of Liberia). He was kidnapped by slave traders at about the age of 12 and was subsequently brought to New York City. A survivor of the slave trade, Crummell's early life remains shrouded in mystery except that as a young man, he suffered in bondage and eventually freed himself. According to his son's recollections, Boston Crummell was never officially emancipated; rather, he simply announced to his owner that he would no longer serve him. After he took his freedom, Boston Crummell married Charity Hicks, a free woman from a family that had been free for generations. He eventually made a living as an oysterman and caterer and was well known in New York City for his culinary skills. In 1819, his son Alexander was born, a man who would ultimately become one of the most influential activists of his time.

Despite the future prominence of his son, Boston Crummell was an activist in his own right. Likely, it was his example, and that of his associates, that shaped and influenced Alexander as a child. Crummell was one of the earliest members of African Society for Mutual Relief (ASMR), which was composed of New York City's most influential black activists and formed the foundation of the black leadership. Although it was partly a mutual aid society, the ASMR soon involved itself in the leading political issues of the day, including abolition, suffrage, and education. Significantly, Crummell also demonstrated interest in emigration, serving on the board of managers for the Haytian Emigration Society of Coloured People, founded in 1818. The notion of Haitian emigration attracted the most prominent members of the black community and was quite popular among the leadership. Although Boston Crummell never emigrated himself, his political leanings likely influenced his young son. The Crummell household became a center of political activity, and it was there that black leaders met to discuss the possibility of publishing the first black newspaper in the United States. The result, of course, was the creation of *Freedom's Journal*.

Crummell's most sustained activism revealed his passion for education. Perhaps because formal education had been initially denied to him during enslavement, Crummell insisted on quality education for black youth. He actively supported the creation of the African Free School, and in 1833, Crummell helped form the Phoenix Society, along with such other influential leaders as Thomas L. Jennings, Theodore Wright, Peter Williams Jr., and white abolitionist Arthur Tappan. The Phoenix Society's purpose was to uplift the black community morally and intellectually, and they sponsored regular forums to support their goals. In addition, the organization also maintained a library and reading room for the entire community. Perhaps the Phoenix Society's most significant contribution was their attempt to create a high school in the black community. In 1836, they opened the Phoenix High School, which was intended to indoctrinate black youth with sound skills and morality. Despite the good intentions of the organization, their enthusiasm was not enough to sustain the school. Largely dependent on white philanthropy for its support, Phoenix High School closed after Arthur Tappan declared bankruptcy in 1839. Undaunted, they established another school later the same year in the basement of St. Phillip's Church. This school, the New York Select Academy, focused strongly

on the fundamentals of math, philosophy, and foreign languages. Even though the academy was popular and well supported, they were unable to raise sufficient funds to remain open for even a year.

Although Boston Crummell's efforts to create effective educational institutions in New York City were continually frustrated, his passion ultimately provided an example to his son, who would later become a celebrated leader in his own right.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Crummell, Alexander; Destination, Haiti; *Freedom's Journal*

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## Cuffe, Paul

Paul Cuffe (1759–1817) was born free near New Bedford, Massachusetts, on Cuttyhunk Island, and distinguished himself as an entrepreneur, a social reformer, and a benevolent philanthropist. One of 10 children—6 girls and 4 boys—Cuffe was born to a freed African slave father named Cuffe Slocum and to a Wampanoag Indian mother, Ruth Moses. At an early age, Paul manifested a politics of independence. He divested himself of the surname Slocum, given to his father in slavery, and adopted Cuffe, his father's Christian first name, as his last name. After his father's death, Paul, at 16 years of age, pursued his maritime interest rather than work on the family farm. From 1776 until 1778, he sailed, fished, and work aboard whalers and commercial vessels that took him to the Caribbean, South America, and Mexico.

With his older brother David, Paul Cuffe built a small vessel in 1779 and began trading with local farmers and fishermen in the various communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Despite brushes with pirates, Cuffe amassed enough resources to buy a schooner. As he traded more expensive products and expanded his trading

territory, his business income surged. By 1808, he had accumulated a seaworthy ship, two brigs, smaller vessels, and considerable real estate.

Despite his wealth, Cuffe was a social reformer. With little work during the winter months, Cuffe taught navigation tactics to illiterate community lads, both black and white. His lessons increased the number of skilled navigators and raised the community's educational level. Cuffe also sought taxation relief for blacks in Massachusetts. In 1777, when he and his brother John were required to pay personal property taxes on their deceased father's estate, both brothers protested. They believed free colored persons should be exempted from property and poll taxes because, unlike white citizens, blacks were constitutionally denied the rights of citizenship and enfranchisement. In February 10, 1780, Cuffe and his brother spearheaded a petition for tax relief, directed to officials in the town of Dartmouth in Bristol County. The brothers claimed that colored people in the community should be exempted from taxes because they had already been doubly taxed: they had the burden to sustain themselves in their new freedom and the duty to enter military service in preparation for battle.

When their petition as black men brought no relief, Paul and his brother claimed their Indian heritage and sent a petition as Indian men to Bristol County Court. They requested relief from taxation on the basis that Indian men had never been taxed. The brothers were arrested and incarcerated in Taunton on December 1780 when the unpaid tax bill reached a substantial sum. They were released immediately based on their claim of Indian heritage. After continuances delayed the trial, the brothers lost the court case and paid in full the overdue tax bill and court costs. They were equally unsuccessful in their appeal to officials of Dartmouth to consider the unfairness of taxing blacks who had no political representation.

In February 1783, Paul Cuffe married Alice Pequit, a Native American; the six children born to them set Cuffe to thinking about education reform for black children in his community, which offered no public education to them. Quakers had educated some blacks at churches and at the Society of Friends' meeting places. However, the Society of Friends' decision to establish a boarding school in Providence placed black children in Cuffe's community at a traveling disadvantage. Cuffe decided to establish a school for neighborhood children on his expansive estate in Westport, Massachusetts. Referred to as Cuff's School, it admitted all races.

Paul Cuffe had a longtime acquaintance with Quakers. The Friends' humanitarian endeavors influenced his parents, and Cuffe had encountered Quaker merchants in his business travels. Two merchants especially influenced him—William Rotch Sr., a prominent white New Bedford whaler, and his son William Jr., who transported goods from New Bedford to Nantucket to England. In England, William Rotch Sr. fostered the whaling industry and lobbied to abolish the slave trade, an issue that piqued Cuffe's interest. William Rotch Jr. hired Cuffe to transport various products, including lumber and food, from New Bedford to Nantucket, and his business acumen interested Cuffe. Often, Cuffe consulted and confided in William Jr. before embarking on a new adventure.

In 1808, Paul Cuffe became a member of the Westport Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends. His Quaker affiliation broadened his interest in social reform. Whereas the Society of Friends pushed for the abolition of slavery, Cuffe wanted more for black Americans. The 1808 letters sent between Cuffe and James Pemberton, president of the Philadelphia Society, and included in *Captain Cuffe's Logs and Letters 1808–1817*, indicate that Cuffe learned from Pemberton about the African Institution of London, founded in 1807, and its intent to civilize and educate Africans.

The fact that black Africans had sold their own people into slavery grieved Cuffe. To redeem Africa, he embarked on a benevolent plan to settle Christian black Americans in Africa, especially those who would be instrumental in uplifting Africans' spiritual, social, and commercial welfare. During his repatriation of blacks, Cuffe intended to augment his commercial interests. Owing to his friendship with James Pemberton, Cuffe narrowed his focus to Sierra Leone, the West African British colony that the African Institution of London showed interest in aiding. Cuffe's plans to redeem Sierra Leone and trade with that country and with England were not immediately realized, however. Pemberton died before Cuffe completed contacts and negotiations with English officials and with Zack Macaulay of the African Institution of London. Despite the Institution of London's failure to offer funds to help finance Cuffe's emigration plan, and despite the passage of the 1809 Non-Intercourse Act that forbade American commerce with England, Cuffe set out for Sierra Leone on his own.

In March 1811, Cuffe arrived in Sierra Leone on the *Traveller*. He took with him bibles, cloth, beef, flour, and other marketable items. He bartered and sold his wares and

distributed his bibles among non-Christian natives and at Christian services of ex-slaves who had, in prior decades, left the American South for Nova Scotia and then migrated to Sierra Leone. During Cuffe's two-month stay in Sierra Leone, he researched the suitability of land for farming, the possibility of a whale fishery, and the feasibility of commercial interchange between black Americans and blacks in Sierra Leone and between Sierra Leone and England, its colonizer.

Cuffe sailed to Liverpool and London, England, to advance his plans, but he received mixed reactions. He was lauded for his skill and moral character in the *Edinburgh Review* and in the *Times*, but he was criticized when local officials seized one of his men, a Sierra Leone native, who they believed was a British citizen. Cuffe met many dignitaries while in Liverpool, but important persons in the African Institution of London failed to finance his plan to repatriate blacks in Sierra Leone. Having made little progress in England, Cuffe returned to Sierra Leone that November 1811.

In Freetown, he organized the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone, a trading alliance, and established as President John Kizell, a former South Carolina slave, who had returned to Sierra Leone, his native home, via Nova Scotia. Cuffe intended this society to market and purchase its own produce in order to weaken the control of English merchants. Later, with the assistance of William Allen, an Englishman and African Institution of London member, Cuffe was able to market in Liverpool those products sent from the friendly Society of Sierra Leone. The society eventually floundered because of individuals' disinterest in collective farming.

En route to the United States, Cuffe ran afoul of the law. First, the British seized the *Traveller* off the coast of Freetown, claiming that Cuffe had failed to obtain permission to transport three African passengers. Once he resolved that issue, he ran into difficulty in April 1812 upon entering the United States at Westport, Massachusetts. Custom officials confiscated his ship as penalty for his having traded unlawfully with the British under the Non-Intercourse Act. The next month, he traveled to Washington, D.C., to plead his case before President James Madison and the House of Representatives. He was finally exonerated of any wrongdoing, and his ship was returned to him.

Returning to Massachusetts, Cuffe docked at large East Coast cities to inform colored Americans of his emigration mission and to encourage formation of societies to unite and communicate with the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone. Through Cuffe's efforts, the African Institution formed

in Philadelphia and in New York, and the African Sierra Leone Benevolent Society organized in Boston. Individuals in other cities promised to maintain contact with Cuffe, and black families committed themselves to immigrate to Sierra Leone.

The War of 1812 between America and England halted Cuffe's plans to trade with the British colony and to transport emigrants desiring to go to Sierra Leone later that year. The declaration of war also nullified his use of a land grant that members of the African Institution of had given gave him to use in Sierra Leone to settle American blacks who had agricultural knowledge. Also, neither the British nor the American government issued Cuffe a license to trade with the British colony. When the British government failed to guarantee Cuffe's protection in Sierra Leone, Cuffe resolutely set out again for Sierra Leone with the understanding that Lord Bathurst, of the African Institution of London, would inform Sierra Leone's Governor, Charles MacCarthy, of his arrival. Cuffe arrived at Freeport, Sierra Leone, in February 1816 with 38 immigrants and a cargo of merchandise. These immigrants were allowed to go ashore, but Cuffe was not permitted to unload his merchandise because Governor MacCarthy had not received Lord Bathurst's epistle. Several days later, MacCarthy allowed Cuffe to unload his wares, except tobacco and maritime goods, which Cuffe later sold to the Friendly Society in Sierra Leone.

Except for the few funds that he had received from the African Institution of London, Cuffe financed his own emigration plan. He provided passage to Sierra Leone, advanced the settlers some provisions, and assisted them by other means in their adjustment to their new home. Few were able to repay him. The American war with England also left Sierra Leone awash with a surplus of goods, the value of which had plummeted since Cuffe's previous trip to the colony. Cuffe also lost money on the African camwood that he had transported from Sierra Leone to Massachusetts in May 1816. With no license to trade in the British colony and with no immediate plan to return to Africa, Cuffe turned his attention to blacks in America. His goal was black empowerment. He envisioned within the United States the development of large separate black settlements capable of engaging in a three-party trade between the African Institution of London, the Friendly Society in Sierra Leone, and the African Institutions in America's large cities.

In the meantime, whites began to form the American Colonization Society, a so-called benevolent association



whose chief purpose was the removal of free blacks, for fear of their rebelliousness, to an area outside the United States and away from controlled slaveholding communities. The organization's aim radically differed from that of Cuffe, who sought with his emigration plan to empower blacks through commercial enterprise and defeat of the slave trade with trans-Atlantic commerce among blacks. Despite conflict of intent, members of the American Colonization Society solicited Cuffe's knowledge of and advice about the suitability of Sierra Leone as an immigration site. Cuffe responded with a general description of the colony, his expectations for the Friendly Society he founded in Sierra Leone, and the possibility of other immigration sites in Africa.

With the establishment of the American Colonization Society in 1816, black Americans in Philadelphia's African Institution vacillated on the subject of emigration. Some feared separation from their enslaved and helpless black brethren; others regarded emigration as the solution to blacks' problems with white America; still others rejected emigration for the hardship it portended for blacks to exile themselves in Africa. Dismayed over some blacks' growing opposition to emigration, Cuffe held fast to his own dream of black nationhood in America and in Africa.

Despite Cuffe's attempts to advance a nationalist organization to empower and dignify blacks, another blow came when an imposter assumed Cuffe's identity and scammed people out of enormous funds. Pretending to be Cuffe's son, the imposter misspelled his assumed name as "Cuffee" and from prison wrote to Paul Cuffe for familial acknowledgment. Paul Cuffe denied any connection to the prisoner and felt the man should spend the rest of his life locked up because his ill-deeds had besmirched the integrity and character of the entire African race.

On September 7, 1817, Paul Cuffe died at his home surrounded by friends. Despite Cuffe's unforeseen setbacks in his emigration scheme, black activists in the 1850s heralded him as the forefather of Black Nationalism.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Sierra Leone

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## Davis, Jefferson

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) was a Southern politician who eventually became the first (and only) president of the Confederate States of America. He served as the leader of the Confederacy throughout the entire Civil War, and his capture by Union forces in May 1865 signaled the decisive Northern victory that brought an official end to the war.

Born in Kentucky, and raised in Mississippi, Davis was raised in a family that believed in slavery; even as a young man, Davis owned 75 slaves. Throughout his life, he believed that slavery was essential to the Southern economy, and he espoused the notion of white superiority and argued that slavery had a positive moral and social influence on society.

In the years prior to the Civil War, Davis had a successful political and military career; he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1844 but resigned his post in 1846 in order to raise a regiment and fight in the Mexican-American War. Over the next decade, Davis became increasingly active in politics and military, eventually serving as the secretary of war from 1853 to 1857. During this era, Davis's political views regarding slavery became more apparent; in particular, he opposed the Compromise of 1850 because he believed in the unrestricted extension of slavery. In Davis's view, it was the right of every white Southerner to own slaves, and the government should not be empowered to limit those rights.

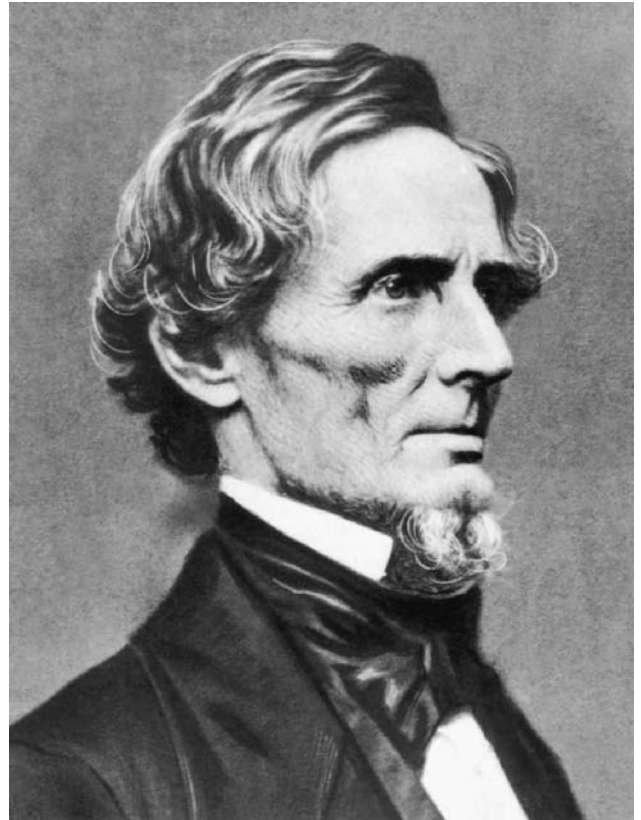
In 1857, Davis was elected to the U.S. Senate, but three years later, shortly after South Carolina seceded from the Union, Davis resigned his seat in Congress and returned to Mississippi to join the Confederacy. When the provisional Confederate government formed in Montgomery, Alabama, in February 1861, it called on Davis to serve as the government's first president. Although Davis was reluctant to accept the office, he was converted to the notion of secession

after the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. For the next several months, Davis served as the interim president of the Confederacy and was officially elected as the Confederate president in November 1861.

Davis's primary challenge materialized on September 22, 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (it would take effect on January 1, 1863). Davis and other Confederate officials saw emancipation as a threat to the supply of slave laborers and viewed Lincoln's proclamation as a confirmation of what they had believed all along about the Republican Party—that it had always wanted to force emancipation on the South. Alarmed at the impact emancipation might have on the Confederate war effort, President Davis took measures to discourage emancipation and the enlistment of African American soldiers into the Union Army. Davis mandated that any African American captured in a Union uniform would be either executed or returned to a state of bondage, and any African American sailors captured from the Potomac Flotilla would be executed by hanging. Likewise, he issued an order that stated that all white officers in command of African American troops would be punished according to state law for attempting to incite an insurrection.

As the war continued, emancipation began to erode the Confederate labor force. In February 1864, Davis encouraged an increase in the impressments of slaves. Many recommended that slaves be armed, and if they fought ably, they could be freed. Although initially opposed to the idea because it undermined the foundation of the slave system, by the end of 1864, Davis saw dual benefits in arming slaves. First, allowing slaves to fight and then emancipating them would clear away slavery as the final obstacle to foreign recognition. Second, it would provide a major boost to the strength of the Confederate Army. Davis and the Confederate government finally approved the use of slaves in March 1865.

Even so, most African Americans despised Jefferson Davis because they saw him as the symbol of the proslavery South. When Union troops occupied Richmond in April 1865, it was announced to the city that the president was coming. Immediately thinking that it was Davis, mobs of African Americans called for Davis's execution. They were soon elated, however, to find that the president who was in Richmond was not Davis, but Lincoln—the man who had signed the Emancipation Proclamation.



*Jefferson Davis was a U.S. senator from Mississippi and secretary of war before becoming president of the Confederate States of America. (Library of Congress)*

In the spring of 1865, as the Confederate armies surrendered, Davis was captured by Union troops near Irwinville, Georgia. He was charged with treason and remained in prison for two years. Following his release, Davis eventually returned to Mississippi, where he wrote about his experiences in the Confederacy. In 1881, Davis published his two-volume book *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*. A Southern apology for the war, *The Rise and Fall* argued that slavery was not the root cause of the American Civil War and that African Americans were the real victim of the Civil War because they faced a tremendous amount of opposition from whites as they tried to establish their freedom. Davis died in 1889.

*See also:* Confederate States of America

*Jonathan A. Noyalas*

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## Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence, the founding document that announced the United States' split from England during the Revolutionary War era, played a seminal role in African Americans' quest for equal citizenship, from slavery through segregation and the Civil Rights movement. From Frederick Douglass to Martin Luther King Jr., spokesmen for the race relied on the Declaration's ringing proclamation that all men are created equal as a measure of what the United States' standard for itself should be.

The Declaration of Independence was drafted by a committee of the Second Continental Congress in response to a motion from Congressman Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. Lee, acting on instructions from his state's ruling convention, moved on June 7, 1776, that the Congress declare that the colonies ought to be free and independent states. Lee also moved that the Congress seek

foreign alliances and establish a plan of confederation. In response, a five-man committee chaired by Massachusetts' John Adams and including Pennsylvanian Benjamin Franklin and Virginian Thomas Jefferson worked to produce a draft.

Adams, concerned with other important work, picked Jefferson to write a draft. His later explanation was that Jefferson, who had written *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* two years before, could be counted on to put the colonists' grievances and case for independence in pithy prose. In fact, the draft Jefferson presented to the committee owed a lot to the *Summary View*—and thus to earlier works by Virginian Richard Bland. Jefferson's draft came to the committee with some minor infelicities, and Adams and Franklin offered changes. Thus, for example, Jefferson's "inherent and inalienable rights" became "certain inalienable rights." The second paragraph of the Declaration, in the end, laid out a Lockean-cum-Virginian version of the rights of Americans.



American artist John Trumbull's *The Declaration of Independence*, which was painted in the decades after the American Revolution. Among the signatories of the document portrayed in the painting are John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and Thomas Jefferson. (Corel)

In Virginia, a committee chaired by George Mason reported a Declaration of Rights opening with a claim that all men were created free and equal. Met with Robert Carter Nicholas's objection that such a statement must either lead to social convulsion or establish a precedent for ignoring fundamental law in a commonwealth whose population was one-third enslaved, the May convention interlined the phrase "when they enter into a state of society" before its conclusion that government was instituted to protect their rights. In other words, if a person residing in Virginia (read: a slave) was kept outside of the Lockean society white Virginians were creating, the government had no obligation to preserve his rights.

The American Declaration of Independence's second paragraph—its famous philosophical predicate—included no such caveat. The American Declaration of Independence thus is consistent with Nicholas's caveat about the Mason draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights of 1776. A Lockean regime could be founded in America that left some people beyond the pale of government's solicitude. The Declaration's chief draftsman, the master of Monticello, certainly understood it that way. In fact, his draft took George III to task for the existence of slavery in America (including Monticello), blaming George both for the capture and transportation of Africans from Africa and for encouraging slaves to rise up against their rebellious masters in the 1770s. Congress excised much of this, although it did retain Jefferson's complaint against Lord Dunmore's Proclamation—which had put the British government on the side of the slaves of rebel masters by offering to free them if they made their way to Dunmore, the last royal governor of Virginia.

The list of grievances against George III took up the majority of the Declaration. In 1776, it amounted to a summary of the colonists' justification of their behavior toward the British government over the previous decade and more. George III received the brunt of the colonists' ire because Parliament, where most of the power in the British government lay, had ceased to command radical North Americans' assent by 1774. Thus, taking his argument in *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774) for granted, Jefferson could lay out the case for separation from George III in much the way Tom Paine's *Common Sense* had urged earlier in the year.

The first of the Declaration's complaints listed several ways in which the colonists had been deprived of self-

government. The king, according to Congress, had vetoed their laws, had required that their laws' implementation be suspended until they received the assent of the Crown, had moved their capitals capriciously to inconvenient locales, had dissolved refractory representative houses repeatedly, and had foregone the opportunity to call those houses back into session for long periods of time. Each of these measures of the Crown was at odds with the *Summary View's* assertion that the colonies, founded by the colonists with their own money and effort, were entitled to the same type of self-government as Britons enjoyed on the home islands. Besides that, they said, George was making it impossible for the colonies to encourage immigration and to settle their inland districts.

The following group of complaints related to disparate actions of the British government that also seemingly tended, if persistently applied, to deprive the colonists of British liberty. Thus, George was said to have impaired the establishment of judicial institutions in the colonies, and he had consented to Parliament's legislation making some American judges dependent on Parliament, not the colonies, for their tenure and salaries. He had also maintained standing military forces in America in peacetime, attempted to set the military above the civilian authorities, and had joined with Parliament in making the colonists subject to their legislation. The legislation in question had stationed substantial forces in the colonies, cut off colonial trade abroad, taxed the colonists without their consent, restricted access to trial by jury, denied communities in the colonies the right to stage juries within their own territory, established a foreign legal system in Quebec while extending that colony's borders, repealed some colonial charters, and declared Parliament's power to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

Finally, George III had abdicated the throne by declaring the colonists to be outside his protection and warring on them—even by hiring foreign mercenaries and encouraging the Indian savages to attack the colonies and by impressing American sailors into the British navy.

Although some of these claims (such as that Britain had endeavored to tax the colonists without representation) were accurate and applicable to all 13 colonies, most of them were applicable only to particular colonies. Yet the leading Patriots had held for a decade that whatever affected any of them affected the rights of all, and so they had no qualms about holding that George had submitted all of them to the

severities of the Coercive Acts imposed on Massachusetts in the wake of the Boston Tea Party. Of course, however, what mattered at the time was not the literal accuracy of each portion of this litany of grievances, but its cumulative weight. Thus, if a particular grievance had been felt in only one colony, its inclusion in the litany made sense as a rhetorical matter to a Congress hoping to spur widespread support for the actual assertion of independence that would come later in the document. This document was intended to be read aloud, not in a library somewhere, and one can imagine a crescendo of anger as the reader of the Declaration solemnly intoned the long list of accusations against George III.

The next section of the Declaration notes that George III cannot have been ignorant of the colonists' growing unhappiness with the course of his government because the colonists had petitioned him repeatedly—to no avail. In their view, George III was a tyrant. Yet, they, like their king, had been blind to the causes of justice and consanguinity.

Therefore, the representatives of the United States were compelled to proclaim that the colonies were forevermore independent. With a nod to their European audience, they went on to claim the powers of a sovereign nation. The French enemies of Britain had long been assisting the American rebels behind the scenes, but they had repeatedly insisted that open alliance had to await a formal break between the Americans and their mother country. Here, then, was America's bid for French (and, with a little additional luck, Spanish) assistance.

John Adams, the bumptious congressman from Massachusetts who had pushed so strenuously for independence for so many months, wrote to his wife Abigail exulting in the momentous occasion of which he had been a part. For ages to come, he said, Americans would fete the day they assumed their separate destiny as a people: July 2, 1776. He was two days off, as the Declaration was not made public until two days later, but the anniversary of the national declaration of independence soon did become the chief civic holiday of the new federal republic.

Originally, what people recalled was the final section of the Declaration. After all, the members of the Second Continental Congress were not elected independently as congressmen are now; instead, they were, as Adams put it, essentially ambassadors from their separate states, in which—as the Articles of Confederation later put it—sovereignty lay, and the state legislatures' instruction to the

congressmen was to declare independence, not to concoct a governing philosophy for a new nation.

In time, however, the philosophical predicate of the Declaration grew to be seen as its central element, the grievances against George III that so enraged the men of 1776 receding into the background. Although the congress of 1776 certainly had neither the right nor the power to impose the doctrine that all men are created equal on the states who were its masters, black people, both enslaved and emancipated, early held the ringing generalities of Congress's draft before their white fellow citizens in insisting that all black people in America should also be free. Slaves joined in this insistence, and the antislavery cause gained support from whites who were persuaded that, yes, the American Revolution did stand for something more than independence, that Robert Carter Nicholas's means of accommodating slavery to republicanism was unsatisfactory. For some, such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, the solution to this problem was to colonize American blacks abroad; for others, it was to free them without granting them social or political equality; and for a growing number, the Declaration of Independence meant that all Americans must enjoy full equality.

*See also:* American Revolution; Jefferson, Thomas

Kevin R. C. Gutzman

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## Delany, Martin R.

Martin R. Delany (1812–1885), an African American military officer, medical doctor, educator, abolitionist, newspaper editor, and Pan-Africanist, was born May 6, 1812, in Charles Town, West Virginia, to Samuel and Pati Delany. Pati Delany—who was free, though Samuel was enslaved—taught Martin and his five siblings to read using the *New*

*York Primer Spelling Book* bought from an itinerant peddler from the North. She relocated with her children to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1822, having defended her children's freeborn status in court. Samuel Delany purchased his freedom in 1823. In 1831, Martin Delany traveled to Pittsburgh as a laborer at the age of 19 to attend and, with Rev. Lewis Woodson, study at Bethel African Church School on Wylie Street. He studied classics at Jefferson College in 1832. In the cholera epidemic of 1833, Delany became apprenticed to Dr. Andrew N. McDowell as a cupper and leecher. He later gained the support of other abolitionist doctors such as F. Julius Lemoyne for his medical training.

As early as 1835, Martin Delany became involved in black nationalist politics by attending the Negro Conference advocating for the creation of a "black Israel." He became a medical professional and became involved in reform issues of the day such as temperance and particularly abolitionism through the 1830s and 1840s. By 1836, Delany had set up practice as a cupper and leecher. He joined the Young Men's Literary and Moral Reform Society of Pittsburgh in 1837. He traveled to the South in 1839 with "free papers," witnessing firsthand the brutality of slavery that would later become the subject of one of his books, and then continued his medical studies through the 1840s. In 1843, he met and married Catherine A. Richards, the daughter of a well-off family, with whom he would eventually have 11 children. Delany began publishing an antislavery newspaper titled the *Mystery* in 1843 and by 1847 served as coeditor with Frederick Douglass of the *North Star* in Rochester, New York. Delany traveled throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky lecturing, reporting, and collecting subscriptions for the paper while Douglass acted as manager. Delany also spoke extensively in Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware. On the eve of the American Civil War (1861–1865), Delany was able to establish himself as an important figure in the American abolitionist movement. Delany was accepted into Harvard Medical School for the years 1849–1852 but was forced to leave as a result of protest by white students in 1850. Despite this setback, Delany was able to establish himself as a medical doctor in Pittsburgh by 1852.

After 1850, having become involved with the abolitionist movement in America, Delany began to develop his ideas about black liberation. He wrote editorials, gave speeches, and advocated for the abolition of slavery and African American civil liberties. In 1852, Martin Delany wrote his book *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and*

*Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered*. This work outlined Delany's support of African American migration back to Africa, and Delany has been henceforth known as the "father" of modern Black Nationalism with this text. Delany delivered the first justification of black freemasonry in 1853 and was also an outspoken critic of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1854. Delany led a National Emigration Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1854 that included 145 participants meeting over four days to promote his views on black emigration. This convention culminated with a political manifesto titled the "Political Destiny of the Colored Continent." Between the years 1854 and 1855, Delany engaged in community organizing and assisted with the Underground Railroad. He was appointed commissioner to explore Africa by the Central Board of the third emigration convention in 1858. Delany traveled to Liberia in 1859 to explore the possibility of black repatriation to Africa the same year he wrote *Blake or the Huts of America*. Delany wrote *Blake* as a response to Harriet Beecher's Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in an attempt to illustrate a more proactive and defiant depiction of African American slaves. While in Africa between the years 1859 and 1860, Delany explored the Cavalla River, Monrovia, and Lagos. Delany was an advocate of both abolitionism and emigration, although some may argue that he never completely lost hope in the American system. During the Civil War, Delany became an ardent supporter of the Union's cause.

Martin Delany actively recruited African American troops for the Union Army and would served as America's first commissioned African American officer. In 1863, Delany was able to secure 2,500 enlistees for Rhode Island and 5,000 enlistees for Connecticut. He petitioned President Abraham Lincoln for a commission to command black troops in the Union Army to no avail. He eventually received a commission as the first African American to receive a regular army commission, obtaining the rank of major. After the war, he worked for the Freedmen's Bureau and in Reconstruction governments throughout the South. With the demise of Reconstruction, Delany turned once again to the idea of black migration to Africa by supporting the Liberia Exodus Company as Chairman of Finance.

Martin Delany occupies an integral place in the history of African Americans for multiple reasons. He was an important figure in American reform as well as the "father of black nationalism." His ideas about black migration to Africa became the foundation of Black Nationalist ideologies

through the late 19th century. He wrote and spoke extensively on this subject as well as advocated for the end of slavery. Martin R. Delany died in 1885.

See also: American Colonization Society; Pan-Africanism

Hettie V. Williams

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## Destination, Canada

During the late 18th and 19th century, thousands of enslaved and free African Americans escaped the intolerable and oppressive conditions of the Southern and Northern United States and fled to Canada, where a gradual abolition of slavery had been introduced in 1793. This repeated departure of free and enslaved African Americans from the United States to Canada illustrated the degree to which Canada was geographically as well as ideologically perceived as a haven and a viable alternative to the United States.

In Canada, the refugees arrived as far east as Nova Scotia (free black loyalists and enslaved African Americans from the American Revolution) and as far west as British Columbia (free African Americans from California). However, the majority of African Americans who arrived in Canada settled in southwestern Ontario. Although there were no major settlements in Upper Canada (now Ontario) prior to 1793, by 1837, roughly 50 African American refugee families had settled in Toronto, Ontario, alone.

Prior to the 1800s, Lower Canada (now the Maritimes and Quebec) was the primary destination for African American fugitive slaves. Conversely, with the development

of the Underground Railroad, escapees increasingly sought refuge in Upper Canada. This migration among fugitive slaves and free blacks reached its peak in the early 1840s and 1850s, with blacks settling in Colchester, Elgin, Dresden, Dawn, Windsor, Sandwich, Bush, Wilberforce, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Chatham, Riley, Auberton, London, Malden, Confiels, Amherstburg, Buxton, and Toronto. Chatham and Dresden in particular became well known as terminals of the Underground Railroad because all were close to the United States–Canada border. Later arrivals naturally settled in places where other African Americans had already established themselves.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of African Americans who traveled to Canada. Historians suggest that at least 1,000 fugitives may have made it to freedom each year in the 1840s and 1850s. Although African American refugees were mostly men, the first census (1851) of Upper Canada counted only a slight numerical difference: 2,502 black males and 2,167 black females. By 1860, estimates of the number of blacks in Ontario ranged from 15,000 to 60,000, the majority of these being African Americans. Historians note that the Toronto Anti-Slavery Society puts the figure to be somewhere between 35,000 and 50,000. Although it is commonly assumed that African Americans who fled to Canada came primarily from border states, according to Canadian historians, all the Southern states were represented in Ontario by 1850. The first wave of refugees arrived in Canada between 1817 and 1822, and most settled around farmlands of present-day Windsor. Still others settled in smaller groups where the “boats set them down.” By the 1820s, African American refugees could be found in the townships of Essex County (which includes Colchester, Harrow, and Amherstburg). The second wave of African American fugitives who fled to southwestern Ontario after 1850, as a direct result of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, settled in places where other blacks had already established themselves. By 1860, the Canada black population was estimated to be approximately 110,000.

The majority of the African Americans who sought refuge in Canada returned to the United States after 1867. During the American Civil War, approximately 30,000 Africans returned to the United States to join the Union Army. Moreover, in the 35-year period after the war, some 60 to 70 percent more African Americans left Canada for

the United States. By 1901, there were fewer than 18,000 blacks left in Ontario.

*See also:* Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves

*Amoaba Gooden*

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## Destination, Haiti

In 1804, the newly formed Haitian republic declared its independence from France and announced the end of legal slavery within its borders. This bold action signaled an official end to the Haitian Revolution, a long, bloody, and complicated battle in which enslaved people fought for their freedom, seized control of the former colony of Saint Domingue, and ultimately built an independent black nation. This momentous event figured prominently in the hearts and minds of African Americans and inspired black people throughout the United States to take decisive actions of their own. For enslaved people in the South, the Haitian Revolution brought hope that slave rebellions could actually be successful, and for free blacks in the North, it sparked an emigration movement to Haiti, where emancipated people dreamed of establishing a new homeland. For many African Americans in the 19th century, then, Haiti was both an ideological and a physical destination.

Although the Haitian Revolution reportedly inspired slave rebellions in the American South, specifically Gabriel's Rebellion and Denmark Vesey's conspiracy, the notion of emigration from the United States to Haiti also took root in the North. Although the response in the North was slower and more gradual than in the South, by 1815, Haiti had become an important part of Northern black political discourse. Plagued by violence, racism, injustice, poverty, and a tenuous social status, many newly emancipated African Americans questioned their place in American society and began to lose hope. Their frustration was particularly acute because they were continually denied suffrage and the rights of citizenship. As a result, black Northerners grew

increasingly doubtful about their future in the United States and wondered if "freedom" was truly an illusion. By contrast, Haiti represented the culmination of their strivings for political autonomy. During the revolution, enslaved people had thrown off their shackles and declared their right to self-determination. Once Haiti became the first independent black nation in the Americas, it appeared to be the ultimate manifestation of what free blacks hoped to achieve. Thus, as free African Americans grew increasingly fearful that they would never receive citizenship in the United States, they began to cast their vision to Haiti.

Significantly, there was also enthusiasm about the notion of black migration to Haiti on the Haitian side. From the nation's founding, Haitian leaders actively worked to attract black migrants from the United States to their burgeoning new nation. For example, Haiti's first president, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, vigorously recruited African Americans and even offered American ship captains 40 dollars for every African American they brought to Haiti. Likewise, in 1816, Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion, who ruled Northern and Southern Haiti, respectively, both sought to mold Haiti into a potential destination for African Americans in the United States. When Pétion drafted his constitution, he included a special clause that granted citizenship to all descendants of Africa who lived in Haiti for one year, a strategy that certainly would have appealed to many African Americans. Although these early inducements did not immediately lead to a large migration of African Americans to Haiti, such efforts revealed that Haitian leaders felt an emigration movement could be mutually beneficial; Haiti would gain from an influx in population, especially skilled laborers and sailors, and African Americans could find refuge from American racism and find citizenship in a new home.

Enthusiasm for Haitian migration began to swell in the latter portion of 1816, when Henri Christophe, the ruler of Northern Haiti, began to work in coalition with Bostonian activist Prince Saunders to extol the virtues of the Haitian republic among African Americans. Saunders, a teacher at the African School in Boston, was an avid supporter of Haitian migration. His correspondence with British abolitionists William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson convinced Saunders to visit Haiti, where he was inspired by his observations of Henri Christophe and the developments within the Haitian republic. Thus, in 1816, Prince Saunders published his reflections on Haiti in a pamphlet widely known



as the *Haytien Papers*. Armed with this printed evidence of Haiti's success, Saunders set out on a speaking tour of the Northern United States, promoting Haitian migration among the free black population.

Saunders's efforts inspired many influential black activists across the North. James Forten, the wealthy and influential black abolitionist from Philadelphia, strongly supported Saunders and openly endorsed Haitian migration. Likewise, Paul Cuffe, a black activist and sailor who was already engaged in promoting migration to Sierra Leone, also became intrigued by Haiti's potential. By 1817, the notion of Haitian migration had gained significant strength, and largely due to Saunders' commitment, Haitian emigration societies began to appear throughout the North. Saunders was particularly encouraged by Henri Christophe's proposal to provide financial support and ships to transport potential migrants. In 1818, however, the movement suffered another blow. Henri Christophe, their main supporter in Haiti, committed suicide in the midst of an insurrection. Although there was a small trickle of emigration over the next few years, it appeared that the movement had hit a standstill.

Yet beginning in 1820, there were a series of events that dramatically altered the course of the Haitian migration movement. Following the deaths of both Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion, a new leader, Jean Pierre Boyer, assumed control of Haiti. Most importantly, in 1820, President Boyer successfully unified the Haitian republic under his rule and, in 1822, gained control over the entire island of Hispaniola. By the summer of 1824, President Boyer was increasingly enthusiastic for blacks to come to his burgeoning country because he sought solutions to Haiti's internal problems and hoped that a migration of black Americans could bolster the economy.

Boyer was able to win black support by implementing two effective strategies; he articulated a political philosophy that resonated with black leaders and created a plan that addressed their most fundamental needs. Although Boyer would later come under crushing criticism for his controversial policies and inept leadership, which eventually caused him to resign and flee Haiti in 1843, he earned widespread support among blacks in the United States during the mid-1820s. His popularity rested in part on the fact that he espoused strong Pan-African leanings; in particular, he emphasized that all people of African descent would find brotherhood, equality, and citizenship in Haiti. For black leaders in the United States, who were desperately seeking

an asylum for their people, Boyer's Pan-African rhetoric certainly would have held tremendous appeal. Even more appealing, however, was President Boyer's special plan to encourage immigration to his country.

In June 1824, Boyer dispatched a representative, Jonas Granville, to travel throughout the United States and unveil his proposal for Haitian migration: the Haitian government agreed to pay part of their travel expenses and provide fertile land, tools, schooling, and most importantly, full citizenship. This plan was so appealing that over the next few years, the Haitian government subsidized the transportation of over 6,000 free blacks from the Northern United States to Haiti, and by the end of the 1820s, an estimated 13,000 African Americans had migrated to Haiti. Initial reports seemed favorable; statements sent back to the United States spoke highly of the reception they received and indicated that the settlers were thriving in their new surroundings. However, the transplanted black migrants soon found themselves confronting major problems. They were culturally distinct from their Haitian brethren in a number of important ways, and they particularly struggled with language barriers and religious differences. Most importantly, however, the process of land distribution quickly frustrated the colonists, and many suspected that they had been duped. Apprehensive that the government did not intend to deliver on its promise of land, they worried they would become permanent laborers rather than independent landowners. In the face of these problems and obstacles, migration to Haiti slowed, and in fact, there was a sizable "reverse migration" of African Americans returning to the United States.

Amid growing disillusionment, there was another blow to the Haitian project. Perhaps partly in response to this reverse migration, the Haitian government announced in May 1825 that it would no longer subsidize the cost of bringing free blacks to the island. The government insisted that its decision was prompted by the immigrants' poor attitude and performance, but other political and financial considerations may have played a role. In particular, the U.S. government's refusal to unreservedly support the new Haitian republic undermined relations between residents of the two countries. Ultimately, however, what was important to the free black population in the United States is that the project of Haitian migration appeared to be a failure by the end of the 1820s.

Over the next two decades, there was little discussion about Haitian migration in the black community. Although activists continued to support Haitian independence, there

was essentially no interest in another full-scale migration. But a revival of Haitian migration plans commenced in 1858 when a Northern black activist, James Theodore Holly, began to champion the virtues of reconsidering the Haitian project. The movement was bolstered in 1859 when the Haitian government, led by President Fabre Geffrard, mimicked similar schemes from 30 years prior by agreeing to provide inducements and travel stipends to American blacks willing to relocate to Haiti. Inspired by these efforts, Holly began to openly promote Haitian migration in late 1859. As in previous years, there was support among well-respected members of the black leadership, including William Watkins and Henry Highland Garnet. In fact, by the end of 1860, Garnet was so enthusiastic about Haitian migration that he became an agent for Holly's Haitian Emigration Bureau headquartered in Boston. Unlike the movement in the 1820s, however, there was considerable dissent within the black community over the concept of emigration. Activists such as James McCune Smith and George Downing openly attacked Henry Highland Garnet and James Holly for their activities.

Even so, the Haitian project continued to move forward and gained some shocking new converts. In the spring of 1861, Frederick Douglass agreed to accompany Theodore Holly on a mission to investigate conditions in Haiti. Although he had obviously been a staunch anti-emigrationist in previous years, Douglass suddenly reversed his position and agreed that the United States was rapidly becoming inhospitable to the black race. Douglass had grown despondent about the setbacks in the 1850s, particularly the Dred Scott decision, and had arrived at the painful conclusion that free blacks might need to consider opportunities elsewhere. As a result, Douglass agreed to visit Haiti to help plan a potential exodus of voluntary migrants.

Yet in a powerful stroke of fate, Douglass never made the journey to Haiti; before they had a chance to embark, shots were fired at Fort Sumter, and the Civil War commenced. The outbreak of war prompted Douglass and many other black leaders to relinquish their emigration schemes and refocus attention on the United States, in hopes that slavery might be vanquished and the battle for suffrage might eventually succeed.

See also: Boyer, Jean Pierre; Douglass, Frederick; Garnet, Henry Highland; Haitian Revolution

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Destination, Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, served as a major place of settlement for freed slaves from North America through the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Slaves were brought from Sierra Leone to America as early as 1652. In the early 1700s, a thriving slave trade brought Africans from Sierra Leone to the plantations of South Carolina and Georgia because the rice farming skills of Africans from this particular part of Africa were in high demand. The American Revolution and its aftermath precipitated a series of attempts by Africans to settle in Sierra Leone. The revolutionary rhetoric prompted some slaves to run away, such as Thomas Peters from North Carolina who fought with the British Black Guides and Pioneers. A British Proclamation of 1775 offered freedom to slaves willing to take up arms in the service of the British. Within a few months, nearly 1,000 runaway slaves from Virginia alone had reached British lines. After the war, some 3,000 black Loyalists relocated to Nova Scotia. Thomas Peters was among this group. Peters and his family endured harsh conditions while settled in Nova Scotia, and this prompted Peters to petition the British government for redress. In 1787, 400 freed slaves from the United States, Nova Scotia, and Great Britain came to Sierra Leone and settled the Province of Freedom, which eventually became known as "Freetown." Freetown became Great Britain's first colony in West Africa. In 1792, Thomas Peters sailed to Sierra Leone with a contingent of African Americans from Nova Scotia.

The 15 ships that set sail on January 15, 1792, under the guise of the Sierra Leone Company were financed through the support of British abolitionists, including Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. An estimated 1,200 African Americans chose to make the journey of return to Sierra Leone. Former soldiers, workers, and religious leaders and their families made the journey. These included Charles Wilkinson, a former member of the Black Guides and Pioneers, and his family. Reportedly, entire congregations made the trip together. Black veterans such as Boston King also completed the sojourn. King would later document his life in his *Memoirs* published in 1798. David George, founder of the first black Baptist Church in North America, joined Wilkinson and King. The men and women in this group included both African-born and American-born blacks encompassing several age groups. One eyewitness claimed that the oldest person on one of the ships was 104 years of age.

The British governor used Freetown as a base when the British eventually gained control over the Gold Coast (now Ghana). A succession of repatriated Africans returned to Sierra Leone through the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century. These “repatriated” Africans originally from various parts of Africa came to be called Krio. The mixed-race ship captain Paul Cuffe (his mother Native American and his father of African descent) from Massachusetts visited the colony in 1811 for the purpose of possible resettlement. In 1815, Cuffe returned with 38 African Americans to settle in the colony. The American Colonization Society (ACS), created in 1816, established a settlement in neighboring Liberia for freed slaves. Sierra Leone eventually became the center of British education in West Africa. Fourah Bay College, established in 1827, served as a center for English-speaking Africans. This was the only Western-style university in Sub-Saharan Africa for more than a century. The back-to-Africa idea survived in African American history such as through the activism of James Forten, Martin Delany, and Henry McNeal Turner. The landmark case of the slave ship *Amistad* (1839–1841) culminated in the resettlement of the Africans originally aboard the ship to Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone became the first location for African American resettlement in Africa. The Krio population that descended from these resettled groups came to play a dominant role in the politics of the colony under British control. Sierra Leone gained independence from Great Britain in

April 1961 and today has a democratically elected president and a unicameral parliament with a population of about 6.1 million people. The major ethnic groups include Mende (30%), Temne (30%), and Krio (1%), along with 15 other ethno-linguistic groups. The United States has continued to have a unique relationship with Sierra Leone since the 19th century, in that U.S. aid to Sierra Leone has been estimated at about \$23 million per year for basic relief and economic development. This “relationship” has also included foreign investment. Sierra Rutile Limited (Sierra Leone has one of the world’s largest deposits of rutile—a titanium ore used as paint pigment and welding rod coatings) is owned by a consortium of U.S. and European investors. Sierra Leone continues to rely on large amounts of assistance from foreign sources, such as through the United States, Great Britain, and the European Union, and has become a major West African port of destination for African Americans since the 1960s.

*See also:* American Colonization Society; Clarkson, Thomas; Coker, Daniel; Cuffe, Paul; Wilberforce, William

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## Dismal Swamp Maroons

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From at least the mid-18th century to the Civil War, enslaved African Americans escaped bondage by fleeing to the Great Dismal Swamp, a vast, dense bog straddling the eastern border of Virginia and North Carolina. Here, adapting to the harsh conditions of swamp life, such runaways became maroons, establishing families, homes, and livelihoods in the swamp’s harsh physical environment. (The word “maroon” originates from the Spanish word *cimarron*, which once described domesticated animals that escaped settlements for uninhabited—and less hospitable—areas, such as swamps and mountains.)

One 18th-century traveler reported that the many maroons who inhabited the Dismal carved out homesteads and gardens in the swamp's high ground—narrow ridges that extended several feet above water level. Another attested to the existence of maroon “habitations” or “cabins,” as well as small fields or plots surrounding them where maroons could plant corn or raise animals pilfered from surrounding plantations. Maroons took advantage of the swamp's wildlife as well, by hunting, trapping, and fishing. Considerable numbers of deer, otter, raccoons, possums, pheasants, partridges, wild ducks, perch, and wild cattle presented them with prospects of hearty meals.

Maroon existence in the swamp was a settled and semi-permanent one, possibly based in small, dispersed communities. A later visitor confidently concluded that many generations of maroons had survived in the swamp. And one who had lived as a fugitive there for a short time subsequently insisted that men and women raised children in the Dismal who had never left its limits.

Though scholars disagree on the exact number of maroons who inhabited the Dismal Swamp, runaway slave advertisements, travel accounts, published personal narratives, and contemporary newspaper and magazine articles all suggest that anywhere from several hundred to 2,000 individual runaways sought freedom and forged communities in the swamp during the 18th and 19th centuries. What is more certain is the mobile and dynamic nature of maroon life within the Dismal. After the Revolutionary War, maroons joined free and enslaved African Americans in harvesting timber, cutting shingles, digging canals, dredging ditches, piloting flatboats, and cultivating crops in the swamp.

By 1800, large-scale economic forces had considerably altered the initial shape and size of the Dismal Swamp. Large commercial interests (including a canal company and several logging enterprises) had constructed roads and waterways throughout, allowing so-called shingle-getters easy passage to stands of cedar trees in the swamp's depths, which were felled and cut into shingles for sale in nearby Norfolk, Virginia. Even tourists traveled to the center of the swamp to taste the supposed medicinal water of its legendary Lake Drummond.

Maroons adapted to the changing conditions of swamp life by relying specifically on the commerce and community that permeated the physical boundaries of the Dismal. Unlike their 18th-century counterparts, who had fled slave

society to a relatively impenetrable and uncharted wilderness, Dismal Swamp maroons of the 19th century sought refuge and freedom within a space largely planned, managed, and controlled by various slave-owning commercial businesses. Divisions in ownership and activity within the Dismal shaped how the swamp's various inhabitants—slave shingle-getters, free and slave lumbermen, ditch diggers, canal workers, cart boys, and maroons—lived and to what degree these “swampers” were documented for posterity.

Though archaeological research is ongoing, the existing historical evidence for 19th-century maroon life in the swamp suggests that runaways were inextricably involved in the commerce and community of those who worked and lived in and near the swamp. African American shingle-getters and their supervisors likely incorporated maroons into lumbering operations, operating an informal economy that provided more shingles for market and a degree of freedom and income for maroons. Maroons were part of a larger African American role in directing swamp activity. Free and enslaved African Americans drove mules that hauled much of the lumber from remote areas of the swamp to various canals along an intricate network of wooden or “corduroy” roads, which could extend five or six miles into the dense cane-brake. Those who walked the company's log causeways and muddy towpaths were primarily African Americans, as were most of the shingle-getters who collected lumber and cut shingles, the cart headmen who drove carts down company roads, the cart boys who loaded carts and assisted cart headmen in hauling lumber, the road hands who repaired and constructed roads, and the lighter men who piloted small craft through the logging companies' canals. Maroons likely worked alongside free and enslaved African Americans engaged in the broad range of everyday swamp activities.

Unlike many of the larger maroon communities in the Caribbean and South America—often physically isolated entities of runaways existing on the margins of the dominant slave society, such as those in Suriname and Brazil—those of maroons in the Dismal Swamp appear to have been communities within communities, whose members may have been set apart from others not so much by space but by the legal status they renounced and the fugitive status they embraced.

Despite one historian's insistence, long ago, that dozens of maroon communities once existed within the present limits of the United States, next to nothing is known about

the nature, composition, or even location of most of these communities, including those in the Dismal Swamp. Much more is known about maroons further south, where oral histories and written documents provide the framework for reconstructing the collective pasts of sizable maroon societies such as those in 18th-century Suriname and Jamaica. Cultural anthropologists and historians pioneered the study of maroon societies by examining maroon cultures in South America and the Caribbean. Today, historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists are devising new ways of uncovering the everyday lives of North American maroons, including those who succeeded in creating an alternative to bondage within the Great Dismal Swamp.

*See also:* Fugitive Slaves; Slave Resistance

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## Domestic Slave Trade

The domestic slave trade, or the interstate slave trade, was part of a vast forced migration of slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries. As new portions of the South became available for settlement, white migrants relied on African American slaves to do the work necessary to establish farms and plantations. Forced migration transferred slaves to Georgia and South Carolina in the early 19th century, but the “Cotton Kingdom” that stretched across Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas became the primary destination for slaves after 1810. It is estimated that between 1810 and 1860, over 1 million slaves were forced to leave behind family and familiar surroundings and begin life anew in the Deep South.

It was the acquisition of new land—typically through the conquest of Native Americans—and the declining

agriculture in settled land that created the necessary conditions for the interstate slave trade. The American government forced Native Americans to sign a series of unfavorable treaties after the War of 1812. Indians gave up territory that would become the “Black Belt” in exchange for land in arid Oklahoma. Whites who moved to the rich, fertile soil along the South’s river system were hungry for laborers who would convert the virgin lands to productive farms and plantations. They found these laborers in the Chesapeake region, where Virginia and Maryland slaveholders were making the transition away from tobacco cultivation. These new agricultural forms demanded fewer slaves, and so masters along the Atlantic seaboard were eager to sell their slaves.

Slave owners in the emerging regions of the South had several options when it came to procuring labor for their new farms. White planters often migrated with a sizable number of bondservants and were selective about who they brought to the frontier. Males ages 15 to 25 were the most highly coveted group because they could withstand the most labor. Slaveholders also wanted a fair share of young women on new farms, mainly in the hopes of increasing their slave ownership through reproduction. Masters also augmented their slave force by traveling to the Chesapeake region to purchase more workers. Such journeys gave slaveholders the opportunity to visit friends and family even as they scoured the countryside for likely new slaves to join their workforce. Planters typically purchased 20 or more slaves on such ventures and then forced them to travel to the frontier. Andrew Durnford, a biracial sugar grower from Louisiana, traveled to Richmond, Virginia, in 1835 to purchase more slaves for his plantation. He traveled the countryside, purchasing 25 bondservants for \$6,876. Migration to the frontier and planters purchasing their own slaves in the Chesapeake were more common from 1800 to 1830, but then declined in importance as the interstate slave trade gained in strength and sophistication.

The domestic slave trade, which accounted for 50 to 60 percent of all forced migrations, was the final method for shifting slaves to the emerging Southwest. Speculation in slaves grew from paltry beginnings to become one of the most sophisticated, well-organized, and visible occupations in the antebellum South. Slave traders, or speculators, seized the opportunity to make money in the high-risk, high-reward venture that came to be the largest enterprise in the South outside of the plantation system. Roving speculators combed the Chesapeake searching for “likely”

slaves. They visited farms and plantations, buying up men and women who had become disposable or who proved intractable. Slave traders could also be seen at auctions, paying for slaves during an estate sale, or purchasing runaways from the sheriff on the courthouse steps. By the 1840s, slave traders set up their own auction houses that specialized in buying, selling, and renting slaves. Planters and slave traders from the Deep South crowded into these auction houses, particularly in Richmond, Virginia, in search of “likely” slaves.

Slave traders were looking for specific types of slaves and tailored their purchases accordingly. They broke up families with virtually no regard, and most slaves in the Upper South knew of the sale of at least one close family member; slaves in the Chesapeake had a 30 percent chance of being sold to the Deep South until their mid-twenties. Speculators typically purchased slaves ages 19 to 25 who appeared to be in good health. These “no. 1 men,” as they came to be called in the slave market, might sell for \$1,500 in Richmond in 1860. “Best boys,” ages 15 to 18, commanded \$200 less. Young women with children were prized as “breeders” and could be expected to fetch a higher price than women who had not given birth. Slaves with specific skills, such as carpenters or blacksmiths, were worth even more in the slave market. Slave traders disdained “scrubs,” bondservants who were old or who had significant physical problems that limited their work capacity. The slaves who commanded the highest prices were known as “fancy girls.” These attractive young women, often biracial, became reluctant concubines of their new masters. Slave traders were known to pay \$1,700 in the Upper South for “fancy girls” and sold them for even more in the Deep South.

Once purchased, the slaves were taken to pens or jails found in cities such as Baltimore, Alexandria, Norfolk, and Richmond. They might wait for anywhere from one day to several weeks before beginning the journey to the Southwest. The first slave pens were located on the outskirts of towns and were little more than dilapidated huts. As the trade became more sophisticated, speculators built larger jails that were closer to wharves (so that slaves could be quickly loaded on ships) or county courthouses (so that transactions could easily be recorded). These slave jails became standard features of the urban landscape, and curious visitors from the North and Europe often made it a point to visit them. Planters from the Deep South also visited the pens, but in the hopes of purchasing slaves. Most jails

had a main office where slave traders might serve wine to prospective customers. Behind the office was an open yard where slaves could be assembled, either for exercise or for inspection prior to sale. Large rooms abutted the yard, and here slaves slept on the ground, men in one room and women in another. The tall walls around the jails kept slaves in and curious stares out.

Once slave traders gathered a sizable number of slaves, they arranged for transportation to the slave markets of the Deep South. The most common, and visible, way to move bondservants in this “Second Middle Passage” was a *coffle*. Anywhere from 50 to 150 slaves made up a *coffle*, which was essentially a three-month forced march to Mississippi or Louisiana. Young male slaves were manacled together in pairs, a set of handcuffs cutting into the wrist of each person. A rope or chain was threaded through the handcuffs, so that the slaves moved in two parallel lines. They typically remained in handcuffs around the clock for a week or so, until the threat of escape diminished. Women, children, and older slaves trudged alongside the *coffle* if they could maintain the pace, or they rode in supply wagons. Slaves slept on the ground at night and ate meager provisions from the slave trader’s supplies. Speculators sold their slaves singly or in groups and might bargain with a plantation owner along the roadside or bring the *coffle* to a slave pen in a Deep South city. Although most slaves arrived in New Orleans or Natchez, most midsized towns such as Memphis, Vicksburg, Jackson, Baton Rouge, Huntsville, Mobile, and Little Rock had thriving slave trades.

Speculators also transported slaves in other ways. The coastwise trade, travel in sailing vessels along the Atlantic seaboard, Florida, and the Gulf of Mexico, was a fast and reliable way to send slaves from the Chesapeake to New Orleans. Isaac Franklin and John Armfield, the two most successful interstate slave traders in American history, purchased three ships and shipped slaves at regular intervals. Armfield purchased the slaves in the Washington, D.C., area and put them on ships, and Franklin sold them in New Orleans. The coastwise trade’s two-week voyage approximated the Middle Passage from Africa in its conditions and treatment of slaves. That is to say, bondservants were packed tightly in cargo holds and normally not allowed on deck.

Speculators also transported slaves on the rivers and railroads. Slaves from the Chesapeake marched to the western edge of present-day West Virginia and boarded flatboats for a voyage to Natchez. Speculators who purchased



*Engraving titled "United States Slave Trade, 1830." The scene shows a ship and a boat, each loaded with slaves, slaves working in gangs, and one man being flogged. The United States capitol, with its flag waving, overlooks the scene in the distance. (Library of Congress)*

slaves in Kentucky and Tennessee normally sent their slaves on steamboats to New Orleans. They were held in the cargo hold, next to the rest of the freight. By the 1850s, slave traders also used railroads to send their slaves to the Deep South. Ships, flatboats, steamboats, and the railroads were more efficient than the coffles, but also more expensive. The more established slave traders tended to use these types of transportation, whereas small speculators relied on coffles.

Once slaves arrived in the slave emporiums of the Deep South, slave traders prepared them for sale. Slaves who had walked for four months needed some time to recover so that they could look their best for sale. Speculators increased the diet of these slaves and dressed them in better clothing to give the appearance of humane treatment. William Wells Brown, a slave who worked for a slave trader, recalled how his owner altered the appearance of bondservants so that they might be sold more readily. Brown was told to pluck gray beards, rub a blackening substance on gray hair, and put grease into the creases of the slaves' faces. He recalled that slaves looked decades younger after he was through with them. Because a slave's value declined with age, a slave trader might earn a greater profit by using such tactics. Speculators also coached slaves on what to say and how to present themselves to prospective buyers.

Slave traders quickly, and rightfully, gained a reputation for double-dealing, and so prospective buyers were wary in

their purchases. Whites customarily examined slaves prior to purchasing them. Male slaves might have to jump, run, or climb stairs to prove their vigor. Females opened and closed their hands quickly to show they could easily pick cotton. Potential buyers squeezed muscles, poked abdomens, and examined teeth, all in the hopes of determining the truth about slaves. Slaves, women included, customarily stripped to the waist for such inspections; buyers perceived scars on a slave's back as evidence of difficulty or unruliness. Women might also undergo a rude gynecological exam to determine whether or not they were capable of bearing children.

Slaves who suffered these indignities were not merely passive actors in the sale. They often actively influenced their purchasers. When a potential buyer seemed too harsh or unappealing, slaves sulked or performed requests with a minimum amount of exertion. In contrast, when slaves encountered a potential buyer who seemed favorable, they presented a much more appealing front. It seems that just as buyers sized up slaves, bondservants assessed purchasers. Slaves also shared gossip and information in the slave markets. The slaves who spent time in the jail shared knowledge with new arrivals, ensuring that bondservants could present a relatively united front against purchasers and traders. A number of slaves ran errands for slave traders and had access to outside information. It seems that slave markets became collecting points for transmission of information, and

news and rumors spread to various plantations through the slave market.

There were other ways in which slaves resisted the interstate slave trade. One Virginia slave, when sold away from her husband and children, jumped out of the third floor of a seedy Washington tavern that served as a collection point for slave traders. The woman, known only as Anna, broke her back and shattered her arms. Slaves were known to maim themselves in order to halt a sale. They had a keen appreciation of the price attached to their bodies and knew that any significant drop in their value could prevent a sale. A Maryland slave, for instance, chopped off his hand when he learned that a slave trader had purchased him. Slaves also collectively resisted the interstate slave trade. In 1841, the brig *Creole* was carrying 135 slaves to New Orleans when a bondservant named Madison Washington led an armed rebellion. The slaves attacked the crew with knives and then took control of the ship and steered it toward the Bahamas. When the ship reached Nassau, the British government allowed the slaves to remain on the island. Violent resistance to the interstate slave trade, though, was rare, sporadic, and unable to slow down the scale of speculation.

Slaves who forcibly objected to the interstate slave trade touched on important issues in the South and raised troubling questions for white Southerners. One of the primary defenses of slavery was that it benefited slaves in a number of ways—providing food, clothing, and shelter, for instance. Masters typically made the argument that they treated their slaves well, and their slaves were content to be in bondage. The interstate slave trade illustrated this argument's fallacy. The forcible separation of families through the interstate slave trade was one of the most horrible features of antebellum slavery, and former slaves recalled auctions, sales, and family breakups in vivid terms. Charles Ball remembered how his mother pleaded with a slave trader not to take Ball, then about eight years old. The trader responded by striking the woman. John Randolph, the Virginia legislator, said the most persuasive orator he had ever heard was a woman, and her rostrum was the auction block.

The tremendous irony of the domestic slave trade is that even as it gained in visibility and importance, white Southerners went to great lengths to deny its influence and volume. The tragic consequences of forced migration did not fit with their notions that slave masters were relatively kind toward their slaves. The public presentation and sale of slaves became so objectionable in the Upper South that

traders took great pains to minimize the general public's exposure to the interstate slave trade. Whereas speculators had once marched coffles past the U.S. capitol, they moved them at night to avoid detection. The coastwise trade, although more expensive, kept slaves out of public view, especially when compared to an overland march. Successful slave traders built up a network of affiliates and employees who handled the day-to-day affairs of buying, selling, and transporting slaves. They insulated themselves in the process from the most revolting and offensive aspects of the commerce in human beings. Slave traders even tried to market their business, claiming they never broke up families or never purchased slaves whom they suspected of being recently kidnapped into slavery. Speculators did an effective job of presenting their business as a necessary one that operated within the bounds of human decency.

Slave traders in the Lower South faced other obstacles to acceptance of their business. Here, white citizens did not fret over the consequences of the slave trade on the slaves. Instead they worried about the number and types of bondservants who were ensnared in the commerce. Some of the slaves ostensibly involved in the Nat Turner slave revolt were sold to speculators, and white residents of the Deep South were concerned that they were importing dangerous and rebellious bondservants. Louisiana prohibited the interstate slave trade for a year following the Turner rebellion, and Mississippi and Alabama passed similar prohibitions in the 1830s. Such laws were not typically enforced and remained on the statute books for only a short time. There was simply too much demand for slaves in the Deep South to limit the domestic slave trade in any meaningful way.

The interstate slave trade handsomely rewarded those traders who were successful. Traders might turn a 30 percent profit on their business, although estimates are difficult given the fragmentary nature of the evidence. Many traders were quickly squeezed out of the business, but those who prospered became rich beyond imagination. Isaac Franklin sold his slave trading empire and retired to Tennessee and Louisiana. He owned 8,500 acres and 550 slaves on three Louisiana plantations and another plantation in Gallatin, Tennessee. Franklin's young wife spent \$10,000 furnishing their two-story brick mansion. He also owned shares in the Commercial Bank of Manchester and the Nashville and Gallatin Turnpike Company and owned land in Texas. He was literally one of the richest men in the United States.



The domestic slave trade had significant consequences for white and black Southerners. The slave population of the “Cotton Kingdom” was a youthful one. Traders and southwestern planters favored young slaves who could do more labor and procreate more often than older slaves. In Alabama, for instance, nearly 40 percent of slaves were under the age of 25, a figure significantly higher than that of the established states of the South. The domestic slave trade also unified slave culture by softening regional differences. Dialects and practices that were noticeable in eastern Virginia or Savannah became indistinguishable in Louisiana. Slaves caught in the coils of the internal slave trade had to drop their regional identification and rely on one another to survive the shock of transportation to the Deep South. In this fashion, the “Second Middle Passage” closely resembled the first journey across the Atlantic Ocean. The domestic slave trade also provided much of the labor that built the states of the Deep South, and it was these states that gained ascendancy in Southern politics in the 1850s. In many ways, the interstate slave trade was the cornerstone of Southern society because it was the means to perpetuate slavery by spreading it to new regions.

*See also:* Family Patterns; Slave Breeding

Robert Gudmestad

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## Douglass, Anna Murray

Anna Murray Douglass (ca. 1813–1882) was the wife of world-renowned black abolitionist Frederick Douglass. A loving, selfless giver, Anna spent most of her adult life

willingly in the large shadow of her heroic husband. But she too performed great feats, if only from the anonymity of her home, and from that base, she helped to change the world.

Anna Murray came of age in antebellum Baltimore, a place resonating under the growing division sweeping the nation over slavery. In Baltimore, antislavery philosophy and abolitionist sentiment existed side-by-side with the practical realities of bondage and an ever-expanding domestic slave trade, which saw tens of thousands sold south from the Port of Baltimore. Anna was not native to the city, however. Rather, she was born on the other side of the Chesapeake, near the town of Denton, Caroline County, on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, where her ancestors had lived as slaves, presumably for generations. Shifting economic considerations in the early 19th century ushered in an era of slave manumissions in the state. In fact, Anna’s parents, Mary and Bambarra Murray, became free mere weeks before their daughter’s 1813 birth. The 8th of ultimately 12 children, Anna was the first in her family born free. Although little is known of her childhood and adolescence on the Eastern Shore, at least some members of the Murray family (Anna to be sure, but perhaps her mother as well) had moved to Baltimore by 1830.

In Baltimore, Anna Murray found an African American population in which free blacks outnumbered slaves 3 to 1 (within a decade, 5 to 1). Yet Baltimore was unlike other Southern cities in that free blacks did not hold themselves as a separate caste; they maintained little space—social or physical—between themselves and the enslaved. Indeed, Anna Murray eventually took an enslaved man, Frederick Bailey, as her fiancée. At the time she met her future husband, Anna was working as a domestic on Caroline Street. The two young adults (Anna 25, Frederick 20) quickly grew fond of one another, becoming engaged in early 1838.

Anna Murray represented the most important of the free blacks who formed Frederick Bailey’s immediate peer circle. Indeed, his sense of this newfound love’s vulnerability to the whims of the domestic slave trade convinced Frederick to break for freedom. On September 3, 1838, wearing a sailor’s outfit fashioned by Anna, with a ticket purchased with Anna’s meager earnings, the slave Frederick Bailey stole away from Baltimore, reinventing himself, ultimately, into Frederick Douglass, free man. Packing all she owned—a feather bed and linens, dishes and flatware, and a trunk

full of clothing—Anna joined Frederick in exile. Wearing a plum dress for a bridal gown, she married Frederick in New York on September 15, 1838. Shortly thereafter, fearing slave catchers lurked at every turn, the couple moved on, settling in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Frederick Douglass, the fugitive–turned–abolitionist orator, burst on the national stage within two years of coming to New Bedford, remaining active and generally away from home. On occasion, Anna joined her husband on the abolitionist lecture circuit, but only to nearby destinations. Early on, it seems, Anna developed a sense of her most valuable contribution to the antislavery cause as behind the scenes, in support of her husband.

The Douglasses relocated to Lynn, Massachusetts, in the mid-1840s. Frederick's frequent absences—in Europe during most of 1845 and 1846, for example—caused Anna to reach out to antislavery women in Lynn and nearby Boston. Such support was appreciated, given that her family had grown quickly (four of her children were born during the first six years of their marriage). As the need grew, Anna's energies increased. At the urgings of her acquaintances, she regularly attended local antislavery gatherings—in fact, friends would often help Anna with her domestic duties at home to assure her ability to attend, though she would never stay away from her home and children too long.

Yet another relocation for the Douglass family occurred in 1848, this time to Rochester, New York. Because Rochester was a much different social climate from Lynn or New Bedford (or even Baltimore before them all), this move was hardest on Anna. The obligations of Frederick's schedule still kept him away for long stretches. Even when he was “at home,” the demands of a newspaper he began publishing, the *North Star*, kept him unavailable to Anna. Most detrimentally, the support Anna had come to appreciate in Lynn did not materialize in Rochester. Feelings of isolation, and perhaps even resentment, must have crept into her thoughts in the upstate New York home. Yet she managed. Her upbringing among strong, independent, economically savvy working women in black Baltimore no doubt prepared her well.

After the Civil War, with slavery abolished, Frederick Douglass kept up his activism—the pursuit of freedom was replaced by the struggle for equality. His hard work and commitment in the antebellum years brought some reward after the war, as he began to receive appointments and

positions that eased the family's financial burdens (though it did little to keep him home more often).

In the 1870s, the Douglasses returned to the South, moving to Washington, D.C. The family had probably hoped the change in scenery would be beneficial for Anna, who had been in poor health and spirits since her youngest child, Annie, died before the age of 12. After a few years in a handsome house on Capitol Hill, Anna and Frederick moved into a home on a beautiful tract of land in Anacostia, a rural section of the nation's capital separated from the rest by a namesake river. The homestead was dubbed Cedar Hill. Rejuvenated somewhat for a time, Anna's years at Cedar Hill were marked by her continued support of her famous husband's activism, welcoming people of all walks into her parlor and drawing room. Yet Anna's illnesses proved chronic, and the deterioration of her health continued. She died at Cedar Hill following a stroke during the summer of 1882.

Writing in 1923, Anna Murray's first biographer and eldest child, Rosetta Douglass Sprague, remarked that her parents' lives had been deeply intertwined; it was impossible to speak of one without the other. Yet within that world created by Frederick's activism, Anna crafted meaningful contributions that were often overlooked or, worse yet, attributed to her husband. For example, legend suggests, the Douglass home in Rochester was an oft-used stop on the Underground Railroad. If so, then Anna, not Frederick (as is custom), must be credited. Surely she handled the practical details of accommodating wayward strangers on a moment's notice. Yet the legend of Frederick Douglass, the “Station Master,” is likely as Anna would have preferred it. She seemed most comfortable behind the scenes. Like many of her day, we see in Anna Murray Douglass a pragmatic approach to freedom fighting, one undergirded by the ideal of family first.

*See also:* Douglass, Frederick; Fugitive Slaves; Underground Railroad

David Taft Terry

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## Douglass, Frederick

Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) was the most renowned black abolitionist in the 19th century. Born into slavery, Douglass spent his entire childhood in human bondage, a formative experience that defined the rest of his life. After escaping slavery, Douglass spent the majority of his life employing his talents as a tireless advocate for racial and gender equality. A skilled writer, an exceptional orator, and a passionate social critic, he was arguably the most influential African American in the United States during the 19th century.

Douglass was born in Talbot County in the vicinity of Maryland's Eastern Shore, probably during the month of February in 1818. The uncertainty surrounding the details of his birth reflected slavery's dehumanizing effect in antebellum America. As a child, Douglass lamented the fact that he was ignorant of his own birthday, but his lack of this knowledge was typical of most slaves. Even into adulthood, he presumed himself a year older than he probably was. A similar uncertainty also shrouded the identity of his father. Reliable evidence suggests that his father was a white man named Aaron Anthony who served as a superintendent over several plantations owned by Col. Edward Lloyd. Douglass recalled that knowledge of his biological father was commonly held among many other slaves, but it remained a limited topic of open discussion. Further complicating the issue of patrimony was the fact that Anthony was also Douglass's master. Thus Frederick Douglass entered the world amidst the complete irrationality and ambivalence of a society established on racial distinction and manipulation.

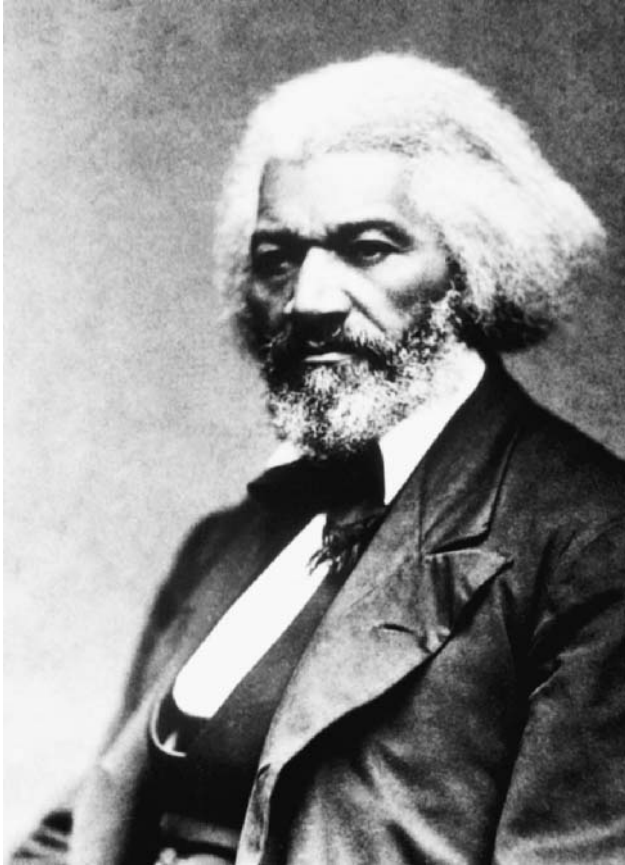
Although his father proved to be a stranger, Frederick knew only slightly more of his own mother. Harriet Bailey named her fourth child Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, but because she endured the exhausting life of a field hand, Harriet was forced to yield the care of her children to

Frederick's grandmother, Betsy Bailey. Living in his grandmother's cabin, 12 miles from the farm where Harriet had been hired out, Frederick occasionally received visits from his mother late in the evening. However, his mother died by the time he turned seven years old, and thus, his personal knowledge of her never developed.

For the first six years of his life, young Frederick did not comprehend his own enslavement. His grandmother cared for him along with many other slave children while their parents toiled in the fields. Occasionally, he heard adults fearfully refer to someone called "Old Master." Otherwise, he passed these early years playing in the woods near his grandmother's cabin, contrasted starkly with the violent remainder of his childhood. His abrupt awakening occurred when she carried him to the main house of the Lloyds' plantation. Cast into the system without his grandmother's protection, Frederick was forced to use his innate skills of adaptation.

Frederick's full indoctrination into slavery occurred over the next two years that he spent on the Lloyd plantation. The Lloyd family, one of Maryland's wealthiest, owned numerous slaves and several farms consisting of thousands of acres. Frederick had been summoned from his grandmother's side because he was now considered old enough to perform some productive tasks. Too young for field labor, he helped drive cattle, cleaned the front yard, and retrieved birds during hunting expeditions. In many respects, Frederick was treated more like an animal than a child during this period of his life. He ate cornmeal mush with his hands from a common trough placed on the ground that he and other children had been called to like pigs. He physically competed for food and remained hungry the majority of the time. His wardrobe consisted of a knee-length linen shirt, and he suffered intensely during the cold winter months. He often fashioned a burlap sack into a kind of sleeping bag that protected his upper body but exposed his feet to frostbite. Frederick also witnessed, for the first time in his life, the bloody and even sadistic punishment that slaves endured. Ultimately, his two years at the Lloyds' solidified his understanding that slavery rested on a foundation of barbaric cruelty.

Perhaps the most significant turning point in Frederick's life occurred at the age of eight, when he moved to Baltimore to serve the family of Hugh Auld, brother to Colonel Lloyd's son-in-law. Life in the city, even as a slave, afforded Frederick numerous opportunities for social interaction



*Editor, orator, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass was the foremost African American leader of the 19th century in the United States. He was also an advocate for women's suffrage. (National Archives)*

and self-discovery that had been denied him on the plantation. His primary responsibility consisted of watching over the Aulds' young son, Thomas. Compared to the plantation, Frederick found this an agreeable task. He also discovered that most slaves in town, including himself, ate more and dressed better than those in the country. His new mistress, Sophia Auld, possessed no prior experience commanding slaves, and she initially proved to be quite lenient. This manifested when Sophia attempted to teach Frederick to read until Master Hugh intervened. She cooperated with her husband's desire and advocated Frederick's continued ignorance. Nevertheless, living with the Auld family in Baltimore opened a door of opportunity that he later interpreted as a providential event.

Despite the Aulds' disdain for educating slaves, Frederick embraced considerable risks and embarked on an independent journey of self-education. Armed with the knowledge of only a few letters of the alphabet, he turned

the streets of Baltimore into a battleground and waged war against his own illiteracy. During short intervals of leisure time, Frederick practiced street-writing with a piece of chalk and challenged white boys he met to surpass his skill. After each episode, he mastered the script they left behind until he eventually comprehended the entire alphabet. Whenever Frederick found himself alone in the Aulds' home, he studied young Thomas's school lessons or read essays on liberty in a popular eloquence manual titled *The Columbian Orator*. Without a tutor or adult supervision, the child sharpened his own intellect. Frederick's determination to teach himself to read, and his clever methods of soliciting the unwitting aid of white children, foreshadowed the trenchant personality that characterized him throughout adulthood. However, just as Master Hugh had warned, Frederick discovered that the more knowledge he acquired, the more he despised his wretched condition of bondage.

After seven years in Baltimore, Frederick returned to the country as part of the division of his deceased master's estate and commenced a new phase of his enslavement. He now became the property of Master Hugh's brother, Captain Thomas Auld, and lived only a few miles from the old Lloyd plantation. He considered Captain Auld a harsh master, and the captain concluded that city life had turned Frederick into a disobedient slave. A few months later, the captain hired out Frederick to work for Edward Covey, a local farmer of modest income who possessed a reputation as a "slave breaker." Covey accepted responsibility for him on January 1, 1833, as Frederick engaged in arduous field labor for the first time in his life. Likewise, for the first time in his life, Frederick also endured regular beatings; Covey whipped him almost every week for the first six months. Physically defeated and emotionally broken, Frederick reached the lowest ebb of his life in slavery. The turning point arrived when he unexpectedly concentrated years of latent aggression and physically struck back at Covey during a routine punishment. A lengthy fight ensued, but Covey remained incapable of subduing Frederick by himself. Edward Covey never struck him again. Frederick surmised that Covey's livelihood depended on his notoriety as a "slave breaker," and thus he never reported the incident. In striking a white man, Frederick had risked his life but he now determined to acquire freedom regardless of the consequences.

Over the next two years, Frederick organized a secret school for slaves, plotted a failed escape attempt, and

eventually returned to Baltimore. Captain Auld decided that Frederick offered more profit if he learned a trade in the city. He resumed his former residence with Hugh Auld, who hired out Frederick's labor to a shipyard. Resisting the physical abuse of fellow white laborers, he became a skilled ship caulker and earned an excellent wage. Frederick even secured an arrangement where he supplied his own room and board before transferring the balance of his salary to Master Hugh. At this point, Frederick's life reached a plateau. As a slave, he could not rise much higher. However, his desire for liberty only intensified.

Assisted by friends in Baltimore, Frederick finally obtained his own freedom when he escaped from slavery on September 3, 1838. A free black house servant, Anna Murray, loaned Frederick money and sewed a sailor's uniform as his escape attire. Obtaining the papers of a free black sailor, he traveled by train and steamboat to Philadelphia and then New York. Twelve days later, Anna joined him, and the two married. Frederick wished to travel even farther north and avoid the slave catchers who roamed the streets of New York. The newlyweds soon settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where Frederick intended to employ his caulker's trade in the region's shipping industry. Nathan Johnson, a trusted contact in New Bedford, recommended that Frederick change his name as a precautionary measure. Johnson happened to be reading a Sir Walter Scott novel, *The Lady of the Lake*, when he suggested that Frederick adopt the name of one of the book's characters. Frederick Bailey, the slave from Maryland, thus became Frederick Douglass, the citizen of Massachusetts.

Frederick and Anna established their home in New Bedford as they attempted to enjoy the benefits of freedom. During the following decade, the Douglass family expanded as Anna gave birth to one daughter and three sons. She also continued her employment as a domestic laborer. Frederick worked as a general laborer until he eventually found employment utilizing his skill as a ship caulker. The family attended the African Methodist Episcopal Church, where Douglass served as a lay leader. During his limited spare time, Douglass attended antislavery meetings and occasionally offered brief expressions of his own experience. He also began to read the abolitionist publication the *Liberator*. Reflecting the polemical mind of its editor, William Lloyd Garrison, the newspaper ignited Douglass's emotions and emboldened him toward activism.

Less than three years removed from slavery, Douglass approached another transitional moment when he spoke at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's convention on Nantucket Island in August 1841. Although his technical skill as an orator remained underdeveloped, the speech carried itself with a passion that only accompanies the truth. Douglass mesmerized the conference with his personal odyssey of abuse, injustice, and deliverance. William Lloyd Garrison, who was seated in the audience, later stated that Douglass provoked his anger against slavery to a depth Garrison himself had never imagined. He eventually prevailed upon Douglass to dedicate all his natural ability to the full-time service of abolition. After much discussion, Douglass consented and became a lecturing agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.

Over the next four years, Douglass traveled extensively throughout New England and across the Midwest, touring with other lecturers of the Massachusetts and American anti-slavery societies, respectively. He found himself continually in the company of erudite peers who sharpened his own mind through repetitive contact. Douglass attended their lectures, read voraciously, and engaged in discussions with supporters and detractors alike. He immersed himself in the experience with the same intensity and perseverance that characterized his other endeavors. Continual public speaking also honed his natural abilities and instilled Douglass with a burgeoning sense of self-confidence. Every time Douglass ascended a platform and presented a public oration, his words produced an iconoclastic effect. His eloquence, demeanor, and message always eroded the contemporary misconception of the happy Southern slave, incapable of intellectual maturity. However, Douglass and his fellow abolitionists occasionally provoked a violent response from some disgruntled listeners, who hurled garbage at them or incited mob violence. Douglass broke his hand during such an attack in Pendleton, Indiana, in 1843. Notwithstanding such obstacles, Douglass rapidly evolved as a social commentator, and his speeches soon reflected a refined sophistication on broader issues concerning political expediency and the problem of northern racism.

Despite his emerging reputation, Douglass remained a fugitive slave with a master in Maryland who still legally claimed him as human property. When he testified about his life in slavery, Douglass omitted specific details that might potentially reveal his identity. Combined with his polished stage persona, the mysterious omissions fueled

criticism that Douglass never had been a slave. Some detractors argued that he obviously possessed a formal education that would have been denied to someone raised in slavery. Public speculation maintained pace with his growing popularity. Douglass understood that he could not continue his assertive stand against slavery unless he removed all doubts about the veracity of his testimony. However, full self-disclosure would certainly jeopardize his public career as an abolitionist, not to mention his freedom.

Embracing tremendous personal risk, Douglass revealed his identity and produced one of the great contributions of his life when he published the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845). A gripping memoir that revealed the salient details of his life in slavery, he drafted the entire manuscript during the winter of 1844–1845. Sparing only the vital details of escape and a few names of individuals who had proved particularly helpful, he exposed the harsh truth of his life as a slave and those who imposed it on him. The *Narrative* has survived as one of his most enduring accomplishments. It contributed to the discordant national dialogue on slavery and revealed the paradox of so-called humane bondage in the land of human liberty. However, the true power of the *Narrative* rested on its foundation of moral precision. Totally devoid of ambiguity, Douglass compelled the reader to construct a value judgment as to whether slavery was good or evil. Demonstrating that it was evil, he suggested that its continued existence poisoned the unique American experiment. Although many other slave narratives found their way into an American readership, Douglass's first literary effort stands among the most significant and effective of this genre. His writing elicited just as much speculation as his public speaking. Again, many questioned the authenticity of his book as much as they did Douglass himself. However, backed by Garrison and other abolitionists, he withstood all criticism and confirmed his identity as the slave Frederick Bailey of Maryland. The *Narrative* sold at a steady pace. By the summer of 1845, success and notoriety had made Douglass the most famous fugitive in the United States.

Accepting the counsel of friends and associates, Douglass sailed to Great Britain in August 1845, where he was warmly received by an abolitionist nation and momentarily beyond the grasp of American slave-catchers. Douglass passed the next 20 months touring England, Scotland, and Ireland. Overall, the trip proved an astounding success as he generated enthusiasm among English reformers who

maintained interest in similar social issues in the United States. However, Douglass also managed to generate controversy during this hiatus. He expressed solidarity with supporters of Irish independence, and most famously, he attacked the American temperance movement during a speech at the World Temperance Convention held in London in August 1846. Douglass faulted the movement's American wing for its failure to condemn the Southern practice of pacifying slaves with alcohol.

Last, Douglass himself became the object of disagreement among American abolitionists when two English patrons raised enough money to purchase his freedom from the Auld family in Maryland. Ideologically, many American abolitionists rejected the practice of purchasing fugitives on the principle that it acknowledged the right of the slave owner to possess human property. Douglass agreed with this philosophy but eventually consented to the transaction in recognition of the danger that awaited him. In December 1846, Hugh Auld legally authorized the manumission of Douglass in exchange for \$710.96. In rebuttal to criticisms of this purchase, Douglass responded that he more appropriately viewed his old master as a kidnapper and the money as his ransom. Unencumbered by fugitive status, Douglass argued that his effectiveness as an abolitionist would only increase with the purchase of his freedom.

Ready to commence a new phase in his life, Douglass returned to the United States four months later as a legally free man for the first time. Supplied with a generous donation from English supporters, he moved his family to Rochester, New York, and established a weekly journal titled *North Star*. As the name suggested, Douglass intended his paper to shine as a beacon of freedom for enslaved persons. However, he also espoused a multitude of contemporary reforms such as temperance, women's rights, and full social equality for free African Americans. His move to western New York also created physical separation from the continual influence of the Garrisonian clique of abolitionists in Massachusetts. Garrison had served as a mentor for Douglass since their first meeting. However, the two men possessed ideological differences that grew as Douglass became more aware of own his distinctive voice within the chorus of abolitionist protest. Although Garrison primarily appealed to human intellect and conscience through moral persuasion, Douglass affirmed the employment of political pressure and eventually violence, if it hastened the demise of slavery. Thus, the inaugural issue of *North*

*Star* on December 3, 1847, publicly declared that Frederick Douglass had truly become his own man in every sense of the word.

During his transition into the field of journalism, Douglass sustained tremendous financial adversity and personal scrutiny. One of many abolitionist papers, the *North Star* gradually established a readership while Douglass financed the enterprise through a variety of methods. He sought donations, mortgaged his Rochester home, and returned to the lecture circuit for several months of the year. Surrounded by financial obstacles, he received personal assistance from Julia Griffiths, an acquaintance from England who moved to Rochester and served as Douglass's business manager. Griffiths organized the finances of *North Star*, arranged Douglass's speaking engagements, and soon accompanied him the majority of the time. Combined with the fact that she also resided in the Douglass home, rumors accumulated as to the nature of their relationship. Despite the scandalous remarks of detractors, she lived with the Douglass family until 1852 and did not return to England until 1855. The *North Star* finally attained financial stability by 1851 as it merged with another publication and became *Frederick Douglass' Paper*.

Leading up to the Civil War, the years in Rochester remained eventful for Douglass and his family. Anna remained immersed in domestic responsibility. She gave birth to a fifth and final child, Annie, in 1849. Douglass himself selected projects and pursued allies consistent with his life's purpose. He protested the segregationist policies of the Rochester public schools until they reversed course in 1857. Douglass also increased his activism and solidarity with the early feminist movement. He advocated for women's right to vote and acquainted himself with key leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Emboldened by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, which conspired to turn the federal government into the accomplice of slave catchers, Douglass increased his participation in the Underground Railroad. His Rochester home served as a refuge for many runaways who continued on to nearby Canada. On July 5, 1852, Douglass delivered his famous "Fifth of July" speech, one of the most memorable of his entire career. Taking advantage of the fact that the Fourth of July fell on a Sunday in 1852, which postponed observance until the next day, he crafted the coincidence into a powerful metaphor of freedom delayed for African Americans. Finally, Douglass wrote a novella, *The Heroic*

*Slave* (1852), and *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). The former, about a violent slave rebellion, was among the first works of published African American fiction, and the latter served as an addendum to his earlier autobiography.

As indicated by his literary experimentation, Douglass expressed increasing agreement with any organization or person who shared an assertive antislavery strategy as the issue continued to polarize the nation. In 1848, Douglass attended the convention of the Free Soil Party, which advocated the permanent exclusion of slavery in the western territories. The previous year, Douglass had met John Brown, arguably the most radical abolitionist in American history. Brown encouraged Douglass to contemplate the ultimate necessity of overthrowing slavery by the most violent means. During an 1849 speech in Boston, Douglass concurred when he first publicly advocated the armed resistance of Southern slaves. Two months before his famous raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859, Brown met with Douglass a final time and asked him to join the attack on the federal arsenal. Although Douglass provided some earlier financial assistance, he refused the offer and considered the plan ill-fated and unsupported. After the capture of Brown and his men, rumors circulated that associated Douglass with the conspiracy. A previously scheduled trip to Europe offered Douglass a convenient escape from intensive media scrutiny that speculated on his involvement in the plot. In November, he sailed across the Atlantic and completed another successful lecture tour of England while investigations in the United States exonerated him. However, the tragic news of his youngest daughter's death shortened his visit, and Douglass returned home in May 1860.

Reappearing in time to witness the contentious presidential campaign and its violent aftermath, Douglass supported Lincoln and the Republicans as the party of lesser evil rather than the party of moral certitude. He disapproved of the tone of Lincoln's inaugural speech, and the president's vow to protect slavery in the states where it already existed caused Douglass tremendous disappointment. However, the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter transformed the dynamics of the secession crisis. Douglass welcomed the change, and he seized the opportunity that it provided.

The Civil War inspired Frederick Douglass toward some of his most ardent and effective activism. He focused significant energy into two objectives: the complete and immediate emancipation of all enslaved persons and the enlistment of black servicemen on behalf of the Union. Over

the next two years, Douglass's editorials and speeches reflected his passionate support of these goals as he continually pressed for their adoption by government leadership. After Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Douglass offered more enthusiastic approval in recognition of the fact that a Union victory now guaranteed the defeat of slavery. He actively recruited for the Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry, the first black regiment in the Union Army, which also included two of his own sons. Douglass published an impassioned editorial titled "Men of Color to Arms." Reprinted in newspapers across the North and utilized as a recruiting poster, the speech reflected the need for former slaves to strike a blow on behalf of their own freedom. However, Douglass appealed to President Lincoln when he discovered the unequal treatment of black soldiers, who received inadequate military support and salary in comparison to white soldiers. That same year, Douglass himself received an offer from the War Department to accept a commission and recruit escaped slaves into the Union Army in the lower Mississippi Valley. Although he was eager to accept this responsibility, the official commission never escaped the bureaucratic confines of Washington, D.C. Subsequently, Douglass resumed his previous duties as the war concluded and even returned to his old hometown of Baltimore, where he visited his sister Eliza for the first time in 30 years. The war to save the Union and abolish slavery had finally been won, and Douglass turned his attention to the arduous task of building a peaceful coexistence. Douglass approached the immediate postwar period with some ambivalence as his life's purpose as an abolitionist suddenly concluded. However, he soon realized that the context had changed, but equality still remained the goal. Douglass then focused on achieving the full rights of citizenship for African Americans. Naturally, he welcomed the 13th and 14th Amendments but his support of the 15th Amendment strained his alliance with American feminists. The leadership of women's suffrage groups opposed enfranchising black men unless such enfranchisement included all women as well. Douglass argued that growing violence against freedmen demanded their employment of the ballot in order to legitimize their political participation. During the next several years, he observed the reconstruction of the South with increasing concern and opposed the return to power of antebellum elitists.

The next decade marked a period of dramatic change for Douglass. He purchased and edited the *New National*

*Era* beginning in 1870. Over the next few years, he crafted the endeavor into an editorial sounding board for evolving racial issues that emerged during Reconstruction. When a fire destroyed his home, along with many of his papers, Douglass moved to Washington, D.C., in 1872. Proximity to the center of federal government offered him potential opportunities to exert more influence over national policy. Two years later, the finances of the *New National Era* deteriorated to such a degree that Douglass discontinued the publication. A new opportunity materialized the same year when Douglass accepted a position as president of the Freedman's Savings Bank. Although it was designed to provide vital assistance to former slaves, Douglass discovered the bank could not fulfill its mission because it rested on the verge of an inevitable financial collapse. Douglass invested and lost some of his own money when the institution declared bankruptcy several months later. Such prominent failures as the newspaper and the bank strained Douglass's public image. However, he deferred to his strength and continued his lectures, which salvaged his income and preserved his esteem. In 1877, President Hayes rewarded Douglass for his staunch support of the Republican Party through an appointment as a U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia. He received another partisan appointment as recorder of deeds in 1881. The financial security of these posts enabled Douglass to purchase and maintain Cedar Hill, a 21-room mansion situated on 15 wooded acres.

The most surreal event during Frederick Douglass's entire life occurred in 1877 when he returned to Talbot County, Maryland, and visited the setting of some of the harshest treatment he had endured as a slave. In June 1877, Douglass once again sailed across the familiar Chesapeake Bay and returned to the Lloyd plantation for the first time in over 40 years. He discovered his former master, Captain Thomas Auld, an old man and quite near death. They discussed the tremendous changes since their last meeting, and the captain informed Douglass that he had always considered him too intelligent to endure life as a slave. The passage of time had soothed Douglass's emotions as well. He later concluded that both he and the captain had played the respective roles that the institution of slavery had imposed on them. After visiting many other familiar sites from childhood, Douglass left the scene of the old plantation and returned to his own mansion at Cedar Hill. The slave from the Eastern Shore had metaphorically journeyed full-circle.



After 1877, Douglass's existence reflected changes common to many in his season of life. His wife died in 1882 after 44 years of marriage. Anna had always remained a permanent but mysterious backdrop in Douglass's public affairs. She followed him to freedom in New York and accompanied him to every home thereafter. When Douglass sailed overseas, Anna oversaw the care of their children. However, the visitors who poured into their home year after year always wanted to engage Douglass in intellectual discourse. By contrast, Anna was maternal but seldom, if ever, political. Interestingly, despite the hiring of a personal tutor in 1848, Douglass's wife remained illiterate throughout her entire life. In 1884, Douglass incited controversy when he married his former secretary, Helen Pitts. Twenty years younger than Douglass, Pitts provoked more commentary because she was white. Undeterred by criticism of his marital choice, Douglass pressed ahead with the issues that had always concerned him. For his continued support of the Republican Party, President Harrison appointed him U.S. minister to Haiti (1889–1891). Douglass also pursued his passion for the lecture circuit until the end of his life; however, his topics evolved from the earlier attacks on plantation culture. After the Civil War, he often delivered a speech titled “Self-Made Men.” In the years following Reconstruction, he spoke about “Lessons of the Hour,” which warned of the alarming number of lynchings reported in the South. Douglass even personally appealed for presidential action, but this became the fight of future generations. On February 20, 1895, Douglass died of heart failure at his Washington home.

No one born in American slavery rose to social and political prominence equal to that achieved by Frederick Douglass. Although a successful activist his entire life, he is remembered for his defiant stand against the existence of slavery, the issue that defined both the century and the country in which he lived. Douglass's writing, oratory, and persistent character all remain as an appropriate legacy to his innate desire and lifelong quest for justice.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Colored Convention Movement; Douglass, Anna Murray; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Garrison, William Lloyd; Lincoln, Abraham

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## Downing, George

George Downing (1819–1903) was born in New York City, the son of black activist Thomas Downing. As a young boy, George Downing attended the New York African Free School, and by the late 1830s, he had become part of the new generation of black leadership in New York City. In November 1841, Downing married Serena Leona de Grasse, the daughter of another New York activist, George de Grasse.

Downing's first known political participation revealed his dedication to unrestricted suffrage rights. In 1837, Downing helped draft a petition arguing for black men's right to equal suffrage; the petition spoke directly to the issue of citizenship, asking for the abolition of property qualifications based on race, which denied them the full rights of citizenship. Although the petition was denied, black New Yorkers held a series of statewide conventions in 1840 and 1841 to address suffrage rights. Late in 1841, frustrated by setbacks, they created a new organization, the American Reform Board of Disfranchised Commissioners (ARBDC). The language of their organization was rather militant, demanding the immediate extension of citizenship rights. Later in the 1840s, George Downing moved to Rhode Island, where he accumulated property, including the Atlantic House where the U.S. Naval Academy was located, and he also built the Sea Girt Hotel, which was destroyed by fire in 1860. He was eventually considered one of the wealthiest black men in the United States, and there is still a street in Newport, Rhode Island, named after him.

Although Downing spent much of his adult life traveling between New York, Washington, D.C., and Newport,

Downing remained particularly active in New York City politics, including in the issues related to education, fugitives, and anticolonization. In 1850, George Downing helped to form the American League of Colored Laborers, an association that advocated for education and training in mechanical skills as a method to improve conditions for their people. The following year, Downing helped create the Committee of Thirteen, an organization dedicated to the protection of fugitives in New York. The organization and its members gained notoriety immediately following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, when they sought to protect James Hamlet from being returned to a state of bondage. Fortunately, they were able to purchase Hamlet's freedom, but the case served only to deepen Downing's commitment to protecting fugitives. In 1852, for example, Downing and James McCune Smith publicly denounced their white pastor at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church for not opposing the Fugitive Slave Act.

Despite his obvious commitment to a series of issues, Downing was most outspoken on the colonization question. In 1851, at a community meeting in New York City, George Downing vehemently denounced the activities of the Liberian Agricultural and Emigration Society and declared that the black community's future was in the United States. In 1852, Downing, along with other Committee of Thirteen members, also organized a meeting to oppose New York governor Washington Hunt's pro-colonizationist views. Although Downing had publicly endorsed Hunt in 1850, he later attacked him for not supporting the black community's anticolonization beliefs. In particular, Downing eloquently argued that the destiny of the black community was inextricably linked with the future of the United States. Downing and James McCune Smith also met privately with Governor Hunt and convinced him to renounce the American Colonization Society and endorse unrestricted suffrage rights for all men.

George Downing was also a delegate to the national colored conventions in 1853 and 1855, where he continued his denunciation of colonization. In 1855 he condemned *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a pro-colonization treatise and also demanded that a letter supporting colonization be burned on the convention floor. In 1858 Downing again asserted his opposition to colonization, but this time the target was his childhood friend Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet had recently founded the African Civilization Society; an organization designed to spread religion and establish business

relationships in Africa. In particular, the society was interested in exploring the possibility of cotton production in West Africa, an endeavor they hoped would provide competition for Southern cotton and destroy the system of slavery. However, the controversial portion of their plans lay in the idea that free blacks should migrate from the United States and assist in the development of Liberia. Although Garnet insisted that emigration should be entirely voluntary, both Downing and Frederick Douglass denounced Garnet and his society. They argued, in particular, that such activities should be dismissed as another plot to remove the free black population from the United States. The conflict culminated in a public debate between Garnet and Downing in April 1860, which resulted in a fistfight between the two former friends.

Beyond anticolonization, Downing was most committed to desegregation. From the late 1850s to the mid-1860s, Downing led a series of desegregation movements, including public schools in Rhode Island and streetcars on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He even forced the U.S. Senate to open its gallery to black people and protested curfews for black people in Washington, D.C. In 1903, George Downing died in Newport, Rhode Island. The *Boston Globe* reported that he was a man who not only fought valiantly on behalf of his race but used his extensive resources on behalf of all oppressed people.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Colonization Society; Downing, Thomas; Garnet, Henry Highland; Smith, James McCune

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Downing, Thomas

Thomas Downing (1791–1866) was born into unusual circumstances—to emancipated parents in Virginia in 1791. His parents had been emancipated prior to Thomas's birth because their previous owner, Captain John Downing, had been convinced by a traveling itinerant preacher to free his slaves. After gaining their freedom, Thomas's parents

managed to purchase their own land and build a home for their family.

Young Thomas spent his childhood in Virginia and lived within a well-respected family; he even became friends with Henry A. Wise, who would later become the governor of Virginia. At the age of 21, Thomas Downing left Virginia, settling first in Philadelphia, where he met and married Rebecca West. By 1819, they had relocated to New York City, where they eventually had five children—George, twin boys Thomas and Henry, James, and Peter Williams—all of whom were educated in New York City's African Free Schools. His son George, in particular, eventually became an outspoken and well-respected leader in the black community.

Downing ultimately rose to fame in New York City, by drawing on a skill he brought from his Virginia home: oyster making. By 1825, Downing was a successful oysterman and had established a famous oyster house known as Downing's. Because oysters were incredibly popular in New York, Downing's became a well-known location for food and refreshment. Between 1830 and 1860, Downing's oyster house became a popular resort for New York City's elite, including bankers, stockbrokers, lawyers, merchants, businessmen, and socialites. Politicians and foreign travelers, most notably the mayor of New York, the Earl of Carlisle, and Charles Dickens, also made it a special point to visit Downing's regularly.

However, Thomas Downing did not limit his activities to operating his restaurant; he also became active in New York City's black community. Downing became a Prince Hall Mason and a member of the New York African Society for Mutual Relief and was an active member of St. Philip's Episcopal Church. In addition, he served as a trustee of the New York Society for the Promotion of Education among Colored Children in order to encourage higher education among black youth.

Yet most of Downing's political activism centered on the issues of abolition and suffrage. In 1836, Downing helped to create a black antislavery organization, the United Anti-Slavery Society of the City of New York, which emphasized abolitionist activity on the local level. He was also active in the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) led by William Lloyd Garrison, until 1840, when Downing and most black New Yorkers abandoned the organization as a result of political differences with Garrison regarding the role of religion, women, and the use of moral suasion in the

abolitionist movement. Though the rise of William Lloyd Garrison and the AASS in 1831 had initially provided black activists with hope and promise, within several years, there was growing tension and internal dissent as political philosophies clashed. In fact, by 1837, it was clear that although abolitionists were united in their desire to destroy slavery, individual leaders had drastically different ideas about the proper tactics to employ. As a result, the fragile antislavery coalition collapsed in 1840. Downing and other leading black New Yorkers split from the American Anti-Slavery Society and instead helped white abolitionists Arthur and Lewis Tappan create an alternative organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. In the face of the conflict within the abolitionist movement, Thomas Downing began to turn his attention to other political activities in the black community, mostly importantly, the issue of voting rights.

Beginning in 1837, Downing began to agitate for the removal of property qualifications from voting laws. According to a New York state law passed in 1821, black men were denied suffrage rights unless they owned \$250 worth of property, a requirement that most black men in the 19th century could not meet. Faced with restrictions based on property qualifications, black activists in New York State believed that the persistent denial of suffrage was an equally significant demonstration of the continuing problem of racism because it was the ultimate barrier to full citizenship. As a result, Downing became increasingly committed to the extension of voting rights to all black men. In particular, he helped organize a meeting during which a petition was drafted insisting that the state constitution should extend voting rights to all men "without the distinction of color." Although the state legislature denied this petition, Downing and his fellow activists refused to be silenced. In 1839, he was elected vice president of a new organization, the New York Association for the Political Evaluation and Improvement of the Colored People, which fought to secure the right to vote for all black men. Two years later, increasingly frustrated with the slow response from the state legislature, Thomas Downing and his son George helped form the American Reform Board of Disfranchised Commissioners (ARBDC) along with such leading black figures as Thomas Van Rensselaer, Thomas L. Jennings, and David Ruggles. He also participated in state suffrage conventions and continued to agitate for voting rights for the remainder of his life.

Thomas Downing died on April 10, 1866. As a testament to his influence in New York City, his death was reported in the *New York Times* (an honor that was extremely rare for a black man in the 19th century), and the New York City Chamber of Commerce closed for a day. In the years that followed, his son George continued his tradition of political activism.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Downing, George; Jennings, Thomas L.

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## Dred Scott v. Sandford

In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Scott v. Sandford*, a decision that definitively articulated the government’s position on slavery and the rights of the country’s black population. In the end, the majority opinion upheld the notion that slavery was both legal and constitutional and further asserted that free black people were not entitled to the full and equal rights of citizenship.

The legal case that became known as *Scott v. Sandford* originally began in 1846, when Dred Scott sued for his freedom on the grounds that he had been illegally held in bondage in a free state. Dred Scott was born into slavery in the state of Virginia in 1799 and was the legal property of the Peter Blow family. In 1830, the Blows brought Scott to St. Louis, Missouri, where he was eventually purchased by Dr. John Emerson. Because Emerson was a military surgeon, he and Scott traveled extensively throughout Illinois and the Wisconsin Territory, where slavery had been prohibited by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. During this period, both men married; Dred Scott wed Harriet Robinson, and John Emerson married Irene Sanford. In 1843,

Dr. Emerson died, and three years later, in February 1846, Scott tried to purchase his freedom from Irene Emerson, but she refused. Thus, two months later, on April 6, 1846, Scott sued for his freedom, arguing that because he had lived in both a free state and a free territory, he had become legally free and could not be justifiably enslaved.

Dred Scott’s case was first brought to trial in 1847 in the St. Louis Courthouse. Scott lost the first case on a technicality, but a judge quickly ordered a second trial. Although Irene Emerson appealed the order, the Supreme Court of Missouri ruled against her in 1848. Two years later, Scott’s case was heard before a jury, which determined that Dred and his family should be emancipated. Again, Emerson appealed the decision to the Missouri State Supreme Court. This time, the court found in her favor and reversed the decision to grant the Scotts their freedom. This decision was particularly significant because it diverged from the court’s precedents. The Missouri Supreme Court had previously ruled, rather routinely, that slaves taken into free states were automatically free.

Shortly after this decision, however, with the assistance of a new team of lawyers who were committed antislavery



Dred Scott, plaintiff in one of the most important cases of constitutional law in American history, illustration from *Century Magazine*, 1887. (Library of Congress)

activists, Dred Scott filed suit in St. Louis Federal Court in 1854 against John F. A. Sanford, Mrs. Emerson's brother and executor of the Emerson estate. (This was the official case that became known as *Scott v. Sandford*, due to the fact that John Sanford's name was misspelled in the official documents). Because Sanford resided in New York, legal wrangling over jurisdiction caused the case to be brought before the federal courts. This shift in venue, however, raised a new issue. In order to bring a lawsuit in federal court, Scott had to show that he was a citizen. Sanford's attorneys countered that because blacks were not citizens in Missouri, Scott had no standing to sue, and the court lacked jurisdiction. The trial judge agreed that Scott's legal status depended on the law in Missouri, not his residence in free territory, and the jury decided in Sanford's favor.

Undeterred, Scott's lawyers next appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, a decision that launched the Dred Scott case into the national spotlight. In fact, even President-elect James Buchanan expressed interest in the case. Concerned about the growing divide over the issue of slavery, Buchanan sent a letter to Supreme Court Justice John Catron, asking whether the U.S. Supreme Court would decide the case before his inauguration in March 1857. Buchanan hoped that the Court would issue a decisive ruling that would remove the question of slavery from political debate, thereby quieting the social and political unrest plaguing the fragile Union. Buchanan later successfully pressured Supreme Court Justice Grier, a Northerner, to join the Southern majority in the Dred Scott decision in order to avoid the implication that the decision was made along sectional lines.

Buchanan's concerns were well founded, given that the Dred Scott case ultimately encompassed a series of issues that were causing tremendous strife in American society, namely, the extension of slavery and the question of black citizenship. These issues were exposed during oral arguments before the Court in February 1856, when Sanford's attorneys raised an additional issue. They argued not only that Scott was a slave and not a citizen, but also that he could not have become even temporarily a freeman by residing in a free territory because the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. Because the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise was a hotly contested issue in the 1850s, *Scott v. Sandford* was immediately placed at the center of a political firestorm.

On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney delivered the Supreme Court's majority opinion in the Dred Scott

case, with each of the concurring and dissenting justices filing separate opinions. Seven justices concurred (although Samuel Nelson concurred with the ruling but not its reasoning), and two justices, Benjamin R. Curtis and John McLean, dissented. Regardless, Taney's majority opinion unequivocally illustrated the strength and power of slavery in the United States. Taney declared that as a slave, Dred Scott was not a citizen of the United States and therefore had no right to bring suit in the federal courts on any matter. In addition, he declared that Scott had never been free because slaves were personal property; thus, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was unconstitutional, and the federal government had no right to prohibit slavery in the new territories.

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Scott v. Sandford* was devastating not only to the Scotts but also to antislavery activists and the entire black community. In fact, many historians have argued that the Dred Scott decision ultimately brought the United States one step closer to Civil War. Undoubtedly, in the aftermath of the decision, public opinion became increasingly polarized over the issues of slavery, governmental rights, and black citizenship. As for Dred Scott, he and his family were eventually emancipated; the sons of Peter Blow, Scott's first owner, purchased them on May 26, 1857, and gave them their freedom. Scott, however, died of tuberculosis only 18 months later, on November 7, 1858. In the end, although the Scotts gained their freedom from bondage, their legal case served to fix, ever more strongly, the bonds of slavery and inequality upon the black population in America.

See also: Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Missouri Compromise; Scott, Dred

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## Elaw, Zilpha

Zilpha Elaw (1790–1846) was a 19th-century itinerant minister. Elaw is recognized as one of America's earliest published, African American female ministers, along with

Jarena Lee and Julia Foote. She was born in 1790 to free black parents in Pennsylvania. Zilpha was one of 22 children born to her parents, and all but 3 survived into adulthood. She maintained an extremely close relationship with her older sister Hannah that would prove integral for her call to Christian ministry. In 1802, at 12 years old, Zilpha Elaw's father sent her to live with a Quaker couple, Pierson and Rebecca Mitchell, after Zilpha's mother died unexpectedly. She was orphaned almost two years later when her father died. Elaw's parents' death had a profound impact on her because she missed the daily religious practices that she had shared with her devoutly Christian family. Due to her parents' death and the reserved practices of her adoptive Quaker parents, Elaw felt a void in her spiritual life that influenced her later decision to become a preacher.

Zilpha married Joseph Elaw, a fuller by trade, in 1810. She became a minister a few years later when the couple moved to Burlington, New Jersey. Though Zilpha Elaw had become a member of the Methodist church during her teenage years, she was not affiliated with a specific denomination like her contemporary Jarena Lee, an African Methodist Episcopal minister. She believed that her sermons transcended denominations and were for all people. Elaw noted in her autobiographical narrative, *Memoirs of the Life, Religious Experience, Ministerial Travels and Labours of Mrs. Zilpha Elaw, an American Female of Colour; Together with Some Account of the Great Religious Revivals in America [Written by Herself]*, that a life-changing event convinced her to enter the ministry. Hannah, Elaw's older sister, had a premonition on her deathbed that Zilpha Elaw should become a minister. Elaw also accepted the advice of her young daughter Rebecca that she should preach. In 1819, despite her husband's admonishments, Zilpha Elaw became a minister and preached her first sermon at a camp meeting. She hid her trade from her husband for two months for fear that he would force her to quit the ministry.

During the early 19th century, women were responsible for the spiritual growth and development of their families. Elaw readily embraced this role, though it created some problems within her marriage. In surprisingly blunt and clear language for the 1800s, Elaw warned women to marry like-minded Christian men. Her 1846 spiritual autobiography and travelogue depicted the tensions that existed in 19th-century male-female relationships. Elaw demonstrated the obstacles that black women endured when they entered into traditionally male-dominated fields such as

the ministry. Elaw's conversion happened during the Second Great Awakening, a critical moment in America's religious history. This religious movement occurred during the 1820s and 1830s and was very powerful in free black communities because of the centrality of the black church and Christianity in their lives.

In 1823, after her husband died following a lengthy illness, Elaw hired her daughter and herself out as domestics. During this time, Elaw founded a school for black children in Burlington, New Jersey. The local black community and the Society of Friends members (Quakers) supported her school. Simultaneously, Elaw was traveling across the United States ministering and preaching. In 1840, she traveled to England to spread the Christian gospel. In her national and international travels, Zilpha Elaw served as an example of black intelligence, piety, and excellence. She often preached about her status as an African American and as a woman to demonstrate how Christianity allowed her space to combat the injustices of racism and gender inequality. Elaw died in 1846, shortly after her memoir was published in England.

*See also:* Evangelism

*Deirdre Benia Cooper Owens*

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## The *Emancipator*

The *Emancipator* was a highly influential antislavery newspaper that began publication in New York City in May 1833 with the support of the abolitionist Arthur Tappan. The newspaper then became the official organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, a national group organized in December 1833 by Tappan and William Garrison. The *Emancipator* was published weekly from 1833 to 1850 and endured many editors, title changes, and publishers. In the beginning, its purpose was to publicize the official views of the society on slavery and colonization. Even though Garrison was a founding member of the society, he was more directly affiliated with the popular publication the *Liberator* than the *Emancipator*. Often the newspapers were at odds with one another because the *Emancipator* offered a moderate

approach to ending slavery by focusing on political means, whereas the *Liberator* supported a radical approach by insisting that the Constitution, the Sabbath, the Protestant Church, and the ministry would need to be abolished before slavery could be ended.

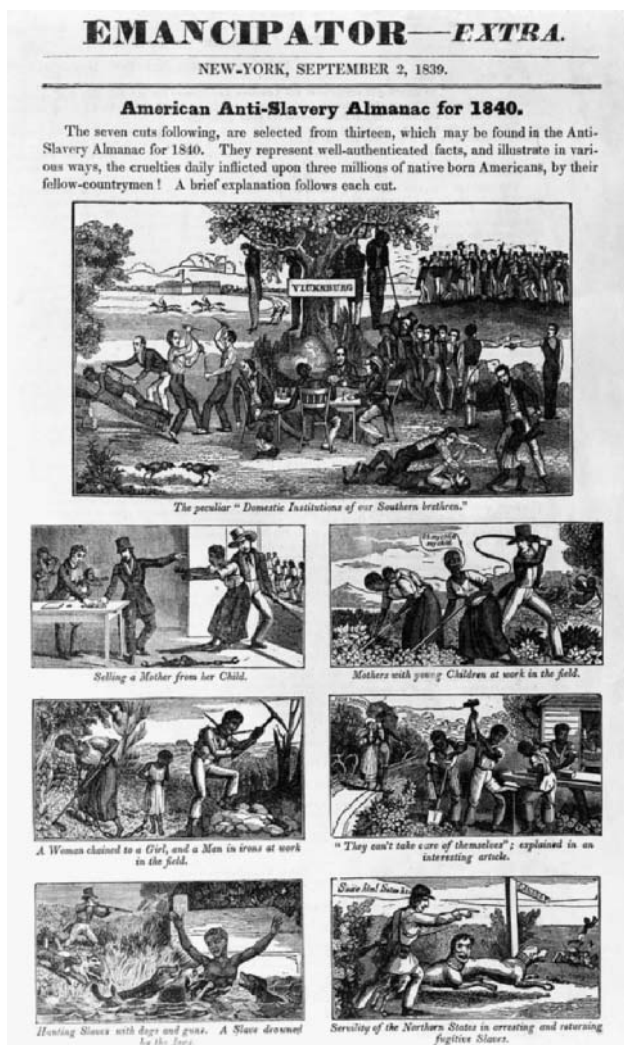
When the *Emancipator* began publication, Arthur Tappan, the society's first president, was its leading spirit, and he and his brother, Lewis Tappan, provided most of the financial backing. Black agents were selected to obtain subscriptions and contributions. David Ruggles, a free black abolitionist, was known as the general agent for the New York City area. Other agents were John D. Classon of Newark, New Jersey; Thomas Van Rensselaer of Princeton, New Jersey; and Abraham D. Shadd and John Carlisle

of Pennsylvania. The *Emancipator* remained an official publication of the society until 1840. During that time, several editors oversaw its publication. Charles W. Denison was the first editor in 1833. From 1834 to 1835, when the title became the *Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*, the editor was William Goodell, a New York abolitionist and one of the first organizers of the society. Theodore Dwight Weld served as editor from 1836 to 1840, and the paper was again known as simply the *Emancipator*.

A philosophical split in the American Anti-Slavery Society led a number of moderate abolitionists to leave the organization in 1840. At that time, Joshua Leavitt, a member of the society's executive committee, acted on his increasing commitment to the antislavery cause by taking up the editorship of the *Emancipator*, whereby he turned it into a leading newspaper for the expression of political abolition. In December 1841, the *Free American*, the official paper of the Massachusetts Abolition Society edited by Eliza Wright, merged with the New York-based *Emancipator* in order to provide a more unified voice for supporters. Both Leavitt and Wright served as editors of the renamed newspaper, *Emancipator and Free American*, and it was simultaneously published in New York City and Boston until March 1842 and thereafter in Boston only. Under Leavitt's leadership, the paper provided insights into the division within the antislavery movement and the movement's relationship to collateral reform activities. The editorials supported the view that abolition could be achieved through political means and offered an alternative to Garrison's *Liberator*. Wright left to begin another publication in 1846, and Leavitt continued as editor of the *Emancipator* until 1847. The editors who followed Leavitt—Curtis C. Nichols, Williams Stevens Robinson, Henry Wilson, and L. E. Smith—continued to encourage political activism against slavery and other reforms until the paper's demise in 1850. During its 18-year run, the *Emancipator* proved to be one of the most widely circulated antislavery newspapers in the country.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Garrison, William Lloyd; Tappan, Arthur

Donna Smith



Illustrated front page of the antislavery newspaper, *Emancipator*, 1839. (Bettmann/Corbis)

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## Equiano, Olaudah

Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797) was a renowned abolitionist. Born in western Africa, he was captured and enslaved but eventually gained his freedom and ultimately published a narrative of his experiences that transformed the abolitionist movement. According to his autobiography, titled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African* (1789), Olaudah Equiano was born among the Igbo of what is present-day Nigeria in a village called Essaka in ca. 1745. He eventually became a seaman, explorer, and abolitionist and the author of one of the first works written by a former slave and published in English, which ushered in a new literary genre called the slave narrative.

Equiano was kidnapped with his sister at the age of 10 and shipped through the Middle Passage to the Americas, as retold in his autobiography. He first was brought to the West Indies and then sold in North America to a local Virginia planter called Mr. Campbell. He was then subsequently sold to British Royal Naval officer Michael Henry Pascal, who gave him the name Gustavus Vassa by age 11 (Pascal named Equiano after a 16th-century Swedish king who had led his people out of bondage from the Danes). The name Gustavus Vassa became a mark of ownership because it was customary for slave masters to rename their slaves, thereby establishing complete authority over the enslaved person's sense of self through a process of renaming. Pascal took Equiano to London with him as personal servant in 1757. While with the Englishman Pascal, Equiano was able to learn the craft of seamanship and travel extensively to Europe, North America, and the Caribbean. He also had the rare opportunity to learn to read and write. These experiences were unique for a person of African descent in the 18th century, as retold by Equiano in his narrative. Equiano was aboard a British ship during Britain's Seven Years' War (1756–1763), fought with France for control of North America on the high seas.

Equiano served as personal servant to Pascal while in England but was also able to acquire valuable skills as a seaman in battle, assisting with the daily tasks of seafaring. Pascal sold Equiano to another seaman, who then sold him into West Indian slavery at Montserrat, at which point Equiano was sold to Robert King, a Quaker and merchant from Philadelphia. While with King, Equiano was able to earn enough money, given his specialized skills and reading ability, to purchase his freedom in 1766. Between the years 1767 and 1773, Equiano worked on commercial vessels sailing to the Mediterranean and the West Indies. He was therefore able to comment on a variety of slaves systems, hence the importance of his narrative. Equiano eventually settled in England. With freedom, and as an educated man with skills, Equiano worked several jobs, including as a hairdresser, as a steward at sea, and on voyages of exploration, including the search for the Northwest Passage to India via the North Pole aboard the *Racehorse* as a part of the Phipps expedition in 1773. During this time, he also embraced Methodism. After working as a buyer and overseer on a slave plantation in Central America from 1775 to 1776, Equiano began to publish attacks against slavery a year later while also writing materials in support of intermarriage. He also became increasingly involved with British abolitionists such as Thomas Clarkson, James Ramsey, and Granville Sharp. He petitioned the Queen of England in 1788 and was appointed to the expedition to repatriate black Britons to West Africa. Equiano served as Commissary of Provisions and Stores as part of a colonization scheme to repatriate blacks back to Africa supported by Sharp and others in the late 1780s. Although Equiano never settled in West Africa, by 1792, a colony was established by African Americans and black Britons at Sierra Leone.

Equiano's friendship with Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, author of *Thoughts on Slavery*, published in 1788, perhaps prompted him to write of his own experiences, and Olaudah Equiano published his autobiography *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* in 1789 as a testimonial against slavery. This was the first significant narrative written in English by a person of African descent as a detailed eyewitness account of slavery, and it was published by the author through a method known as subscription. Equiano was able to solicit monies from several prominent benefactors to print his work through pre-publication subscriptions, and he was able to publish a total of nine editions of his book during his lifetime, including



German, Dutch, and American editions. The work became central to the growing antislavery cause in Great Britain as Equiano toured and gave public lectures on his narrative in such places as England, Scotland, and Ireland. It has been called the most important work written by an African in the Western world. This work by Olaudah Equiano was both anti-racist and antislavery in tone while also serving as a well-developed illustration of life in bondage as written by a former slave. It became a best seller and was reprinted several times and published not only in London but also in Dublin, Edinburgh, and Norwich during Equiano's lifetime. Close to a dozen more editions of Equiano's text were published by 1837, within four decades of his death.

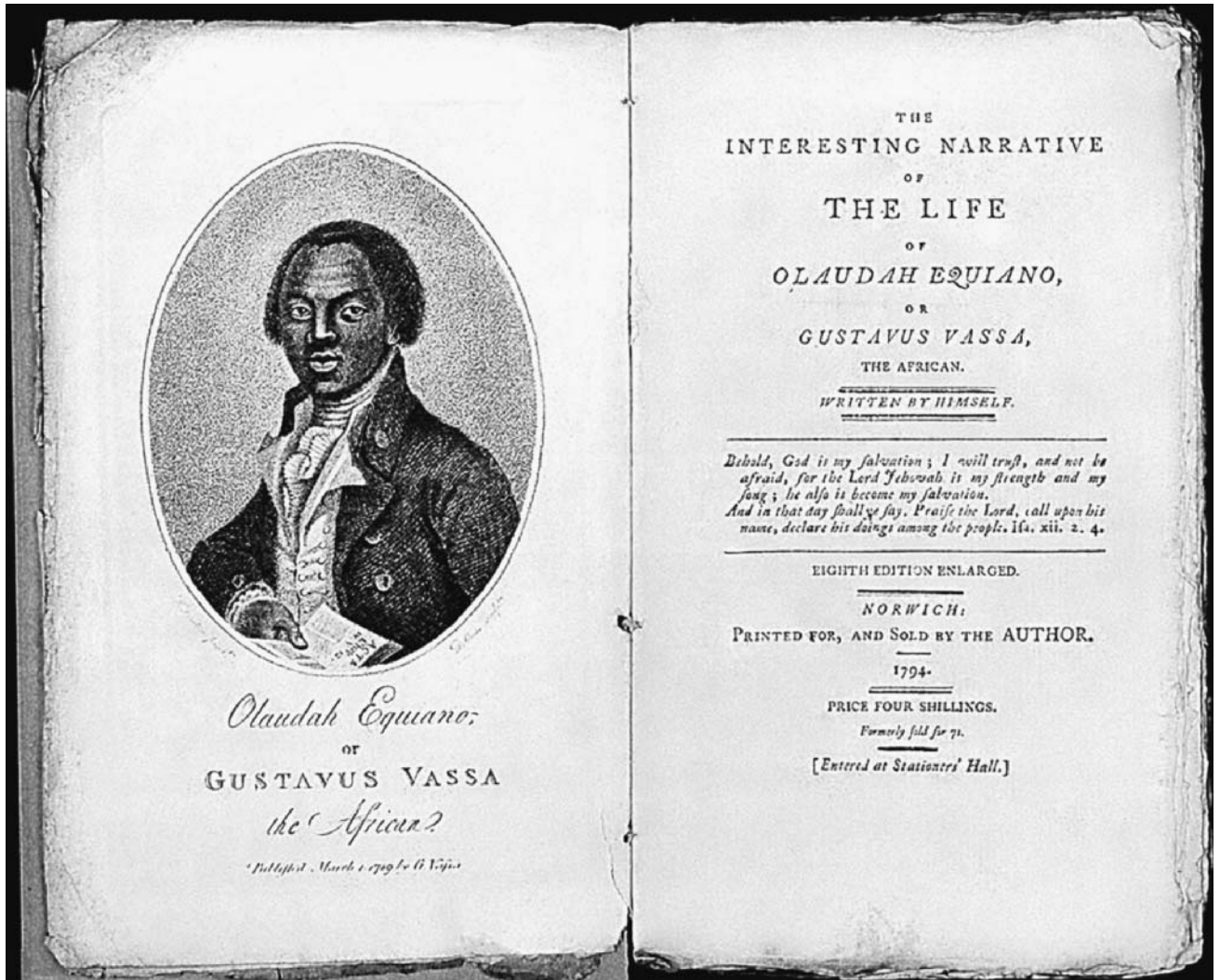
Equiano was able to amass a fortune as a result of the revenue generated by the book (leaving an estate equivalent today to over 3 million dollars). The slave narratives that followed the printing of Equiano's work would serve as integral to the abolitionist cause worldwide. This has led some scholars to label the work of Equiano as political propaganda while at the same time raising questions about the authenticity of Equiano's testimony. Although recent scholarship has suggested that Equiano may have been born in North America, what is not in dispute is the fact that Equiano was enslaved for a period encompassing nearly a decade. Much of what Equiano has to say in his narrative, in relation to his life as an enslaved young man both in Great Britain and in the Americas and thereafter, can be verified.

Although enslaved Africans managed to document their experiences in various ways through the written word before Equiano's narrative was produced, in poems, letters, petitions, and brief testimonials, his work is of seminal importance in the history of African Americans for several reasons. Other writings produced by persons of African descent, such as the poems of Phillis Wheatley, brief testimonials by those enslaved such as that of Ottobah Cugoana, and petitions against slavery generated during the Revolutionary War Era, were not as extensive or comprehensive an account of slavery in New World societies as Equiano's account. And the writings that followed Equiano's were sometimes dictated to a second party and published by sympathetic whites. Equiano's experiences were extensive. He was able to witness and deliver an account of plantation slavery across three continents, including North America, South America, and Europe, from a black perspective written in his own hand. Equiano managed (although he acquired monies from those sympathetic to his cause) to

maintain a measure of control over the publication of the work written "by himself." This demonstrates a remarkable level of ingenuity on the part of Equiano, and he also took control of marketing his book through self-promotion. The actions of Equiano through the writing, publishing, and promotion of his story as an antislavery testimonial became a precedent for former slaves to retell their stories as a part of an international antislavery movement that flourished in the 19th century. The fact that Equiano was able to profit substantially from his literary endeavor was unusual as well for any author of the period, regardless of race.

Despite the sometimes propagandist overtones of the text, criticisms of the text do not overshadow the historical importance of the work altogether. Equiano's account of the Middle Passage (contrived or not) remains largely consistent with accounts written by slavers and other eyewitnesses. We may perhaps look at the work as both the beginning of an important literary genre and a propagandist tool for the antislavery cause. Equiano's narrative also provides us with a unique perspective on pivotal events in both American and world history such as the Seven Years' War, the search for a Northwest Passage, and an overview of plantation slavery in several New World societies. The work also serves as a foundational piece of literature within the development of an African American and British antislavery network that emerged through the 19th century as British abolitionists played a major role in the international abolition of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. Olaudah Equiano was essentially an international figure. African American abolitionists in the 19th century such as Nathaniel Paul and Charles Lenox Remond traveled abroad to Great Britain and worked to utilize the British antislavery network in place following the example of Equiano.

The first-person narrative of slavery made popular by Equiano was followed by several examples in the America through the 19th century as the literature of protest progressed from poems, petitions, and letters to distinctive narratives of slavery through several eyewitness accounts. Jarena Lee was one of the first African American women to produce an account of her life in servitude in *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* in 1836. This was followed by several works by prominent African American abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, with writings such as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in 1845 and *The Narrative of William Wells Brown* in 1847. Solomon Northup's experience of being kidnapped into slavery, as



Title page of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. (Library of Congress)

documented by Northup in his book *Twelve Years a Slave, the Narrative of Solomon Northup* in 1853, mirrored the experience of Olaudah Equiano's friend John Annis, who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in 1773. This was an event that further encouraged Equiano's antislavery activism.

Olaudah Equiano married Susanna Cullen, a white British woman from Cambridgeshire, in 1792. They had two daughters, Ann Marie and Johanna. He died in 1797, leaving behind a substantial estate to his daughter and heir. Although there are an estimated 6,000 slave narratives, 200 book-length narratives having been written between the years 1760 and 1947, Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* stands as one of the most comprehensive personal accounts of slavery. Olaudah Equiano's life and work should be understood as central to the development of an international antislavery movement and as a testament of black

self-representation. Olaudah Equiano sought to conscientiously, through his writings and the promotion of his *Interesting Narrative*, represent the black self as human and challenge the inhumane system of plantation slavery. Although scholars may continue to debate the *Interesting Narrative* and the life of Olaudah Equiano, we may specifically look on the text as part autobiography, part slave narrative, and part antislavery manifesto.

*See also:* Abolition, Slave Trade; Bight of Biafra; Black Atlantic; Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah; Igbo

Hettie V. Williams

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## Field Hands

Field hands usually made up the majority of African American slaves on any given plantation. These individuals had the primary responsibility of assuring the crop production of any given plantation to which they were assigned. Under the hostile social institution of plantation life and slavery, field hands tilled the land, planted and harvested the crop, and performed any assignable task in order to ensure the viability of the land and the crop production process. For field hands, the plantation, or “field,” was their consigned-to work area. It was in the field that the field hands exerted their physical influence on the agricultural productive potential of the plantation.

Field hands could be either male or female; however, the majority of field hands were male. Children were also used as field hands. Given the labor demands of plantation life and the agricultural economy of the time, a typical day in the life of field hands usually included rising before dawn to ensure that they would be at the field before sunrise. The work routine at the plantation saw that the field hands were engaged in productive activity from sunup to sundown. Field hands were subject to the harsh beatings and whimsical curiosities of the slave owners at any given moment.

Although not regarded by most slave owners as human, field hands were sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers. Although field hands made up the majority of the productive, functioning individuals within any plantation production unit, they were still able to preserve African customs and practices in the realms of spiritual beliefs, music, dance, and social cooperation. It was the preservation of customs and values that helped the field hands during the years of slavery because it allowed for the field hands to have their own defense mechanisms, dignity,

and self-respect in the face of institutionalized social conditions predicated on violence and African American subjugation.

Further, field hands developed and maintained unique methods of communication to be used among each other to ensure the immediate survival of their sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers. They would communicate to each other in times of danger; they would also communicate to each other during times of planned rebellion or escape. Field hands were the eyes and ears on the ground, serving as protectors of all the slaves of the plantation.

*See also:* Gang System; Slave Plantation

Bruce Ormond Grant

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## Field Order No. 15

Special Field Order No. 15 was written to deal with the politically damaging statements of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman in regard to the treatment of African Americans by his armies and to establish a policy to deal with the growing numbers of African American refugees following the advance of the Union armies. The order itself gave rise to the idea of “forty acres and a mule” and its concept suggesting the distribution of Southern lands to the recently freed slaves.

In November 1864, General Sherman advanced his two armies overland from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia. This operation was known as the Savannah Campaign of 1864, or more popularly “The March to the Sea.” Sherman’s columns foraged throughout the Georgia countryside for supplies and marched through areas previously untouched by the war. These military operations gave slaves the opportunity to leave their masters and to follow the Union columns for freedom and protection. The number of freed refugees continued to grow, as Sherman’s armies moved southward. The large number of refugees hindered the rapid movement of the columns and opened them to possible Confederate attacks. Sherman sought to move quickly

across Georgia, and the growing refugees frustrated both him and his commanders. This situation came to a head at Ebenezer Creek on December 8, 1864. The commander of the 14th Army Corps of General Sherman's armies, Bvt. Maj. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis, ordered his pontoon train to be taken up before the black refugees could cross over the creek. At the same time, there was a real threat of the Confederate cavalry attacking the rear guard of Davis's column. The refugees panicked and tried to cross the water. As a result, a number of African American families drowned in the fast-moving waters, despite efforts of individual soldiers to save them. Upon Sherman's arrival in Savannah, the newspaper reporters and soldiers shared accounts of the refugees' deaths and the corresponding casual attitude of Sherman and his commanders.

In addition to the reported deaths, statements began to surface in Northern newspapers concerning General Sherman's attitudes toward black military enlistment. Many of his remarks indicated that he believed African Americans were unable to reason for themselves, and they were being tricked into enlistment by recruiters promising high bounties. General Sherman also maintained that blacks would never be the equals of whites, and they should be removed from society to live in isolation. Many of his comments appeared in both Union and Confederate newspapers and became a source of embarrassment to the Lincoln administration.

On January 11, 1865, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas arrived in Savannah, Georgia, to discuss these issues with General Sherman. Secretary Stanton spoke at some length about the affair at Ebenezer Creek, and Sherman defended the actions of his subordinate, who had dealt with a potential Confederate cavalry threat. The next day, the secretary and the adjutant general wanted to investigate further the relationship of Sherman and blacks during the campaign. Secretary Stanton urged Sherman to call a meeting with representatives of the black community in Savannah, Georgia. Twenty people attended this meeting. The majority of the representatives were ministers of local churches in the city and the surrounding countryside. Before talking to the representatives, Stanton asked Sherman to leave the meeting, which irritated the general. The black leaders spoke highly of the conduct of General Sherman while Adjutant General Thomas took notes of the statements. Stanton seemed satisfied with the answers that he received during the meeting with the ministers. Later,

General Sherman would express his pleasure with the satisfactory answers in letters home to his wife and in his personal memoirs.

With his legal training in mind, Stanton was now prepared to provide a legal document to settle the matter of refugees following the armies and to protect the Lincoln administration from any future statements by military officers regarding the freedmen. Stanton, Sherman, and Thomas worked on a draft order that would solve the refugee problem for Sherman, before his columns moved northward into the Carolinas. The draft order was rewritten several times by Stanton and was finally approved for issue. The order was intended to be issued simultaneously with the beginning of Sherman's new campaign. However, the heavy rains and flooding delayed the northward movement of the Federal columns until February 1865.

The special field order set aside the Georgia Sea Islands and the Lowcountry south of Charleston, South Carolina, extending 30 miles inland, for the settlement of black refugees. Each family would receive 40 acres within this territory. To assist families in settlement, Sherman provided extra mules for distribution to farmers. Brig. Gen. Rufus Saxton was appointed as "Inspector of Settlements and Plantations" to assist the black families in setting up their segregated communities. General Saxton, a pre-war abolitionist, saw these land grants as an opportunity to bring respectability to blacks and their families.

General Sherman saw the land allotments as a temporary measure, yet others saw these "Sherman grants" as the final step in emancipation for the freedmen. The cry "40 acres and a mule" became a hope among former slaves that Southern land distribution was a form of reparations to be paid for their slave labor. Land allotments to former slaves continued through the Freedmen's Bureau until 1866. After the war, President Andrew Johnson returned the land holdings to Southern property owners, and black families were forced to give up their military land.

*See also:* Forty Acres and a Mule; Union Army

*William Harris Brown*

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## First African Baptist Church

The First African Baptist Church (FABC) in Savannah, Georgia is recognized as the home of the oldest African American Baptist congregation in North America. The church and its members evolved from communities of black people—slave and free—who were brought together by the efforts of black Christian leaders George Liele and Andrew Bryan.

The First African Baptist Church traces its lineage back to the evangelistic efforts of George Liele. Born a slave, Liele was owned by a Baptist minister, Henry Sharp, who allowed Liele to travel the South preaching to slaves beginning in 1773. Over the next five years, Liele established dozens of small Baptist communities on plantations in Georgia and South Carolina and was ordained and emancipated. After the death of Henry Sharp in 1778, Liele moved his ministry to British-occupied Savannah. The congregation he established there grew steadily and became a haven for slaves who escaped from their plantations during the chaos of war. Many of the slaves who joined Liele in Savannah were converts won during his earlier evangelistic efforts. Most notable of these converts was David George, a preacher who had been one of eight slaves converted by Liele on a South Carolina plantation. George grew the congregation and, in 1778, led the group to Savannah when their owner fled to avoid British troops.

In the aftermath of the Revolutionary War, the majority of blacks living in Savannah, including George Liele, left America with the British. Liele ended up in Jamaica, where he continued his missionary efforts. Andrew Bryan, a slave converted by Liele, took over the direction of the congregation in Savannah. For several years, Bryan, whose master was amenable to slave Christian education, fought to gain access to slaves whose masters were unwilling to have them evangelized. Bryan and his congregation were targeted with

violence, threats, and imprisonment but eventually gained the legal right to hold daylight services on his master's plantation. Bryan was ordained in 1788 and led the construction of a makeshift church structure, named Bryan Street Baptist, in 1794. In 1800, 700 black Baptists reorganized as the First Colored Baptist Church.

After Andrew Bryan's death in 1812, his nephew, Andrew Marshall, took over and changed the church's name to First African Baptist Church in 1822. In 1832, tension over church leadership and religious direction resulted in a schism. Some church members left, but most remained with Marshall and relocated to Franklin Square. There the community purchased a \$1,500 church with money the congregants had saved to purchase their freedom. For 23 years, FABC members worshiped in this building, until the structure was demolished to build a new church. Because nearly all of the members of FABC were enslaved, the church was built during the night when the slaves were permitted to leave their homes. During the four years of construction and until emancipation, the First African Baptist Church was a major stop on the Underground Railroad, and escaped slaves were hidden in a four-foot room under the church floorboards.

Though slave congregations existed all over the South, FABC stands out as one of the largest and most public black religious communities. Though officially supervised by a white board of trustees, the church was sanctioned by the Baptist church in 1788. In an environment where literacy among blacks was rare, dozens of FABC congregants could read, and a few were able to write. The public history of FABC has led many to recognize the First African Baptist Church as the "first black church in America." Such a claim to primacy is controversial, largely because of the non-public history of the "invisible institution" in the Americas dating back to the 17th century. These clandestine organizations and churches were important parts of a hidden African community in the new world and were often at the center of education, resistance, religious innovation, and a sense of dignity for participants.

Listed on the National Register for Historic Places, the building constructed in the 1850s still stands and houses an active congregation with impressive influence on the Savannah community. During the Civil Rights movement, the FABC housed organizing meetings and actively participated in campaigns for equal rights. Today, the church educates the community and remembers the historic importance of

the church by maintaining a Web site and museum, housing a large collection of stained glass windows depicting African American leaders, and offering tours.

See also: Black Churches; Underground Railroad

*Kathleen Hladky*

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## Fort Pillow Massacre

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The Fort Pillow Massacre was a horrific event in the Civil War during which Confederate soldiers openly slaughtered a group of predominately African American Union soldiers after the regiments had surrendered, a clear violation of the rules of war and a painful indication of the severe racial hatred within the Confederacy.

Fort Pillow was the site of an old Confederate fort on the eastern bluffs of the Mississippi River, some 40 miles north of Memphis, Tennessee. It consisted of a dirt parapet roughly 6 to 8 feet high and was surrounded by a ditch that was 12 feet wide and 8 feet deep. This semicircular earthwork covered the front of the fort, but the rear of the post was open to the bluff and river. Below the bluff, the terrain angled sharply to the river. The fortification was surrounded by low hills that were separated by a ravine and a small creek known as Coal Creek.

In 1862, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Union army was responsible for the initial capture of the fort. By the spring of 1864, a small Federal garrison consisting of 295 white and 262 black troops occupied the post. Maj. William F. Bradford commanded two companies of the 13th Tennessee Cavalry and was actively recruiting additional soldiers from the local communities. Maj. Lionel F. Booth led two detachments from the 6th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery and the 2nd U.S. Colored Light Artillery. As additional protection, the gunboat *New Era* was stationed near the fort to assist in repelling any Confederate force.

During this period, Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest was leading two cavalry divisions on a raid into western Kentucky and Tennessee. The purpose of his raid was to

find additional horses and recruits for filling out his command after the hard fighting during the winter of 1864. In addition, Forrest's raid was designed to harass the Federal supply posts. After leaving Paducah, Kentucky, Forrest moved his commands into west Tennessee to recruit additional men for his Tennessee regiments. Forrest learned of Union recruitment out of Fort Pillow and what he considered to be abuses performed by the Southern Unionists at the post. He considered the Southern Unionists to be a threat that had to be neutralized before he could recruit for his commands.

On the morning on April 12, Confederate Brig. Gen. James R. Chalmers arrived with two brigades to surround and assault the fort. Confederate sharpshooters occupied the hills and surrounded the Union works. They opened fire on the garrison. Soon a sharpshooter killed Major Booth, and command of the fort fell to Major Bradford. General Forrest arrived on the scene and redeployed his cavalry into the ravine and the creek bed on the sides of the fort. He also occupied the fort's barracks and horse pen. By mid-afternoon, Forrest sent a flag of truce to request the surrender of the fort. Bradford refused to concede the post, fearing Forrest's reputation and the probable fate of his command. Major Bradford continued to stall General Forrest, seeing the smoke from additional Federal streamers coming up the river. Forrest knew Bradford was waiting for help, so he sent two detachments to cover the river, in case a Union ship attempted to disembark additional troops. Major Bradford refused Forrest's offer of surrender for a second time. General Forrest ordered his men to attack the fort on the sound of a bugle.

Because of the closeness of the ravine and creek bed, the Confederate cavalry was soon over the parapets and into the fort. After a weak volley, the defenders of the fort quickly attempted to surrender. Confederate cavalrymen ignored the upraised hands and started shooting into the mass of Union soldiers. The Union soldiers scattered toward the bluff in a vain attempt to reach the covering fire of the gunboat. Confederates were shooting at point-blank range with muskets and pistols into the swarming mass of Union soldiers. Many African American soldiers were shot while their hands were raised in the air. Many others were chased by screaming Confederates and shot in the back. The Union soldiers were ordered to stop running, but the indiscriminate killing continued inside the fort. Men who were able to reach the river were shot while trying to swim



*Confederate massacre of Union troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on April 12, 1864. The Fort Pillow Massacre, one of the ugliest racial incidents of the Civil War, was perpetrated by Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, who later became the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. (Library of Congress)*

out to the *New Era*. Many soldiers were killed below the bluff. Out of a garrison of roughly 560 men, some 231 were killed, and 100 were seriously wounded. General Forrest took 168 whites and only 58 blacks captive (later reported as killed). The Confederate brigades suffered only 14 killed and 86 wounded from the assault.

Soon, the news of the massacre was being reported to local Northern newspapers as the wounded arrived at Federal posts along the river. In addition, the Confederates allowed two Federal gunboats to land parties to pick up the wounded. While the wounded were being evacuated, the Confederate officers boasted of their actions of murdering surrendered soldiers as a mark against black enlistment. Both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Congress investigated the Confederate actions at the fort and found both General Forrest and his command guilty of attempting to massacre the Union command at the post. President Lincoln chose

not to retaliate against the Confederates, but the issue of Fort Pillow was used as a political tool to rally support for the government during the presidential election of 1864. Nathan Bedford Forrest, of course, ultimately became the founder of the violent white supremacist organization the Ku Klux Klan.

Even so, if there was any attempt by the Confederates to scare blacks from enlistment, it certainly backfired with the many U.S. Colored Troops scattered throughout the Confederacy. Many units sought to retaliate against Confederate prisoners for the actions of General Forrest and his men. It was not uncommon to see African American troops killing Confederate prisoners after an engagement while shouting the words “Fort Pillow.”

*See also:* Ku Klux Klan; Union Army

*William Harris Brown*

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## Forten, Charlotte

Charlotte Forten Grimke (1837–1914) is perhaps now best known for her lively diaries, but she was an important public presence—writer, teacher, and activist—within the black community for over four decades. Granddaughter of free African American activist James Forten and Charlotte Vandine (her namesake) and daughter of Robert Bridges Forten and Mary Virginia Woods, she was born into a comparatively wealthy home in Philadelphia. Although her father was never as successful as the family scion, and although her mother died in August 1840, Forten was surrounded by strong black presences and especially strong black women in her youth, including her aunts in particular (the title figures of John Greenleaf Whittier's "To the Daughters of James Forten"). Philadelphia's growing racism, though, drove some members of the family (including her activist aunt Harriet Forten Purvis and uncle Robert Purvis) to Philadelphia's suburbs and beyond. It also eventually convinced her father to send Forten to the Higginson School in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1853. She graduated from Higginson in 1855 and from the Salem Normal School in 1856.

During her time in Massachusetts, she began her now-well-known diaries in earnest, began to seek publication for her poetry, and became fully enmeshed in the abolitionist circles surrounding Boston. Her poem to William Lloyd Garrison appeared in the *Liberator* in March 1855, and her "Poem for Normal School Graduates" appeared there

in August 1856. Over the next decade, more work would appear in the black press (including the AME quarterly *Repository of Religion and Literature*) as well as the white-run *National Anti-Slavery Standard*; her efforts at mainstream publication, though, were unsuccessful. She heard several abolitionist and Transcendentalist luminaries in nearby Boston, and she participated actively in the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. Boarding with the extended Remond family (including abolitionist lecturer Charles Lenox Remond and his well-connected wife Amy Williams Cassey Remond), Forten interacted with leading white abolitionists Lydia Maria Child, Maria Weston Chapman, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison, as well as black leaders such as William Wells Brown. All knew of her grandfather's crucial support to the fledgling movement, and some had likely met her as a child in Philadelphia, but all also grew to respect Forten for her own talent and intellect.

After her graduation from Salem Normal, Forten spent two years as a teacher at Salem's Epes Grammar School, but ill health—headaches, respiratory problems, and occasional depression—led to her resignation in 1858. Recuperating in Philadelphia and also traveling occasionally to Massachusetts, Forten continued her diary writing and socialized with, among others, novelist Frank J. Webb and elocutionist Mary Webb, who had just returned from Great Britain. Forten taught again in Massachusetts—this time at Higginson—during parts of 1859 and 1860, but her health again limited these efforts. The family's financial fortunes had also weakened considerably: James Forten had died in 1842, the shipping industry on which he had made his fortune had changed drastically, and Robert Forten (who by 1858 had remarried, moved to Canada, and then gone to England) was never adept at business. Still, on the eve of the Civil War, her family's commitment to public service had not changed, nor had her own.

When Union troops cinched possession of the islands off the coast of South Carolina and began setting up schools for the newly freed slaves in the initial years of the war, Forten—acting in part on the advice of poet John Greenleaf Whittier—applied to work there as a teacher. After she was turned down—likely because of her race—by the Boston Education Commission (later the New England Freedman's Aid Society), Philadelphia's Port Royal Relief Association assigned her to St. Helena Island in late 1862, and she became the first black teacher to serve there. Along with school head Laura Towne and fellow teacher Ellen Murray,



Forten helped teach massive day and evening classes in basic literacy, mathematics, and civics, punctuated by discussion of past black leaders and accomplishments. Forten's interactions with the newly freed constantly reminded her—sometimes stingingly—of the differences between her relatively privileged upbringing in the North and the realities of the slave South. Simultaneously, although she made a lifelong friend in Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, some of the whites with whom she worked veiled their racism thinly—if at all. Still, she worked in the Sea Islands until May 1864, when her health again failed (in the wake of the April death of her father, who had returned to the United States, joined the Union Army, and contracted typhus). Her efforts aided countless among the newly freed, the letters she wrote to the *Liberator* soon after beginning work at St. Helena alerted readers to the Sea Islands efforts and were reprinted by black newspapers as far west as San Francisco (in the *Pacific Appeal*), and her “Life on the Sea Islands”—which was published by the nationally circulated *Atlantic Monthly* in May and June 1864—helped shape Northern public sentiment toward efforts to aid the newly freed.

The Reconstruction saw a recovered Forten continue writing, teaching, and working for freed people in a range of settings. She became the secretary of the Teachers Commission of the Boston office of the Freedmen's Union Commission in October 1865; taught at Shaw Memorial School in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1871 and 1872; and worked at what would later become Sumner Memorial High School in Washington, D.C., in 1872 and 1873. Her translation of Emile Erckmann and Alexander Chatrain's novel *Madame Therese; or, the Volunteers of '92* (prefaced by Higginson) was published by a national house—Scribner's—in 1869, although her own work continued to find only limited venues for publication.

Her move to Washington shaped the rest of her life in two important ways. First, it led her to apply to the U.S. Treasury, which appointed her as a “first-class clerk” in 1873. She held this position—relatively rare among African American women—for five years. She also met the Rev. Francis Grimke (the son of South Carolina planter Henry Grimke and an enslaved woman, and a nephew of abolitionists Angelina and Sarah Grimke), who was 12 years younger than her. They married on December 19, 1878, soon after Grimke received a charge at Washington's Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. By all accounts, the marriage was a happy one, though it was marred by the death of their only child, six-month-old Theodora Cornelia, on June 10, 1880.

The Grimkes served the Fifteenth Street Church until 1885, when Francis was called to the Laura Street Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida. As she had in Washington, during the couple's four years in Florida, Charlotte Grimke was an active leader of churchwomen and of broader community efforts. Still, missing the intellectual life of Washington and recognizing that Francis was gaining a larger public voice in the religious and political lives of African Americans, the couple returned to the Fifteenth Street Church in 1889. Charlotte Grimke also found time to write, and her notable publications from this period included letters on race and equality published by the *Boston Commonwealth* and the *Evangelist* and a remembrance of Whittier published in the *New England Magazine*.

In addition to her occasional published pieces, Grimke made two lasting contributions—one personal and one much more public—to African American culture after the Grimkes' return to Washington. In 1894, she and her husband became the guardians of their 14-year-old niece, Angelina Weld Grimke, for four years while her father, Archibald Grimke, worked in Santo Domingo; in 1905, Archibald (who had separated from his white wife, Sarah Stanley) and Angelina (by now a teacher at the Armstrong Manual School in Washington) moved into the Grimke home more permanently. Weld Grimke's poetry and drama—published mainly in the 1910s and 1920s—has since been recognized an important next step in the literary treatment of questions of race and gender that mark her aunt's diaries. Weld Grimke herself celebrated her aunt's influence in one of her better-known poems, the 1915 “To Keep the Memory of Charlotte Forten Grimke.” On the more public front, in 1896, Charlotte Grimke was a founding member of the National Association of Colored Women, a major organization engaged in activities from the struggles against lynching to the fight for equal education.

Grimke's final years, though, were marked by a return of old ailments, and she spent almost all of her last year confined to her bed. She died at her home in 1914.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Forten, James

*Eric Scott Gardner*

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## Forten, James

James Forten Sr. (1766–1842) was a wealthy and influential black abolitionist who dedicated his life to racial advancement.

The son of free African Americans—Thomas Fortune and Margaret Waymouth—James Fortune was born in Philadelphia on September 2, 1766. He later changed his last name to Forten. He studied at the Quaker school of Anthony Benezet, a Quaker abolitionist. But after his father's death, his education ended when Forten had to work to support his mother. During the Revolutionary War, Forten served as a powder boy on the privateer the *Royal Louis*. The ship was captured by the British, and Forten was taken as prisoner of war. He made friends with the British captain's son, and the boy appealed to his father to be lenient with Forten. This probably saved Forten from being sold into slavery in the West Indies. He was instead put on the prison ship *Jersey* off Long Island, where after seven months, Forten was released.

Back in Philadelphia, Forten resumed his life and cast about for a livelihood. His father Thomas had worked for the sail maker Robert Bridges, and the elder Forten had taught his son James some rudiments of the trade. It was logical then for Forten to take an apprenticeship with Bridges. When Robert Bridges retired in 1798, he turned the business over to Forten, who now had his own company employing both black and white workers. Forten won the confidence and respect of Philadelphia merchants. The company prospered, and by 1834, he had several additional sailing lofts. In later years, Forten's sons Robert and James Jr. had joined the firm, which became known as James Forten and Sons.

Forten married twice. He married Marthe Beatte in 1803, and after Marthe's death in 1804, Forten married

Charlotte Vandine in 1805. Charlotte, sons James Jr. and Robert, daughters Harriet and Margaretta, and son-in-law Robert Purvis were all members of antislavery organizations. Forten supported the abolitionist movement for his entire life. He gave financial support to William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper the *Liberator*, and Garrison was a frequent guest at the Forten home. The American Anti-Slavery Society was organized in Forten's home in 1833. In 1835, he was elected president of the American Moral Reform Society. Forten even utilized his business as a means of protesting slavery. His company refused to rig sails for vessels suspected of participating in the slave trade.

Although Forten himself did not wish to emigrate, he became interested in emigration on behalf of some of his employees. He formed a friendship and business association with Paul Cuffe, a promoter of colonization in Sierra Leone. Cuffe died in 1817, and two years later, Forten publicly denounced the scheme of African colonization. Forten also supported migration of free blacks to Haiti, becoming friends with the African American known as Prince Saunders. Saunders persuaded Forten and Richard Allen to form the Haitian Emigration Society in Philadelphia in 1825. Some African Americans did immigrate to Haiti, but most returned to America disillusioned. Although Forten was against the American Colonization Society because he believed that they wanted to force mass emigration of free blacks from America, Forten saw nothing wrong with individual blacks voluntarily leaving.

At the same time, Forten also thought that free blacks should remain in America and fight for their rights as well as the slaves' emancipation. In 1800, Forten and other black Philadelphians petitioned Congress to amend the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law to grant legal rights to suspected fugitives. In his "Letters from a Man of Colour on a Late Bill Before the Senate of Pennsylvania" in 1813 and in his appeal "To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania" in 1832, Forten urged lawmakers not to ban African Americans from coming into Pennsylvania and to acknowledge the contributions of blacks to American society. After Pennsylvania amended its constitution to disenfranchise African Americans in 1838, Forten went to court in vain to sue for his right to vote.

Forten's final 10 years were difficult. Because of his wealth and influence, Forten and his family came under increasing attack. He received death threats, and his son Thomas was attacked during the 1834 race riot in

Philadelphia. His daughter Harriet and son-in-law Robert Purvis were heckled as they tried to enter Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia for an abolitionist meeting in 1838. During his last years, Forten suffered a financial reversal because of the Panic of 1837 but managed to keep his business intact. He died in Philadelphia on March 15, 1842.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Cuffe, Paul; Destination, Haiti; Forten, Charlotte

*Eric Ledell Smith*

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## Free African Society

The Philadelphia Free African Society (FAS) was established in 1787 by Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and other free blacks as a Christian social welfare group that offered community resources and financial support to members when they were sick, disabled, or otherwise in need. Upon the death of members, who were all dues-paying free black men, the society would provide for their widows and children. Members of the FAS were required to live orderly and sober lives, attend monthly meetings, and pay dues. The society operated as democratic institution. Leaders of the group were elected, and decisions about how to spend the society's money, support and discipline members, and aid the community were made by voting members. The success of the FAS spawned the creation of dozens of other benevolent organizations throughout Philadelphia and the United States.

Recognizing that whites were not going to work to address the spiritual, economic, and social needs of

Philadelphia's blacks, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones began the Free African Society in 1787. In the absence of black public or private institutions, the FAS offered a quasi-governmental infrastructure for charity, education, marriage counseling and regulation, employment, money management, and the general maintenance of social order. Although the FAS was officially nondenominational, it maintained close theological ties to the Methodist and Episcopal traditions and frequently combined efforts with Quakers, who were abolitionist leaders.

Deeply invested in Christian religious ideas and morality, the FAS leadership translated their ideas about how society should conduct itself into programs encouraging the religious and social "uplift" of the black race. In the preamble of the FAS constitution, written by Absalom James and Richard Allen, the men lamented the lack of community among blacks and expressed sorrow over the "irreligious and uncivilized state" of their black brethren. Within the black community, similar conversations about the importance of morality, social uplift, education, and Christianization were occurring as a part of efforts to justify the humanity and equality of blacks in the eyes of whites. Through FAS, Allen and Jones initiated and participated in the conversation about the meaning of "social uplift" and the role of black churches in African American culture.

Sometime after the establishment of the FAS (scholars now disagree over whether the events at the St. George church occurred in late 1787 or sometime between 1792 and 1793), ministers Richard Allen and Absalom Jones joined an exodus of blacks from St. George's Methodist Episcopal church. After years of discrimination and paternalistic supervision, black congregants left when praying members were forcibly removed because they refused to be segregated into an upstairs gallery. After this event, Allen, Jones, and members of the Free African Society began to discuss creating an African church.

From its inception, the contributions of the Free African Society to black life in Philadelphia were tremendous. The group was responsible for the opening of 10 black-run private schools, offered literacy classes, taught Sunday school, fed the poor, regulated marriage licenses and birth certificates, purchased burial grounds, and financed the first prepaid health care plans in America. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, when many whites evacuated Philadelphia, FAS members mobilized blacks to orchestrate

patient care in the city. Together Allan and Jones produced literature commenting on the social situations of blacks and published the first document copyrighted by an African American, "A Narrative of the Black People," which responded to accusations that blacks had profited from patient care and robbed the homes of whites during the yellow fever outbreak.

Through their work with the FAS, both Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, lifelong friends who disagreed over their religious affiliations, went on to lead congregations that played important roles in the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In fact, though Richard Allen was an active participant in the FAS, he technically ended his formal affiliation with the group in 1789 when he became concerned that the group's adoption of Quaker practices violated his dedication to traditional Methodism. Allen, sympathetic to Methodism, opened the Methodist-affiliated Mother Bethel Church in 1794. A year earlier, in 1793, Jones, who identified as an Episcopalian, founded the African Episcopal Church of Philadelphia. In the 19th century, the friends settled their 20-year-long denominational dispute, merging Mother Bethel and the African Episcopal Church of Philadelphia into the African Methodist Episcopal church in 1816. As a result of the union, the new AME was the largest black denomination in the world, and Richard Allen was elected its first bishop.

Though the FAS ceased to formally exist by 1794, the work of the group continues through Mother Bethel AME Church. Historically significant as the first African American institution created by blacks for blacks, the Free African Society has been lauded by black leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois as an early model for black churches and fraternal orders interested in creating effective programs for social organization, financial support, and community outreach. *See also:* Benevolent Societies

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## **Free Soil Party**

The Free Soil Party was a political party formed in 1848 that advocated against the extension of slavery into new territories.

"Free soil" became a political movement in the 1840s when Northern abolitionists feared that up to six additional slave states might enter the Union from the newly acquired western territories. Northerners were afraid of economic competition from Southern slaveholders who might move into the new territories if the territories were not to become "free soil."

In 1846, during the Mexican War, David Wilmot of Pennsylvania introduced an amendment to an appropriations bill in the House of Representatives which stipulated that slavery would be prohibited in all of the lands to be obtained from Mexico. Known as the Wilmot Proviso, the bill passed the House of Representatives, but the Senate adjourned without voting on it. During the 1847 session of Congress, Wilmot proposed another antislavery amendment to a new appropriations bill, but the Senate's version of the bill did not include the amendment. The conflict over the expansion of slavery became more pronounced, and the "free soil" concept became part of the platform for the newly formed Free Soil Party in 1848.

Salmon P. Chase and John P. Hale, leaders of the "free soil" concept, and antislavery groups and discontented Whigs and Democrats convened in Buffalo, New York, in August 1848 to establish a broadly based political party that opposed the extension of slavery into the territories acquired from Mexico. Members of the Liberty Party, which had not shown well in the election of 1844, sent delegates from 17 states to the convention and accounted for about one-third of the new party's members. The antislavery factions of New York State's Democrats, called the Barnburners, also sent several delegates. Numerous northern Whigs also joined the party because they opposed the Whigs' nomination of Tennessee's Zachary Taylor for president because Taylor was a slaveholder. The newly organized Free Soil Party adopted the slogan "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men" and nominated former president Martin Van Buren, a New York Barnburner, as its party's candidate for president. John Quincy Adams's son, Charles F. Adams, of Massachusetts was selected as the Free Soil candidate for vice president. The party's platform urged the



*The Free Soil Party, led by former president Martin Van Buren in the 1848 election, opposed expansion of slavery and supported a homestead act. Party members were largely absorbed by the Republican Party after the 1852 presidential election. (Library of Congress)*

abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C.; proposed there be no interference with slavery that existed within any of the states at that time; opposed the expansion of slavery into any of the nation's new territories; demanded cheap postage; promoted internal improvements; recommended the government provide public land grants to American settlers who were making settlements in wilderness areas; urged the government to abolish unnecessary offices; and advocated a revenue tariff from which the early payment of the national debt would be made.

The new party attracted many small farmers, debtors, merchants, and household and mill workers who feared competition from free or slave black labor in the territories. The Free Soil Party polled approximately 10 percent, or 300,000, of the popular votes in the 1848 election but did not win any electoral votes. The party's success in gathering a large number of popular votes for its candidates weakened the election chances of the Democratic presidential

candidate, Lewis Cass, to win in New York State and helped elect Zachary Taylor, the Whig candidate, to the presidency. Several Free Soil candidates were elected to Congress, and in Ohio the people also elected Free Soil candidate Salmon Chase to the U.S. Senate. The party was well represented in several state legislatures and was especially influential in the Ohio legislature, which was evenly divided between Democrats and Whigs. As a result, the Free Soilers used their leverage in the legislature to enact legislation and to successfully overturn most of the state's black laws.

When the Compromise of 1850 was enacted, many thought the slavery issue was settled. The Barnburners left the Free Soil Party and returned to their earlier political alliances, but many antislavery proponents remained in the party. Although weakened as a party, the Free Soil Party held its 1852 convention in Pittsburgh and nominated John P. Hale as its candidate for president and George W. Julian of Indiana as its candidate for vice president. The party's platform denounced the Compromise of 1850, the fugitive slave laws, and the expansion of slavery into new territories. The party failed to win any electoral votes and collected only 5 percent of the popular vote, but it elected several members to the U.S. House of Representatives and state legislatures.

By 1854, the Free Soil Party had ceased to exist because most of the remaining Free Soil Party members joined the ranks of the newly formed Republican Party and continued to oppose the expansion of slavery. "Free soil" again became a major issue after the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854. Northerners took up the "free soil" cause in the debates over whether Kansas should be admitted as a slave or free state, and the abolitionist movement gathered strength from the Free Soilers when the U.S. Supreme Court decided the Dred Scott case in 1857.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Brown, John; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Republican Party

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## Freedom's Journal

Established in 1827, *Freedom's Journal* was the first newspaper owned and operated by blacks and was headquartered in New York City at 6 Varick Street. For two years, *Freedom's Journal* provided an independent voice for African Americans. Although blacks appreciated the abolitionists speaking out on their behalf, they felt it was time for them to enter the public debate. The press appeared to be the best place to counter racial propaganda, to fight for political equality for free blacks, and to raise the status of blacks in the community. Thus began an era in black press history that led to the launching of a multitude of black-owned newspapers before the beginning of the Civil War.

Several factors came together in the 1820s that made the climate right for a black-owned newspaper to compete with the mainstream press. Slavery had recently been abolished in New York, and the free blacks needed a venue to contribute their viewpoints as well as to receive information pertinent to their community. New York City did not have the largest black population at the time, but because it was a center for civil rights debates, it made a logical location for a black-oriented newspaper. Free blacks were establishing their own communities, churches, and schools across the country, thus establishing a social infrastructure that could support a national newspaper. Value was beginning to be placed on reading and writing in the black community, and literary societies were being developed. Education on political issues, the arts, and the sciences and improvement of the day-to-day lives of blacks were of particular importance. Political issues affecting blacks were being actively debated in the mainstream press, such as the continuation of slavery and the civil rights of freed blacks. The colonization movement was being supported by editors of major newspapers. Mordecai Noah, the editor of the *New York Enquirer* and a proslavery and colonization advocate, routinely unleashed racist propaganda in his paper, and many blacks became angered by his comments. Indeed, it seemed that the time had come for blacks to have their own forum to confront influential racist rhetoric and to increase their sense of solidarity.

Although the full details of how *Freedom's Journal* was formed and funded are still unclear, scholars generally agree that a group of prominent African Americans gathered at the home of Boston Crummell in New York City

to discuss the creation of an autonomous newspaper that could convey the black community's viewpoint and uplift its respectability. Two well-educated clergymen, John Brown Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, were selected as the editors. Russwurm, whose father was a white American and whose mother was a slave in Jamaica, was born in Port Antonio, Jamaica, in 1799. As a youth, Russwurm was educated in Canada and became one of the first black graduates of Bowdoin College. Samuel Cornish was born in Sussex County, Delaware, in 1795 to free parents and attended the Philadelphia Presbytery. He became the pastor of the First Colored Presbyterian Church in New York City some years before launching *Freedom's Journal*. Both men were prominent figures in their community and were highly respected.

The first issue of the four-page, four-column weekly newspaper appeared on March 16, 1827. Russwurm and Cornish explained that their objectives were to oppose slavery, colonization, and racist commentary. *Freedom's Journal* became a popular newspaper with circulation numbers similar to other antebellum newspapers. It circulated in 11 states, the District of Columbia, Haiti, Europe, and Canada. The tabloid cost \$3 per year, and a typical advertisement cost between 25 to 75 cents. As was common for newspapers at the time, agents were utilized to promote the paper and obtain subscribers in various cities. At various times, 14 to 44 agents were listed at the end of each issue, most of them influential African Americans such as Rev. Nathaniel Paul, founder of the First African Society in Albany, and Richard Allen and James Forten, conveners of the colored conventions. David Walker, the Boston agent, would later write *Walker's Appeal*, a militant pamphlet that called for slaves to rebel against their masters.

The audience for the newspaper was ex-slaves and free black citizens, largely in Northern states, who were becoming upwardly mobile. Thus, the articles were focused primarily on improving the conditions for free blacks in the country and increasing their sense of brotherhood. Education was of particular importance to the editors, leading to a diverse array of topics appearing in the paper's columns. The newspaper broadened readers' knowledge of the world and the political arena by covering domestic and foreign news and featuring articles on such countries as Haiti and Sierra Leone. To encourage freedom of expression, editorials offered divergent opinions on important issues. As a paper of record, it published birth, death, and marriage

announcements. Biographies of such prominent African Americans as businessman Paul Cuffe and poet Phyllis Wheatley were published to encourage black achievement. Daily life for blacks was supported by self-improvement advice, notices of cultural events, job listings, and classifieds. Reports on the kidnappings of free blacks in the Northern states were closely monitored, a service that probably saved many lives. In addition to news reports, the newspaper provided an outlet for African American literary offerings by publishing poems, essays, and speeches. Because the majority of the articles were written by African Americans, the newspaper strived to dispel the stereotype that blacks had no rhetorical skills.

But despite the initial successful reception of the paper, Cornish left *Freedom's Journal* after only six months. In September 1827, Cornish announced his resignation in the newspaper columns, indicating that he was leaving for health reasons and to devote more time to his ministry work. Yet most scholars agree that Cornish's decision to leave the paper was actually the result of dissension between Cornish and Russwurm over the issue of colonization, a concept that was conceived by the pro-white American Colonization Society to expatriate free blacks to Africa. The initial mission of the paper's editors was to oppose advocates of colonization and to publish the truth about efforts to send free blacks to Africa. The issues of colonization and slavery usually coincided with one another because many whites who supported colonization also supported keeping the institution of slavery. Abolitionists felt that the society was trying to get rid of the free blacks, who were gaining a voice in politics, and leave only slaves in the United States, which would create a reduction in the antislavery protesters. Cornish, like the majority of free blacks, opposed this movement. *Freedom's Journal* did provide editorials on the both sides of the issue, but the paper's official editorial position was opposed to colonization. Initially, Russwurm supported the paper's position, but he eventually changed his opinion. Therefore, historians believe that the discord between the two editors was a factor in Cornish's decision. But other scholars believe that the partnership dissolution was amicable, and Cornish's departure was due to other reasons. The fact that Cornish served as an agent for *Freedom's Journal* until its demise indicated a continuing business relationship between the two editors.

After Cornish's departure, Russwurm edited the newspaper alone between March 16, 1827, and March 28, 1829.

He did not immediately change the paper's official editorial position against colonization. But Russwurm became increasingly frustrated with what he perceived to be the lack of opportunities for free blacks and the continued hatred from whites. As a result, more colonization sentiments began to appear in the newspaper, and the editorials lacked the earlier militant tones. In February 1829, Russwurm officially proclaimed his support for colonization, and he announced his resignation as editor in April 1829 so that he could prepare for his immigration to Liberia. Readers did not respond favorably to his position, and in the final issue that was published on March 28, 1829, Russwurm expressed disappointment over the criticism. In September 1829, he left for Liberia, where he continued his editorial work as the publisher of the *Liberian Herald*. Cornish attempted to revive *Freedom's Journal* in May 1829 under the new name *Rights of All*, but the paper folded in less than a year.

Although the paper did not survive for longer than two years, it paved the way for other antebellum black-owned and operated newspapers. The editors demonstrated that blacks could use words to fight inequality and racism and that the press could serve to empower them to control their own lives and destinies. Diffusing information in order to educate, raising the black community's respectability, and creating a sense of solidarity were primary objectives of pre-Civil War newspapers. These principles began with the editorial position of *Freedom's Journal*, and they continue to influence African American journalism today. *See also:* American Colonization Society; Cornish, Samuel; Crummell, Boston; Liberia; Russwurm, John

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## Fugitive Slave Act of 1793

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was a piece of legislation signed by Congress and President George Washington in 1793 that monitored and relegated fugitive slaves. Southern states believed that this law was necessary because the U.S. Constitution made it unlawful for a slave to escape to another state to be free. Although this was the law, many slaves continued to flee to Northern states in search of a new life. Because abolitionists—both white and black—created a support network for fugitives, opponents of the antislavery cause felt that there was a need for clearer legislation regarding runaway slaves, especially the issue of returning slaves to their owners. One incident in particular indirectly led to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793: the kidnapping of John Davis, a suspected runaway slave. Three white men kidnapped John Davis from Pennsylvania and took him to Virginia, where they claimed he had been a slave. Pennsylvania authorities wanted Virginians to arrest the men and send them to Pennsylvania to face kidnapping charges. Attorney General Edmund Randolph refused to arrest the three white men because he said that the state of Virginia did not have sufficient legal jurisdiction.

This incident highlighted the constitutional problems regarding capturing and returning runaway slaves. Attorney General Randolph claimed that both governors were at fault and that the governor of Philadelphia should have provided the governor of Virginia with a copy of the law that had been broken. Attorney General Edmund Randolph submitted his report regarding the incident and policy to President George Washington, who forwarded the report to the U.S. Congress. The result was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 outlined the process for returning runaway slaves to their owners. After significant debate and revision, the U.S. Senate passed a bill on January 17, 1793, and a similar version was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on January 30. The final bill was signed into law by President George Washington on

February 12, 1793. The final Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 includes four sections. Sections 1 and 2 of the law addressed the role of the states in returning criminals. This part of the law claimed that it was the governor's responsibility to act. Once the harboring state had received an indictment from the governor seeking the fugitive, it was the responsibility of the state to arrest the fugitive and notify the state from which the fugitive had committed the crime. These sections of the law also placed a fine of \$500 and up to one-year imprisonment on anyone who aided in rescuing a fugitive.

Sections 3 and 4 of the law addressed fugitive slaves. These sections did not put the responsibility of enforcing this law on any one person. Section 3 outlined a three-stage process for taking a runaway slave into custody: (1) the slave owner must first seize the runaway; (2) the runaway was to be brought before a federal judge, state judge, or magistrate; and (3) the claimant must offer proof that the suspected fugitive was a fugitive owned by the claimant. A certificate of removal would then be issued to the claimant. The last section, section 4, said that any person interfering could be sued by the owner for \$500 and for any injuries caused.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was important for several reasons. This legislation allowed Congress to direct states on how they must deal with runaway slaves, a matter that eventually led to significant debate and court battles because many argued that Congress should not have been given such extreme power. The law was also important because it ignored the rights of any black person. Black people could be kidnapped and sent into slavery although they had been citizens of their communities. Many Northern blacks feared that they would be captured and taken into custody, regardless of whether they had actually escaped from slavery. This problem was highlighted by the fact that alleged slave owners were not required to provide tangible proof that a person was a runaway slave. The magistrate could accept an affidavit or oral proof that the person was a runaway. This lack of precise evidence allows for the possibility of tainted evidence to force blacks into slavery. Runaway slaves now were forced to escape to Canada rather than be subjected to this treatment in the free states.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842). In this case, Edward Prigg had assaulted a black woman, Margaret Morgan. He kidnapped her from Pennsylvania and took her to Maryland to serve as a slave. Pennsylvania had passed a law that did not allow the state to help in returning



runaway slaves and made it a crime for anyone to try to capture a black person for the purpose of enslaving him or her. The Supreme Court ruled that Pennsylvania's law was unconstitutional but also argued that states did not have to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. This remained a point of conflict between the Northern and Southern states until 1850, when the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was revised as part of the Compromise of 1850. This new law called for federal assistance in the recapturing of fugitive slaves and mandated that federal marshals be used to capture and return slaves to their owners.

*See also:* Compromise of 1850; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves

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## Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

Passed in 1850 as part of the Compromise of 1850, a congressional agreement designed to quiet Southern fears that antislavery advocates were gradually undermining slavery, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made it easier for slave owners to reclaim their runaway slaves.

The Fugitive Slave Act's stipulations included the following important mandates: it gave slaveholders the unrestricted right to enter the Northern states and reclaim their so-called property; it established that black people had no rights—no right to a trial, no right to testify, and no protection from being illegally detained or imprisoned; and it forced Northerners to help slave catchers recapture fugitives. In so doing, it essentially forced Northerners to support the system of slavery because Northerners could be prosecuted for knowingly aiding or abetting a fugitive. Moreover, the act established federal commissioners who had jurisdiction to issue certificates of removal for fugitive

slaves. The commissioners took testimony from a slave owner in person and from affidavits; the alleged slaves were not permitted to testify. Then the commissioners were to issue certificates of removal once they had established the identity of an alleged slave. There was no jury trial, and no defenses were permitted. Thus, the commissioners' function was limited to determining the identity of the person being returned, not whether the person actually *was* a fugitive. The act preempted the Personal Liberty Laws of several Northern states, which prohibited state officers from cooperating in the return of fugitive slaves.

In debate in early 1850, members of Congress questioned the value of the act. Was it something that would turn American citizens into lawbreakers? Could a law that was inconsistent with the morality of the Northern population command respect, or would the act bring the law into disrepute? The debates in Congress over these issues are some of the most important public discussions of jurisprudence in American history. The most famous speech in favor of the Compromise of 1850 was Daniel Webster's "Seventh of March Speech." In it, he urged support for the act on the grounds that returning fugitives was a constitutional duty and an expedient measure to avoid serious sectional conflict. Ultimately, Congress decided to risk losing respect for law in return for an attempt to reach a compromise with Southerners, who had threatened secession since the early 1830s when South Carolina threatened disunion. Only four senators voted against the act, including Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Salmon Chase of Ohio.

There was a series of high-profile cases in Boston, in which slave owners sought return of fugitives. Shadrach Minkins, a fugitive slave from Norfolk, Virginia, was the first person in New England to be arrested pursuant to the act. He was taken to the courthouse, where within a few hours a mob rescued him. He then fled to Canada, where he was beyond the reach of the act. The episode illustrated the conflicts that arose when Southern slave owners tried to reclaim their human property in the North. Attempts to enforce the act led to other violence. A Maryland slave owner was killed in September 1851, in Christiana, Pennsylvania, when he went with U.S. marshals to reclaim a fugitive slave hiding in the home of a black family. Four fugitive slaves were arrested for conspiracy in the Christiana murder, but when charges were dismissed, they were turned over to their alleged owners from Maryland.

The last fugitive returned from New England was Anthony Burns. When he was arrested in May 1854, a mob, with perhaps as many as 2,000 people, tried to free him. In the process, a deputy died. President Franklin Pierce then used federal troops to guard against a mob. Burns was subsequently tried before Judge Edward Loring, found to be a fugitive, and ordered returned to his owner. Burns was then marched, in chains, through the streets, to a boat that took him back to Virginia. Perhaps as many as 50,000 people witnessed the march. Afterward, Boston residents purchased Burns's freedom, and he returned to Boston.

The Burns episode illustrates how quickly attempts to return fugitives escalated into violence and how much passion the plight of one person might generate. In his speech "Slavery in Massachusetts," delivered shortly after Burns's trial, Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau indicted the act, arguing that it made millions of black people in the North into slaves. Likewise, in response to the Burns case, William Lloyd Garrison burned a copy of the Constitution on the town square in Boston.

The greatest significance of the act, then, was not in the number of people returned to slavery but in the reaction it generated in the North. Abolitionists used the act as a rallying point. The most famous response was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was written in response to the act. An important part of the novel revolves around an Ohio senator who voted in favor of returning slaves to their owners. But when a fugitive slave and her son appear at the senator's home, he harbors them. Stowe believed that even politicians would act humanely and would violate the Fugitive Slave Act.

It has been estimated that there were perhaps 2,000 sermons delivered in churches about the act. Many were given by abolitionists, who argued that the "higher law" of the conscience (or of God) required them to violate the law. Many others, including Frederick Douglass and Ralph Waldo Emerson, spoke or wrote against the act and against returning fugitive slaves. One of the most sophisticated works along those lines was Henry David Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government" (popularly known as "Civil Disobedience").

Although abolitionists such as Thoreau and Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts spoke of the "Higher Law," many others in the North urged support for the Fugitive Slave Act, even if individuals disagreed with it. For instance, in 1851, lecturers at Brown, Harvard, and Yale universities all

spoke about the need to uphold law. The act, thus, was a central point of conflict over views of justice, law, abolition, and slavery. And in the end, the choice to reduce the risks of disunion through passing the act highlighted the gulf between law's practice and the country's promise, between law's formalisms and morality's sentiments. Reactions to these contrasts played an important role leading to war.

*See also:* Destination, Canada; Fugitive Slave Act of 1793; Fugitive Slaves; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Underground Railroad

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## Fugitive Slaves

Fugitive slaves were people who either temporarily or permanently escaped bondage. The number of fugitive slaves during any point in American history is difficult to ascertain. Although some sense may be gleaned through examination of various types of records (runaway advertisements placed in newspapers, for example), and hypotheses can be offered, only two facts may be conceded without reservation. The first is that runaways were an ever-present component of the American population. Second, the overwhelming majority of runaway attempts were unsuccessful, ending with the fugitive's voluntary return, capture, or death. Yet the power of fugitive slaves in the American historical narrative is not to be found in individual episodes of success or failure. Their impact was much more fundamental. Africans and African Americans used flight (the act of running away) as part of a broader system of resisting the physical and psychological manipulation of slavery. In this way, flight expressed a desire for self-determination. Indeed, from the beginning of slavery in the United States, enslaved people fled from households, plantations, and their owners' control without permission quite frequently. The purposes

for such actions remained somewhat consistent across the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

Most escapes served specific needs, socialization and protest being most prevalent. For example, the developments influencing community formation among the enslaved (patterns of importation and domestic sale) encouraged social networks and kinship systems involving multiple plantations in any given region. “Visiting” relatives and friends away from one’s own plantation, therefore, became a valued aspect of community life, and short-term flight became necessary as slave owners discouraged or attempted to restrict these habits. Similarly, slaves periodically fled into nearby wooded areas, “hiding out” for stretches of time (days, weeks, months), though remaining in the general vicinity. This variety of flight functioned as a method of protest or as a tool of negotiation with slave owners. Thus, in most instances, slaves absented themselves from plantations or work sites without permission, but with the intention of returning.

Still another variety of flight—perhaps the most dramatic—involved those attempting a permanent break with slavery. Indeed, those who ran hoping never to return understood that they were taking their lives into their hands. Fugitive slaves attempting a permanent break were pushed to act by a variety of factors. Persistent brutality by an owner or overseer, a forced change in social setting, altered work conditions, or other concerns convinced many to run.

For skilled slaves, running to nearby towns, living under assumed names, and plying trades proved somewhat possible, at least early on. Yet for the unskilled before the American Revolution, few safe havens existed. A number were taken in by Native American groups. Others simply remained at large in woods, swamps, and mountainous regions, banding together as groups of fugitives—ranging in size from dozens to, in rare instances, hundreds. This practice, called “outlying,” represented the gravest concerns for whites because such groups survived most often



*An 1850 illustration condemns the Fugitive Slave Act, a law passed by Congress in September 1850 which increased federal and free-state responsibility for the recovery of fugitive slaves. The law provided for the appointment of federal commissioners empowered to issue warrants for the arrest of alleged fugitive slaves and to enlist the aid of posses and even civilian bystanders in their apprehension. (Library of Congress)*

by marauding, pirating, pilfering, and sometimes violent means. In response, many jurisdictions encouraged owners to declare their outlying runaways as “outlaws.” This designation allowed pursuers to hunt and kill fugitives, rather than recapture them.

Quite often, particularly in the earlier periods, enslaved blacks fled seeking opportunity and independence—economic as much as social. Skilled artisans among the colonial and early national enslaved populations were notorious for taking such action, especially because white non-slaveholders were often willing to offer opportunities for work to skilled black strangers, no questions asked. Economic opportunities continued to entice 19th-century enslaved blacks to risk flight, particularly as port cities along the Atlantic seaboard began to flourish, and railroad and canal projects offered employment to any willing and strong hands. Yet as the Northern states abolished slavery in the wake of the American Revolution, and free black communities emerged, freedom itself became the pull. By the early national era, freedom in the North became a magnet for fugitive slaves from the Southern states. Assuming new identities, establishing themselves within communities, and taking on spouses (often unaware of their true identities and castes), many fugitives successfully reinvented themselves in the North.

After 1800, although many traditional compulsions still factored significantly into blacks’ decisions to run, for those in the Upper South, a common compulsion became the threat of sale to the Deep South. A forced relocation of perhaps 1 million African Americans from the old tobacco country to the emergent cotton frontier sent black communities into panic. Many blacks risked the perils of flight rather than the doom of this domestic slave trade.

Although pursuit and recapture represented constant threats, uncooperative extradition habits of Northern state and local governments—a general disinterest, in fact, for the plight of slave owners seeking absconded property—made for relatively safe havens in the North. Tougher federal laws, however, made even free states precarious for fugitives. Indeed, many fugitives who had lived in the North under the guise of freedom for years felt compelled to pick up and move on again. Seeking asylum outside American borders, a sizable refugee community formed in Canada, which became for African Americans a sort of “promised land.”

In advertising for the return of their runaways, slave owners presented a wide variety of profiles; people from

every walk of enslaved life, it seems, could and did runaway. Old men ran, as did pregnant girls. Many believed to be unfamiliar with their surroundings ran nonetheless. Slaves thought to be timid and mild-mannered, even loyal, fled bondage too. However, most runaways were young men, between the ages of 15 and 30. They generally ran off alone, at least initially. Young women without children ran more than those with children. The months of April through October saw the most flight attempts, but because of distracted owners and relaxed supervision, no single week of the year emboldened more runaway attempts than the days between Christmas Eve and New Year Day. Though some made clandestine use of railway and water vessels, most runaways fled on foot. While on the move, runaways stayed close to roads, rivers, and other normal routes, traveling mainly at night.

Many fugitives made at least short-term use of family and friends on nearby plantations or in towns and cities. Fugitives generally helped themselves to provisions (food, clothing, sometimes money) before leaving, but when these ran out, foraging in the woods, relying on the kindness of people encountered along the way, and even pilfering from barns and storehouses as they came upon them were necessary to sustain and survive. A number of runaways even found short-term employment from whoever might be willing to hire a person of undetermined status.

Indeed, fugitive slaves drew upon many others for assistance. These accomplices included both the willing and the unwitting. Friends, family, and hospitable strangers encountered while on the run, for example, are known to have provided for fugitives’ material needs, information, temporary shelter, finance, and other necessities. Likewise, through stealth, ruse, and deception, the random farmer, the less-than-diligent ship’s captain, the gullible hack driver, and others encountered by chance might also help fugitives keep running, whether they knew it or not. Most dramatically, however, abolitionists across the North and Midwest participated in regionally organized networks designed to help fugitives keep running during the last four decades of slavery in the United States. Called the Underground Railroad, these confederations helped fugitives remain at large, providing money, logistical support, and transportation. However, only a handful of reformers associated with the Underground Railroad (Harriet Tubman being the most noted) actually went into the South and “rescued” blacks from slavery. Fugitives had to get free themselves first.

Runaways were known to the earliest colonial slaveholders, and lawmakers attempted to keep slaves on the plantation through legislation aimed at deterring runaway attempts, discouraging would-be accomplices, and promoting recovery of those slaves who did escape. To deter the slaves, generally, any black person found without direct white supervision was treated as a runaway unless she or he could prove legitimacy. By the antebellum era, every town and hamlet in the South had a jail, and many had pens designated specifically to house runaways (though free blacks without proper identification also frequently found themselves detained there). Additionally, punishments for free blacks and whites convicted of aiding runaways could be severe. Penalties could be simply monetary, but many served lengthy prison sentences for aiding and abetting runaways. Those who voluntarily participated in slave escape attempts were punished, obviously, but so too were those ignorant of a fugitive's status. The thrust of such laws hoped to give non-slaveholding whites a stake (protection of their own freedom) in maintaining others' property.

The threat of penalties alone, however, did not ensure the participation of non-slaveholding whites in maintaining others' slave property. From the 17th century onward, for example, handsome rewards were offered to white citizens who took it upon themselves to interrogate and detain any African Americans found away from supervision without valid documentation. For slaves who managed to escape, advertisements alerted the public as to who was at large—their name and physical characteristics, when and from where they ran, whom they knew in the area, and most importantly, what the owner would pay for the fugitive's return. Furthermore, by 1850, a new Fugitive Slave Act had strengthened slaveholders' ability to pursue runaways across state lines, to anywhere in the nation.

Ultimately, fugitive slaves and their growing cadre of allies (slaves on the plantations, free blacks, and abolitionist whites) became the bane of slaveholders and pushed the nation to civil war. In fact, both sides became emboldened by various developments late in the antebellum era, and thus standoffs proved inevitable. The most dramatic confrontation involving fugitive slaves directly occurred in a small eastern Pennsylvania hamlet, Christiana, on September 11, 1851. A community of fugitive slaves—largely from Maryland—had existed for many years there. Encouraged by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a Baltimore slave owner arrived at Christiana demanding the return of his

absconded property. The fugitives, led by William Parker (a runaway from near Annapolis, Maryland), stood their ground. In the end, the slaveholder lay dead, and the national debate over slavery appeared ever surer to degenerate into bloodshed. Nearly a decade before John Brown's raid, the fugitive slaves at Christiana had set the nation on the course to war and freedom.

*See also:* Destination, Canada; Fugitive Slave Act of 1793; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Underground Railroad

*David Taft Terry*

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## Gabriel (Prosser)

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Gabriel Prosser (1776–1800), a slave blacksmith from Henrico County, Virginia, became a leader and organizer of an attempted rebellion that sought to end slavery in 1800. Born to enslaved parents in the same year that fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, Gabriel grew up on his master Thomas Prosser's rural Brookfield plantation located about six miles outside the state capital of Richmond. Gabriel was the youngest son in a religious slave family and followed his father into a skilled trade, receiving training as a blacksmith. By age 20, Gabriel had become an exceptional slave. He stood well over six feet tall, and thanks to his blacksmithing skills, his ability to read (and perhaps write), and his intelligence and self-confidence, he was becoming a respected figure in the slave community. Gabriel's master had already begun to acknowledge Gabriel's skill and ability by giving him wide latitude to move freely about the surrounding area to hire his labor out.

By the 1790s, Gabriel managed a blacksmith's shop and trained other Prosser slaves in metalworking. Largely free

from direct white supervision, he regularly hired out his time in the area around Brookfield and within Richmond city limits. Richmond at that time had become a rapidly urbanizing trading center in which wealthy planters, businessmen, white workers, free blacks, and slaves routinely mingled. Living in such close proximity to the city and often participating in the interracial working-class culture of Richmond, Gabriel became familiar with American revolutionary rhetoric and impassioned politics, the slave revolution in Saint Domingue, and the Quasi-War with France. Also influenced by egalitarian Christian millennialism, Gabriel came to abhor the inequality of Virginia society and to detest slavery and white slaveholders in particular.

His growing anger with white privilege burst into public view in September 1799. Former Brookfield overseer Absalom Johnson caught Gabriel, his brother Solomon, and slave Jupiter stealing a pig from the farm Johnson rented in Henrico County. Confronted by Johnson, Gabriel attacked him, biting off a portion of Johnson's ear. All three slaves were arrested. On October 7, Gabriel was found guilty of maiming and was sentenced to 39 lashes at the public whipping post and a branding of his left thumb. This brush with the law of slavery did not crush Gabriel's desire to fight slavery and white privilege.

Sometime in the spring of 1800, Gabriel and other skilled and literate slaves in Richmond City and Henrico County (including his brother Solomon) began to plan the violent overthrow of white slaveholders. They were informed by overheated campaigning in the tumultuous election of 1800 and by news of successful black liberation on Hispaniola. These skilled slaves used their unsupervised time in Richmond to scout the locations of armories. The conspirators sought recruits at Sunday slave gatherings, including religious services, funerals, and afternoon picnics. They sought to harness the energies of evangelical Christian slaves in the rural countryside, but to serve a secular egalitarian revolution. With the movements of skilled slaves hiring their own time, free and slave river-men working local waterways, and weekly gatherings of slaves in the counties surrounding Richmond, the conspiracy grew as the summer progressed. Slaves from as far away as Caroline County, Petersburg, and Norfolk joined the conspiracy.

The rebels spent the summer fashioning swords out of scythes and planning their attack on white slaveholders. All rebels were to meet in Henrico on the evening of Saturday,

August 30, 1800. The rebels would split into three columns, one marching on the capitol building and taking Governor Monroe hostage. Others would set fire to Richmond's riverside warehouse district, seize weapons and ammunition, and blockade Mayo's Bridge. The rebels would kill whites in Richmond and demand the end of slavery. Tremendous thunderstorms and flooding on the evening of August 30 washed out bridges and prevented the slaves from gathering, so the attack was postponed until the next day.

By that time, vague rumors of the revolt were circulating among whites, but little attention was paid to them. On that Saturday, however, two Henrico slaves mentioned the plot to Mosby Sheppard, who sent an urgent message to the governor. Monroe ordered patrols for Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday, a white patroller received another warning about the revolt. Monroe was again notified and sent out Henrico magistrates to Thomas Prosser's plantation. Gabriel had disappeared, but they questioned a young slave named Ben, who revealed the details of the plot. Monroe mobilized the militia while magistrates continued with the investigation. At least 70 slaves were tried, and 44 were convicted, 26 were publicly hanged, and the remainder were pardoned or transported out of the United States.

Meanwhile, Gabriel remained at large. On September 14, downriver from Richmond, Gabriel boarded a schooner headed to Norfolk. On September 23, the ship arrived in Norfolk, and two slaves reported Gabriel's presence on the schooner to authorities. The next day, he was arrested and transported to Richmond. Within three weeks, Gabriel had been convicted and sentenced to death. He was publicly hanged on Friday, October 10, bringing to a close what may have been the largest attempted slave revolt on U.S. soil.

*See also:* Slave Resistance

*Kirt von Daacke*

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## Gang System

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The gang system was a labor routine used primarily on large plantations producing one crop that called for groups of enslaved people to work together on the same job at the same time. Jobs or chores using the gang system were often driven by the seasonal needs of the crop and the processing required to prepare the crop for market. Almost every plantation used the gang system to some extent, but some used it only for specific chores, whereas others used it as a specific means of organizing the bulk of the plantation labor for crop production. In some regions, depending on the crop type, it was not uncommon for these jobs to be strenuous and dangerous and for the “gang” to be composed mainly of Africans who were purchased for their strength and youth—and worked until they could no longer physically perform the job at hand. Through this system of labor, the enslaved workers could be easily supervised by the overseer, who would ensure that they worked hard and continuously: the slaves could not ease up their pace, take breaks, or take “advantage” of the planter by breaking tools or instituting behavior that might slow down the process of the assigned chore.

In North America, the gang system first took root in the tobacco enterprise of Virginia and the Chesapeake region. Small gangs were cost-effective and easy to supervise; they were often formed with one strong worker in each gang who could set the pace for the entire group of workers. The gang would be expected to work at the tempo and for the duration of that strongest member of the group. The gang system continued to develop as a favored labor system as the United States experienced westward expansion in the 19th century. Gang labor was particularly well suited for the growing cotton production of the inland regions.

In the Caribbean and in South America, the gang system of labor was used extensively on the sugar plantations—the dominant cash crop of the region. The intense work required to cultivate, harvest, and process sugarcane could best be accomplished through the use of closely supervised gangs of Africans who could be worked long, grueling hours as needed. Whether planting, tending, or harvesting the cane, gang labor was available on demand and could be worked almost nonstop until the process was complete. The same was true for the severe and brutal work of processing the cane to produce the raw sugar product: milling

and boiling the stalks had to be completed within a specific period of time after the cane was harvested. Strong, young Africans were favored for work on these plantations and usually did not experience a long life expectancy doing this work. The enslaved populations on these plantations were not self-perpetuating, and to keep up with the demand for sugar, the plantations continually relied on the purchase of newly acquired Africans through the slave trade.

*See also:* Slave Plantation; Task System

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## Garner, Margaret

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Margaret Garner (1833–1858) was an enslaved woman in Kentucky who escaped to the free soil of Ohio with her family in 1856. Surrounded by federal marshals, Garner murdered her two-year-old daughter to prevent her return to slavery. The four-week fugitive slave trial that followed was one of the longest and costliest in American history. It received national attention and galvanized opponents of slavery as a symbol of that system’s evils. Then as now, Garner stood as an iconic image of African American women’s slave resistance.

Margaret Garner was born into slavery on June 4, 1833, at Maplewood, a northern Kentucky plantation owned by the Gaines family. John Pollard Gaines, who became the second territorial governor of Oregon in 1849, purchased Maplewood in 1825. Margaret and her parents were among about a dozen slaves who worked on the Gaines plantation, which focused on hog-raising and was one of the most productive in Boone County. Maplewood’s slaves created a strong community culture among themselves and with slaves who resided at nearby plantations, sustaining familial and other ties with cross-plantation marriages, work, and travel. At age five or six, Margaret went to work in John

Pollard Gaines's house, where her duties involved looking after his 11 children.

John Pollard Gaines's positions in the state and national legislatures frequently called him away from Maplewood, and his wife's numerous pregnancies left her too weak to manage the plantation. Various male family members and friends filled this vacuum from time to time, creating a volatile environment that may have encouraged some of Maplewood's slaves, including Margaret's mother Priscilla in 1846, to attempt escape. For Margaret, another change in plantation management precipitated her breaking point. Just before leaving for Oregon, John Pollard Gaines sold Maplewood to his brother Archibald Kinkead Gaines, who owned the Arkansas plantation Gaines Landing with Benjamin Gaines, another brother. Archibald Gaines imposed more stringent discipline on Maplewood's slaves and disrupted their families and community by hiring out their labor. The specter of sale was a constant presence. Around the time of Maplewood's transfer to Archibald Gaines, 16-year-old Margaret married Robert Garner, a 15-year-old

slave of James Marshall, and bore her first child, Thomas, in March 1850. Three more children followed: Samuel in 1852, Mary in 1853, and Cilla in 1855. Perhaps fearing that their family would be split apart, Margaret and Robert took advantage of the cold winter of 1856 to make their escape. Margaret was several months pregnant at the time.

At 10 or 11 p.m. on January 27, 1856, Robert stole a sleigh from James Marshall's plantation and drove himself, his parents Simon and Mary, Margaret, and their four children to the Kentucky border city of Covington. There, the party traversed a frozen Ohio River to Cincinnati, where Margaret's free uncle and cousin, Joe and Elijah Kite, had a cabin. Taking shelter in the cabin, the Garners planned to embark on the Underground Railroad, bound for Canada. On the other side of the river, however, Archibald Gaines and James Marshall's son Thomas had discovered the Garner's absence and pursued them to Cincinnati. Under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, passed in 1850, slave owners could reclaim slaves who escaped to free states with the additional aid of federal marshals. At about 10 a.m. on



*Engraving of Margaret Garner, a fugitive slave who killed her own daughter rather than see the child returned to slavery, illustrated in Harper's Weekly, 1867. (Library of Congress)*



January 28, 11 men circled the Kites' cabin. When they finally forced their way inside, they found that Margaret had cut two-year-old Mary's throat and appeared poised to kill her three other children. The marshals arrested and jailed Margaret and the other Garners.

The Garners' fugitive slave trial began on January 30. Their attorney, Ohio abolitionist John Jolliffe, claimed that the adult Garners were already free by virtue of prior visits to Ohio and that the children born after those visits were also free. The trial lasted four weeks and gripped the national and abolitionist press, with the exception of the Deep South, before Judge John L. Pendery ruled on February 26 that all seven Garners continued to be the property of their respective masters and should be returned to Kentucky. On February 28, the Garners traveled back to Kentucky in shackles.

Before Ohio officials could demand the return of the adult Garners to stand trial for outstanding murder charges, Archibald Gaines sent them and the three children to Gaines Landing in Arkansas on March 7 aboard the steamship *Henry Lewis*. While en route, another ship hit the *Henry Lewis* near Troy, Indiana. Margaret Garner either jumped or fell into the Ohio River with baby Cilla, who drowned. The rest of the party continued the journey to Arkansas, arriving at Gaines Landing on March 10, and began working on its cotton crop. Archibald Gaines continued to frustrate Ohio authorities' attempts to try Margaret for murder. At the end of April, Benjamin Gaines relocated the Garners from Arkansas to New Orleans and by 1858 had sold them to Judge DeWitt Clinton Bonham, who owned the 600-acre Willow Grove plantation in Issaquena County, Mississippi. Margaret died of typhoid fever at Willow Grove in the late summer or early fall of 1858.

Several artistic works have commemorated Margaret Garner's struggle to save her children from slavery. During the fugitive slave trial, Margaret was the subject of numerous antislavery poems, sermons, speeches, and public meetings. Both proslavery and abolitionist authors produced novelized accounts of Mary Garner's death, including *Abolitionism Unveiled* by Henry Field James (1856), *Liberty or Death!* by Hattia M'Keehan (1859), and *Chattanooga* by Garner attorney John Jolliffe (1858). In 1867, artist Thomas Satterwhite Noble depicted Margaret Garner's confrontation with federal marshals in his painting *The Modern Medea*. In the 20th century, Margaret Garner's story inspired Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987) and its

1998 film adaptation. Morrison also wrote the libretto for the opera *Margaret Garner*, which premiered at the Detroit Opera House on May 7, 2005.

See also: Fugitive Slaves; Slave Resistance; Underground Railroad

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## Garnet, Henry Highland

Rev. Henry Highland Garnet (1815–1882) was one of the most militant black abolitionists of the antebellum era. Known for his oratory skills and strength of character, Garnet's greatest period of activity and accomplishment was from 1840 to 1865. He continued his activism after 1865, as many other abolitionists did, in fighting for equal rights after the Civil War.

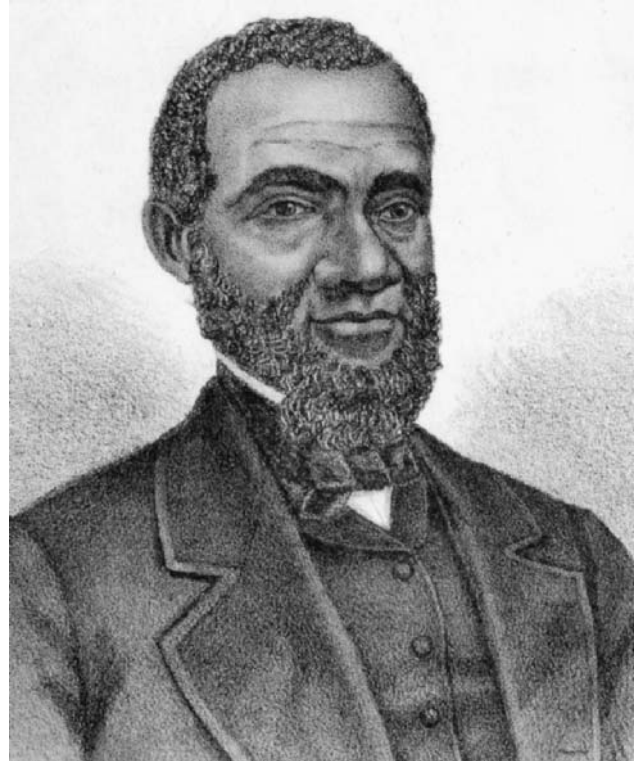
Henry Highland Garnet was born on December 23, 1815, in New Market, Kent County, Maryland. He and his parents were the slaves of Col. William Spencer, as had been his grandfather before him, an African chief of the Mandingo people. In 1824, Henry's family and his extended relatives escaped from Kent County. After reaching Wilmington, Delaware, the runaway party separated; Henry and his family went to New Hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where Henry began school at nine years old. After a few months, in 1825, they moved to New York. It was in New York that Henry's father, George, changed their family name to Garnet, and the name of Henry was given to him.

Garnet was sent in 1826 to the New York African Free School No.1 on Mulberry Street, which was founded by the New York Society for the Manumission of Slaves, where, as 1 of 300, he received an excellent elementary education until 1828. When he was 13, Garnet served as a cabin boy for two

voyages to Cuba. After returning from sea, Garnet discovered that his family had narrowly escaped being returned to slavery. His father was almost recaptured by slave hunters, and his sister was arrested and then released based on a fake alibi stating that she was a New York resident when she was said to have been a slave in Maryland. Garnet's mother had been taken in and hidden by neighbors. Everything the family owned had been either stolen or destroyed by the slave hunters, making life even more difficult. Garnet was incensed at the attack on his family, and despite being only about 14 years of age, he went out looking for the slave catchers with a knife, exhibiting a fearlessness and courage that would later inspire others. Eventually, he became indentured to a Captain Epenetus Smith in Smithtown, Long Island, for over two years. Captain Smith's son, Samuel, who was 10 years Garnet's senior, tutored Garnet while he was indentured to Samuel's father. It was at this time Garnet lost the use of his right leg from an injury, whereupon he returned to his family in New York.

In 1831, Henry Garnet entered the new High School for Colored Youth in New York, where he studied the classics and Greek and Latin languages. Encouraged and mentored by Theodore Sedgwick Wright, pastor of the First Colored Presbyterian Church of New York, Garnet soon prepared himself for the ministry. Wright would become his lifelong friend; he baptized Garnet and, in 1841, married him to his wife Julia Williams.

In 1835, Garnet entered Noyes Academy in Canaan, New Hampshire, a new high school formed by abolitionists who vowed to admit African American youth on equal terms with white youth. Garnet, who was 19 at the time, traveled with two classmates, Alexander Crummell and Thomas S. Sydney. Their trip to Canaan, however, foreshadowed the state of race relations in New Hampshire. They were not allowed cabins on the steamboat that took them from New York to Providence, Rhode Island, and when they transferred to the stagecoach that was to take them to Canaan, they were not allowed to ride inside but rather had to ride on top. Garnet, because of his infirmed leg and asthma, suffered greatly from the exposure to the elements, as did his companions Crummell and Sydney, who remained without bed or food despite their stately dress and middle-class appearance. Approximately a month later, Garnet and his fellow black students left Noyes and the state of New Hampshire, with a mob at the outskirts of Canaan making sure that they did. This was



*Henry Highland Garnet was a prominent abolitionist and black nationalist who is best known for his 1843 speech in which he urged slaves to take up arms against slavery. (Library of Congress)*

the same mob of local white farmers that had torn down and then burned the Noyes Academy school buildings a few weeks earlier.

The following year, Garnet, Crummell, and Sydney entered Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York, which was under the leadership of Rev. Beriah Green, a white professor of intellectual and moral philosophy and president of the institution. This was where Garnet was exposed to the moral suasionist views that he used when he returned to New York in 1840 and gave his first speech at the American Anti-Slavery Society. Garnet made an immediate impression, as did his ability to use humor effectively. In that same year, he graduated with honors from the Oneida Institute.

Garnet began his early career teaching youth in the black school district of Troy, New York. While teaching, he also conducted religious meetings at the First Presbyterian Church and was ordained in 1841 as a ruling elder. In 1842, he became licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Troy, and the following year, he was ordained and installed as pastor of the Liberty Street Presbyterian Church of Troy, a position he held until 1848. This church was important to the Underground Railroad in helping slaves escape and was used

frequently to hold state and national colored convention meetings.

Garnet had been forced to amputate his injured leg in 1840, but that did not seem to hamper his activism. He was one of the leaders and organizers of the New York and national conventions and was a pioneer of the radical black abolitionist sentiment espoused in the 1840s. For one year, Garnet sustained a weekly publication titled the *Clarion*, which took up the issue of oppression. He was an advocate of the temperance movement and frequently spoke on it. Additionally, Garnet was at the forefront of politically uniting abolitionism with party politics.

Perhaps Garnet's most famous speech was his "Address to the Slaves of the United States" given at the National Colored Convention held in Buffalo, New York, in 1843. Although Garnet did not specifically call for insurrection, he urged the slaves to fight for their liberty and argued that if they were to die in the effort, that would be better than enslavement. He urged them to remember their forefathers from Africa who certainly would have fought enslavement and the brutal treatment at the hands of slave owners. Garnet told them to remember that they were among 4 million slaves living in the South, so they should not be afraid. Yet if it was to end in a violent confrontation where whites would have as their goal to put everyone to death, the possibility of liberty would be worth it.

The 1843 convention was a high point in Garnet's leadership within the black abolitionist movement. Although he did not specifically champion insurrection, the convention leaders were still uncomfortable advocating that slaves use force. Frederick Douglass morosely predicted that an insurrection of the slaves would end in their death, which would be inappropriate for the convention to sanction. The "Address" was submitted for a vote of ratification at the Buffalo convention and for approval for mass distribution. Garnet's pamphlet was circumvented from publication, however, by one vote, but five years later, it was published along with David Walker's "Appeal" by white abolitionist John Brown at his own expense.

Garnet's most significant contribution was his willingness to try different strategies or renew old ones in order to achieve emancipation and civil rights. By the 1840s, a shift from the ideas of moral suasion to political action was evident. Garnet was one of the first to endorse the Liberty Party, a third-party movement founded in 1840 by abolitionists who were supportive of political action, by giving

a noteworthy speech at the Liberty Party Convention. He played a leading role in the efforts to obtain suffrage in New York in the early 1840s. By 1841, Garnet had presented 17 petitions for black suffrage to the New York State legislature, 15 of which came from and were signed exclusively by African Americans.

In 1850, Garnet was invited to lecture for the Free Labor Movement in England, where he lived for over two years with his wife and family. While in Europe, he traveled through Bavaria, Prussia, and France, spending significant time in those countries lecturing on behalf of the antislavery cause. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland was so impressed by Garnet that they hired him as their first black missionary to work in Sterling Grange Hill, Jamaica, in 1852, but after three years of missionary work, he contracted a fever and was ordered by his doctors to return to the United States.

Back in New York, Garnet began a ministry at the Shiloh Church on Prince Street, where he succeeded his longtime friend Theodore S. Wright. Garnet was able to build an effective ministry, and his church was soon overflowing with patrons. His sermons on various political events, such as the Dred Scott decision, the death of John Brown, and the Emancipation Proclamation, were reprinted at length in the daily press.

The increase in racial hatred that emerged by the middle of the 19th century, expressed through laws, limited economic opportunities, and race riots, impelled Garnet to proclaim the necessity of the doctrine of Black Nationalism, and out of these ideas grew the African Civilization Society in 1858, a biracial organization primarily funded by white philanthropists. Garnet defended its mission to bring Christianity to Africa and argued that through the use of free labor in cotton and sugar production, it would destroy the American plantation system. In 1861, Garnet was president of this society. But the Civil War ended his emigration efforts and his black nationalist perspective.

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, Garnet called on black men to serve, and upon government authorization, black men enlisted in significant numbers. Garnet signed up as chaplain to the black troops on Rikers Island. He established a hospital on Rikers Island and organized a Ladies Committee for the Aid of Sick Soldiers.

In 1864, Garnet received a call to pastor at the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. On the first anniversary of the ratification of the Thirteenth

Amendment, Garnet preached to the House of Representatives, the first African American to speak in the halls of Congress. In his speech, Garnet urged Congress to not let slavery be reinstated, but rather remain firmly condemned by law. The power of Garnet's oratory skills left the congressmen emotional and amazed.

During Reconstruction, Garnet was a solid Republican and worked briefly for the Freedmen's Bureau. He pressed the federal government to give greater assistance to the freedmen and to distribute land to blacks for them to begin their lives as free people.

In January 1882, Garnet became the U.S. ambassador to Liberia, which was his last wish. He was not in good health, however, and died in Africa one month later. He was given a state funeral by the Liberian government, and Edward Wilmot Blyden, the founder of West African nationalism, preached at his funeral.

*See also:* African Civilization Society; Colored Convention Movement; Liberty Party

Kay Wright Lewis

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## Garrison, William Lloyd

William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879), among the most important abolitionists in 19th century America, was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts. His early childhood was filled with difficulty. When he was three years old, his father

abandoned the family, and by 1814, he had begun a number of apprenticeships, but the one that would have the most importance to his work in his adult years began in 1818, when he started a seven-year stint as an apprentice printer with the *Newburyport Herald*.

Garrison's first encounter with abolition began in Boston in 1828 when he met Benjamin Lundy, an abolitionist who favored emancipation, but also the colonization of slaves. Meeting with Lundy altered Garrison's life forever. Less than a year after he met Lundy, Garrison began delivering abolitionist speeches and embarked on his abolitionist crusade that would span more than three decades. In his early speeches, he informed his crowd that he favored colonization and gradual emancipation. Those views would soon change.

After learning of Garrison's antislavery speeches, Lundy decided to invite Garrison to Baltimore, Maryland, to aid in the publication of Lundy's abolitionist newspaper, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Garrison accepted the offer, but when he arrived in Baltimore in the summer of 1829, his views on abolition and colonization were slowly beginning to change. He now believed that the only solution to the slave problem was immediate emancipation and integration. Garrison's language in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* was strong as he condemned many who supported slavery. In November 1829, Garrison condemned Francis Todd for his involvement in the slave trade. Several months later, in February 1830, Garrison was indicted in Baltimore for libel against Todd. Garrison had no funds to hire a defense attorney, but a Baltimore lawyer, Charles Mitchell who hailed from Connecticut, decided to take the case pro bono. Despite Mitchell's efforts, Garrison was found guilty and ordered to serve a six-month prison sentence or pay \$70 in fines and court costs. Because he had little money, Garrison went to jail. He remained in prison until June 5, 1830, when a sympathetic New York philanthropist, Arthur Tappan, paid the \$70 to secure Garrison's release.

Garrison's time in prison hardened his views on slavery. While in jail, he recorded the stories of many of the runaway slaves who were being held in the Baltimore jail. When he was released, Garrison used these slaves' stories as examples of the horrible nature of the institution of slavery. Also in prison, Garrison further educated himself on the evils of slavery. He studied numerous antislavery writings from Great Britain and used the time to compile, in



William Lloyd Garrison was one of the most controversial and influential abolitionists of the 19th century. (National Archives)

writing, his views on slavery and colonization. His thoughts proved valuable for abolitionist lectures as well as for laying the foundation for his book *Thoughts on African Colonization: Or an Impartial Exhibition of the Doctrines, Principles and Purposes of the American Colonization Society, Together with the Resolutions, Addresses and Remonstrances of the Free People of Color*, published in June 1832.

Upon being released from prison, Garrison moved to Boston and prepared to launch his own campaign against slavery through the skills he had learned as a child—the press. Even though he understood the importance of the publication of anti-slave literature, he knew that it could not be done successfully without the support of local free blacks. In the latter half of 1830, support among Boston's free blacks grew, and by the end of the year, a committee comprising African American women began a fund-raising campaign to support Garrison's abolitionist newspaper the *Liberator*. On January 1, 1831, with the assistance of

copublisher Isaac Knapp, Garrison published the first volume of the *Liberator*. Garrison's publication sparked outrage throughout the South, with many fearing that he was trying to incite a slave insurrection—something that in later years he openly condoned. Southerners' fears about the influence of Garrison's *Liberator* became realized several months after the inaugural issue with Nat Turner's revolt in Virginia. Although Turner started his revolt for numerous reasons, many believed that he was heavily influenced by Garrison's publication. For his seemingly radical views and powerful anti-slave rhetoric, Garrison became a wanted man in many slave states. For example, the Georgia House of Representatives offered a \$5,000 reward for Garrison's capture. The city government in Washington, D.C., tried to prevent free blacks from taking copies from the post office, and a grand jury in North Carolina indicted Garrison on charges that he was trying to incite a slave insurrection through publication of his weekly newspaper.

The year following publication of the *Liberator*, Garrison continued his crusade against slavery when he helped to organize the New England Anti-Slavery Society. In 1833, he played a prominent role in the creation of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Despite Garrison's commitment to the abolition of slavery, his "radical" views and condemnation of the U.S. Constitution alienated him from many abolitionists and eventually caused a permanent rift within the movement. This divide, which occurred at an 1840 anti-slavery convention, ultimately led to the development of two warring factions in the abolitionist movement; Garrison and his followers remained within the American Anti-Slavery Society, and the Tappan brothers led another faction into the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison's extreme political views also ultimately alienated Frederick Douglass. Whereas Garrison viewed the Constitution as a proslavery document, Douglass, arguably the most important free black leader in the 19th century, viewed the Constitution as an important tool in ending the institution of slavery. By 1851, Garrison's and Douglass's differing views were creating growing tension. Although Garrison admired Douglass for running away from his master, Garrison challenged Douglass's intellectual ability—stating that a former slave could not have as much intelligence as Garrison. The rift between Douglass and Garrison would never be reconciled.

Garrison's sometimes harsh, blunt language alienated many abolitionists but also infuriated many proslavery

advocates. Hatred for Garrison sometimes placed the radical abolitionist in harm's way. For example, in Boston in 1835, an anti-abolitionist mob called for Garrison's execution. Although he escaped the mob without any major bodily harm, Garrison apparently did not mind being in danger because he believed that if he were wounded or killed, he would become a martyr in the righteous cause of abolition.

For nearly the next two decades, Garrison watched as slavery tore the nation apart, placing it on a path to civil war. As events in the country intensified and became bloody, beginning with Kansas in the 1850s, Garrison, although a Christian, condoned violence as a means to end slavery. In October 1859, after John Brown's unsuccessful raid on Harpers Ferry, Garrison portrayed Brown as a martyr to the abolitionist movement. In a speech Garrison delivered in Boston on the date of Brown's execution in Charles Town, Virginia, December 2, 1859, Garrison told the onlookers that he was elated to see that after so many decades, people had finally come to realize that the only way to end slavery was through violence. Compromise, for Garrison, was not an option.

After Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and Abraham Lincoln's victory in the 1860 presidential race, civil war seemed imminent. On April 12, 1861, the American Civil War began with the bombardment of Fort Sumter. When the war broke out, many abolitionists refused to support the war effort because the conflict's purpose was not to end slavery. Again Garrison parted with mainstream abolitionists when he supported the war as a possible way to end slavery.

Despite Garrison's wishes for immediate emancipation, President Lincoln did not believe it to be prudent. Because Lincoln, who openly condemned slavery, refused to immediately emancipate the slaves, he came under Garrison's scrutiny. When Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, Garrison condemned it because it was not all-encompassing—it freed slaves only in areas in rebellion. Although displeased with the selectivity of the Emancipation Proclamation, Garrison did view it as an important step in the permanent abolition of slavery.

As the Civil War progressed, Garrison watched with joy as African Americans were recruited into the Union Army. Certainly he was overjoyed in May 1863 as he watched the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first African American regiment raised in the North, parade through the streets of

Boston before it went to South Carolina. During the parade, many in the regiment, including its commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, respectfully acknowledged Garrison as they passed him. Despite his differences with many abolitionists, they recognized, by the middle of the Civil War, that Garrison was one of the most important figures in fueling the abolitionist movement.

After the Civil War ended in the spring of 1865, the U.S. government recognized Garrison's important role in the abolition movement and invited him to attend the flag-raising ceremony at Fort Sumter on April 14, 1865. Finally Garrison received praise for his role in energizing the abolitionist movement in the North. When he arrived in Charleston, aboard a U.S. steamer, former slaves greeted him as a hero. On several occasions he was reportedly carried through the streets in triumph. Sadly, the same day that Garrison received the adoration of the newly freed people, President Lincoln was assassinated while attending a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

Praise for Garrison after the Civil War did not end with his visit to Charleston. In many places throughout the nation, Garrison became an icon. He was praised by many as being the person ultimately responsible for the emancipation of the slaves. His iconic status led many to suggest that Garrison should occupy the Massachusetts Senate seat left vacant after the death of Sen. Charles Sumner in 1874. Garrison declined. He was further lionized when his image was captured in sculpture and various publications.

With the end of the Civil War, Garrison firmly believed that the work of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which he had helped to organize in 1833, was complete and that the organization should be dissolved. Garrison's proposal to disband the American Anti-Slavery Society was soundly defeated, and Garrison stepped down as the organization's president. On December 29, 1865, Garrison published his last issue of the *Liberator* and in essence silenced himself as the nation rebuilt, and the future of African Americans was uncertain.

In 1865, Garrison was greatly saddened by the death of President Lincoln. Although not overjoyed with his successor, Andrew Johnson, Garrison decided to support Johnson. After enduring several months of Johnson's increasingly negative attitude toward African Americans, Garrison began to lose confidence in the nation's chief executive and called for his impeachment along with many other Republican leaders. Although he made it clear that he was losing

confidence in Johnson, Garrison did not make his position on African American suffrage in the postwar era obvious. Although Garrison believed that African Americans should receive their freedom, he did not necessarily believe that they should automatically be given the right to vote. He firmly believed that countless years in slavery had dulled their intellect and that many newly freed slaves would be unfit to cast their vote. African American suffrage, he supposed, would be something that would come with time.

Many former abolitionists condemned Garrison's views on African American suffrage in the post-Civil War era; however, Garrison cared little and could do nothing to respond because he did not have the luxury of conveying his position in a weekly publication any longer. Health problems also prevented Garrison from taking any active role in Reconstruction. Garrison died on May 24, 1879. News of his death prompted officials in Massachusetts to order flags flown at half-staff. The eulogies at his funeral commemorated his vital role in bringing to the forefront the horrors of slavery and in ending slavery.

See also: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Douglass, Frederick; Immediatism; the *Liberator*; Lincoln, Abraham; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis

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## Gradual Emancipation

Gradual emancipation was the most common method used to abolish slavery in the Northern states. Although Vermont adopted an immediate emancipation statute, and Massachusetts' courts abolished slavery in 1783 as a matter of

interpretation of that state's 1780 constitution, other Northern states did so through gradual emancipation plans.

In most cases, the gradual emancipation acts passed in the Northern states shared similar stipulations; they slowly phased out slavery over a period of time, by setting different dates on which people would be freed according to their date of birth. Although these statutes weakened slavery, they obviously did not abolish the system entirely. All enslaved people who were born before the state designated dates were still resigned to a life of bondage. Even for those born after that date, freedom was postponed because children were still born into a state of indentured servitude. Although they could look forward to eventual emancipation, they were forced to toil much of their productive years under slavery. In New York, for example, the legislature in 1799 adopted a law that stated that any slave born in New York on or after July 4 of that year would become free on attaining age 25 if a woman or 28 if a man. It also prohibited exportation of slaves from New York. Obviously, this measure meant that slavery would not immediately end in New York, and there were still slaves in that state for several more decades.

The Lockean political philosophy of the American Revolution placed special emphasis on property rights, and from the perspective of many white Northerners, gradual emancipation's advantage over immediate abolition lay in the respect it extended to the property rights of the masters. If a state gave the master 25 or 28 years' ownership of his slaves, he might still hope to extract a profit from the relationship, even if not so great a profit as he had contemplated on acquiring the slave in the first place. (In some cases, this doubtless meant selling slaves to purchasers further south, which helps to explain the New York law's ban on such sales.) In addition, proponents of gradual emancipation justified it by saying that the lag time between adoption of the plan and the actual freedom of the slave enabled the master to impart economic skills useful in earning a living; an untrained slave freed to face the world, the theory said, was more likely to sink than to swim.

Besides Northern reformers, some notable Southern political figures proposed gradual emancipation schemes for their states. For example, Prof. St. George Tucker's "American" edition of Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (published in 1803), which formed the basis of legal instruction at the University of Virginia and other Southern schools for decades, included

an appendix republishing his 1796 gradual emancipation plan. In addition, after the Southampton Rebellion of 1831, the Virginia General Assembly spent several months on a fruitless debate about adopting the gradual emancipation bill first proposed by Thomas Jefferson in 1777.

Gradual emancipation was widely viewed as a “reasonable” alternative both to perpetual acceptance of slavery, which Tucker, Jefferson, and others denigrated, and to immediate abolition—which, as Patrick Henry put it, would have bankrupted every significant man in Virginia (the South). The post-Southampton debate exposed even gradual emancipation’s impracticability in a Virginia society in which whites could not bear the idea of a large population of freedmen among them, and so it sank into oblivion even in the Upper South thereafter.

Radical abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, for their part, disliked the idea for another reason: it did not give the enslaved person immediate freedom. What respect did the property rights of the master deserve, they asked, when the property in question was the stolen labor of the innocent slave? Garrison’s the *Liberator* rejected any accommodation for slaveholders, including gradual emancipation.

The most significant unadopted gradual emancipation proposal of all was doubtlessly the one made by President Abraham Lincoln in his annual message to Congress in 1862. There, he proposed a constitutional amendment giving compensation to slaveholders in states that would free their slaves by January 1, 1900, either gradually or all at once. Of course, his conceptual amendment was never adopted. *See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Garrison, William Lloyd; Jefferson, Thomas; Lincoln, Abraham; Northern Slavery

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## Great Awakening

The “Great Awakening” is a term used to describe an epoch of revivals, evangelical crusades, and reinvigorated piety among American Christians during the mid-18th century. Historians map this phenomenon from Germany to Scotland, from London, England, to New Haven, Connecticut. Uniting these geographically disparate locales was the desire to affirm religious belief over and above the rationalism of the concomitant Enlightenment. Although many contributors to the Awakening were highly educated and committed intellectuals, the overarching theological thrust of this movement was to encourage heartfelt conversion and the acceptance of Christ as personal savior. The chronological position of these awakenings has led many historians to argue for a connection between the populist fervor of the American Revolution and the individuated religious enthusiasm of the revivals. No matter its political consequence, the Great Awakening remains a critical benchmark in religious history, in that it marks the beginning of evangelical dominance within American Protestant churches.

“Great Awakening” was first deployed by Joseph Tracy in 1842 to describe the religious character of the colonies. However, scholars argue that the Great Awakening usefully brackets revivals spanning from the mid-1720s to the late 1770s. Throughout this 50-year period, evidence of renewed Christianity surfaced up and down the eastern seaboard. The roots of this wide-ranging movement can be found in New Jersey and Massachusetts. In northern New Jersey, Dutch Reformed minister Theodorus J. Freylinghuysen decided to exclude parishioners from communion until they could actively testify to their repentance and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Freylinghuysen’s bold reaction to the rote formalism of Christian worship influenced surrounding ministers, including Presbyterian Gilbert Tennent. Tennent was one of four Scots-Irish clergyman sons of William Tennent, founder of “the Log College,” a seminary particularly devoted to the craft of preaching. Now known as Princeton University, the Log College encouraged ministers to preach in such a way as to provoke pious regeneration among their congregants.

The influence of the Log College is difficult to trace. Some historians believe the effects of this Middle Colonies’ enthusiasm can be observed among New England Congregationalists and Baptists during subsequent decades.



Others argue that the revivals in New England were solely the product of one charismatic genius, Jonathan Edwards. Minister of the Congregational church in Northampton, Massachusetts, Edwards forcefully rejected the pervasive Arminianism among his parishioners. Arminian theology emphasized the human ability to obtain God's grace; Edwards countered that justification occurred by faith alone and not by human ability to engender grace. Edwards's sermons on justification by faith alone were vivid, moving, and terrifying, simultaneously impressing his listeners with detailed philosophical proofs and condemning them for their sinful self-indulgence. Aside from his gifts as an orator, Edwards was a keen thinker and writer; his record of the revivals, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), proved very influential at home and abroad. In England, Edwards's writings encouraged John Wesley and George Whitefield to pursue lengthy evangelical tours.

George Whitefield's travels in America came directly on the heels of Edwards's revivals in the Connecticut River Valley. A leading figure in the founding of Methodism, Whitefield arrived from England in 1739 and immediately launched a 14-month tour. During that and subsequent trips, Whitefield argued that man was completely reliant on the mercy of God. Although such a claim was hardly unique within post-Reformation Christianity, Whitefield's presentational tactics were. Whitefield was, in the words of one historian, a "divine dramatist," a clergyman who embraced theatrical tropes to prompt conversion. Whether weeping openly or bellowing about brimstone, Whitefield garnered a groundswell of popular support through his blending of Christianity and entertainment.

Whitefield's style became the headlining feature of the Great Awakening. However, quieter versions of the Awakening occurred outside the tabernacle. Missionaries, inspired by Edwards, Whitefield, and other proponents of the new Christianity, increasingly traveled southward to ply the gospel. Although evangelicalism initially struggled to gain footing in the South, this early missionary work began the conversion pattern that would eventually produce the Bible Belt. Moreover, Christian proselytizing during the mid-17th century produced increasingly independent African American religious activity in the South. The honor for the first continuing black church is usually given to the Silver Bluff Church in Aiken County, South Carolina, where during the mid-1770s, an African American preacher, David George, established a congregation. Although only a minor

step in the long struggle for African American denominational independence, George's church emblemizes an era of increasing Christian autonomy and authority.

Across the countryside, Whitefield and others encouraged individual testimonies. Often, women and African Americans would participate, describing their conversion experiences. Conservative and moderate clergy harbored deep distrust for the touring itinerants who fostered such indifference to caste and social position and encouraged emotional bombast at their revivals. Evangelicals countered that these critics were false Christians, lacking any evidence of God's grace. Within churches and denominations, this discord gained momentum. The resultant denominational schism saw the emergence of Congregationalist New Lights alongside Presbyterian New Side as revivalists and advocates for Christian piety, and Congregationalist Old Lights and Presbyterian Old Side as revival critics and proponents of rational faith.

Although there were obvious results of the Great Awakening, including sectarian splits, the notoriety of George Whitefield, and an increased Protestant investment in the conversion experience, many historians continue to dispute both the meaning and the reality of the "Great Awakening." Did the revivals foster revolutionary democracy or theological conservatism? Were there as many revivals as Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Tracy reported? One historian has gone so far as to argue that the "Great Awakening" never existed; it was merely an invention of anxious ministers. Either way, the mid-18th-century revivals continue to foster, as they did in their own time, great debate and staunch opinions.

In fact, the Great Awakening had a profoundly important influence on the debate over slavery in several ways. First, this movement was based on religious revivals that were automatically inclusive; the purpose of a revival was to create an emotionally expressive and powerful conversion to Christianity, and thus, not only did the emotionalism appeal to Africans, but the focus on converting souls—all souls—meant that Africans were included in these gatherings. This alone started to cause more Africans to become interested in Christianity, and particularly after 1740, black people began to join Christian churches in increasingly large numbers. In addition, this form of evangelical Christianity called for people to liberate themselves from sin, and it was not difficult to translate ideas about liberation from sin into notions of personal liberation. Black people, in particular,

could clearly see the relationship between spiritual liberation and physical liberation from earthly bondage. Finally, religious revivals created a sense of “spiritual equality” between all the participants, which meant that whites began to view blacks as not just their spiritual equals, but their spiritual brothers and sisters. Of course, this transformation in turn not only caused whites to think of black people as human beings with souls, but also opened the possibility of viewing them as equals. Obviously, this extreme transformation in ideology made it increasingly difficult to imagine holding them in bondage.

As a result, inspired by the Great Awakening, religious converts in the North joined the antislavery movement in an effort to save the soul of the nation. Ultimately, antislavery made its way to the Northern political agenda, at least in part due to the growing awareness that slavery was incompatible with Christianity.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Evangelism

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## Grimke Sisters

Sarah Moore Grimke (1792–1873) and Angelina Grimke Weld (1805–1879) were pioneering social activists. Abolitionists, writers, educators, and women’s rights activists, the sisters achieved many notable firsts, with Angelina being the first woman both to publicly debate men over abolition and to address a state legislature. Lifelong opponents of

slavery and racism, the sisters expended their considerable talents agitating for emancipation and civil rights for enslaved African Americans and, taking valuable lessons from their public abolitionism, spearheaded the later-developing crusades for women’s rights and gender equality.

The sisters were born in Charleston, South Carolina, into a wealthy family with a prestigious lineage in the state. Their father, Judge John Faucheraud Grimke, was a part of the state’s ruling elite. In addition to his seat in the judiciary, Grimke was a major landholder and slave owner with a distinguished military career during the American Revolution. The sisters’ mother, Mary Smith, belonged to another wealthy and prestigious Charleston family whose lineage included two colonial governors.

From an early age, each of the sisters displayed open hostility toward slavery, and each acted against what they considered an unjust system in different ways. At age four, Sarah witnessed a slave being whipped and fled the scene in tears; she was later found down at the harbor begging a ship captain to take her somewhere where such things did not happen. Sarah later rebelled by willfully violating South Carolina’s laws and teaching family slaves to read, using the Bible as her textbook. When she was caught, her father disciplined both her and her waiting maid severely but did not punish the slave corporally. For her part, Angelina witnessed a slave boy, the property of the school mistress, whose back and legs were so freshly whipped that the scabs had only begun to close, and she was horrified by the evident cruelty. Sarah later related that young Angelina fainted at school and that she, concerned, pressed her younger sister as to the cause.

In 1818, Sarah accompanied her dying father north to Philadelphia, where he hoped to receive medical treatment not available in Charleston. Sarah cared for her father during his final months and, remaining in Philadelphia for two months following her father’s death, became acquainted with Quakerism. Returning to Philadelphia in 1821, Sarah became more involved with the Philadelphia meeting, the local Quaker congregation, and was formally accepted as a member in 1823. The relationship between Sarah and the Quaker elders was strained from the outset, however, because Sarah objected to the meeting’s practice of requiring that attendees sit segregated by race. In 1829, when Angelina joined Sarah at the Philadelphia meeting, the sisters jointly began to protest the treatment of African Americans in the meeting in both word and action, by openly questioning



*Sarah Grimke (left) and her sister Angelina Grimke, occupied a special place in the U.S. abolition and women's rights movements. (Library of Congress)*

the practice during meetings and by choosing to sit with black attendees rather than white. Having left the South in order to get away from slavery, the sisters began to confront the realities of Northern racism in their new home.

The sisters tried to develop professionally but were continually stymied by the norms of Philadelphia society and the rigidity of the group. Sarah, who had chafed against the limits placed on a young woman's education and had been heartbroken when she was forbidden to study law, dedicated much of her time to learning theology, with an eye toward becoming a Quaker minister. Angelina contacted activist Catherine Beecher, seeking to attend her women's seminary and later to become a teacher, but the meeting denied her permission to move to Hartford, Connecticut, in order to pursue this, offering her instead a position teaching in one of their schools. Angelina accepted but chafed at the rebuke, while Sarah found herself continually at odds with the meeting's leadership, who blocked her attempts to advance in the ministry.

Frustrated by the meeting, and the restrictions placed on them because of their gender, the sisters gradually

turned more and more of their effort to public abolitionism. They became active members of the Philadelphia branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), where Angelina served on the committee for the improvement of people of color. Angelina had been inspired by a lecture given by George Thompson, a British abolitionist whose speaking engagements were controversial in the North and frequently the site of riots. Thompson compared American slavery to biblical slavery, and found that the American model did not match with its biblical counterpart, concluding that despite the claims of Southern clergy, the Bible did not sanction slavery. Thompson further endorsed immediate abolitionism, rather than gradual manumission, beginning with slave children and the elderly, and pushed further for the legalization of slave marriages, the end to the internal slave trade, and a system of apprenticeships established to provide the freed slaves practical training. These were all positions and argumentative styles that Angelina later would incorporate into her writings.

Thompson also directly precipitated the sisters' involvement in the abolitionist movement. In an 1835 issue of the *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison appealed to the residents of Boston to renounce mob violence and to let Thompson lecture unmolested and unthreatened. Angelina, moved by Garrison's support of the man who had strongly influenced her, wrote Garrison a letter in which she forthrightly outlined her own antislavery beliefs, telling Garrison that his cause was holy and that she believed it God's will that emancipation come to the United States. Garrison quickly reprinted the letter in the *Liberator*, and it was picked up and reprinted in other Northern newspapers, bringing Angelina Grimke to the attention of the abolitionist movement. Later in the year, Angelina's letter was reprinted in several abolitionist pamphlets, distributed in Boston and throughout the North.

Though her letter aroused widespread protest in Philadelphia and exacerbated her tensions with the Philadelphia meeting, Angelina refused to retreat from her position. In 1836, she published a 36-page pamphlet titled *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, which exhorted Southern women to seek actively to overthrow slavery in the South. Angelina sounded many of the themes she had heard from Thompson but drew also upon her direct experience with slavery from her Southern upbringing. This pamphlet, which merged political and biblical arguments, caused such a storm in the sisters' hometown of Charleston that copies were seized at the post office and burned before they could be distributed. The only such pamphlet written by a Southern woman for other Southern women, the *Appeal* is remarkable both for its lack of ostentation in the writing itself and for its suggestions that Southern women practice selective civil disobedience in willfully ignoring "unjust" laws.

Angelina followed her *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* with *An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States* (1837), in which she urged reform in the North and pressed Northerners particularly on the question of race and racism, linking Northern racism with Southern slavery. Sarah, meanwhile, also published a controversial pamphlet in 1836, her *Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States*. Published by the AASS, the *Epistle* laid out Sarah's argument against slavery and used the Bible to refute the Southern clergy's contentions that slavery was biblically justified; where Angelina exhorted Southern women to take the moral lead in opposing slavery, Sarah directed her attention at the ministers themselves.

In 1837, the sisters accepted an invitation from Elizur Wright, secretary of the AASS, to speak to several women's groups in New York. The speeches (particularly Angelina's) were so successful that the sisters began speaking to larger "mixed" crowds, both men and women, and embarked on a speaking tour of the New England states. The tour lasted nearly six months, during which time the sisters gave approximately 90 lectures in nearly 70 towns, speaking before an estimated total audience in excess of 40,000.

The tour was hardly free of controversy, however. If the South was incensed over the sisters' open attacks on slavery, the sisters' prominent public role upset the North nearly as much. As rare as it was for women to speak in public, it was especially rare for them to address mixed audiences, and much of the public's response to this was negative. The Council of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts issued a "pastoral letter" forbidding their congregations to open their churches to female speakers. The letter, and many editorials, reiterated the common belief that a woman's proscribed sphere prohibited her from undertaking to lecture men in public and that doing so not only was a violation of her subordinate gender role but was itself "unnatural" and opened the society to ruin and condemnation. Because they spoke openly about matters such as rape and women's bodies, the sisters also found themselves frequently the targets of accusations of lewdness, ungodliness, and mental derangement.

Undaunted, the sisters continued their speaking tour, which culminated with Angelina's appearance before the Massachusetts Legislature on February 21, 1838; this was the first time in American history that a woman addressed a state legislative body. The sisters also responded to the gender-based attacks they had suffered in print. In 1838, Sarah published *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*, in which she presented an original, biblically driven case for equality between men and women in all areas of life, including the right to speak in public without fear of harassment and addressing unequal educational opportunities and professional limitations imposed on women. The *Letters* also specifically addressed the travails of female slaves, whom Sarah saw as the ultimate victims of an oppressive, patriarchal society, and joined biblical and political arguments for feminism into arguments for abolition. Angelina, meanwhile, published her *Letters to Catherine Beecher*, also in 1838, in response to the famous reformer's assertion that

the Grimkes had gone too far in their public appearances and that they had acted in ways unbecoming respectable women of their generation. Rebutting Beecher's claim that women should not speak in public, Angelina's *Letters* went so far as to argue that women should be permitted to study the law and to be elected to legislative positions, in order to influence the writing of law. In seeking to extend the influence of women into the legislature and the legal process itself, Angelina had clearly moved beyond the ideas she had expressed in her 1836 *Appeal*, which sought to bring women's influence to bear on social custom and practice.

The sisters' long speaking tour and publications did nothing to improve their relationship with the Philadelphia meeting, which repeatedly threatened the sisters with expulsion if they would not recant and retire to private life. The sisters refused to be cowed by threats and chose not to leave the meeting, instead leaving it to the Quaker elders to suffer the embarrassment of expelling them. In 1838, the meeting took advantage of a technicality to expel the sisters. Angelina was expelled when she married Theodore Dwight Weld, the famous abolitionist orator, and Sarah was expelled for attending the wedding.

The strain of the speaking tour and new family life took its toll, and the sisters retired from public life following the wedding, retiring to a farm in New Jersey overlooking the Hudson. Angelina and Theodore had three children, and Sarah lived with their growing family. Their retirement from active public life was not a cessation of activity, however; the three reformers compiled and published *American Slavery as It Is* in 1839. Drawing on over 2,000 newspaper articles and the sisters' first-person experience with slavery in their home state of South Carolina, the exposé of the horrors of slavery inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The Grimkes' combination of their particular talents and their personal circumstances made them speakers, writers, and reformers of considerable reach and impact. Their undeniable gift for public speaking, courage, Southern lineage and upbringing, and gender combined to make them controversial, popular, and highly effective lecturers and writers. They were leaders in coupling feminism and abolitionism, and their insistence that reformers should abjure racism and agitate on behalf of the humanity and personhood of the slave put them ahead of most of even the most radical of their contemporaries. Sarah Grimke died

on December 23, 1873, and Angelina Grimke Weld died on October 26, 1879.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Garrison, William Lloyd

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## Haitian Revolution

The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) began as an outgrowth of the French Revolution and then turned into a slave revolt before ending as a war of independence. One of the three great Atlantic revolutions of its era (with the American War of Independence and the French Revolution), it marked the only successful example of a slave revolt in world history and the creation of the first independent black republic in the world.

### The Road to Revolution (1789–1791)

The beginning of the Haitian Revolution is usually set in 1791, but social unrest, itself a result of the colony's internal tensions, had reached a crisis point years before the slaves actually revolted. On the eve of the revolution, Haiti (then known as Saint-Domingue) was by far the most prosperous of France's colonies. It was the largest exporter of sugar and coffee in the world and single-handedly assured a trade surplus in the overall balance of French commerce. All three basic components of Saint-Domingue's society, however, held long-standing grievances against the metropolis.

Whites represented only 5 percent of Saint-Domingue's population, but they stood at the apex of the social and racial

pyramid. Most prominent were the slave-owning planters (or *grands blancs*), who owned most of the lucrative sugar plantations. Despite their privileged status, the *grands blancs* repeatedly complained about the colonial bond, particularly the lack of self-government and the extensive powers of the Paris-appointed governor and *intendant*, which they claimed amounted to a “ministerial dictatorship.” They also pointed to the mercantilist trade restrictions (or *exclusif*) that limited their ability to trade outside of the French empire and to their dependence on merchants from Bordeaux and Nantes. The colonial plebs known as *petits blancs* held few or no slaves, but they were also turbulent because of their insistence on racial discrimination against free people of color. When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, some *grands blancs* openly dreamed of independence from France, thinking it would grant them full political autonomy and the freedom to trade with England and the United States. Reflecting the confused situation in the metropolis, whites quarreled with each other ceaselessly, oblivious to the risk their political fractiousness represented in a population made up almost entirely of slaves.

Free people of color, also representing about 5 percent of Saint-Domingue’s population, were equally interested in the political developments in revolutionary France. Though many free people of color were former slaves who had obtained manumission (or the illegitimate children of a white planter and a black slave), they generally avoided calls for slave emancipation. Instead, they aspired to the white planter model, bought plantations (particularly in the south and in the coffee sector), and became slave owners themselves. Their main grievance was the regime of racial discrimination that emerged in the second half of the 18th century, under which they were relegated to secondary legal status despite their economic affluence. With the election of deputies to the Estates General (1788) and the passage of the Declarations of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens (1789), free blacks demanded full equality under the law and the right to appoint deputies to the French National Assembly. When this request was rejected, two free mulattoes, Jean-Baptiste Chavannes and Vincent Ogé, rebelled in 1790. Their revolt proved short-lived, and Chavannes and Ogé were executed in 1791.

Saint-Domingue’s half-million slaves, representing 90 percent of the population, had remained relatively quiescent for much of the colony’s rise (with the exception of the Makandal conspiracy in the 1750s). Some forms of resistance

were present, such as infanticide, maroonage, and poisoning, but overall, the slaves seemed more docile than their equivalents in Jamaica and elsewhere. All this changed abruptly in August 1791.

### The Slave Uprising (1791–1793)

The slave uprising began in the rich, sugar-producing plain around Cap Français (present-day Cap-Haïtien or Cap) in August 1791. According to an oft-repeated story (based on a 19th-century history by Antoine Dalmas that is not fully reliable), representatives from various plantations gathered in Bois Caïman for a Vodun ceremony during which the *houngan* (Vaudou priest) Boukman Dutty invoked the *lwa* (spirit) of war, Ogun, and sacrificed a black pig. All present allegedly drank the animal’s blood, swore to fight the whites, and then dispersed in a storm. The ensuing uprising is better documented. Within a few weeks, the entire plain of Cap went up in flames, and up to 100,000 slaves joined the revolt, though Cap itself was saved.

Because of a dearth of sources, it is somewhat difficult to assess the slaves’ motives for revolting. Some historians view the revolt as an outgrowth of the French Revolution, claiming that the slaves became aware of the ideals of the Enlightenment (particularly the writings of the Abbé Raynal) and fought to obtain *liberté* and *égalité*. Others doubt that the largely illiterate slaves were so well informed and point out that many slaves mistakenly believed that the French monarch, Louis XVI, had granted them a three-day weekend. The recent influx of African slaves prior to the revolt has also been cited as a contributing factor (two-thirds of the slave population were African-born in 1791), but long-time Creole slaves often joined in the uprising as well. White contemporaries liked to blame the uprising on the nefarious influence of foreign agents (Spanish or British) or French envoys of the Société des Amis des Noirs (founded in 1788 to combat the slave trade). Yet another conspiracy theory held that Governor Philibert de Blanchelande had engineered the uprising in a misguided attempt to scare the revolutionary authorities in Paris away from their radical agenda.

Because of their lack of trust in the metropolis, the planters initially chose to appeal to Jamaica, Cuba, and the United States for help instead of France. The planters and colonial troops killed the slave rebel Boukman, but the uprising continued under the leadership of Jean-François Papillon and Georges Biassou. They were seconded by a



Haitian general Toussaint Louverture revolts against French forces in Santo Domingo to liberate slaves during the Haitian Revolution. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

50-year-old coachman named Toussaint Bréda (later Toussaint Louverture), who may have played a leading role behind the scenes in the early uprising. In December 1791, Louverture offered colonial authorities a negotiated settlement, under which the rebel leaders would have convinced their supporters to return to the plantations in exchange for better working conditions and a handful of manumissions. French agents showed some interest, but they had to back down because of the intransigence of local planters. In 1792, the rebel army announced that it now pursued a goal of general emancipation for all slaves.

In April 1792, the French parliament granted full equality to free people of color, in part to fulfill the idealistic principles of the Declarations of the Rights of Man, but also to obtain their support in putting down the slave revolt. Despite the urgency of the crisis, white planters in Saint-Domingue initially balked at this measure, before

finally assenting to it. White–mulatto acrimony remained a constant for the rest of the revolution, but in the short term, mulatto support helped contain the slave revolt.

### **The Foreign Invasion (1793–1798)**

By 1793, the French revolution's radical turn had led to a general European war. England and Spain seized this opportunity to attack Saint-Domingue. English troops seized the main ports in the south and west (including the administrative capital in Port-au-Prince), while Spain invaded the colony's central and northern areas from Spanish Santo Domingo. Many conservative white and mulatto planters collaborated with the English invaders, whose labor views mirrored their own. Many slave rebels, including Jean-François, Biassou, and Louverture, entered the Spanish army. France controlled only parts of the interior and capital.

Simultaneous operations led to the British invasion of Martinique and the temporary occupation of Guadeloupe.

With the French facing a dual foreign invasion, at odds with conservative whites and rebellious slaves, and unable to obtain significant reinforcements from the metropolis because of the naval war with England, the situation quickly became dire for the French envoys in Cap. Making matters worse, a dispute arose between Gen. François Galbaud and the agent Léger-Félicité Sonthonax in which Cap was burned and much of its white population forced into exile in the United States (June 1793). Hoping to convince some black rebels to side with him, Sonthonax issued an emancipation decree in August 1793. The measure contradicted his instructions, but the three delegates he sent to France convinced the French Convention to ratify his decision and extend it to other colonies under French control in February 1794. The sweeping change finally brought France's colonial policy in sync with its revolutionary principles; it also proved militarily sound as black allies helped France reconquer Guadeloupe and hold on to Saint-Domingue.

The most notable convert was Toussaint Louverture, who defected from the Spanish to the French army in May or June 1794, possibly because of the emancipation decree or because of a feud with his superiors (Biassou and Jean-François remained in Spain's employ until their death). Louverture's volte-face brought Saint-Domingue's central regions back into the French fold. When Louverture helped defeat a mulatto uprising led by Jean-Louis Villatte in June 1796, the French governor Etienne Laveaux promoted Louverture to division general and heralded him as the black Spartacus prophesied in Raynal's writings. Louverture's campaign against the British invaders was long inconclusive, but his influence began to rise beyond purely military matters and into the political arena. He arranged for Laveaux and Sonthonax to leave for France and then engineered a "popular" uprising in Fort Dauphin in 1798 that forced a new French agent, Gabriel d'Hédouville, to return to France.

Because of events in Europe, Spain sued for peace in 1795 and withdrew its forces from Saint-Domingue (the 1795 Treaty of Basel also stipulated that Spanish Santo Domingo would be ceded to France, but the Spanish governor Don Joaquín García remained in office because France organized no official transfer of authority). The high cost of the Saint-Domingue expedition, in addition to human losses caused by yellow fever and the military stalemate,

convinced England to evacuate its own troops in 1798. After meeting Louverture in Môle St. Nicholas in October 1798, the British negotiator Brig. Gen. Thomas Maitland agreed to withdraw all British forces in exchange for a private promise that Louverture would not attack British Jamaica.

### Louverture's Reign (1798–1802)

Hédouville's replacement, Philippe Roume, served as French agent until 1801, but his political authority quickly became nonexistent, and Louverture was the de facto ruler of the colony until February 1802. When in power, Louverture continued his negotiations with Maitland, signing a new convention in May 1799 under which the British acquiesced to Saint-Domingue's commerce (even as they fought France in Europe) against a renewed pledge that Louverture would not attack Jamaica. Louverture complied with the terms of the convention, denouncing in November 1799 an invasion of Jamaica prepared by Roume.

With the onset of the Quasi-War between France and the United State, the U.S. Congress imposed an embargo on all commerce to French colonies in retaliation for French privateering in the Caribbean. The embargo proved devastating for Saint-Domingue, whose economy rested on exports of tropical produce and imports of foodstuffs and weapons. After writing to U.S. president John Adams, Louverture signed an agreement in April 1799 to resume U.S. exports to Saint-Domingue in exchange for a halt to French privateering out of the colony's ports.

Until then, the southern region had remained under the control of the mulatto general André Rigaud, who sharply criticized Louverture for his treasonous dealings with the Anglo-Saxon enemy, his harsh labor practices, and his suspected plans of independence. Louverture levied similar accusations, and a bloody civil war known as the War of the South (or War of the Knives) broke out in June 1799. Louverture had an overwhelming superiority in manpower, but the better-supplied Rigaud organized uprisings in Louverture's rear and almost won in the opening weeks of the war. Louverture's military fortunes later recovered, and with the help of the U.S. Navy, his second-in-command Jean-Jacques Dessalines captured the strategic port of Jacmel and then Rigaud's stronghold of Cayes in July 1800. Rigaud fled into exile, and Louverture, after a wave of repression aimed at Rigaud sympathizers, asserted his authority over all of Saint-Domingue.



In the last months of the War of the South, Louverture forced Roume to issue a decree authorizing him to take over Santo Domingo. But the Spanish governor, urged on by the local population and the French agent in Santo Domingo, François de Kerversau, rejected a first attempt to take over the colony. When Roume subsequently rescinded his order, Louverture had him jailed and easily invaded Santo Domingo in January 1801.

After 10 years of slave revolt, foreign invasion, and civil war, Saint-Domingue enjoyed its first period of sustained peace, and Louverture worked to revive the local economy. His black constituents would have liked to divide the old plantations into small plots dedicated to subsistence farming, but Louverture concluded that land redistribution would result in the ruin of the export-based plantation economy. Instead, he maintained a system (already in place under Sonthonax and Hédouville) that forced former slaves to remain on their plantation as semi-free cultivators who were paid yet unable to seek alternative employment. The policy helped bring about a partial recovery (to about one-third of the most prosperous year on record), but it led to widespread labor abuse and deep resentment against the Louverture regime. In October 1801, a peasant rebellion broke out near Cap, led by Louverture's nephew Moïse.

In parallel to his economic plans, Louverture implemented a constitution that made him governor general for life with the authority to appoint his successor. The constitution was drafted and published without any input from the metropolis, leading many to suspect that Louverture was on a path to independence. Louverture insisted that he had no such intention and sent his director of fortifications, Charles Vincent, to France in July 1801 with a copy of the constitution.

### **The Leclerc-Rochambeau Expedition (1801–1803)**

By the time Vincent reached Paris in October 1801, the First Consul Napoléon Bonaparte had decided to remove Louverture from office. Bonaparte had initially thought that he could employ Louverture and his army in offensive operations against Jamaica, but news of the takeover of Santo Domingo and the abuse inflicted on Roume made him change his mind. Vincent's return, along with the London peace protocols earlier that month, only confirmed Bonaparte's belief that Louverture was a rebellious governor

who had to be brought to heel. Bonaparte put his brother-in-law, Gen. Victoire Leclerc, at the head of a 20,000-man expedition that left for Saint-Domingue in December 1801. Many suspected that Bonaparte ultimately intended to restore slavery, but he officially reasserted his commitment to emancipation, and his secret instructions to Leclerc were silent on the issue.

Leclerc landed near Cap in February 1802, and after short, fruitless negotiations, he launched an all-out military campaign against Louverture's army. Cap was burned, but Leclerc captured all the major cities and advanced into the interior. The battle of Ravine-à-Couleuvres and the siege of Crête-à-Pierrot proved costly to Leclerc's army, but many of Louverture's generals defected to the French side, and Louverture agreed to a ceasefire. Under its terms, Louverture was to retire to his plantation at Ennery, but Leclerc soon accused Louverture of planning a new uprising and deported him to France, where he died in captivity in April 1803.

The colony briefly recovered following Louverture's departure, but guerilla warfare resumed in the summer of 1802 because many peasants became convinced that the French intended to restore slavery. News had reached Saint-Domingue that Bonaparte had maintained slavery in Martinique and restored it in Guadeloupe, so a campaign by Leclerc to disarm the population was interpreted as an attempt to prepare the ground for similar measures in Saint-Domingue. Black colonial troops, including Dessalines, initially remained on the French side, but French atrocities convinced most of them to defect in October 1802. By that time, the French army had been decimated by tropical fevers that eventually claimed the life of Leclerc himself.

Leclerc's successor, Donatien de Rochambeau, managed to remain in control of coastal areas in the winter of 1802–1803 because of new reinforcements from France and because Dessalines focused his attention on interne-cine warfare with other rebel bands. Rochambeau is vividly remembered today among Haitians for the extreme cruelty with which he prosecuted the war (including the use of man-hunting dogs). Leclerc has a better reputation, even though he had initiated many of these policies, even announcing his intention to kill the entire black population of the island to obtain a lasting peace.

In June 1803, the resumption of the war with England cut off the influx of reinforcements that kept Rochambeau's expeditionary force alive. Dessalines began capturing isolated French ports one by one, attacking by land while the

British Navy blockaded the French by sea. Following the battle of Vertières (November 1803), Rochambeau left Cap with the last remnants of the Leclerc expedition, only to be captured and sent to Jamaica. The French remained in control of Santo Domingo, where they fought off an attempted invasion by Dessalines in 1805, only to be expelled by the Spanish population in 1809 following Bonaparte's invasion of Spain.

Dessalines and his generals declared the colony independent in January 1804, renaming it Haiti after its pre-colonial Taino name. They also massacred most of the remaining white planters the following spring. Other French planters who had left in time were scattered from Cuba to New Orleans, Charleston, Philadelphia, and France itself. All told, the revolution had probably resulted in the death of one-third of Haiti's population. France continued to regard Haiti as a rebellious colony until 1825, when it recognized the country's independence against a monetary indemnity earmarked for the exiled planters.

*See also:* American Revolution; Destination, Haiti; Louverture, Toussaint; Slave Resistance

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## Hall, Prince

Prince Hall (?–1807) established one of the first African American institutions, the fraternal order known as Prince Hall Masonry, when he formed an African Masonic lodge in Boston during the late 18th century. A prominent Revolutionary-era activist and speaker, Hall's early life remains a mystery to scholars. Compounding the documentary lack is the preponderance of other African American men named Prince Hall listed in the Massachusetts census during his lifetime. From the available information, we can conclude that Hall was the slave of a Boston leather-dresser named William Hall for 21 years. In April 1770, William gave Prince his freedom, leaving him with a valuable skill to trade upon. Shortly after his manumission, Prince Hall opened his own shop, The Golden Fleece, which quickly became a profitable business. Married several times, Hall was also a member in good standing at Andrew Crosswell's Congregational church, firmly ensconcing himself among the free black elite of the city.

Hall believed his economic ascent ought to achieve him certain social advantages. In his first publicly recorded act, Hall petitioned to become a member of Boston's St. John's Lodge of Freemasons but was turned away. At the time, Masonic lodges formed a critical site of middle-class economic organization; Hall's rejection from such an organization, presumably because of his racial status, insulted the upwardly mobile Hall. Not to be dissuaded, Hall and 14 other free black men approached, and gained admission to, a British army lodge of Freemasons. When the regiment withdrew from Boston, Hall and his fellow black Masons were issued a limited permit to meet independently. On July 3, 1775, they formed African Lodge No. 1, the first African American Masonic organization, and Hall was made the master; however, it was not until April 29, 1787, that Hall and his associates received their official charter authorizing African Lodge No. 459.

Throughout the Revolutionary years, Hall actively pursued public protest. In 1777, he petitioned the Massachusetts state legislature demanding abolition; in 1786, he offered 700 black troops to Governor James Bowdoin to quell Shays' Rebellion. Although neither gesture proved immediately effective, both acts demonstrated Hall's increasing authority in the black community. By 1787, Hall proposed that the state legislature allocate money to send

Massachusetts blacks back to a settlement on the African coast. When the issue failed to achieve a response, Hall returned to petitioning the state for improved conditions among his fellow black citizens. Although blacks were taxed similarly to white citizens, their children were not included in the public school system. In lieu of a return to Africa, Hall became a tireless advocate for black public education and, more broadly, black social conditions in New England.

Hall's most prominent intellectual legacy has been the survival of two speeches given to his colleagues at the African Lodge. The first "charge," delivered in 1792, used a careful genealogy of ancient imagery to unite his black audience. According to Hall's rendition of history, blacks were meant to triumph; they had been destined by their forefathers, by their unique suffering, and by their particular occupation of the United States. If this first "charge" was bent on unifying black Masons under a common communal narrative, his second "charge," delivered in 1797, focused their purpose. In his 1797 address, Hall pointed to the recent example of Haiti, where a slave revolt had led to the creation of a black nation. Although Hall was careful not to indict all white America, his second charge revealed that he was increasingly disenchanted with his white brothers, particular those white Masons who failed to recognize the African Lodge. Haiti, therefore, became an exemplar of black self-determination, a model Hall encouraged his brethren to remember as they temporarily endured the burden of American inequality.

Hall's speeches to the African Lodge model the sort of independence prescribed by black Masonic culture at the turn from the 18th to the 19th century. As white America continued to exclude free blacks from its economic and social institutions, Masonic societies became critical sites of alternative organization and unification. These groups sought not insurrection, but financial and familial endurance. Following the authorization of African Lodge No. 459, several other black lodges opened in eastern cities, such as Providence, Rhode Island, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During the first half of the 19th century, few free Northern black men failed to join these lodges. The black independent church movement, as well as the eventual "negro conventions," would be largely funded and bureaucratically subsidized by Masons.

Prince Hall died in Boston on December 4, 1807. Within a year of his death, his followers renamed their

order the Prince Hall Masons in honor of their courageous founder.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Revolution; Continental Army; Prince Hall Masonry

Kathryn Emily Lofton

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## Hamilton, William

The early life of William Hamilton (1773–1836) remains something of mystery; he was even rumored to be the illegitimate son of Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury. Yet despite his obscure early years, Hamilton soon gained training as a carpenter and spent most of his life as an activist. His first public action came when he was still a young man. In 1796, William Hamilton took a stand against racism and joined his brethren in their exodus from the John Street Methodist Church in New York City. Outraged by racial prejudice within the congregation, James Varick, William Hamilton, and Peter Williams Sr. split from the white Methodists and established the African Methodist Church. Through their religious and political action, these men successfully created the first independent black religious institution in New York City.

Beyond his church affiliations, Hamilton also engaged in explicitly political activities. On January 1, 1808, New York's black community held a celebration honoring the official end of the slave trade, and William Hamilton served on the committee of arrangements. Later that year, Hamilton expanded his service to black New York by helping to reorganize the most influential mutual aid association in the city. On June 6, 1808, William Hamilton was a charter member of the African Society for Mutual Relief and was elected as the organization's first president. Throughout

his life, Hamilton was passionately committed to black associations and institution building and, in 1809, publicly declared that only autonomous organizations could fortify the community and provide the foundation for unity.

Over the years, William Hamilton also developed a reputation as a powerful orator. For the first anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in 1809, the African Society selected Hamilton as their keynote speaker for the celebration. He delivered a bold message that ignored moral uplift and championed early notions of Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism. For Hamilton, identity was the critical issue, and he argued for unity among all African people regardless of their geographic location. He urged his people to view themselves as Africans and encouraged them to embrace the term *African* because he believed national boundaries should not prevent people of African descent from recognizing their interconnectedness. Reflecting an early Pan-African philosophy, Hamilton sought to unify all African people throughout the Diaspora based on their shared identity and heritage.

In addition to Pan-Africanism, William Hamilton also demonstrated tendencies toward Black Nationalism. Although he clearly supported identification with Africa, he simultaneously called for black unity in the United States. Using the African Society as a model, Hamilton argued that institution building would strengthen the community and provide hope for the future. He commended the African Society for its cohesion, its dedication to moral uplift, and its amelioration of poverty. Without community, Hamilton remarked, life is miserable, and advancement is nearly impossible. By stressing African pride, Hamilton hoped that blacks would use their common identity and heritage as a foundation for collective political action. In 1815, Hamilton gave another public address in which he criticized all those who had participated in, and benefited from, slavery. Hamilton also boldly suggested that blacks (and Africans elsewhere in the Diaspora) could have a solution to their plight, arguing that Africa should be the seat of global political power in the future.

Perhaps the most important year in Hamilton's public career was 1827, a time when he helped create *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States, and was also the orator for New York's Emancipation Day celebration. Although Hamilton took a rather controversial position regarding the emancipation festivities, by denouncing the community's public parade, he still graced

the pulpit and delivered an address honoring the abolition of slavery in New York State. His speech was a complicated amalgamation of the various ideas circulating in the black community, including African pride, gratitude to benevolent whites, and moral uplift. Hamilton opened by reveling in the meaning of Emancipation Day, a moment that signified the liberation of African people. Hamilton impressed upon the audience that the privileges of freedom and equality were due to all humans, even those who asserted their African ancestry. To Hamilton, therefore, it was possible to be both a child of Africa and an American citizen; in fact, throughout his speech, he repeatedly referred to his audience both as the "sons of Afric" and as "citizens" of the United States. Although Hamilton commenced with a passionate introduction, asserting the rights of Africa's descendants to American citizenship, he clearly understood the political stakes on Emancipation Day. Aware that they were poised at a crucial moment in the battle for public opinion, Hamilton apparently recognized that black civil rights would be granted only if they could demonstrate their worthiness. As a result, the majority of his speech dramatically departed from his oration in 1815, in which he had focused primarily on Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism. Instead, he sought to redeem the image of his race by humbly offering thanks to their white benefactors and issuing a call for moral improvement.

Between 1827 and 1832, Hamilton was relatively silent until he resurfaced during the colored convention movement. Surprisingly, however, Hamilton had apparently become completely consumed with moral improvement and dramatically reversed his position on emigration. At the 1832 convention, William Hamilton addressed the delegates and attempted to convince them that support of migration to Canada was a serious strategic error. Anti-colonization had become a watchword of the black community in the 1830s and influenced every aspect of their political activism. Later that same year, when the headmaster of the African Free School, Charles Andrews, espoused pro-colonizationist views, William Hamilton led a boycott of the school until Andrews was fired from his position.

Hamilton remained active in the colored convention movement and was a convener of the 1834 meeting, which was held in New York City. In his opening address, he again attacked colonization and the American Colonization Society, as well as the cruel system of racial prejudice that oppressed his people. Ironically, less than a month after

his speech, a violent anti-abolition riot swept through the black community in New York City. Years later, Hamilton was remembered for his bravery during the pogrom, when he boldly defended his home and family with weapons. Just two years after the riot, in 1836, William Hamilton died in New York City.

See also: Abolition, Slave Trade; Black Nationalism; Colored Convention Movement; *Freedom's Journal*; Pan-Africanism; Williams, Peter Sr.

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Hammon, Jupiter

Born into slavery, Jupiter Hammon (1711–1806) grew up on the estate of Henry Lloyd near Oyster Bay in New York. Offered an education and allowed to study religion in the Lloyd family library, Hammon expressed a particular interest in the doctrines of the Protestant faith. In his early twenties, he raised enough money to purchase a Bible from his owner and around 1740 became a part-time preacher and a gifted writer. His *Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ, with Penitential Cries*, a broadside on salvation and piety, was published in 1760, making him the first African American male to be published in North America. The honor of the first African American publication goes to Lucy Terry, whose publication “Bars Fight” preceded *Evening Thought* by a few years.

Hammon's theology, a mixture of evangelical and moderate Calvinistic Anglicanism, focused on the importance of Christ's work of atonement, the perseverance of the saints, and the importance of the gospel in evangelism. After reading Solomon Stoddard's *Safety of Appearing at the Day of Judgment in the Righteousness of Christ*, he became

convinced of the need for regeneration through a sole reliance on “the merits of Jesus.” Although not as theonomic as Stoddard, who emphasized the importance of the law to instill fear in the hearts of potential converts, Hammon celebrated the persuasiveness of the gospel in spiritual transformation, thus contributing to the history of African American preaching. He emphasized the importance of “holy living” and encouraged fellow African American slaves to work out their salvation in fear and trembling.

When Henry Lloyd died in 1763, Hammon was transferred to Henry's son, Joseph, who became a patriot in the American Revolution but later escaped with his family to Connecticut when the British invaded New York. Unlike many slaves who took the opportunity to run away when the British arrived, Hammon decided to stay with the Lloyd family. During the war, he completed “*An Address to Phyllis Wheatley*,” a poem that links the imagery of African American heritage with the realities of the Christian faith. A year later, the *Connecticut Courant* printed his “An Essay on Ten Virgins.”

Two of his most influential works—*A Winter Piece* (1779) and *Address to the Negroes of the State of New York* (1787)—combined the ideals of the Revolution with the doctrines of the Protestant religion. His exhortation to live a holy life raised the important issue of black identity in post-Revolutionary America. In *A Winter Piece*, Hammon called for not only inner moral reform among blacks, but also the need to assert and cultivate African identity within the context of American society—that is, to become a nation within a nation. The Revolution forced blacks to reconcile their African consciousness with an American identity. In this sense, Hammon is an important predecessor of W. E. B. Du Bois, who over a century later sought to resolve the dilemma that divided the souls of black folks: reconciling the duality of “African” and “American.”

His *Address to the Negroes* dealt with the relationship between earthly and otherworldly emancipation. Recognizing the powerful impact of Revolutionary thinking, Hammon hoped that the rhetoric of the Revolution, especially notions of liberty and equality, would inspire slave owners to reconsider their actions. He nonetheless rested on the power and sovereignty of God, and argued that freedom would manifest only as the result of God's grace. Although encouraging other slaves to seek freedom, Hammon expressed no interest in his own emancipation. Although he believed in the pursuit of freedom, he maintained that

spiritual emancipation was infinitely greater than earthly liberty. Although he questioned whether slavery was morally just and in alignment with Christianity, Hammon reminded his listeners to obey their masters in the Lord. Awaiting the ultimate freedom in the next life, Hammon chose to remain in continual servitude. In a number of publications, he acknowledged his faithful service to three generations of Lloyds. Perhaps the reason he chose not to become a freeman was either that it was not offered to him by the Lloyds or because of his old age; in the latter case, he may have considered it better to live out the remainder of his years with the Lloyd family. The *Address* was printed in New York in 1787. In 1806, the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery reprinted and distributed more than 500 copies.

The details of Hammon's life, including the exact date of his death, remain a mystery. Much of what he wrote passed through his white supporters. He notes that many of his friends provided editorial assistance for many of his writings, and no one is certain whether, in reality, such assistance meant editorial liberty, yet it is most unlikely that the African Americanisms in Hammon's religious prose were a mere figment of white imagination. Jupiter Hammon should be celebrated as an early architect of African American identity.

See also: Abolition, Slave Trade; Abolition, Slavery; Moral Uplift

Ryan McIlhenny

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## Hemings, Sally

Sally Hemings (1773–1835), a slave on the Monticello plantation owned by Thomas Jefferson, had several children who were fathered by Thomas Jefferson. Hemings was born in Albemarle County, Virginia, to Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings and John Wayles. Sally Hemings's grandmother was an African who was impregnated by a white ship captain named Hemings. Her child Elizabeth (Betty) Hemings

became a slave of John Wayles, the father of Martha Wayles Jefferson, the wife of Thomas Jefferson. Elizabeth had six children, one of which was Sally Hemings. Elizabeth Hemings and her children were given to Thomas and Martha Jefferson on division of the Wayles estate. Sally Hemings, the half-sister of Martha Wayles, was a slave on the Monticello plantation for most of her life. Many described her as having long straight hair and looking almost white, given that both her father and grandfather were white.

In 1787, Thomas Jefferson asked that an older slave accompany his daughter Mary to Paris so that she could be with him during his time there. Rather than send an older slave, Elizabeth and Francis Eppes, Mary's aunt and uncle, sent Sally, who was only 14 years old at the time. While in Paris, Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson are suspected to have begun a sexual relationship that lasted until at least 1808, the birth date of her last child. The older brother of Sally Hemings, James, was already in Paris training to be a chef. In 1788, Jefferson began paying both Hemingses half of servant wages. Hemings and Jefferson made an agreement that he would free her children when they reached 21 years of age, if she returned to the United States with him. Sally Hemings returned from Paris in 1789. James Callender drew attention to the affair between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings by publishing a story in 1802 when he was upset because Thomas Jefferson would not help him with his career.

The Hemings family had been privileged by the Jefferson family. Most of the Jefferson household staff was part of the Hemings family. Sally continued to serve as the personal assistant to Mary Jefferson until Mary married and cleaned and maintained Thomas Jefferson's clothing. Jefferson freed two of Sally Hemings's brothers, James and Robert. He also sold her sister Mary to a white man named Thomas Bell. The two became a couple and resided in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson allegedly had six children, two of whom died when they were infants. Some say that Sally may have given birth to a seventh child, Thomas, in 1789. Madison, Sally Hemings's son, stated that his mother gave birth shortly after returning from Paris, although Jefferson made no record of this birth as he did with all of the other Hemings children. The first child of Hemings that shows up in Jefferson's records is a child named Harriet. This child was born in 1795 and died in 1797. Hemings's next child, a boy named Beverly, was born in 1798.

Hemings named a second child Harriet upon her birth in 1801. Both Beverly and his sister Harriet left the plantation in 1822. Beverly left first and never returned, nor was she sought after by Jefferson. At age 21, Harriet was given 50 dollars and put on a stagecoach to Philadelphia by a Monticello overseer. Sally Hemings then had an unnamed daughter who died as an infant. The last two children, Madison and Eston, were born in 1805 and 1808, respectively. Upon Jefferson's death, he freed both of these two men as agreed. In his will he wrote that they should be given as apprentices to John Hemings, Sally Hemings's brother, until they turned 21 years old, at which time they should then be freed. Furthermore, Jefferson petitioned the state of Virginia to allow Madison and Eston to remain free citizens in Virginia. Because Madison was already 21, which Jefferson must have known, he would be freed immediately. Eston was 18 years old, but Jefferson's daughter, Martha Randolph, freed him at that time. Sometime after Jefferson's death, Martha Randolph freed Sally Hemings. A census-taker listed Sally, Madison, and Eston as white in 1830.

Sally Hemings lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, until her death in 1835. Beverly and Harriet married whites in Washington, D.C., and Maryland. Madison and Eston moved to Pike County, Ohio. They were both considered black in Ohio and subject to the rules regarding black people in Ohio. Eston Hemings adopted a new name and moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where he and his family adopted a white identity.

*See also:* Jefferson, Thomas; Miscegenation

Clarissa Peterson

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## House Servants

House servants usually made up the minority of slaves on any given slave plantation. The organization of plantation life necessitated that African Americans must maintain the domestic sphere, which was primarily defined as the home and social world of the slave owner. The house servant was obligated as a slave to perform domestic, social, familial duties within the plantation household. Under slavery, "domestic servants" and "craftsmen" constituted most of the individuals occupying the realm of house servants.

Domestic servants cared for the home of the slave owner; these individuals cooked the meals, washed the clothes, and drove the carriages for the slave owners. They also cared for the infants of the slave owners, ran errands, wove, arranged the dining room, and performed numerous tasks within the domestic sphere. House servants were subjected to the whims and demands of the slave owner and family all day and all night; there were no set rules or order in the daily schedule of a house servant.

Within the complex hierarchical landscape of plantation life, house servants were a sort of privileged class of enslaved African Americans. Both the slave owners and some of the slaves themselves regarded house servants as socially above the status of field hands, in part because house servants sometimes lived in the homes of the slave owners, typically had better clothing and ate better food than their "field" counterparts, and participated more than their field counterparts in the social world of the slave owner. Consequently, some house servants even tried to marry their children between and among each other, duplicating a system of exclusion and prejudice that they themselves were entrapped in.

Men, women, and children were all employed in the capacity of house servitude, but the majority of domestic servants were female because the peculiar institution of slavery ascribed to African American women the role of caretaker while simultaneously consigning African American women to domestic servitude. House servants traveled from plantation to plantation and at times were hired out to different plantations; this mobility expanded the role and duties of a house servant. House servants became ambassadors of social customs, as well as carriers and transmitters of African American cultural reality.

Although all African Americans performed important roles in distinct domains within the institution of slavery,

some nontraditional house servants were skilled bondsmen who were excluded both from the domestic sphere of plantation life and from the field. These valued individuals were architects, homebuilders, shoemakers, weavers, and mechanics, and they composed another distinct social and intellectual class within the hierarchy of plantation social life.

House servants were important because they demonstrated the social and intellectual versatility of African American people. Inadvertently, the slave owners allowed African Americans living under the peculiar institution of slavery to demonstrate to themselves that they were intelligent, functional, literate, communicative, and complex beings—all contrary to the portrayal of house servants as interpreted by the slave owners.

See also: Field Hands; Hemings, Sally; Jacobs, Harriet; Newsom, Celia; Slave Plantation

Bruce Ormond Grant

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## Immediatism

Immediatism is the principle or practice of immediate action, often associated with programs for social reform, specifically the international antislavery movements of the 19th century. As it relates to antislavery, immediatism is the demand for direct emancipation of individual slaves, without any preconditions or intermediate stages of obligatory servitude. Immediatism is often defined against the contrary principle of gradualism, which entailed the eventual emancipation of slaves under certain conditions, such as apprenticeship or the eventual removal of freed slaves through foreign colonization.

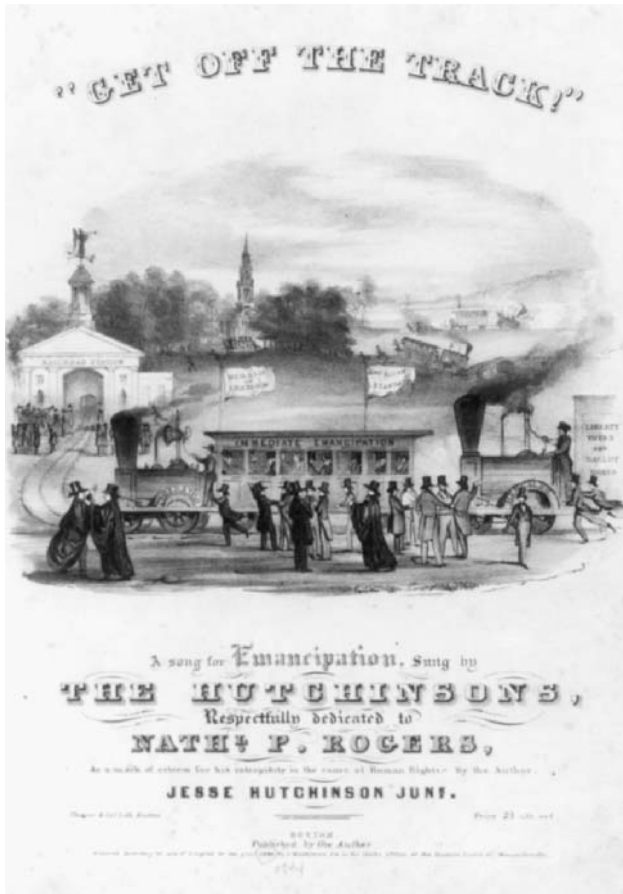
Reformers who worked to end slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean advocated both gradualism and

immediatism to varying degrees throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Gradualist strategies, most notably the effort to colonize freed slaves outside of the United States, dominated antislavery principles until the 1830s, when a variety of factors tipped the balance toward immediatism. The transition to immediatism was a response to a specific set of conditions within the antislavery movement, but also part of a larger pattern of contemporary intellectual development.

The most significant factor to guide abolitionists toward immediatism was growing opposition to gradualist doctrine and frustration with failed gradualist methods. This sentiment developed throughout the 1820s on both sides of the Atlantic, in England through the publication of an influential pamphlet in 1824 by Elizabeth Heyrick that called for the *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition* of slavery and in the United States through the agitations of such black abolitionists as David Walker. These early immediatists assailed colonization and other gradualist methods as compromises with evil, practices that did more to sustain the institution of slavery than weaken it. The African American critique of colonization also noted its racist connotations, namely the assumption that people of African descent did not belong in the United States. Heyrick's impatience with British reformers and politicians who accommodated Caribbean slave owners also reflected the frustrations of a number of American abolitionists who observed similar postures toward the slave interest in their own country.

As for the larger intellectual developments that contributed to the rise of immediatism, the most prominent influence on this process was evangelical Christianity. The growing popularity of religious revivals during the early 19th century instilled many Protestants with a new conception of human nature and sin. Evangelical Christians moved away from longstanding views of sin as a natural and unavoidable part of the world order toward an understanding of sin as voluntary and thereby vulnerable to the strength of human will. Christians were not only capable of avoiding sin, but also responsible for removing sin from the Christian community through evangelical reform. Slavery became a primary target for these reformers. They understood slavery not as an abstract evil inherited from history, but as a sin or crime committed by individuals. This evangelical logic easily translated into principles of immediatism. Just as those who converted to the cause of evangelicalism and repented sin did so immediately, those who





An illustrated sheet music cover titled “Get off the Track’ A Song for Emancipation...” calling for immediate abolition of slavery, 1844. (Library of Congress)

rejected the sin of slavery immediately devoted themselves to its abolition.

A major turning point in the American antislavery community’s shift toward immediatism came with William Lloyd Garrison’s rejection of gradualism in 1830. Garrison was an ardent gradualist and active promoter of colonization when African American abolitionists in Philadelphia and Baltimore convinced him that his work had failed to diminish the institution of slavery and exposed him to the doctrine of immediate and unconditional emancipation. In 1831, Garrison published the first issue of the *Liberator*, a periodical that soon became the nation’s most influential exponent of immediate abolition. Throughout the 1830s, immediatism became central to the American antislavery movement. A number of antislavery organizations, including the American Anti-Slavery Society, sprang up throughout the northern and western states and declared their devotion to principles of immediatism.

Though increasingly popular among members of the transatlantic reform community, the precise meaning of immediatism was still open to interpretation. The call for immediate abolition rarely translated into a demand for the immediate emancipation of all slaves in the Americas. Instead, immediatism took more personal or rhetorical meanings, for example, an immediate *commitment* to end slavery or immediate *recognition* and *repentance* of the sin of slavery. The methods employed by early immediatists also reflected this ambiguity. Antislavery societies pushed for abolition through moral suasion, exerting pressure on slaveholders and those who supported them through a variety of means, including the dispersion of antislavery publications and consumer boycotts of slave-produced goods.

Throughout the 1830s, most immediatists shunned political methods and the compromises that typically came along with them, but by the 1840s, many realized the viability of a political path to abolition. Chartered in 1840, the Liberty Party won over most American abolitionists through the centerpiece of its party platform: the immediate abolition of slavery wherever constitutionally possible. The Liberty Party’s lack of success led political abolitionism into more compromising directions and disheartened many immediatists. The dispute over methods, between moral suasion and political activism, fed into a number of other divisions (including race) to fracture the temporary unity that immediatism brought to the abolitionist community. Nonetheless, immediatism remained an ideological fixture of the American antislavery movement until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Garrison, William Lloyd; the *Liberator*; Liberty Party

Eric Rose

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## Jacobs, Harriet

Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813–1897), also known as “Hatty,” “Linda Brent,” and “Linda Jacobs,” was a slave until 1852, a Civil War and Reconstruction relief worker, an antislavery activist, and the author of the autobiographical *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Jacobs was born a slave in Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813, the child of Delilah, a slave, and Elijah, a slave and skilled carpenter. Elijah taught Hatty and her brother John to value education. When Hatty was six, her mother died, and it was at this time that Hatty learned of her own status as a slave. Hatty and her brother went to live with Delilah’s mistress, Margaret Horniblow; a period Jacobs later recalled as happy. Miss Margaret taught Harriet sewing (a marketable skill) as well as reading and spelling before it became illegal to teach reading to slaves. Margaret died when Harriet was 12. Margaret had specified in her will that Harriet was to become the slave of her niece, Mary Matilda Norcom, the five-year-old daughter of Dr. James Norcom, who thereby became in effect Harriet’s master.

As a young woman, Harriet fell in love with a freeborn black carpenter who wanted to purchase and marry her, but Dr. Norcom refused permission and threatened to shoot him if he approached her. Norcom wanted her for himself, and she became a target of his sexual harassment. Now 15 years old, she resisted him, and hoping to deter him, she became the mistress of Samuel Tredwell Sawyer, an unmarried man from a family of some wealth and power, by whom she became pregnant. When Mrs. Norcom, fearing a liaison between her husband and Harriet, banned her from the Norcom house, Harriet went to live with her grandmother, Molly. Harriet’s grandmother had been emancipated from slavery in Edenton, whereupon she opened a bakery-teashop there to make a living. Harriet became the mother of two children by Sawyer, who arranged with Molly to support Harriet and their offspring. When Norcom transferred Harriet a few miles away from town to the plantation household of his married son, she went, only to run away. She was 21 years old, and Dr. Norcom’s search for her began.

The year was 1835, and Jacobs began her nearly seven years of concealment in a garret of her grandmother’s house. The garret, a small space above an attached storeroom, was nine feet long and seven feet wide. The highest part of the roof was three feet above the space, and it sloped down to the floor of the garret. A trap door provided access to the storeroom below. Subject to rats running over her bed, stifling summer heat, rain that drenched her through a flimsy roof, and severe winter cold, she sometimes became ill and also crippled from inability to move about in the cramped space. She attempted to recover the use of her limbs by a little movement in the constricted space.

Foremost in Harriet’s plans was the well-being of her children, who were then living in Molly’s house but who were not told of their mother’s presence in the garret. After five years of confinement, Harriet descended in secret to bid farewell to her daughter Louisa, who was about to be sent to New York as a slave to her father’s cousin. Nearly two years later, Harriet descended for the last time, said goodbye to her son Joseph, and fled to New York.

When Jacobs became situated in the Northern states, a minister suggested that she write the story of her seven-year imprisonment. Jacobs’s first priority was to become employed, educate and free Louisa and Joseph, and make a home for her family. Eventually she succeeded.

Jacobs found a job as a baby nurse in the home of Nathaniel Parker Willis, a writer. When his wife Mary died, he took Harriet and his child to England to visit relatives. During her 10-month stay in England, activist Frederick Douglass, who was escaping slave hunters, also fled to England, where he lectured and raised money for the antislavery movement.

Jacobs and her brother John worked as antislavery activists in the Northern United States. John, who had also escaped to the North, gave lectures with Douglass. Meanwhile, the escapees were under threat of capture; the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850. The threat finally ended for Jacobs while she was in the employ of Nathaniel Willis, who had married again; his wife Cornelia purchased the freedom of Harriet and her children.

Jacobs reunited with Louisa and Joseph in the Northern states. She supported herself as a seamstress and as landlady of a boardinghouse. While her son traveled westward with her brother John in search of gold, her daughter sought a position as a teacher.

In Rochester, New York, Jacobs met Amy Post, who was involved with antislavery and women's rights issues. Post was instrumental in convincing Jacobs that she should write a book about the evils of slavery. Jacobs used the pseudonym "Linda Brent" and fictionalized the names of other people in her narrative but stated that her story was true. Edited, reorganized, and promoted by Lydia Maria Child, the book gained other support for publication, and Jacobs traveled to promote it. Jacobs became known as an author and reporter-activist.

During the Civil War, Jacobs worked in Alexandria, Virginia, as a relief worker in the refugee settlement and the hospitals. She and daughter Louisa also worked to support a free school, named the Jacobs School in Harriet's honor, to be administered under black leadership. With Louisa as teacher, it opened in January 1864.

After the war, Harriet and Louisa worked for Reconstruction. In Savannah, Georgia, they worked to enable self-reliance among the freedmen. In the late 1870s, they moved to Washington, D.C., and opened a boardinghouse for whites and later another boardinghouse for the black elite. When the houses closed, the Jacobs women worked in domestic service, and Louisa pursued a teaching position; they were also involved in social activism.

Harriet Jacobs's book *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* has been published in several foreign languages. See also: Douglass, Frederick; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; House Servants; Slave Resistance

Rose Pelone Sisson

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## Jay, John

John Jay (1745–1829) served in many positions: he was a lawyer, member of the Provincial Assembly, state legislator, leading New York Whig, main author of New York's 1777 Constitution, chief justice of New York, member and

president of Congress, secretary for foreign affairs, minister to Spain, chief negotiator of the Treaty of Paris, coauthor of *The Federalist*, member of the New York Ratification Convention, first chief justice of the United States, negotiator of Jay's Treaty, coauthor of George Washington's Farewell Address, governor of New York, president of the American Bible Society, and abolitionist.

The Jay family, a prominent merchant family, fled France in the wake of Louis XIV's 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Born in New York, New York, on December 12, 1745, John Jay received part of his education in a francophone school in New Rochelle, and resentment of Catholicism would mark him throughout his life. At age 14, young John was sent to King's College (now Columbia University) in New York, where he formed close relationships with several other members of the colonial elite. On graduation, Jay read law under prominent New York lawyer Benjamin Kissam.

John Jay entered into practice in 1768 with Robert R. Livingston, who one day would be chancellor of New York. Jay found law remunerative but uninspiring. It did allow him to widen his circle of contacts, however. That circle was unparalleled after his marriage in 1774 to Sarah Livingston, daughter of future New Jersey governor William Livingston and a member of New York's most socially and politically eminent family.

Jay's marriage came just as the Imperial Crisis of the 1760s and 1770s reached its climactic stage, and Jay was at the forefront of New York's opposition to the Intolerable Acts adopted by Parliament in 1774. He sat in Congress from its inception, and he played a leading role in formulating the colonies' response to British policy. Jay generally hoped for reconciliation with Britain in the First Continental Congress because, as he later noted, Britain had given his family a refuge from Bourbon persecution. Yet Jay also insisted that colonial rights be respected, even if it came to war.

As the struggle commenced, Jay proved a prolific and powerful penman on behalf first of colonial rights and then of independence. His standard rhetorical tropes included reminders of the Old Testament and invocations of the rights of Englishmen. In 1777, Jay returned to New York from his post in Congress to participate in the drafting of New York's first republican constitution. Thanks to his and like-minded delegates' efforts, New York's government featured a better balance among the branches than



*John Jay, first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, delegate to both Continental Congresses, diplomat, and Federalist governor of New York, was also an ardent abolitionist. (Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States)*

was adopted by such states as Pennsylvania and Virginia in their first passes at writing constitutions. Jay also retained property requirements for suffrage, which would endure into the 1820s. However, family circumstances forced Jay's departure before the final version's adoption, and Jay lamented that his proposals dealing with elimination of slavery did not form part of the completed document. Slaves in New York would have to wait decades longer for a remedy to their plight.

Although others touted Jay for governor, he believed that he could contribute to New York's new government more substantially by helping to inaugurate its new judiciary, and so Jay became his state's first republican chief justice. In his first charge to a New York grand jury, Jay noted that whatever the beauty of their new constitution's form, it was up to the people of New York to give it life—and virtue.

In 1778, Jay returned to Congress to push New York's position in the Vermont dispute. Like other leading New Yorkers, Jay denied that Vermont should be recognized as a separate state. Soon enough, his fellow congressmen elected him president of Congress, and he remained in that

position until deputed to negotiate an alliance with Spain the following year. His mission to Spain proved entirely fruitless because the junior Bourbon monarchy refused substantial commitments, either of men or of money, to the American cause.

Congress next posted Jay to Paris, where his intransigence and hostility to the French were instrumental in wringing a very favorable—Jay would have said providential—peace from Great Britain. By the terms of the 1783 Treaty of Paris, the United States' boundaries were extended from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River, a remarkable increase in the new republic's area.

Jay returned to America to assume the post of secretary for foreign affairs under the Articles of Confederation. Like other federal politicians of the 1780s, Jay's chief experience was of the "imbecility" (James Madison's term) of the country's first federal constitution. He thus became a Federalist, an advocate of a stronger federal union. He also helped to form the New York Manumission Society in 1785, in an effort to force the state to pass a gradual emancipation act. Although Governor George Clinton defeated efforts to make Jay a member of New York's delegation to the 1787 Philadelphia Convention, he joined Alexander Hamilton in leadership of the Empire State's pro-ratification forces. An illness limited Jay's contribution to *The Federalist* to only five essays, but number 2—on the prospects of the young republic—is among the most eloquent. In the Poughkeepsie Convention, Hamilton and Jay offered a very nationalistic take on the new Constitution, one that would soon be known as "Hamiltonian." Jay's personal diplomacy in the convention was credited with persuading the anti-federalist majority that it could capitulate with grace.

Jay's good friend George Washington went to Jay's house en route to his inauguration as the first president under the federal Constitution, and in the course of consultations there, he offered Jay his choice of offices in the new government. To the general's surprise, Jay opted not for the top office in the cabinet—that of secretary of state—but for the chief justiceship. As in New York a decade earlier, Jay believed that his experience and temperament best fitted him to give firmness to the new judicial branch.

Jay's view of his role as chief justice was that it was to be supportive of the new government—and thus of the executive. Jay joined his colleagues in refusing to give the president formal advisory opinions, but he did operate on behalf of Washington behind closed doors. Finally, he even

accepted appointment to head a special diplomatic mission to resolve outstanding difficulties with the British. Jay's Treaty of 1795, the product of a year's negotiation (and thus absence from the capital), made Jay a very controversial figure. It likely cost Jay the succession to the presidency. However, characteristically, Jay put the national interest ahead of his own, and although the treaty touched off a firestorm of opposition from the nascent Republican Party, it has won Jay praise as a practical statesman from recent historians. In compliance with it, the Peace of Paris finally won implementation, and a new war with Britain was averted.

Upon his return from Europe, Jay was met with news of his election as governor of New York. In that office, he signed gradual emancipation legislation in 1799 of the type he had wanted to see included in New York's constitution in 1777. Although Jay did own slaves, he also supported the idea of abolition during and after his public career, and his children would take prominent roles in the cause after him.

The federal elections of 1800 threatened the defeat of Jay's Federalist Party and the elevation of Hamilton's long-time enemy Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton wrote to Jay to suggest that the system for allocating New York's presidential electors be changed by New York's lame-duck legislative majority, but Jay judged such chicanery (which would have mirrored Republican James Madison's manipulation of Virginia's domestic political system) beneath him. When Oliver Ellsworth resigned the chief justiceship, President John Adams offered it to Jay, but Jay refused. After a long public life, he wanted to retire into the presence of his beloved wife.

Jay left office just as Adams did, and his wife died shortly thereafter. He lived a widower for another quarter-century, and he only rarely spoke out on public issues. One matter about which Jay's position was very well known was that of the future of slavery, which he hoped to see disappear. Thus, as he opposed the War of 1812, so Jay also opposed admission to the Union of Missouri with a constitution allowing slavery.

John Jay died on May 17, 1829, at age 83. He deserves to be numbered right after George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson among the ablest and most significant of the founding fathers.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Revolution; Gradual Emancipation

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## Jefferson, Thomas

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was a politician who was involved in several magnificent scientific and cultural achievements of his time. Most notably, Jefferson was one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence and is viewed as the one of the founding fathers of the United States. Even so, Jefferson's views on African Americans and slavery remained deeply conflicted and troubled throughout his life. Although Jefferson possessed some antislavery leanings, he remained a slaveholder until his death, and he strongly believed in the inherent inferiority of African Americans.

As a young man, Jefferson was instrumental in the movement to end slavery in Northern states and was involved in the effort to end slavery nationally. In 1769, he led a very aggressive but unsuccessful campaign to end slavery in Virginia. Jefferson was successful in getting legislation passed that made it unlawful for any further importation of slaves into Virginia in 1778. Writing in 1781, he expressed his views that slavery should be eliminated in a widely read publication in the colonies titled *Notes on the State of Virginia*. He attempted to eliminate slavery entirely in the Continental Congress in 1784. He also served as ambassador to France from 1784 to 1789, as secretary of state from 1790 until 1793, and as vice president of the United States from 1797 to 1801.

Jefferson was elected president of the United States and served two consecutive terms from 1801 to 1809. In the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr tied in the number of votes received in the Electoral College. The election was therefore decided in the deadlocked, bitterly divided U.S. House of Representatives, which ultimately handed Jefferson the presidency. Recent scholarship has concluded that the three-fifths clause of the Constitution, which allowed each slave to be counted as three-fifths of a vote, gave Jefferson the presidency. The three-fifths clause allowed slave owners to vote three-fifths of their African American slaves against their will. It was the three-fifths

compromise that gave Jefferson enough votes to tie Aaron Burr in the elections and to gain control of the House of Representatives. A dozen or more of the Electoral College votes he received were the result of the clause. These votes were cast by the will of slaveholders, not African Americans. In 1804, he was reelected in a landslide. It is paradoxical that Jefferson, who pushed for legislation and wrote about the great immorality of slavery, would be elected by the vote of slave owners.

Jefferson is criticized by modern historians because throughout his career he wrote on the unethical practice of slavery, and yet he owned slaves himself and never made any effort to free any of them, even after America's independence and when abolition of slavery was no longer unlawful. Modern researchers continue to be puzzled that Jefferson's philosophy of "all men are created equal" was invented by a slave owner. Even more, they note that although *Notes on the State of Virginia* espoused antislavery thought, it also articulated the belief that there were distinct racial differences between whites and blacks that rendered black people hopelessly inferior. Moreover, Jefferson was a staunch colonizationist who argued that if black people gained freedom, they should be relocated back to Africa in order to prevent race-mixing and racial equality. In fact, Jefferson's views brought him into conflict with black abolitionists such as Benjamin Banneker and David Walker. Banneker, in particular, raised the contradiction between Jefferson's belief in liberty and equality and his status as a slaveholder. Indeed, adding to the complexity of Jefferson is the realization that Jefferson's aristocratic lifestyle could not have existed without the help of slavery. Jefferson benefited from it both economically and politically. Ultimately, he would not have been president without it.

Jefferson's motives have also been challenged in recent years. He was well aware that the opposition raised to slave trafficking did not necessarily mean that the interested parties were opposed to slavery. Some American slave owners saw the abolition of slave trafficking as an opportunity to eliminate competition so that the offspring of their own slaves could be marketed into the regions west of the Mississippi. Thomas Jefferson failed utterly to offer any direct remedies for any type of racial prejudice or injustice, and his writings do contain references to African Americans being in some ways inferior to whites. In addition, he helped to set precedent and engage in the removal of Native Americans from their land.

It is fair to note that Jefferson went up against tremendous opposition to his antislavery stance and continually spoke out against it for his entire life. In the 1820s, Jefferson stated that his quest to bring about an end to slavery was even more difficult than he had imagined. While President, Jefferson stated that he had given up on the abolition of slavery in 1805. Even though Jefferson came to the realization that slavery would not be abolished during his life, he did continue to encourage others to end it. Jefferson's writings have proven to be instrumental in providing foundation for future abolitionists to justify their causes. Leading figures such as John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln all quoted and relied on the philosophies of Jefferson as reasoning to push for emancipation.

After the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson philosophized that the territory should be filled with small farmers and should be maintained as free territory. Jefferson attempted to include a provision for the abolition of slavery in all newly acquired territories after 1800. Congress defeated Jefferson's proposal for the abolishment of the expansion of slavery into the territories. This vision was never actually realized. In the years after the purchase and even before Jefferson's death, the region saw an influx of more and more slaves. In the process, slavery became more and more ingrained into American society, both politically and economically. Jefferson's personal records show he owned 187 slaves, some of whom were inherited at the death of his wife. To aid in financial hardship, Jefferson had placed a lien against some of his slaves, which made it difficult to free them upon his death. At that time, Jefferson had arranged for some of his slaves to be emancipated. Although not without criticism from modern historians, Edmund Bacon, who had worked for Jefferson at Monticello from 1806 to 1822, stated that he believed that if the situation would have presented itself, then Jefferson would have freed all of them. Much of the public clearly supported slave trafficking; nevertheless, Jefferson continued to vocalize his beliefs. Joining in Jefferson's cause were several prominent founding fathers.

Adding to Jefferson's seemingly paradoxical relationship between his philosophy and actions was his ongoing sexual relationship with one of his African American slaves, Sally Hemings, who was his wife's half-sister. Jefferson fathered one or more of Sally Hemings's children, two of whom he emancipated upon his death.

Jefferson died July 4, 1826.

See also: American Revolution; Banneker, Benjamin; Haitian Revolution; Hemings, Sally; Louisiana Purchase; Gabriel (Prosser)

Steven Napier

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## Jennings, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Jennings (1830?–1901) was born in New York to a prominent black leader, Thomas L. Jennings. There is some controversy surrounding the date of her birth; the U.S. census reports that she was born in 1830, but her death certificate suggests that she was born in 1826. Regardless of her exact birth date, Elizabeth Jennings was born into an activist family. Not only was her father an established member of the black leadership, but her mother (also named Elizabeth) was also a founding member of the New York Ladies Literary Society. Established in September 1834, the organization was created to acquire literary and scientific knowledge. On the association's third anniversary, her mother delivered a moving speech urging women to action. Perhaps inspired by her parents, the junior Elizabeth Jennings ultimately became an activist in her own right. When still a child, Jennings and her siblings (William, Thomas Jr., and Matilda) all received education and went on to have successful careers.

Although Elizabeth Jennings was largely absent from the public sphere as a young girl, she was abruptly launched

into fame in a celebrated desegregation case. In the early 1850s, New York City's segregated streetcars had become a symbolic reminder of the black community's second-class citizenship. In the mid-19th century, public transportation in New York City was dominated by a series of streetcar companies that controlled the city's railways. Not surprisingly, they created policies under which African Americans were forced to ride in separate cars marked for their use. These regulations were not only discriminatory and morally offensive, but also inconvenient because the "colored" cars tended to run infrequently. As early as 1850, black leaders, frustrated by unequal treatment, began to lodge complaints against the railway companies. However, it was not until 1854 that the problem of segregated streetcars garnered significant public attention. Elizabeth's father, Thomas Jennings, later credited his daughter with being the first to openly challenge segregated streetcars.

On July 16, 1854, schoolteacher Elizabeth Jennings and her friend Sarah Adams began their regular journey to church. However, on this particular Sunday, Jennings was attacked and abused by a streetcar conductor, an incident that catapulted her into fame and sparked a movement. According to the *New York Tribune*, Jennings attempted to board a Third Avenue streetcar on her way to church, as she did every week. However, on July 16, she and her companion Sarah Adams were refused entrance. The conductor told her that she must wait for the next car that was intended to accommodate black passengers. Jennings insisted that she did not want to be detained and refused to leave the car. This action, of course, resulted in a conflict with the conductor, who tried to convince Jennings to get onto another car, but she was adamant in her objection. In her response to the conductor, she made simultaneous claims to respectability and her American birthright.

As would be expected, Elizabeth Jennings's strong attitude and bold personality were not well received by the streetcar conductor. In response to her claim to equal rights, the conductor tried to drag Jennings from the car violently. Yet Jennings clung to the window ledge, while the conductor and the driver both pulled her down. All the while, her friend, Sarah Adams, was also being dragged from the car, screaming for them to release Jennings. Apparently, Adams's warnings did little to influence them because they were not satisfied until they had removed her from the car. However, Jennings was not so easily deterred. Refusing to surrender, Jennings jumped back into the car, and the conductor drove

to the police. Although it was her right to ride, the police officer ignored Jennings's version of the events and likewise dragged her from the car.

In response to Jennings's encounter, the black community organized a mass meeting during which they heard Jennings's story and resolved to take action. Jennings herself was unable to attend because of her injuries, but she had prepared a statement that was read to the entire assembly. Outraged, the community passed a series of resolutions denouncing the conductor's actions and declaring their intentions to address the situation. Soon, they formed the Legal Rights Association, through which they demanded the rights of black people as citizens and asserted their equal right to transportation on the streetcars. Jennings's father, Thomas, led the Legal Rights Association and vociferously fought on his daughter's behalf. As promised, the black community brought the problem of discrimination to public attention. In 1855, Jennings's case was tried in court, and the jury found in her favor. Jennings's attorney was Chester A. Arthur, who later became the 21st president of the United States. The judge had already concluded that black people had the same right to ride the streetcars as any other citizen and could not be excluded on the basis of race. Therefore, the jury was really left only with the responsibility of assigning damages. Although Elizabeth Jennings sought \$500, the jury was divided and awarded her only \$225. Regardless, the decision was a crucial victory for the black community; a court of law had determined that they had the same rights to ride public transportation as any other citizen.

Following the resolution of her case, Elizabeth Jennings (as with many black women during the 19th century) withdrew from the public realm. She married Charles Graham sometime in the late 1850s, but tragedy struck her family in 1863. During the vicious Civil War draft riots in New York City, her young son Thomas died, apparently due to convulsions. She and her husband braved the rioters and managed to get her son's body to Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn for a proper burial. Her husband died just a few years later, in 1867. Despite her personal tragedies, Elizabeth Jennings Graham remained committed to the African American community. In 1890, she berated the community for not financially supporting *T. Thomas Fortune's* newspaper, and in 1895, she established a kindergarten in her own home. She remained active until her death in 1901.

*See also:* Douglass, Frederick; Garnet, Henry Highland; Jennings, Thomas L.; New York Draft Riots; Pennington, James Williams Charles

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## **Jennings, Thomas L.**

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Thomas L. Jennings (1791–1859) was born in New York City as a free man. Little is known about Jennings's early life, but by 1821, he was making his living as a tailor. In fact, he became the first black man in the United States to hold a patent after he created an innovative dry cleaning process called "dry scouring." Throughout his life, Jennings used his fame and fortune in support of his race. Jennings was a founder and trustee of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and later gave substantial sums of money to the abolitionist cause. His first public act, however, was in service of the United States. He was still a young man during the War of 1812, but although black men were not initially allowed to fight, Jennings responded to the pleas for assistance in fortifying New York City from British invasion. In fact, Jennings, along with his friend Peter Williams Jr., was among the leaders of the black crew.

Despite Jennings's early efforts to protect the nation, just several years later, he had begun to question the future of the black race in the United States. Following the Haitian Revolution, many black New Yorkers had begun to consider migrating to Haiti. Because Haiti was the first free and independent black nation in the Western Hemisphere, it seemed to offer the goals of equality and citizenship that free blacks sought. By 1818, black activists had developed the Haytian Emigration Society of Coloured People, and Thomas Jennings served on the board of managers. Jennings continued to endorse immigration to Haiti until the late 1820s, when the movement lost support because of Haiti's internal problems. Thereafter, Jennings dedicated himself to various race uplift activities.



In 1827, Jennings served on the organizing committee for New York City's Emancipation Day celebration. This was a powerful moment for black New Yorkers, for according to the stipulations of the state's Gradual Emancipation Act, July 4, 1827, would be the legal end to slavery in New York. As with traditional celebrations in the black community, the organizing committee decided to have an official address with prayers delivered from the various religious orders. Jennings probably did not expect, however, that he would find himself at the center of a community controversy. In planning the commemoration, the committee took a rather unorthodox position, which threatened an important tradition among black New Yorkers. Apparently fearful that whites would oppose a procession, they abandoned the tradition of parading and declared that the black community should abstain from appearing on the streets that day. Concerned about their public image, the group argued that they wanted to show their gratitude for abolition and therefore wanted to prevent racial violence or negative publicity.

Although the organizing committee was carefully crafting a celebration that would serve their race-uplift strategy, the vast majority of black New Yorkers had a different agenda. Wanting to fully celebrate freedom in their distinct cultural and political style, another group formed their own planning commission to organize a separate event. Unconcerned with public perception, this alternative group created a celebration that challenged American society and flaunted their African heritage. Apparently reveling in their cultural legacy, they remained committed to the tradition of parading, a decision that represented not only a cultural connection to Africa, but also a desire to celebrate the power of community. The debate over how to properly commemorate emancipation raged for months, but the community finally agreed to hold separate celebrations.

Later that same year, Jennings became actively involved in the black education movement, which was viewed as a critical aspect of race uplift. On December 27, 1827, a meeting was held between black leaders and the trustees of the African Free School. African Society members Peter Williams Jr. and Thomas L. Jennings were appointed as the chair and secretary, respectively. Recognizing that the African Free School was not reaching as many children as it could, leaders resolved to review conditions in the black community and ascertain why more children were not attending school. One of the solutions they identified was to promote education through the formation of literary

societies. Jennings played an active role in establishing the Phoenix Society in 1833, an organization whose purpose was to uplift the black community morally and intellectually. The society also attempted to open two high schools in the following years, but both institutions floundered due to financial problems.

Beyond his work with education, Jennings also became publicly active around the issues of abolition and colonization. Surprisingly, Jennings, who had previously supported Haitian migration, reversed his position and spoke against migration to Canada at the National Colored Convention in 1832. Jennings maintained that advocating emigration could undermine their attempts to gain citizenship in the United States. Jennings apparently believed his role as an activist should be to advocate for black rights in the United States, which would explain his participation in the formation of the New York Anti-Slavery Society in December 1833. Likewise, Jennings also became committed to the suffrage movement and helped organize a meeting in February 1837, where a group of black men drafted a petition arguing for their right to equal suffrage. Although they managed to garner significant support, the petition not only failed to pass the state legislature, but was overwhelmingly defeated, with only 11 affirmative votes. Frustrated by the failure of petitioning, Jennings assisted in the creation of a new organization, the American Reform Board of Disfranchised Commissioners, which used more militant language to demand the immediate extension of citizenship. However, this organization also floundered, and black men in New York did not gain the unrestricted right to vote until the passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870.

During the 1840s, Thomas Jennings was largely silent on political issues. However, in 1854, his daughter, black schoolteacher Elizabeth Jennings, launched him back into the spotlight. Elizabeth Jennings played a critical role in the struggle that eventually culminated in unrestricted access to streetcars. After Jennings was assaulted by a conductor and a police officer, a public meeting was held to address the problem of segregated streetcars in New York City. Thomas Jennings was elected as the president of a new organization, the Legal Rights Association, which was designed to secure equality in public facilities. Even after his daughter won her case, Jennings labored unceasingly to raise public consciousness about the continuing problem of racial discrimination and raise money to fight it. Jennings died on February 11, 1859, in New York City.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Colored Convention Movement; Destination, Haiti; Jennings, Elizabeth; Williams, Peter Jr.

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## Jones, Absalom

Absalom Jones (1746–1818) was a black activist and abolitionist in Philadelphia who helped found the African Episcopal Church. Jones was born enslaved in Sussex County, Delaware, where at an early age he taught himself to read. At 16 years of age, he was taken to Philadelphia and put to work as a clerk and handyman in a retail store. Through arrangement with his owner, Jones was allowed to work additional hours in the evenings and to keep the additional earned wages as his own. By the 1780s, he had earned his freedom, married and bought his wife's freedom, and purchased property in Philadelphia.

As a lay minister and teacher at St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Jones met and joined forces with another lay minister there, Richard Allen. In their role at St. George's, they ministered to the African Americans attending the established church for whites. Together they formed the Free African Society in 1787. Like other mutual aid societies, the Free African Society was established to provide services to its members not available to even wealthy free people of color through traditional white establishments, such as life insurance and burial provisions, but it also served both secular and sacred purposes through nondenominational prayer meetings and other gatherings. The organization sought to provide services for members as well as to improve the character and social actions of its associates.

Although the Free African Society and the black members of St. George's Methodist Church flourished under

Allen and Jones, increasing racial tensions and incidents led to concerns that the African American members of St. George's would separate from the church's main congregation. In 1792, an official split did occur when the white trustees of St. George's tried to prevent Jones from praying in what they perceived as the "white" section of the church. Grievously insulted, the black congregants left the church as a whole.

With this break in the congregation of St. George's Methodist Church, Absalom Jones began to organize "the African Church." Although a number of the white members of St. George's fought the division—the established black congregants had brought a solid economic base to the church—many white abolitionists supported Jones's efforts to establish an independent church. When Jones began construction on his new facility in 1793, donations from these same abolitionists aided the building fund.

Another divide in the former St. George's congregation took place in 1794 when Absalom Jones and Richard Allen disagreed on the denomination of the new church. Whereas Allen and a few of the black congregants believed the new church should be Methodist and be a truly independent black church, the majority of black congregants sided with Jones, who applied to the Episcopal Church for membership. The African Church was accepted into the white-led Episcopal Diocese of Philadelphia, and the church was named the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, with Absalom Jones ordained as deacon. In 1802, Jones was ordained an Episcopal priest, the first Episcopal priest of African descent. Richard Allen went on to establish Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (in the Methodist tradition) in Philadelphia and became the first AME bishop.

Absalom Jones, like other African American religious and social leaders in the post-Revolutionary period, continued to strive for the egalitarian principals of the American Revolution, believing that blacks could prevail if they continued to insist on those liberties promised to those who supported the new nation. Jones believed the African Americans had the opportunity to help establish their position in the new society.

As an active abolitionist, Jones petitioned the U.S. Congress—the first African American to do so—in 1797 on behalf of four men who were facing the possibility of being re-enslaved. Having been manumitted in North Carolina, the men went to Philadelphia for fear of being sold back into slavery. In a document full of revolutionary rhetoric,

Jones petitioned that slavery violated the spirit of the U.S. Constitution, and as a result, the Congress had the ability to abolish it. Congress refused to accept his petition.

See also: African Methodist Episcopal Church; Allen, Richard; Benevolent Societies

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## Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854

Stephen Douglas, U.S. senator from Illinois and Northern Democrat, brokered the Kansas-Nebraska Act for a variety of reasons; principal among them were his desire to see construction of a transcontinental railroad begin, his designs on the presidency, and his naiveté regarding the extreme volatility of the slavery debate. The 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act was one of the most important events leading to the Civil War. Douglas had successfully managed to navigate the partisan and sectional divides during congressional discussions leading up to passage of the Compromise of 1850. In 1854, this tactic utterly destroyed one political party, splintered another along sectional lines, greatly bolstered the political sway of the so-called slave power of the cotton-producing South, and set the nation on a direct path toward war.

Using popular sovereignty—the ability of western settlers to vote on the issue of slavery—as the solution to partisan and sectional strife, Douglas sponsored the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in January 1854 as part of a larger plan to encourage settlement in the Kansas-Nebraska territory. The most controversial element of this proposal was the repeal of the 1820 Missouri Compromise. Douglas felt that eliminating the compromise line and allowing slavery into territories previously declared free would help populate the region. Of course, this was also part of a larger design. In addition to being a congressman and a former justice on the Illinois Supreme Court, Douglas was a major investor in Chicago real estate. In 1850, he had secured a land grant from the federal government for the Illinois Central Railroad linking Chicago to Mobile, Alabama. The resulting increase in the value of his Chicago real estate netted Douglas a small

fortune. The possibility of building a railroad between Chicago and San Francisco promised to produce an enormous increase in his property value. To do so, however, required support from Southern proslavery Democrats seeking to expand slavery into previously prohibited areas. Likewise, if he hoped to receive the Democratic Party nomination for the presidency, Douglas needed strong support from the South. Thus, the successful repeal of the Missouri Compromise promised to satisfy Southern, proslavery constituents.

Douglas offered popular sovereignty as a concession to the South so that his self-interested plan to increase the value of his property could advance undeterred. The Kansas-Nebraska bill would allow settlers in this territory to decide on the issue of slavery by voting. Douglas proved a bit naïve in making this concession. He assumed that the topography and climate in the Great Plains would not be conducive to cash crop cultivation. In turn, he believed that few slave owners would venture into the territory and that more free states than slave states would form from the Kansas-Nebraska territory. He underestimated the will of the pro-expansion slave-owning aristocracy, and by blurring the boundaries between free and slave states, Douglas increased the fears of the “slave power” voiced by Free Soilers and African Americans.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed on May 30, 1854. Reactions against it were immediate. Because the congressional vote followed sectional as opposed to partisan lines, the act caused the complete collapse of the Whig Party as its Southern members defected and joined their counterparts in the Democratic Party. Workers throughout the North held rallies to oppose the act. Although they still distanced themselves from radical abolitionism, they did adopt the jargon and symbolism employed by abolitionists. On the eve of congressional elections in 1854, ex-Whigs, antislavery Democrats, Free Soilers, and abolitionists voiced their collective opposition to the slave power through the formation of the Republican Party. As Abraham Lincoln noted in an October 16, 1854, speech, the revolutionary spirit unleashed in 1776 was undermined by the spirit of the Kansas-Nebraska Act—despite its call for popular sovereignty. In this particular case, the right to vote on the issue of slavery was a rationale for slavery, white supremacy, and the continued expansion of the influences of the South’s “slave power.” Lincoln went on to state that whereas the Declaration of Independence declared that all men were created equal, the 1854 act simply reinforced the savage inequities inherent in

chattel slavery under the ruse of “self government” in the Kansas-Nebraska territory. In Lincoln’s assessment, liberty lost ground to bondage as a direct result of the 1854 act. Far from being representative of classical liberal doctrine, popular sovereignty, as articulated by Douglas and his allies, was a clear and conscious acquiescence to white supremacy, slavery, and the Southern aristocracy.

Although historians are left to ponder why Douglas offered such a sizable concession to Southern aristocrats, the Kansas-Nebraska Act can be measured as a resounding victory for the “slave power.” This fact was not lost on the scores of slave owners pouring over the Missouri border into Kansas two months before the passage of the 1854 act in order to secure prime land for cash crop cultivation. Nor was it lost on the thousands of Free Soilers who became radicalized to the point that they not only opposed the westward expansions of slavery, but also began to militantly oppose the institution of slavery itself. Moreover, this concession demonstrated to free blacks that no section of the United States, neither the North nor the territories that had previously excluded slavery, could serve as a true haven for liberty. The result of this convergence of forces was guerilla warfare in Kansas, the emergence of militant Free Soilers and abolitionists who favored the use of violence, and an increasingly radicalized agenda among African American leaders and organizations.

See also: Brown, John; Louisiana Purchase; Missouri Compromise

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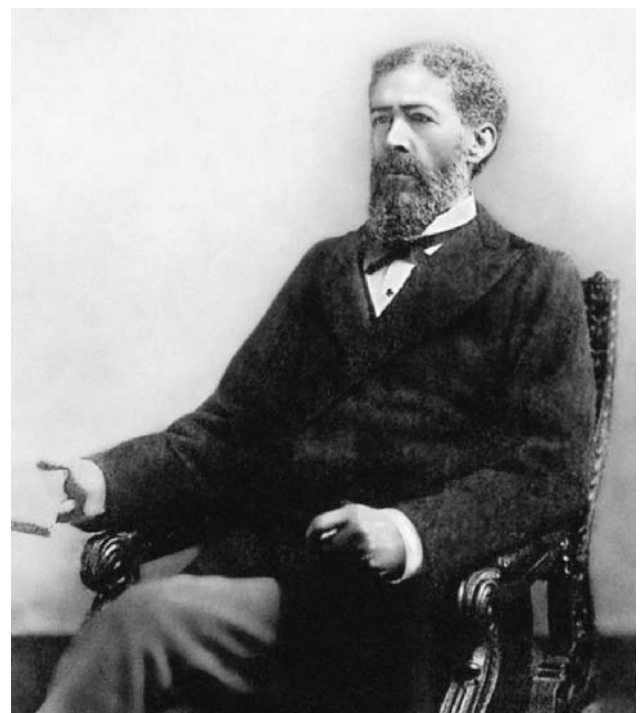
## Langston, John Mercer

John Mercer Langston (1829–1897), attorney, educator, and diplomat, became one of the most prominent African American educators and reformers of the postbellum era.

Born on a plantation in Louisa County, Virginia, Langston’s father was the white owner, his mother a former slave. When both parents died in 1834, Langston and his brothers inherited part of the estate and moved to Ohio.

Langston attended Oberlin College (1844–1849), excelling in debate and oratory. After graduation, when racial barriers prevented him from attending law school, he returned to Oberlin (1850) for a theology degree (1852) and spent an additional year acquiring instruction in extemporaneous speaking. Meanwhile, he became involved in the Ohio black convention movement and began advocating migration to Canada and the West Indies. His emigrationist philosophy emphasized self-reliance and self-respect, which remained core beliefs long after he had abandoned emigration as a solution to the problems of African Americans.

Langston studied law (1853–1854) under Philemon Bliss of Elyria, Ohio, and became Ohio’s first black attorney (September 1854). Partnering with a white attorney, Langston built a lucrative practice near Oberlin. He married Caroline Wall, daughter of a wealthy white North Carolinian and an African American mother, and became the nation’s first African American elected official when he was



After assisting with the Underground Railroad and recruiting African Americans into the Union Army during the Civil War, John Mercer Langston went on to found the first African American law school, serve as U.S. minister to Haiti, and represent Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives. (Perry-Castaneda Library)

elected as clerk of Brownhelm township (spring 1855). He also became secretary of the board of education and school visitor.

In May 1855, Langston addressed the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York City, galvanizing the audience by delivering a powerful indictment of slavery and American racism. Later in 1855, the family moved to Oberlin, where Langston was elected clerk of Russia township and expanded his law practice. He assisted black Oberlin students with housing and funds and became a member of the village council and board of education. He was building a statewide reputation for eloquence and trial skills.

During the Civil War, Langston recruited volunteers for black regiments in Massachusetts and Ohio. Although Langston, like other wealthy men, hired a substitute for military service, in the spring of 1865, he requested command of a black regiment. The war ended before he received the commission, however. Meanwhile, he continued working for African American social and political equality, heading the National Equal Rights League and speaking about African American suffrage and the Emancipation Proclamation.

After the war, Langston turned to the work of racial justice. He met with President Andrew Johnson (April 1865) and toured the border states, speaking to freedmen and legislators. He was appointed inspector-general of the Freedmen's Bureau (1867) and lectured throughout the South about education for freedmen. Although the work led Langston to anticipate rewards from the Republican Party, he declined appointments as commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau and minister to Haiti.

In 1869, Langston joined the law department of Howard University, becoming the nation's first black law professor at a black law school. He quickly became dean and began enhancing the department's reputation. During his last two years at Howard, he served as vice president and acting president, for which service the university awarded him an LL.D. Yet in 1875, the racially motivated white board of trustees rebuffed his bid for a permanent appointment as president.

Meanwhile, Langston continued his work on behalf of the freedman. President Grant appointed him to the Freedmen's Savings and Trust (1872) and to the District of Columbia Board of Health, an acknowledgement of his accomplishments at Howard and his efforts in the 1872 Grant campaign. Langston's advocacy of the Republican

Party increased in the later 1870s. He was a delegate to the 1876 Republican National Convention and after the election anticipated a high-level appointment—perhaps commissioner of agriculture—because of his work. But there was room for only one high-profile African American, and Frederick Douglass took precedence.

Instead, Langston received the post of minister resident and consul-general to Haiti—which he had rejected earlier. Although he was considered the dean of the Port-au-Prince diplomatic corps for much of his tenure (1877–1885), his record was mixed. He devoted his energy to a succession of private claims against Haiti, most of which Washington classified as groundless disputes without international status. Implementing U.S. policy during years of upheaval in Haiti, he tended to be either too involved or too removed from events. He took a yearly leave of absence regardless of the Haitian political situation, returning to the United States to conduct private business or campaign for Republicans. Some writers credit Langston with diplomatic skill, mastery of local customs, and prestige within Haitian society. Other assessments argue that his actions undermined the sovereignty of the hemisphere's only independent black nation, that his obsession with color hampered his ability to deal with Haitian leaders, that he failed to improve the consular service, and that he misunderstood Haitian culture.

After leaving diplomatic service, Langston became president of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (1885 to December 1887), ultimately resigning because of ongoing conflicts with the college's Board of Visitors. Then, to demonstrate the electoral possibilities open to African Americans, in 1888 he ran for Congress from Virginia's Fourth District. In the convoluted contest, the state Republican chairman opposed and sabotaged Langston's efforts, and Frederick Douglass spoke against Langston. When Langston's opponent was declared the winner, Langston challenged the result in a dispute that dragged on for 18 months. He was finally seated (September 23, 1890), becoming the first African American elected to Congress from Virginia. But Congress adjourned eight days after he was seated, and six weeks from elections. Langston was renominated—despite opposition from the Virginia Republican leadership—but lost the ballot. This time, he chose not to contest the outcome. In 1892, he declined renomination, saying that Republicans would have greater success with a white candidate.

Langston nevertheless continued to believe in the Republican Party as an agent for racial justice. In February 1889, he headed an African American delegation to President-elect Benjamin Harrison. He was a delegate in 1890 to the Virginia Republican state convention and in 1892 to the Republican state and national conventions. He retired in 1894, published his memoirs that year, and died in 1897.

Throughout a multifaceted and productive career, Langston was an unwavering proponent of the Republican Party and a tireless campaigner on its behalf. Although he was mentioned for cabinet-level appointments and a vice presidential nomination, racial barriers proved impenetrable. His themes, on which he spoke regularly, were equality before the law, equal opportunity, political and economic empowerment, education, self-reliance, and self-respect, and his addresses spellbound audiences and pointed to a higher calling and a better future. The complexity of his biography became more evident in the 20th century, as writers criticized his support of the Republican Party even after it had abandoned African Americans; actions that suggested disingenuousness and self-aggrandizement; and ambivalence on matters of color originating in his own mixed-race ancestry. Nevertheless, the predominant assessment in the early 21st century parallels the common view in the 19th: he was one of the nation's most extraordinary African American leaders.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Destination, Canada; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Republican Party; Underground Railroad

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## The *Liberator*

First published on January 1, 1831, by William Lloyd Garrison and copublisher Isaac Knapp, the *Liberator* became the first publication in the United States dedicated to immediate abolition. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, the four-page newspaper the *Liberator* explained to its audience—primarily sympathetic whites and free blacks in the North—that slavery ought to be abolished immediately, that colonization ought to be prevented, and that some of the basic rights of citizenship should be extended to African Americans. Furthermore, the *Liberator* declared that the best way to bring about the end of the institution of slavery was through nonviolence.

William Lloyd Garrison had previous experience in publishing an antislavery newspaper in Baltimore, Maryland, and he understood that without the support of the local free black population where the paper was to be published, the endeavor would be a dismal failure. In Boston, Garrison found a supportive contingent of free blacks who formed a committee and began raising funds for publication of the *Liberator*. During the first year of publication, it was clear that Garrison's chief supporters would be Boston's free black population—out of approximately 450 subscribers, nearly 400 were African American. The abolitionist paper received support from other free blacks throughout the North as well. For example, James Forten, a leader of the free black community of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, sent Garrison a check for \$54—enough to pay for 27 subscriptions. The timing of the money's arrival, one week after the initial issue was published, could not have been better because many of the items needed to publish the weekly abolitionist paper were purchased on credit.

Although Northern free blacks undoubtedly agreed with much of what Garrison published, they used the paper to their advantage. Northern free black organizations, such as the Adelpic Union Library Association, used advertising space in the *Liberator* to promote various educational opportunities and abolitionist meetings.

Non-abolitionists in the North viewed Garrison's publication as radical, and it was despised greatly in the South. Southern slave owners feared that if the *Liberator* found its way into the slaveholding South, it might incite a major slave insurrection. Several months after the initial issue was published, Nat Turner's revolt broke out in Virginia, and many slave owners believed that the abolitionist publication helped to fuel the fires of Turner's rebellion. Fearful of the *Liberator's* power, slaveholding areas implemented stringent restrictions against Garrison's publication. For example, free blacks and slaves in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., were forbidden to read the paper. The state of South Carolina forbade anyone to read or have a copy of the *Liberator* in his or her possession and implemented a \$1,500 reward to anyone who turned in a violator of this law. Furthermore, many local courts throughout the South indicted Garrison on charges of disturbing the peace and called for the federal government to stop publication of the *Liberator*. Southern whites also confronted harsh punishment should they be found with a copy of the abolitionist paper. A white Georgia male, for example, who had subscribed to the *Liberator* was taken from his home by a mob and brutalized; he was tarred and feathered, set on fire, dunked in a river, and whipped.

Undoubtedly the greatest hatred toward the *Liberator* came from the South, but some of the more moderate abolitionists in the North also disapproved of Garrison's paper and tried to discourage its publication. Some abolitionists feared that the powerful, antislavery rhetoric in the *Liberator* might delay the end of slavery because it would cause slave owners to more vigorously resist emancipation. Moreover, abolitionists who favored the colonization of African Americans lambasted Garrison's paper—believing that the only way that abolition could work was if all former slaves and free blacks were sent to another land. Garrison's *Liberator* further infuriated abolitionists when he attacked specific individuals in the publication. He attacked notable figures including Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The *Liberator* claimed that Stowe's depictions of slaves in her book were extremely racist. Anyone who did not hold the same views on abolition became targets for criticism in Garrison's columns.

Other Northerners attacked the *Liberator* and called for an indefinite suspension of publication so as to provide harmony between North and South. Many prominent Northerners believed, and justifiably so, that Garrison's powerful

antislavery message might eventually cause slaveholding states to leave the Union in order to protect the institution of slavery and the Southern economy

Despite the animosity that many, both Northerners and Southerners, exhibited toward the *Liberator*, it was an important publication in bringing about the end of slavery. For more than three decades, it brought to the forefront the horrors of slavery and shaped abolitionist thinking. After its long life, Garrison ceased publication of the *Liberator* on December 29, 1865. With the conclusion of the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves, Garrison believed that the purpose of the abolitionist movement and the *Liberator* had been served.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Garrison, William Lloyd; Thirteenth Amendment

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## Liberia

Liberia, a present-day country in Western Africa, was the primary destination of African Americans who left the United States during the colonization movement of the early to mid-1800s. Since the founding of the American Republic in 1776, the issue of slavery had plagued the country. During the Revolutionary War, Americans emphasized that all men were created equal. Following the conclusion of the war, the idea of equality for all remained. But while Americans emphasized equality, they simultaneously continued the inequitable practice of slavery. It was during this time that the colonization movement, which promoted the transfer of African Americans back to Africa, became a viable solution for America's contradictory actions.

In December 1816, Rev. Robert S. Finley established a colonization society in the United States. With the support of such prominent individuals as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and Henry Clay, Finley

established the American Colonization Society (ACS) in January 1817. The ACS sought to relocate former slaves and freed African Americans. The colonization movement was primarily concerned with the transfer of freed blacks. The majority of ACS supporters and members were slave owners themselves. Although they did not wish to abolish slavery, they did wish to relocate freed blacks, whom they deemed dangerous. The freed blacks, especially in the South, were viewed as potential sources of insurrection.

An associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Bushrod Washington, was elected the first president of the ACS. Washington, along with newly elected U.S. president James Monroe, worked to convince the U.S. Congress to support the ACS's colonization program. Congress appropriated \$100,000 and helped the ACS secure African territory for the transfer of African Americans.

By 1820, the ACS was ready to send its first voyage of African Americans back to Africa. On January 31, 1820, the *Elizabeth* sailed from New York Harbor with hundreds of African Americans on board. Six weeks later, the ship landed on the West Coast of Africa. The initial settlement for the African Americans on board was the town of Campellar. After a few months in Campellar, many of the settlers became extremely ill and died. When President Monroe heard of the unhealthy conditions in Campellar, he sent a new expedition to gather the remaining settlers from Campellar and build a permanent settlement. *Nautilus* left for Africa in January 1823. After picking up the living members of the first ACS voyage, the *Nautilus* sailed down the West African coast until it came upon Cape Messurado. In December 1823, the settlers arrived in Cape Messurado and demanded that the local leader, King Peter, sell the land to the ACS. At first, King Peter refused, but when the American settlers drew their pistols, he acquiesced. Cape Messurado was conceded to the ACS, and the Americans achieved their dream of a colony for freed African American slaves. This new colony was Liberia.

In June 1847, the people of Liberia—some of whom were former U.S. residents—declared their independence. The ACS, U.S. government, and Liberian people had had conflicting ideas on governance since the founding of the colony. By 1847, the Liberian people were ready to cut their ties with the United States. Liberia became the first democratic republic on the African continent. The country's first elected president was Joseph Jenkins Roberts—a former Virginian who had immigrated to Liberia in 1829.

Although Liberia declared its independence in 1847, the United States did not recognize it until after the Civil War.

Once Liberia was founded, the ACS had to work to continue the flow of African Americans from the United States to Liberia. The movement was initially slow to gain popularity among African Americans; however, interest rose significantly following the Nat Turner slave rebellion in 1831 and the conclusion of the Mexican War in 1848. The Civil War in the United States brought the conclusion of the colonization movement. When the Civil War ended, slavery was abolished, and African Americans were granted equality under the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. Consequently, a colonization movement was no longer deemed necessary. Although minor colonization movements, such as that of Marcus Garvey, occurred in the 20th century, the movement came to a relative end with the conclusion of the Civil War.

Liberia continued as a democratic republic, even after the colonization movement came to a close. Relations between the indigenous Liberians and those who immigrated to the colony from the United States, however, were not democratic. The Americo-Liberians—those who emigrated from the United States—formed an elite class in Liberia, and the indigenous people suffered some of the same inequalities in their homeland that the Americo-Liberians had suffered in the United States. A two-tiered social structure continued in Liberia until 1980, when a military coup, led by Samuel K. Doe—a native Liberian—assassinated President William Tolbert and overthrew the Liberian government that had held power since independence in 1847. *See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Colonization Society; Destination, Sierra Leone

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## Liberty Party

The Liberty Party, founded in 1840, was the first American political party solely devoted to the abolition of slavery. Moral suasion, which sought to appeal to the conscience of



individual slaveholders in order to induce them to emancipate their slaves, had dominated 1830s antislavery activism. By the end of the decade, however, it had become clear that this tactic had made little positive impact, leading many abolitionists to envision a different approach to the slavery problem. Although the Liberty Party failed to elect any national officers in 1840 or 1844, the appearance of a national antislavery party forced the Whigs and Democrats to take a stand on the slavery issue and laid the groundwork for the rise of the Republican Party in the 1850s.

The move into politics was a contentious issue for abolitionists, leading to a schism in the American Anti-Slavery Society at its 1840 annual meeting. The wing of the abolitionist movement led by Boston editor William Lloyd Garrison resisted political involvement, fearing that it would corrupt the ideals of the antislavery movement and force compromise on important principles. Supporters of the Liberty Party, led by New York merchant Lewis Tappan, argued that the antislavery movement must move into the political sphere to achieve its goals. Most leaders of the Liberty Party did not believe that the federal government had the power to eradicate the institution of slavery where it already existed. An antislavery government could, however, abolish slavery in Washington, D.C., and prevent its expansion into new territories, thereby hastening its end.

After leaving the American Anti-Slavery Society, Liberty Party supporters nominated James G. Birney for president in 1840 and called on committed evangelicals and antislavery advocates to shun the established parties, the Whigs and the Democrats, who were viewed as too soft on the slavery issue. In the aftermath of the depression of 1837, the Liberty Party was perceived as a poorly funded third party that took no stand on economic issues and had little chance of winning; they managed to secure only 7,000 votes. In 1844, Birney's second candidacy under the auspices of the Liberty Party fared little better. The party dissolved before the 1848 election and was replaced by the Free Soil Party as the antislavery alternative in American politics.

The legacy of the Liberty Party is mixed. On the one hand, the party forced Northern politicians to address the slavery issue for fear of losing abolitionist votes. By bringing slavery to the center of national politics, it is undeniable that the Liberty Party hastened the end of the institution. However, Garrison's fears of the corruption of principle inevitable in political involvement were partially vindicated. The movement of antislavery to the center of the national

political scene was accompanied by a distinct shift in emphasis. Northern politicians increasingly voiced their antislavery appeals in terms of the institution's negative effects on white Northern labor and business, rather than on moral rectitude or slavery's dehumanization of African Americans. Although the Liberty Party dissolved before the culmination of this trend, the effects would become clear in the rhetoric of the Free Soil and Republican parties in later years.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Birney, James; Free Soil Party; Garrison, William Lloyd; Smith, Gerrit; Tappan, Lewis

K. Stephen Prince Jr.

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## Lincoln, Abraham

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was the 16th president of the United States, serving from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865. Shortly after Lincoln's election, the southern states seceded from the United States, primarily due to conflict over the issue of slavery, and the country disintegrated into two separate entities—the Union (the North) and the Confederacy (the South). The resulting effort to bring the South back into the Union is known as the Civil War, the bloodiest war in American history. During this sectional crisis, Lincoln was faced with the daunting task of guiding the Union through war and reuniting the United States. Most notably, however, Lincoln was also forced to grapple with the issues of slavery, emancipation, and the future of African Americans in the United States. Although Lincoln is commonly known as the “Great Emancipator” because he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, his true legacy regarding African Americans is highly complex and hotly contested.

Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky, which was then considered the frontier of American settlement. In 1816, Lincoln's parents moved to Spencer

County, Indiana, a move that Lincoln recalled was partly because of his parents' opposition to slavery and partly due to a property dispute. In 1830, the Lincoln family moved just outside Decatur, Illinois. Shortly after moving to Illinois, Lincoln was employed by a local businessman to transport goods by raft down the Mississippi River to the port at New Orleans. It is possible that Lincoln witnessed the horrors of slave trading and the abuse of enslaved African Americans during his travels.

Lincoln unsuccessfully campaigned for the Illinois state legislature in 1832 when he was 23 years old. Meanwhile, he attempted several business ventures and other endeavors unsuccessfully, until he discovered William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Lincoln studied law on his own, partnered in the practice of law with Stephen T. Logan, and became one of the most prominent attorneys in Illinois. In 1834, he won a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives, where he served four consecutive terms.

In 1837, Lincoln publicly spoke out against slavery for the first time. While speaking in front of the legislature, he attacked slavery on the basis of immorality. During his time in the Illinois state government, Lincoln fought to persuade fellow congressmen to ban slavery and prevent it from spreading. Yet his relationship to slavery and slaveholders remained deeply conflicted. In 1840, Lincoln married Mary Todd, the daughter of an influential slaveholding family in Kentucky. More significantly, Lincoln was tremendously influenced by Henry Clay, a powerful Whig politician and Kentucky slaveholder who brokered both the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850. Although Clay was praised for establishing compromises that preserved the Union, he remained committed to protecting slavery where it already existed. The Missouri Compromise, for example, sought to limit the extension of slavery in the Northern territories, but it allowed for Missouri to be admitted as a slave state. Moreover, the Compromise of 1850 had devastating repercussions for the black population, since one component of that compromise—the Fugitive Slave Act—turned the Northern states into hunting grounds for slave-catchers and denied civil rights to free black people in the courts. Lincoln, however, remained an admirer of Henry Clay and soon became his colleague in the halls of Congress.

In 1846, Lincoln was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives but he only served a two year term. For the next decade, Lincoln focused most of his energies on his

legal career. However the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 catapulted Lincoln back into the political arena. Although the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had placed limits on the spread of slavery into U.S. territories, this act was nullified by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Outraged by the notion of extending slavery into new territories, Lincoln decided to seek election as the U.S. senator from Illinois. He successfully became the Republican nominee because his political ideologies on slavery were perceived by most within his party as more moderate than most candidates, therefore perhaps making him more electable. Lincoln did, indeed, prove to be a moderate voice within the Republican Party on the issue of slavery.

Soon after receiving the nomination, Lincoln gave a soon-to-be-famous speech in which he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The speech was representative of the fragmentation the country faced over slavery that ultimately led to the Civil War; in Lincoln's view, the United States could no longer remain divided over the issue of slavery and he urged the nation to resolve the issue one way or another. Yet Lincoln stopped short of advocating for total abolition. Instead, he limited his criticism by raising opposition only to the idea of expanding slavery beyond the current slave states. However in 1858, even that notion was considered highly controversial. Lincoln's challenger for the U.S. Senate seat was Stephen A. Douglas, representing the Democratic Party. Douglas believed that because the people were sovereign, each individual state should choose whether it would be a slave or free state. Not surprisingly, the two men sparred over the issue regularly during the election, and their verbal exchanges became known as the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858.

The election of 1858 revealed a great deal about Lincoln's ambivalent views toward slavery; he believed that slavery was immoral and that African Americans had undeniable rights and liberties granted to them through the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, but he also believed that the federal government did not possess the authority to rescind slavery in states where it already existed. In addition, Lincoln was a staunch colonizationist who believed that the free black population ought to be removed from the United States. It was, perhaps, for these reasons that Lincoln gained tremendous support within the Republican Party. Although Lincoln lost the Senate race, his speeches during the campaign brought him national attention that transformed the presidential race of 1860.

In May 1860, Lincoln was selected as the Republican nominee for president. Again, his opponent was Democrat Stephen A. Douglas; this time, however, the outcome would be much different. Even though Lincoln was considered by most as a political moderate, he won in every Northern state where slavery was not permitted. Lincoln won the election virtually without any support in the slave states of the South, where his name was not present on seven of the ballots. Lincoln won only two counties in the southern United States. Because of Lincoln's opposition to the extension of slavery, many governmental officials declared that they would secede if Lincoln were elected president. Indeed, shortly after Lincoln's election, seven Southern states organized and officially seceded from the United States.

Even worse, in February 1861, in Baltimore, Maryland, an attempt was made to assassinate then President-elect Lincoln. Tensions were so heated at Lincoln's inauguration that a large number of federal marshals were stationed on the ground and on top of buildings in Washington and were ordered to "shoot to kill" anyone who made a move to harm the president. Despite political pressure, Lincoln continued to proclaim his position against the extension of slavery. In his inaugural speech, Lincoln stated his support for the Corwin Amendment to the Constitution. The Corwin Amendment, which had already passed in both the Senate and the House, essentially protected slavery where it already existed but prevented the spread of the institution into U.S. territories. However, Lincoln was in complete opposition to the Crittenden Compromise, which allowed slavery to spread. Although there were a few final attempts to preserve the Union, the spring of 1861 sealed the country's fate. In April, shots were fired at Fort Sumter and in the following month, four more states joined the Confederacy, which brought the total number in the Confederate States of America to 11. The United States dissolved into civil war, and Lincoln was placed in the unenviable position of forcing the Confederacy back into the Union.

Since the Civil War was fought primarily over the issue of slavery, it was during this era that Lincoln's views on slavery and African Americans became most important. Soon after the war commenced, radical factions within the Republican Party began pressuring Lincoln to pass an emancipation act. However Lincoln was extremely reluctant to do so. His central concern, of course, was the preservation of the Union, and he was convinced that abolishing slavery would alienate the South permanently. More personally,

Lincoln was opposed to the idea of housing a large free black population in the United States. In fact, Lincoln was a supporter of the American Colonization Society, an organization dedicated to forcibly removing free blacks from the country, and proposed the establishment of a black colony where African Americans, once freed, could escape the racism and prejudices of the South. In 1861 and 1862, Lincoln attempted to arrange for African Americans to migrate to Panama and an island in the Caribbean to escape anticipated problems of remaining in the South. In 1862, Lincoln held a conference for African Americans in Washington where he tried to build support for the establishment of such colony. Lincoln continued to support a colonization policy until his death in 1865.

Lincoln was so concerned about the idea of black emancipation that, throughout the war, he refused to allow slaves to be freed even after Union forces prevailed in a particular region. In 1861, John C. Fremont, who was in charge of the Union army in Missouri, issued a proclamation that all slaves in the state were free. Lincoln was fearful that this would lead bordering slave states that were fighting with the North, such as Kansas, Kentucky, and West Virginia, to join the Confederacy. Lincoln modified the proclamation to free only slaves of Confederate soldiers or those who were directly aiding in the fighting. Fremont refused, and Lincoln relieved him of his command. Issues surrounding African Americans during the Civil War came up again in May 1862, when Gen. David Hunter enlisted black soldiers in the occupied district under his control. General Hunter tried to free all slaves owned by Confederates in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Lincoln forced Hunter to relieve all African American Union soldiers from duty and to nullify the attempts made in freeing the slaves in those regions. In so doing, Lincoln reiterated his policy of Union preservation, not the abolition of slavery.

In July 1862, Lincoln finally succumbed to political pressure and allowed black soldiers to enlist in the Union Army. But one month later, on August 22, 1862, Lincoln wrote a letter indicating that his primary objective throughout the entire struggle was to preserve the Union at all costs, and indicated that if slavery must exist in order for the Union to survive, he was willing to allow slavery to thrive. Yet as the war dragged on, the Radical Republicans, an abolitionist faction of the Republican Party, criticized Lincoln for moving too slowly in abolishing slavery. Finally,

on September 22, 1862, Lincoln unveiled the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect on January 1, 1863.

Not surprisingly, Lincoln has long been celebrated for passing the Emancipation Proclamation because most believed that this legislation legally brought an end to slavery. However, in reality, this was not the case. First, the Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves in Confederate states. This meant that slavery was allowed in the border states that had remained loyal to the Union. In addition, the proclamation contained passages that strongly endorsed and encouraged colonization and the forced removal of emancipated black people. Most importantly, however, was the fact that since Lincoln had no real authority over the Confederacy, the Emancipation Proclamation was essentially unenforceable in the South. Indeed, at the time of the proclamation only a few African Americans immediately benefited from the order.

Still, the proclamation had the desired effect. The news of freedom spread rapidly on plantations, and black people were inspired to flee from plantations in larger numbers. And as the Union forces advanced, many more African Americans were freed and given refuge behind Union lines. Moreover, Lincoln's efforts to defeat the rebellion in the South were greatly advantaged by the issuance of the Proclamation. Internationally, the British and other governments who were supporting the South primarily for financial gain were forced to abandon those policies, once Lincoln took a firm stand against slavery. In addition, as black people fled the plantations and joined the Union, the Confederacy essentially collapsed—both financially and militarily.

Yet even as the war came to a close, and the Emancipation Proclamation slowly took effect, Lincoln continued to reveal his conflicted views toward slavery and African Americans. As he reflected on the process of reuniting the North and South, Lincoln feared that if Reconstruction policy was too harsh on the Confederacy, the Confederate states would be permanently alienated, and the Union would not be preserved. Throughout the Civil War, he encouraged restoration of formal governments and popularly elected officials in an effort to try to return the South to normalcy. Many congressional leaders pressed for permanent marshal law and for former Confederate supporters to be executed, but Lincoln vetoed the Wade-Davis Bill, which would have imposed much harsher penalties on former Confederates. However Lincoln also supported the

notion of passing a 13th Amendment to the Constitution that would permanently prohibit slavery in all U.S. states and territories. This amendment, of course, did go into effect several months after Lincoln's death. Even so, Lincoln remained supportive of colonizing free blacks outside of the United States. Approximately one week prior to Lincoln's assassination, he asked Gen. Benjamin F. Butler to establish a program to relocate African Americans to Panama. Even though the program was abandoned after Lincoln was assassinated, it indicates that Lincoln had still not fully reconciled the notion of having a free and equal black population within U.S. borders.

On April 14, 1865, shortly after General Lee surrendered, Abraham and Mary Todd attended a play in Washington at Ford's Theater called *Our American Cousin*. Lincoln was occupying reserved seating in the balcony when John Wilkes Booth, a prominent actor, walked unnoticed from behind Lincoln and shot him. Booth was a strong Confederate sympathizer, and had plotted with several others to kill Lincoln for his views on slavery. Lincoln was immediately taken from the theater to a private home, where he lay in a coma for nine hours before finally dying the morning of April 15, 1865.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Colonization Society; Clay, Henry; Compromise of 1850; Emancipation Proclamation; Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854; Missouri Compromise; Union Army

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## Lord Dunmore

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John Murray, the 4th Earl of Dunmore (1732–1809), was the last royal governor of the Virginia Colony. History remembers Murray best for “Dunmore’s Proclamation,” the first Emancipation Proclamation.

Lord Dunmore first came to Virginia from a New York governorship in December 1771 as successor to the late Governor Botetourt. Dunmore negotiated the peace with the Shawnee in Dunmore’s War in 1774, and he was in office at the beginning of the American Revolution.

On November 7, 1775, Dunmore issued an edict known as Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation. It offered freedom to black servants or slaves who were willing to take up arms against the American rebels. By 1775, the British were losing the war, and in hopes of regaining the advantage, Dunmore issued his proclamation. Several enslaved Williamsburg men anticipated him by seven months. In April 1775, a small number of enslaved men visited Dunmore’s Palace and volunteered to serve under the British banner. He turned them away.

Although on the surface, this proclamation appeared magnanimous, there was one essential problem. Murray offered to free only the enslaved of Patriots, his enemy. He did not free his own slaves or those of his fellow Loyalists. Even the few who qualified for Murray’s offer had to meet certain provisions. The slaves had to (1) escape their owners and guards, (2) successfully navigate the perils of the roads (potholes, pirates, and slave patrols) leading to the harbor, and once they reached the water, (3) negotiate a ride to make it to the ship *William* in the Norfolk harbor. Once there, the recruits had to state and demonstrate firearms skills. Only then did the slaves meet the terms and conditions Dunmore set forth for their emancipation under his proclamation.

Still, Dunmore’s Proclamation affected the Patriot cause, and they reacted. In less than a month, on December 4, 1775, the Patriots prepared to fight back. The Committee of Safety doubled slave patrols on both sides of the Chesapeake Bay. Owners lectured their slaves against the evils of Dunmore, and the Committee of Safety warned owners verbally and in print to watch their slaves, their neighbors, and their neighbors’ slaves closely.

The Ethiopian Regiment, as Dunmore’s black troops called themselves, totaled 600 at its height. The men

distinguished themselves by wearing a sash across their chests inscribed with the phrase “Liberty to Slaves.” Dunmore’s black regiment served in at least two minor skirmishes and only one major battle. The skirmishes were at Kemp’s Landing on the Elizabeth River in mid-November and a bombardment of Hampton in late November 1775. On December 9, 1775, they fought at the “Battle of Great Bridge” on the Elizabeth River (below Norfolk) and lost badly. Sixty-one died, including three officers, in just 25 minutes of fighting. That day, the Ethiopian Regiment fortified the north end of the bridge. On the opposite side were 700 Patriots, Col. William Woodford’s 2nd Virginia Regiment, which had occupied the south end of the bridge since December 1. Great Bridge was the major land entry point into the city of Norfolk. History records the names of at least three of the combatants at Great Bridge. James Anderson and Casar were former slaves among the injured in Dunmore’s Ethiopian Regiment. William Flora, of Woodford’s Regiment, was the last to leave his post holding the bridge, under a hail of gunfire.

As a result, by June 8, 1776, Dunmore feared for his life, left his Williamsburg residence for good, and took refuge on board the man-of-war *Fowey* at Yorktown. Dunmore left his slaves behind. Officials auctioned them off and sent his Lordship’s slaves to work in the lead mines. With his troops suffering more from disease (smallpox) than from combat casualties, Dunmore admitted defeat in June 1776 and left the Chesapeake. He moved temporarily to Tucker’s Mill near Portsmouth and finally to Gwynn’s Island near the Rappahannock. Along the way, approximately 300 escaped slaves joined Dunmore’s forces. Among them were several enslaved persons owned by Col. Landon Carter of Sabine Hall Plantation, Richmond County, Virginia: Billy, Joe, Moses, John, Lancaster Sam, Manuel, Panticove, Peter, and Postillion. Carter reported them missing on June 26, 1776, and said they went to Dunmore. After General Cornwallis’s surrender at Yorktown, Dunmore’s healthiest surviving troops accompanied him to New York to fight again. The injured and infirmed traveled with other Loyalists to Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. From 1787 to 1796, Dunmore was governor of the Bahamas, where he served the thousands of black Loyalists sent there after the war.

Beginning as a tactic of war, it appears that in the end, Dunmore’s Proclamation did indeed lead him to become perhaps not the “Great Liberator,” but at least someone

who did his best to liberate enslaved African Americans. So respected was Dunmore among African Americans that the *New York Journal* reported at least one African American woman there named her child for him. The newspaper further reported that an African American man in Philadelphia harassed whites in the streets with threats of the coming of Dunmore and his black regiment turning the tide of the war. Whether or not such reports are true, and despite the fact that his proclamation was one-sided, offering freedom only to the enslaved of his enemy, he became “the African Hero,” and the name Dunmore carried hope for a free and equal future in the slave quarters and homes of free African Americans in the new America.

See also: American Revolution; Fugitive Slaves; Slave Resistance

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## Louisiana Purchase

When President Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, America doubled its size; 13 present-day states, in whole or in part, were created from the new territory. The Louisiana Territory was divided into two territories after it was acquired. Land north of the 33rd parallel was designated “Territory of Louisiana,” and the southern section of land, less the West Florida Territory, was called the Territory of Orleans.

In 1804, the U.S. Congress restricted slaves coming into the Louisiana Territory to those who were the property of actual settlers. The slave revolt in St. Domingue (now Haiti), which resulted in the Haitian Revolution, brought to New Orleans a wave of more than 10,000 French-speaking black refugees. Two years later, slave revolts in a parish south of New Orleans caused the U.S. government to send troops to stop the slaves’ advances on New Orleans. The following year, 1812, Louisiana was admitted into the Union, and Congress organized the Missouri Territory. Slavery

was legal in the Missouri Territory, and about 10,000 slaves lived in the territory by 1818 when the territory sought statehood. Missouri’s admission as a state would have upset the balance between slave and free states. In order to resolve the problem, Congressman James Tallmadge of New York introduced an amendment to admit the state but to prohibit the bringing of any more slaves into the state and to grant freedom to the children of slaves born in the state after its admission. The Tallmadge amendment passed the House but not the Senate. When Maine applied for statehood during the next session of Congress, the Missouri Compromise was passed. Maine was admitted as a free state, and the compromise authorized Missouri to write a constitution and decide for itself whether slavery would be permitted in the state. The Missouri Compromise also prohibited slavery in all areas north of the southern boundary of Missouri, with the exception of the state of Missouri. Congress fashioned a second compromise to prohibit Missouri’s legislature from denying black citizens their constitutional rights. Missouri’s new constitution permitted slavery within the state and prohibited free blacks from entering the state. Missouri was admitted as a slave state in 1821.

The Missouri Compromise was an attempt to settle the debate over slavery in the Louisiana Territory. The act, passed in 1820, temporarily maintained the balance between free and slave states, but the issue arose again when Kansas and Nebraska were seeking territorial status. Both areas had been controlled by the Missouri Compromise, but Sen. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act in Congress to permit popular sovereignty in both Kansas and Nebraska. Southern Congressmen supported the bill, but antislavery proponents bitterly opposed it. When President Franklin Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act into law, slavery became possible in both territories, and the issue over the expansion of slavery once again became a major issue. The unanswered question regarding slavery in the territory of the Louisiana Purchase hastened the onset of the Civil War.

See also: Haitian Revolution; Jefferson, Thomas; Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Missouri Compromise

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## Louverture, Toussaint

Toussaint Louverture (1743?–1803) was a former slave and planter who played a leading role in the Haitian slave revolt, fought in the armies of Spain and France, became governor of Saint-Domingue (Haiti), and then died in exile in France.

Toussaint Louverture was the son of Gaou-Guinou, the son of an African chief of the Arrada (Allada) nation in present-day Benin who was captured in combat and sold in French Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti). According

to the tradition, Louverture was born near Cap François (present-day Cap Haïtien or Cap) on May 20, 1743, but archival sources cite various years, and his first name suggests that he was born on All Saints Day (November 1). He was first known as Toussaint Bréda, after the plantation where he worked. The nickname Louverture (or L'Ouverture) only appeared in the 1790s. Meaning “an opening” in French, it came, according to various sources, from the gap in his front teeth, his ability to create an opening through enemy lines, or his association with the Vaudou *lwa* (spirit) Papa Legba.

A slave on a plantation owned by the Comte de Noé, Louverture benefited from unusually favorable working conditions. When most other slaves in the northern plain of Cap were assigned arduous field duties on sugarcane plantations, he was put in charge of the plantation's cattle and horses and served as veterinarian and coachman. Louverture also learned how to read, though his handwriting and spelling remained hesitant throughout his adult life. He particularly revered the Abbé Raynal, whose history of French colonization in the West Indies denounced the treatment of slaves and predicted that a “black Spartacus”



*Toussaint Louverture rose from enslavement to the military and political leadership of the Haitian struggle for independence within the French Revolution. (The British Library)*

would one day lead a major slave revolt. Louverture eventually became convinced that he was the black Spartacus prophesied by Raynal.

Louverture married another slave called Suzanne, adopted her mixed-blood son Placide, and fathered two other sons of his own, Isaac and Saint-Jean. The oral tradition cites various other daughters and illegitimate children, but sources on this issue are weak. Louverture's extended family included various individuals destined to play a leading role in the Haitian Revolution, including his brothers Paul and Pierre Louverture and his nephews Moïse and Charles Belair.

Louverture was unusually close to the manager of his plantation, Bayon de Libertat, who eventually freed him prior to 1776. Thereafter, Louverture established himself as a planter and bought slaves of his own. At the time of the Haitian Revolution, many knew that he had been freed prior to the slave revolt, making him an *ancien libre* (as opposed to the *nouveaux libres* who were freed during the

revolution). His slave-owning past, however, was not uncovered until the 1970s.

Aside from the Makandal poison conspiracy (1758), Saint-Domingue's slaves remained relatively subservient until the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 upset the colony's delicate racial and social balance. After 1789, some conservative whites prepared to break away from France so that they could distance themselves from its revolutionary agenda and escape its trade restrictions. Free people of color, such as the Mulattoes Jean-Baptiste Chavannes and Vincent Ogé, lobbied the French National Assembly for an end to the racial discrimination prevalent in Saint-Domingue and led a short-lived revolt in 1790. In August 1791, the slaves themselves, who represented 90 percent of the colony's population, revolted throughout the northern plain of Cap.

Louverture lived in the area directly affected by the slave uprising, but his role during the initial uprising remains unclear. Some scholars think that he played no role in the initial uprising (which was masterminded by the Vaudou priest Boukman) and joined the revolt only after he had seen his former master Bayon de Libertat to safety. Others think that Louverture participated in the uprising from the beginning but hid his own involvement for fear that the revolt might fail. A similar theory holds that he was following orders from Governor Philibert de Blanchelande, who allegedly encouraged the slaves to revolt in order to scare the French government into abandoning its revolutionary agenda.

Louverture had for sure joined the rebellion by late 1791, when he proposed colonial authorities bring the revolt to an end in exchange for limited concessions. Following Boukman's death, Louverture served under the rebel leaders Jean-François Papillon and Georges Biassou, first as doctor, then as secretary, and then as aide-de-camp. The planters' intransigence doomed Louverture's attempt at negotiation and forced the rebels to continue fighting. In July 1792, they announced that their demands now included general emancipation for all of Saint-Domingue's slaves (Louverture did not personally sign this letter, but he may have used his teenage nephew Charles Belair as a stand-in).

In 1793, the French Revolution's more radical turn, including the execution of Louis XVI, led to a general European war between France and conservative monarchies such as England and Spain. These nations saw the war as an



opportunity to attack Saint-Domingue, which had become the leading world exporter of sugar and coffee and France's most valuable colony in the 1780s. English troops seized many ports along the western coast, including the colonial capital of Port-au-Prince, while Spain attacked from the neighboring colony of Santo Domingo in the East.

Louverture, along with his superiors Jean-François and Biassou, enlisted in the Spanish army after the declaration of war. Spain, like France and England, was a slave-owning power, but they cited their loyalty to the Bourbon dynasty to explain their service in Spanish ranks. Jean-François and Biassou led units of Spanish auxiliaries for the rest of their careers. Louverture, however, abandoned Spanish ranks in May or June 1794 and defected to the French army. His motives for doing so remain mysterious. He may have reacted to the radical shifts in France's colonial policy, including the decision by French commissioner Léger-Félicité Sonthonax to abolish slavery in Saint-Domingue (August 1793) and the decree of the French Convention that extended emancipation to most French colonies (February 1794). He also seems to have encountered serious difficulties in his relationship with his black and Spanish superiors.

After joining the French army, Louverture played a leading role fighting the British occupation troops in Saint-Domingue's north and west and the Spanish invasion in the east. Spain sued for peace by 1795; the British evacuated their last troops in 1798. Louverture also helped diffuse a revolt by the mulatto Jean-Louis Villatte in March 1796. Following the Villatte affair, the French general Etienne Laveaux promoted Louverture to division general. Louverture also arranged for his two sons, Placide and Isaac, to be sent to France, where they studied at the Institut des Colonies under the Abbé Coisson. A metropolitan education had been a sign of social success in prerevolutionary Saint-Domingue, but it also left Louverture vulnerable should France decide to retaliate against him by holding his sons hostage.

Following Laveaux's own departure for France, Louverture maneuvered to force subsequent French commissioners, including Sonthonax and Gabriel d'Hédouville, to leave the island. A cautious, occasionally duplicitous leader, Louverture did not overtly oppose France's envoys. Instead, he had rivals appointed as deputies to the French parliament. He also engineered "spontaneous" popular demonstrations and then encouraged envoys to sail away for their own safety. The ploy, which he used repeatedly, allowed

him to eliminate obstacles to his rule while officially remaining loyal to France. By late 1798, he was the dominant military and political figure in western and northern Saint-Domingue (the mulatto general André Rigaud controlled the southern region; various maroon bands were active in the mountainous interior; and eastern Hispaniola remained a Spanish colony even though it had been ceded to France by the 1795 Treaty of Basel).

During his tenure as governor of Saint-Domingue, Louverture's primary concern was to revive the plantation economy that had underpinned the colony's immense wealth. As a former slave, he was genuinely opposed to the restoration of slavery, which at any rate would have been impossible to impose on the black majority. But as a former planter, he also noted that the abolition of slavery had led to a precipitous drop in the exports of coffee and particularly sugar. Continued exports were vital if Louverture wished to obtain revenue for his regime, finance his army, and generally bring the Saint-Domingue economy back to its former splendor. Sugar cultivation was reliant on heavy capital investments and, as such, could flourish only on large estates. Former slaves, however, associated plantation labor with slavery and dreamed of carving out the large estates into small plots and living off small-scale subsistence agriculture.

To solve this dilemma, earlier French agents such as Sonthonax and Hédouville, as well as governors of other French colonies, such as Guadeloupe's Victor Hugues, invented an intermediate laborer status dubbed *cultivateur*. Cultivators were not slaves, could not be whipped, and were paid a portion of the crop. They were not, however, free to leave the plantations and were locked into obligatory, long-term contracts to ensure that plantations had access to a stable labor pool. Eager to revive production, Louverture preserved the cultivator system, even instituting lifelong contracts and reducing the laborers' salary from one-third to one-fourth of the crop. The system was brutally enforced by Louverture's subordinate, Gen. Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and led to popular dissatisfaction with Louverture's rule. In October 1801, Louverture's own nephew Moyse revolted to protest labor conditions, only to be executed on Louverture's orders.

Louverture also incited some white planters to return from exile because he needed their expertise and capital to revive sugar plantations. He made sure, however, that many plantations were leased out to fellow officers of color and

that white planters never regained the prominent social status they had once occupied. Louverture also hired many whites as secretaries, confessors, diplomats, legists, and administrators. The army, on the other hand, was dominated by officers and soldiers of color.

In 1798, tensions between France and the United States led to an undeclared Quasi-War. The hostilities impacted Louverture directly because French privateers soon began to seize U.S. merchants along the coast of Saint-Domingue, and the U.S. Congress retaliated by imposing an embargo on all trade to France and its colonies. Saint-Domingue, a major exporter of tropical crops and importer of foodstuffs, had always been heavily reliant on foreign trade. When U.S. merchants stopped visiting Saint-Domingue's ports, just as French merchants themselves were absent because of the naval war with England and the United States, Louverture feared that trade disruptions would lead to financial ruin and starvation. In November 1798, Louverture thus wrote to U.S. president John Adams and offered to halt all French privateering out of Saint-Domingue in exchange for a lifting of the U.S. embargo. A convention along these lines was signed in April 1799, and trade resumed the following summer, even as France and the United States continued the Quasi War (which did not end until the Treaty of Mortefontaine in September 1800).

England, which had been at war with France continuously since 1793, represented another threat to Saint-Domingue's revival. In 1798, Louverture negotiated with Brig.-Gen. Thomas Maitland to obtain the departure of the last British troops from Port-au-Prince and Môle St. Nicolas. A year later, he signed another convention with Maitland under which he promised not to attack British colonies, such as Jamaica, in exchange for British protection of his commerce. Louverture subsequently canceled a planned invasion of Jamaica and sent diplomatic envoys to Jamaica and England.

Louverture's closeness to the British served as the *casus belli* for the conflict that erupted in the summer of 1799 with Louverture's southern rival Rigaud. Rigaud accused Louverture of disloyalty for dealing with the English enemy; of plotting to declare independence; and of planning to restore slavery. The war was also caused by Rigaud and Louverture's competing ambitions and racial enmity between mulattoes and blacks. Known as the War of the South (or War of the Knives), the brutal conflict lasted until July 1800, devastating the south in the process. Louverture's army was

on the defensive at first and then captured the strategic port of Jacmel and overwhelmed Rigaud's forces.

Following his victory against Rigaud, Louverture pressured the French agent Philippe Roume to allow him to take over Santo Domingo, which had been ceded to France in 1795 but remained under Spanish rule. Officially, Louverture explained that the invasion would put an end to Spanish kidnapping of black citizens of Saint-Domingue. He most likely also hoped to deny France a landing spot in Santo Domingo if it ever decided to send an expedition to remove Louverture from power. Pressured by Louverture, Roume authorized the takeover and then rescinded his order. Louverture imprisoned Roume and eventually exiled him to the United States; in the meantime, he sent his army to take Santo Domingo by force (January 1801).

Now in control of all of Hispaniola, Louverture summoned 10 delegates to draft a constitution for the colony. Presented to the public in July 1801, the constitution made Louverture governor general for life with the power to appoint his successor. Louverture informed France of the constitution only after it had been promulgated. Various observers concluded that the bold document was a preliminary to an outright declaration of independence, but Louverture, probably anxious to maintain some tenuous link to the only European power that had abolished slavery, continued to emphasize his loyalty to the metropolis.

After he took over in a 1799 coup d'état, First Consul Napoléon Bonaparte hesitated on the proper policy to adopt toward Louverture. He initially considered keeping Louverture as an ally, whose troops could be used for offensive operations against the English. In 1801, however, after hearing of the invasion of Santo Domingo, Roume's imprisonment, and Louverture's constitution, Bonaparte prepared a vast expedition intended to remove Louverture from power. Many suspected that Bonaparte also intended to restore slavery in Saint-Domingue (as he did in Guadeloupe and other French colonies), but Bonaparte insisted that he remained committed to emancipation in Saint-Domingue's case.

The London peace protocols (October 1801), which began a short period of peace with England, allowed a massive French fleet to cross the Atlantic. The initial expedition carried 20,000 troops; a total of 43,000 troops, in addition to sailors, left for Saint-Domingue in 1801–1803. They were led by Bonaparte's brother-in-law, Gen. Victoire Emmanuel Leclerc. When Leclerc landed in Cap in February 1802,

he insisted that he had come merely to reinforce Louverture's army, not restore slavery, while acting in an aggressive manner. Louverture replied that he had always been loyal to France, while ordering his army to burn various cities, including Cap, to the ground. Leclerc attempted desultory negotiations by sending Louverture's sons (who had traveled with the expedition) in an attempt to mollify their father, but all-out fighting soon began as a result of both sides' intransigence.

The campaign lasted throughout the spring of 1802. Per Louverture's orders, his subordinates, such as Dessalines, burned towns, massacred white planters, and retreated to the island's mountainous interior to wage a guerilla war. Louverture himself fought a delaying action at Ravine-à-Couleuvres, while Dessalines forced the bulk of the French army into a costly siege at Crête-à-Pierrot. By May 1802, Leclerc's forces were ravaged by the costly campaign. Louverture, meanwhile, was abandoned by many of his own generals, including his brother Paul and the commander of Cap, Henri Christophe. Exhausted, both sides agreed to a ceasefire, under which Louverture surrendered his command but was allowed to retire on his plantation at Ennery.

Dessalines, who harbored ambitions for the overall command of the black army, privately informed Leclerc that Louverture was planning to renew the fighting as soon as yellow fever had decimated French ranks. Leclerc, who was under orders from Bonaparte to deport Saint-Domingue's leading officers of color, arranged to capture Louverture by surprise. Louverture and his family were put on the frigate *Créole*, then the ship-of-the-line *Héros*, and sent to France in June 1802. Before leaving, Louverture famously said that exiling him might cut the "tree of liberty" but that new saplings would soon spring from its roots. The rebellion indeed continued, becoming general by the fall of 1802 as black troops became convinced that the French had come to exterminate the black population or re-enslave it. The rebellion eventually succeeded and led to Haiti's independence in 1804.

Louverture's family was separated when they arrived in France's main military port on the Atlantic, Brest. Louverture's stepson Placide, who had fought with him in the spring 1802 campaign, was held captive in Belle Île. His wife Suzanne and sons Isaac and St. Jean were sent to Bayonne and then Agen. Louverture, accompanied by his servant

Mars Plaisir, was transported to the prison of Fort de Joux in the Jura mountains. While in captivity, Louverture repeatedly appealed to Bonaparte to complain of Leclerc's behavior and insist of his loyalty to the First Consul and to France. Bonaparte never personally replied, but he sent an aide-de-camp to obtain the location of Louverture's alleged treasure. When Louverture denied the existence of such a treasure, Bonaparte tightened the conditions of Louverture's detention. Alone, mistreated, and bitterly cold, the aging Louverture died in his cell in April 1803. Rumors spread that he had been poisoned on Bonaparte's orders, but the autopsy report indicates that Louverture died of pneumonia.

Louverture remained as controversial in death as he had been in life. Nineteenth-century abolitionists admired him as a former slave who had risen from humble circumstances to lead a colony. His enemies recognized his intelligence but also accused him of duplicity and disloyalty to France. Strangely, Haitians initially held him in low esteem because, contrary to his successor Dessalines, he had never dared to declare outright independence or kill all whites. Louverture's image improved in the 20th century, and Haitians now regard him as one of their revolutionary heroes, on par with Dessalines. A plaque honoring Louverture now stands in the French Pantheon, where outstanding French historical characters are buried (Louverture's actual body, dumped in the prison's cemetery, was lost in a subsequent renovation of the Fort de Joux).

*See also:* Destination, Haiti; Haitian Revolution; Slave Resistance

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## Manumission

Manumission is the legal act of freeing one's slaves. Like many other aspects of slavery, laws regarding manumission varied across time and place, but as slavery became institutionalized during the colonial era, legislatures codified the practice of manumission. In contrast to manumission practices in British North America, and later the United States, France and Spain had very liberal manumission laws in their empires; the Catholic Church encouraged manumission, and laws were enacted that gave every slave the right to purchase his or her freedom at an established and fair price. In the United States, however, a general fear of a free black population commingling with slaves and possibly agitating for rebellion led many legislatures to make manumission difficult for the slaveholder and more restrictive for any manumitted slaves. After 1705 in Virginia, for example, slaveholders could not manumit without approval of the governor or the council, and freed slaves were required to leave the colony unless the courts granted a stay.

During the American Revolution, manumission underwent a significant change. Many slaveholders, particularly those in Virginia, had a difficult time justifying slavery in light of the ideals for which the war was fought. As Southern states wrote their first constitutions, they liberalized laws regarding manumission. This led to a doubling of the free black population in the South over the next two decades. Only a small fraction, however, followed George Washington's example of providing a financial legacy for their manumitted slaves. Over the course of the war, the British manumitted approximately 14,000 slaves for supporting the Loyalist cause. Americans manumitted hundreds more for meritorious services rendered during the Revolution. In the North, manumissions increased as slavery was abolished through gradual emancipation.

By 1810, however, the rate of manumission in the south steeply declined, and it was practiced mainly only in the urban areas and in the border states. The public attitude changed because of the Haitian Revolution and Gabriel Prosser's revolt in Virginia in 1800. Moreover, slavery became viewed less as a necessary evil in the mind of Southerners and more as a positive good. With manumission no longer socially acceptable, slaveholders who wished to manumit their slaves outright were viewed by their white

neighbors as dangerous subversives tearing apart the very fabric of society.

In response to changed attitudes after 1810, states enacted burdensome regulations that made it harder for slaveholders to manumit their slaves. Generally, the Upper South states required slaveholders to gain the permission of the courts in order to free their slaves. In the Deep South, the slaveholders needed authorization from the state legislature. All states had age requirements that did not allow the young and strong or the old and feeble to receive manumission. Some states made it more difficult to free slaves through a will, which was a common form of manumission. In addition, creditors were allowed to consider slaves an asset of the estate, and dozens of manumitted slaves were re-enslaved under this provision. States retained the right to manumit slaves for meritorious conduct. In the antebellum period, some slaves were manumitted for informing authorities of impending revolts.

Despite these restrictions, masters continued to manumit slaves. Slave owners who owned one or two slaves, be they yeoman farmers or artisans, manumitted their slaves in times of economic duress. Artisans in Baltimore employed a form of slavery for a set number of years and manumitted the slave at the end of that term. The cumbersome and costly process of legal manumission led many slaveholders to free their slaves outside the law. There was little the authorities could do to someone who simply sent his slave north or refused to exercise any control over the enslaved.

Most slaveholders required some sort of compensation for manumission. Because slaveholders had traditionally sold slaves to raise cash, this was more palatable to Southern public opinion. This practice led to abuses. It was not uncommon for slaveholders to take money and not follow through on the promise to free a slave or to ask for more money after the initial cost was met. Slave purchases were often made by relatives who wanted to free their spouse. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, manumission societies, run mainly by Quakers in the South, purchased slaves and either manumitted them outright or kept them nominally as bondsmen but compensated them for their labor. Literate slaves tried to raise money to purchase their spouses by appealing to Northern antislavery publications. Such journals as the *New York Journal of Commerce* conducted fund-raising campaigns to purchase specific slaves with the purpose of manumitting them.

Manumitted slaves were required to leave the state unless they received an exemption from either the courts or the legislature. Although some manumitted slaves immigrated to Liberia, according to the wishes of their former masters, most either mixed into the existing free black populations in the South or, more likely, migrated north to cities such as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wherever they went, they faced discrimination, poverty, and unemployment. *See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Gradual Emancipation

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## Maroon Societies

Maroons societies were independent black communities established by fugitive slaves throughout the Americas in an effort to escape bondage and create a viable, permanent free society. From the establishment of the first Spanish colonies in the Caribbean up to the abolition of slavery in the 19th century, escaped Africans set up autonomous settlements and became a major force of rebellion and mass resistance to colonial authorities. Maroon societies existed in the Caribbean and in North, South, and Central America, interacting with all the major colonial powers (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Dutch.) Though most suffered persecution at the hands of slave owners and colonists, a number were able to negotiate treaties granting them legitimacy and permanent freedom. Despite difficulties brought on by modernization and political repression, maroon communities survive to the present day in every part of the hemisphere. Maroon societies, therefore, represent not only one of the earliest forms of resistance to colonial power but also the first self-ruling African communities in the New World.

The term “maroon” comes from the Spanish *cimarrón* and is believed to be of indigenous Caribbean origin. The

French verb *maroonage* means to take flight or become a fugitive; the phenomenon of *petite maroonage*, noted by Gabriel Debien, refers to cases of individual or temporary flight and is distinguished from *grand maroonage*, the formation of permanent fugitive slave communities. Petit maroonage includes slaves who briefly absconded to escape punishment and cases such as runaways who blended into the black populations of cities, as well as “maritime maroons” who became sailors and pirates. However, it was through grand maroonage that escaped slaves created the defiant, self-governing communities known as maroon societies. In each colonial realm, local nomenclature described these new social entities: Spanish *palenques* and *cumbes*; Portuguese *quilombos*, *mocambos*, *cumbes*, and *mambises*; English *maroons* and *runaways*; French *maroonage*; and Dutch *bosnegers*, or bush negroes.

The earliest maroon societies appeared in Spanish Santo Domingo. Beginning in the early 1500s, escaped Africans journeyed to the hilly interior and north coast of modern-day Dominican Republic, in many cases living among native peoples. Because the settlers of Santo Domingo relied largely on Indian slave labor, maroonage initially referred to escaped Indians as well as Africans. Over the course of the 16th century, maroonage spread to the Spanish mainland and was increasingly associated with African fugitives.

With Europeans concentrated in urban zones and plantations, an important factor for the survival of escaped slaves was their interaction with native populations. Maroons collaborated with, fought against, and blended with native peoples as they created their own settlements. In the Esmeraldas region of Ecuador, initial conflict between Africans and Natives soon gave way to political alliances. The intermarriage of Africans and Natives created a new ethnic group called *mulattoes* or *zambos*. In some parts of Spanish America, especially Panama and Florida, maroons also played key roles in European colonial rivalries. Panamanian maroons assisted Francis Drake’s attempt to hijack the Spanish silver convoy in 1573 as it traveled across the isthmus bound for Spain. In the Florida community of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, near St. Augustine, maroons allied with the Spanish crown successfully defended the settlement from British and Native attacks. These maroons were granted their freedom in return for military service, the first group of Africans to negotiate emancipation in what is now the United States.

By the 17th century, the British, French, and Dutch had established colonies with a thriving mercantile economy in sugar, tobacco, cotton, and rice. The booming Atlantic slave trade led to a concurrent rise in maroon settlements. In North America, escaped slaves settled land outside of colonial control such as the western mountains and the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and the Carolinas. Despite the ephemeral nature of these settlements, maroonage in the mainland British colonies continued up to the 1860s.

The 1600s also saw the formation of what would become the largest known maroon settlement in the Americas: the Quilombo de Palmares in the province of Pernambuco, Brazil. Celebrated today as the first African Republic of the New World, Palmares was a federation of closely aligned communities called *mocambos*, operating under a supreme ruler called the Ganga-Zumba. With population estimates ranging anywhere from 2,000 to 30,000, Palmares supported a flourishing farming and trading economy. The maroons also staged frequent raids on nearby colonial settlements. After numerous attempts at suppression, the Portuguese annihilated the community in 1694.

From the plantations of the Dutch colony of Suriname, large-scale maroonage led to the establishment of autonomous communities in the colony's interior by people such as the Saramaka, Ndjuka, Matawai, and Boni. Fierce battles with colonial militias in the 18th century resulted in treaties granting the Ndjuka and Saramaka independence and tribute payments. In return, they were expected to return newly escaped slaves. Nonetheless, by the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Dutch were again at war with the Aluku, or Boni, maroons. The survival of the Suriname maroons and those of neighboring French Guiana has provided an invaluable window to the rich culture and history of maroon societies, a synthesis of foundational African practices interwoven with Native and European elements.

Integral communities also survive in Jamaica, where maroons emerged during Spanish occupation of the island. From 1655 to the mid-18th century, the Jamaica maroons fought fiercely to maintain their freedom against British forces, finally winning recognition from the British Crown under the condition that they were to end their aggressive raids, return new runaways, and assist British forces in subduing slave revolts. Although these terms guaranteed maroon autonomy, they drove a fatal wedge between these free blacks and plantation slaves. Some of the best-known maroon communities, Trelawny town, Nanny town, and

Clarendon, and heroes such as Cudjoe, Cuffee, and Nanny, emerged from the Jamaican experience.

Caught between their desire to defend their independence and their obligations to colonial authorities, maroons were often forced into strained and even belligerent relations with society. Those maroons who did enter in direct conflict with colonial armies risked the total dissolution of their communities and a return to enslavement. After battling with British authorities at the end of the 18th century, the Trelawny town maroons found themselves exiled to Nova Scotia and then to Sierra Leone. Another case resulting from violence between maroons and British settlers led to the forced migration of the Black Caribs or Garifuna people from the island of St. Vincent in the 1790s. After suffering mistreatment and decimation on the islands of Baliceau and Roatán, they were brought to Honduras under protection of the Spanish Crown. From there, they migrated along the Central American coast. Today numerous Garifuna communities can be found from modern-day Belize to the northern coast of Nicaragua.

Maroon societies also exerted widespread influence in colonial North America. French, and later Spanish, New Orleans was home to many maroon groups, especially in the tidal wetlands area of the Gulf coast. In Spanish Florida, African slaves fleeing the British colonies settled among communities of Red Creek Indians from Alabama, leading to the creation of the Seminole people, whose name is another derivation of *cimarrón*. The Seminoles fought two long wars against the U.S. Army. The first war, from 1816 to 1818, ended in an uneasy peace. However, white settlers continued to covet Native land in Florida, and slave owners remained eager to recover runaways. The policy of Indian removal brought on a second war that saw the forced migration of Seminoles to the Oklahoma territory in 1842. Eventually one group of Seminoles left in search of better conditions in Mexico, while the other remained in Oklahoma. Both communities still exist today.

The social formation of maroon communities has followed many patterns. Native people often played a major role, as in the case of 16th-century Santo Domingo, Esmeraldas on the Ecuadorian coast, and the union of Caribs and Africans in Saint Vincent. With about two African males arriving in the Americas for every female, maroon men sought to increase the number of women in their communities by intermarrying with native women and raiding villages and plantations. Though leadership followed a

patriarchal structure, women exercised critical roles in the many areas needed for survival: military defense and raiding, farming, hunting, and relations with colonial settlers and authorities.

Maroon societies generally formed either in remote areas, far enough from colonial settlements to render them less susceptible to attack, or in inhospitable areas near colonial settlements such as swamps, hill country, and mangrove forests. Although the latter locations facilitated raiding and commerce, protecting the community from attack remained of paramount importance. Nestled within a combination of natural barriers and man-made palisades or spiked moats, maroon communities were designed to give members time to escape in case of military assault. Maroons relied on guerrilla tactics and surprise raids to achieve their military ends. They also counted on intelligence and material support from plantation slaves. In response, authorities mounted numerous offensives and hired agents to recapture runaways. In the United States, these were the “slave patrols”; in Brazil, they were *capitões-do-mato*; in Spanish America, they were the *santa hermandad*.

Early maroon societies were largely composed of first-generation enslaved Africans. It is thought that those born in the Americas, often called Creoles, had less incentive to escape the plantation system to which they had been acclimated from childhood. After the 18th century, however, larger numbers of American-born slaves fled as well. Maroon societies have played an important role in the retention of African culture. Scholars believe Palmares was based on a Central African pattern of social formation called the *ki-lombo* used among the Imbangala warriors to create new bands based on capture and raiding. African linguistic forms have survived in various maroon cultures, especially the Saramaka maroons of Surinam, who developed a language combining African, Native, and Dutch elements. Saramaka altars and music also illustrate the direct African lineage of maroon art and aesthetics.

The plight of maroon societies continued after independence. Today, major communities of maroon descent continue to live in Oklahoma, Surinam, Jamaica, Honduras, and Colombia. However, maroons have seen the erosion of their lifestyle and communities. Political pressures from national governments unwilling to recognize colonial treaties, along with the cultural and social changes wrought by modernization, have led to the diminishment of maroon landholdings and the weakening of their cohesion as a people.

At the same time, maroons have become an ever more important symbol for people of African descent in the Americas. In Brazil, annual celebrations of the great king Zumbi of Palmares have acquired national significance as a day of black consciousness. Nanny Day is celebrated in Jamaica, and maroon such as like Alonso de Illescas in Ecuador are recognized as symbols of black independence, autonomy, and ongoing resistance.

*See also:* Dismal Swamp Maroons; Fugitive Slaves; Slave Resistance

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## Massachusetts 54th Regiment

The 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, one of the first regiments of African American soldiers to be organized during the Civil War, was in many respects the most important. Governor John Albion Andrew of Massachusetts, an ardent abolitionist, was one of the first public figures to understand the importance of the participation of black soldiers in the war against the Confederacy, to the Union cause and to the future of black Americans. Almost immediately after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, he asked Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, on January 26, 1863, for authorization to recruit for the 54th. Andrew wanted the regiment, the first to be recruited in the North and the fourth overall after the Louisiana Native Guards (September 1862), the First Kansas Colored Volunteers

(September 1862), and the First South Carolina Infantry (October 1862), to be a model for future black units, one that would through its performance shape perceptions of black Americans throughout the world.

Within days, he selected Captain Robert Gould Shaw, then a captain in the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, to be its colonel and commander. The son of Francis G. Shaw, a merchant and prominent abolitionist, Shaw was only 25 years old and a veteran of combat at Cedar Mountain and Antietam. He was fond of the 2nd Massachusetts and confident of promotion in it. Command of the 54th came with significant risks, of failure, isolation, and ridicule, but he accepted the challenge. He turned out to be a brilliant choice.

Massachusetts had few free black men of military age, so recruitment extended as far west as Chicago. George L. Stearns, a supporter of John Brown in Kansas during the late 1850s, led the recruitment drive as agent of the committee appointed by Andrew to superintend the process. Supporters included the most influential black abolitionists: Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Charles L. Remond, John S. Rock, Henry Highland Garnet, and William C. Nell. Douglass's sons, Charles and Lewis, were among the first to enlist from New York. Volunteer soldiers came to the Readville, Massachusetts, camp in the spring of 1863 from 10 of the Union states, as well as from North Carolina, Louisiana, and even Canada, believing that the future of all African Americans would be determined by the war and their contributions to it. The nation had focused its attention on them, and they knew that if they proved themselves on the battlefield, they could help bring about the end of slavery and racial injustice. Soon they were so many that later arrivals became the nucleus of another regiment, the 55th.

The 54th's active service began on May 28, 1863, when the regiment set sail for duty in South Carolina. At St. Simon's Island, Shaw reported to Col. James Montgomery. The regiment's first operation was a July raid against the undefended coastal town of Darien, Georgia. Under Montgomery's orders, the 54th participated in the looting and burning of Darien, including destruction of nearly 100 residences, three churches, and the courthouse. Shaw objected in writing but obeyed his orders, leaving the town ablaze.

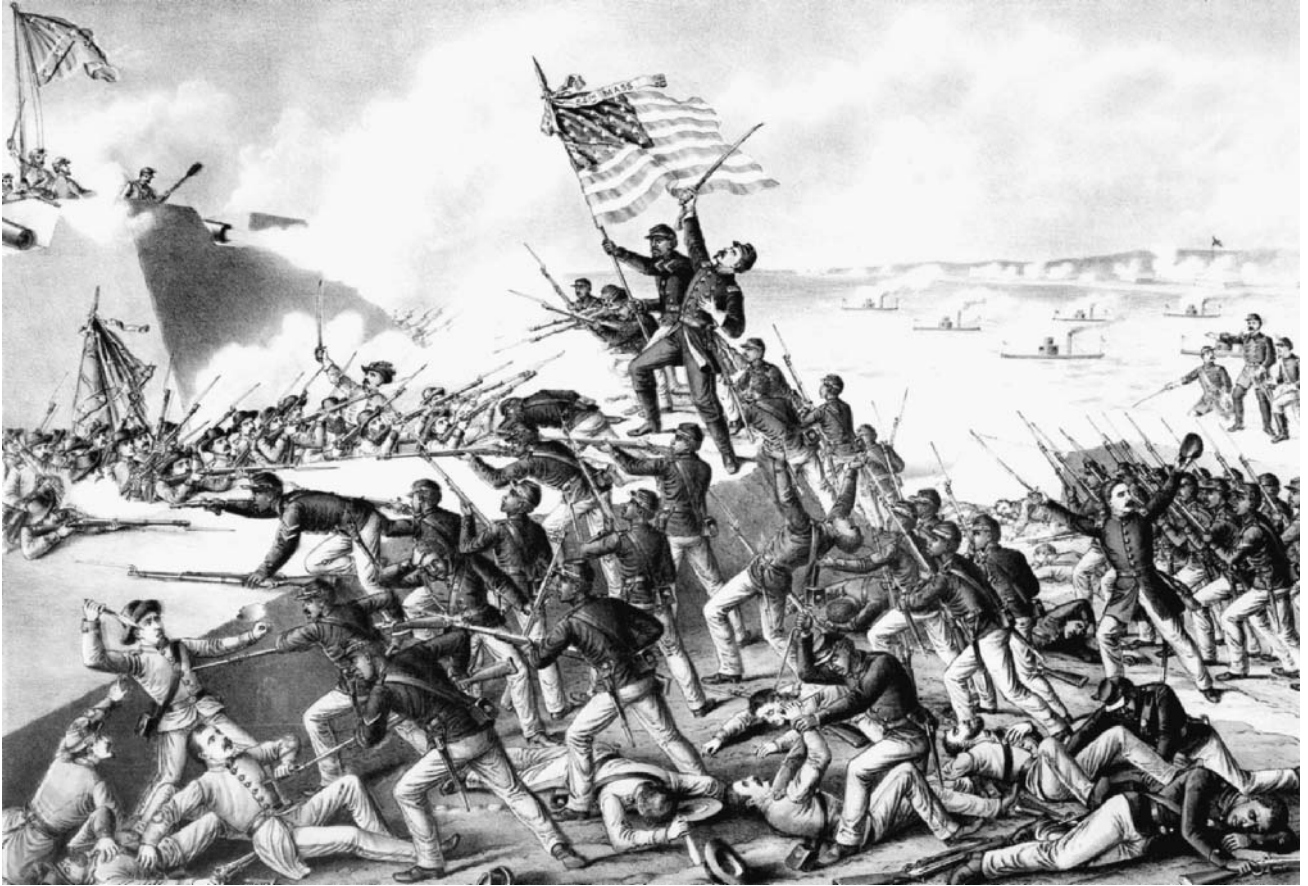
After returning to South Carolina, the regiment became involved in Brig. Gen. Quincy A. Gilmore's offensive to close Charleston harbor. South Carolina was the cradle of secession, and Charleston was its focal point. The city was very strongly fortified and defended, making assault

from the land impossible and approach from the sea extremely difficult. Of modest military value and vulnerable to isolation by blockade, Charleston remained a target of high symbolic significance. As Gilmore planned to attack the city, Colonel Shaw, who wanted a role in more than raiding, particularly of the Montgomery variety, feared the 54th would be left out of the fight and made his concerns known to his superiors. He soon got his opportunity. On July 8, he received orders to prepare to deploy as part of Gen. Alfred H. Terry's 4,000-man division for "a diversionary demonstration" on James Island south of Charleston. Confederate forces under Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard viewed the feint as the main attack and struck the right flank of the Union line, giving the 54th its first real taste of combat. The regiment took the brunt of the attack and held, preventing the enemy from flanking the Union line and striking the white 10th Connecticut. The successful stand earned praise from General Terry, the grateful Connecticut soldiers, and the Northern press. The 54th suffered 14 killed, 18 wounded, and 13 captured. It gained widespread respect and appeared to pass the test for which Governor Andrew had enlisted it.

Within a week, the nation had much more conclusive proof of the battle-worthiness of the 54th and the willingness of black soldiers to fight for the Union and an America without slavery. At dusk on July 18, the 54th formed up at the head of a 14-regiment assault force, ready to attack Fort Wagner on Morris Island in Charleston harbor. The huge fortification of palmetto log and earth at the north end of the narrow barren island, with its sand beaches, low hills, and salt marshes, was a key to Charleston itself, and the 54th would be the vanguard, the first to reach and strike this formidable obstacle, with 13 white regiments coming behind.

The charge of the 54th covered 600 yards of exposed beach, crossed a moat, and surged up the walls of the fort. Advancing through heavy fire with Shaw in the lead, the regiment reached the top, a few men even getting inside, before withering fire forced them to withdraw. Sgt. William Carney of C Company carried the national colors to the very parapet of Fort Wagner and safely brought the flag back, later receiving the Medal of Honor for his bravery. Colonel Shaw died leading the charge, and almost half of the 600 attackers were killed, wounded, or captured. The white regiments also suffered substantial casualties. After the repulse, Gilmore called off the attack, which was a





*The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment stormed Fort Wagner in July 1863. (Library of Congress)*

major operational disaster. Fort Wagner was not actually taken until September 6, and its occupation had little bearing on the war's outcome, but from a social and symbolic perspective, the assault was very important. Shaw and the 54th became symbols of the dedication and commitment of the black soldier, proving that African Americans would give their all to crush secession. Colonel Shaw's burial by the enemy in a common grave with his fallen soldiers caused howls of protest from the North but ultimately cemented his position as a martyr to the causes of reunion and abolition.

July 1863 was clearly a military turning point. The Union won key victories at Gettysburg and at Vicksburg. But the behavior of the 54th, underscoring the valorous performance of black troops at Milliken's Bend (June 7) and Port Hudson (May 27) also showed that the black soldier was able to play a major role in the prosecution of the war. With 30 black regiments in the field and 30 more by the end of the year, Union manpower was surging while Confederate forces were declining. Black soldiers became an increasingly

vital part of the sword that would end slavery. In so doing, they would stake a strong claim on citizenship.

After Fort Wagner, the 54th remained in South Carolina, occupied with the routine work of digging and constructing trenches and fortifications. Discontent began to spread through the unit, whose soldiers were convinced that they bore a disproportionate portion of such work and resented it. Moreover, the government denied them the \$13 monthly pay of soldiers and insisted that because they enlisted based on the Militia Act's authorization for enrollment of black laborers, they deserved only the lower compensation of \$10 per month minus \$3 for their clothing. Also, the killing of innocent black victims in the rampage known as the New York draft riot raised serious questions about whether their sacrifice was worthwhile.

The complaints of the officers and men of the 54th regarding unfair imposition of fatigue duty finally received a hearing. General Gilmore ordered such practices ended in November. However, the critical issue of pay still festered. For nearly a year and a half, soldiers of the 54th and other

Massachusetts black regiments refused any money rather than accept anything less than that due to them as soldiers. Their families suffered acute hardship, allayed to some extent by private philanthropy. When the state of Massachusetts offered to make up the difference between what the government offered and what was rightfully theirs, the men of the regiment, realizing that acceptance of unequal pay would affirm a subordinate status, stood firm. Finally, at the end of September 1864, the attorney general issued a ruling that allowed the soldiers to receive the pay that was their due.

The 54th remained on active service until the end of the war. It participated in two bloody Union defeats during 1864, at Olustee, Florida, in February and at Honey Hill, South Carolina, at the end of November. Neither battle was significant to the outcome of the war. In January 1865, Sgt. Stephen A. Swails of the regiment became the first African American line officer. Col. Edward N. Hallowell, who succeeded Colonel Shaw in command, recommended Swails for a commission, and Governor Andrew approved. The army chain of command finally approved the promotion, and Sgts. Peter Vogelsang and Frank M. Welch also won commissions and served briefly as officers.

In February 1865, the regiment returned to Charleston, this time as part of the occupying force. The bulk of the regiment arrived on February 25, but part of B Company entered Charleston on February 18, the first Union soldiers into town after the Confederates fled. Except for a six-week period from mid-March to the end of April, when it participated in one of the last campaigns of the war, including a sharp skirmish at Boykin's Mill, South Carolina, on April 28, the regiment remained in Charleston as part of the provost guard until August, when the men boarded ships and returned to Massachusetts.

In two years of wartime service, the 54th participated in five armed encounters with the enemy. It suffered total casualties of 5 officers and 95 men killed, as well as 20 officers and 274 wounded and 93 dead due to disease and accident. It fought its battles in some of the more obscure and inconsequential theaters of war and, like most black regiments, spent more time in manual labor than in combat. Still, the 54th's contribution went far beyond the routine facts of service, to the dramatic impact of its gallant conduct at Fort Wagner, showing the whole country that African Americans made worthy soldiers. The 54th passed the test of combat with flying colors, fought a successful struggle for equal pay, and produced the first black line officers.

At the end of the 20th century, the history of the 54th was more widely known than ever before. Augustus Saint Gaudens's spectacular memorial to Colonel Shaw and the regiment on Boston Common, dedicated in 1897, was one of only three Civil War monuments to commemorate the service of black soldiers for an entire century after the conflict. Then, in 1989, the film *Glory*, based on Peter Burchard's 1965 book *One Gallant Rush*, captured the attention and imagination of audiences all over America. It was followed by television documentaries and several new books. The brave deeds of the 54th were brought out of obscurity and popularized. Like the Minute Men and Rough Riders of other eras, the 54th joined a pantheon of universally familiar American military heroes.

See also: Douglass, Frederick; Lincoln, Abraham; Union Army

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## Methodist Camp Meetings

Methodist camp meetings became a popular way for people of European and African descent to interact within the setting of a Protestant revival. John Wesley (1703–1791), an Oxford-educated Anglican minister, promoted a form of conversion and religious experience that would later compel ministers to found the Methodist church and endorse a revivalistic form of worship that often occurred in the context of camp meetings. The experience of conversion, according to Wesley, required a “witness of the Spirit,” or the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a believer. Many Protestants criticized such claims as mere “enthusiasm” during the period known as the Great Awakening (ca. 1735–1745), whereas many others embraced the teachings of popular revivalists. The individualization of conscience

and the inversion of authority, in particular, appealed to many European Americans and African Americans.

People of European and African descent began to share a common religious space during revivals in Virginia and North Carolina before and immediately after the American Revolution. The resultant interracial events produced novel forms of Protestant worship in America. The European emphasis on the spoken word combined with the African tradition of applying dance and song to words. Also, during interracial revivals, European Americans started to exhibit dynamic relationships with revival preachers in the form of verbal exhortations and demonstrations of the indwelling of the spirit. In other words, white Protestants did not simply convert enslaved and free Africans without undergoing radical changes themselves.

Francis Asbury (1745–1816) established the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787. He ordained hundreds of new Methodist ministers who would come to be known as “circuit riders,” or itinerant preachers, because of their willingness to travel to places far removed from the more populated areas of the eastern seaboard. Historians have referred to the years from 1787 to 1805 as the period of the “Great Revival,” due in large part to the emergence of the Methodist camp meeting as a popular mode of communal and individual religious expression. The most famous camp meeting occurred at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801, but thousands of smaller and larger meetings occurred throughout the United States and western territories. The effectiveness of revivalism and the high number of conversions have compelled many historians to refer to the first four decades of the 19th century as the Second Great Awakening.

It was during the Second Great Awakening that Methodism became the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. This unprecedented success was due in large part to the popularity of the Methodist camp meeting. Camp meetings came out of the revival tradition of Virginia. They usually occurred in rural areas, and people usually traveled great distances to participate in what would sometimes last over a week. Local and itinerant ministers expressed a message of sin, damnation, conversion, and salvation. They took advantage of their personal charisma and their ability to elicit emotional responses from the audience. The audience of converted and unconverted people responded with verbal and bodily gestures that sometimes frightened outside observers. Some common forms of

spiritual possession included shaking, laughing, shouting, dancing, barking, and jerking.

Though racial segregation often occurred during camp meetings, both African and European Americans participated in shouting exercises. These “shouting Methodists,” as they came to be known, best demonstrate the influence of African religious practices on Protestantism in the form of the “ring shout.” The ring shout was characterized by circular dancing, repetitious singing, and call-and-response. Sometimes potential converts and people in mourning stood or knelt in the middle of the ring shout. Also, during larger camp meetings, there could be multiple rings formed at the same time. The raucous, lay-driven ring shouts often bothered camp meeting leaders because of the tendency to shift attention away from the pulpit. More critical observers referred to ring shouts as examples of extravagant emotion and the unwanted influence of African culture.

Methodist camp meetings brought people of many cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds together. They also transformed the ways in which many people experienced conversion on an individual and communal level. The incorporation of bodily activity into Methodist worship stood in stark contrast to the sedate practices of other European and American denominations. Moreover, the movement of Methodist worship to outdoor settings continued and enhanced the success of the revival tradition. Yet despite such triumphs, the participation of African Americans in camp meetings underwent a reduction during the antebellum period as white Methodist leaders accommodated themselves to the slaveholding ethic of elite Southerners. A proslavery and patriarchal ideology fused with Methodist spirituality to further alienate African Americans from the experience of conversion during camp meetings. As the Southern states moved closer to secession, many African American Methodists took their experiences of the camp meetings to their plantation quarters, away from much of the authority of ministers and slaveholders, where they began to cultivate a Protestant culture that would flourish after emancipation. *See also:* Evangelism; Ring Shout; Second Great Awakening

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## Mexican War

The Mexican War, fought between 1846 and 1848, between the United States and Mexico was a conflict primarily over the expansion of slavery. Inspired by the concept of Manifest Destiny, the United States gained a sizable territory with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848. More important, the war opened the wounds of slavery and federal regulation.

In the 1830s and 1840s, America witnessed an age of westward expansion. During this period, thousands of Americans migrated into the western territories. By 1845, it had become clear that Americans demanded more territory. In July 1845, the editor of an expansionist newspaper named John L. O'Sullivan wrote of a concept called "manifest destiny." By 1846, newspapers had embraced the concept of America's right to westward territories that did not belong to the United States. In close association with the concept of Manifest Destiny, there was a movement called Young America, whose leading proponent was George Sanders. The supporters of the Young America movement believed that the United States had a special mission that would eventually envelop the entire world. The idea of Manifest Destiny and the missionary Young America movement provided the context for American expansion.

An additional factor was Texas. In 1836, Anglos living in Texas achieved independence from their parent state of Mexico. Mexico refused to accept Texan independence. Over the next nine years, Mexico engaged in border conflict with the Republic of Texas. The 1844 election of the ardent expansionist James K. Polk exacerbated the situation. One of Polk's campaign promises was the annexation of Texas, and in 1845, the United States indeed annexed the Republic of Texas, making Texas a new state. This worsened tensions between the United States and Mexico. In addition, many Northerners viewed the annexation of Texas as a dilemma, in that it would offset the precocious balance of power between the free and slave states in the Congress.

In November 1845, Polk tried to negotiate diplomatically through John Slidell, but he failed. Tensions reached a

boiling point in January 1846, when Polk ordered Zachary Taylor to head to Texas, with about 4,000 troops, to guard against a possible Mexican invasion. On May 9, 1846, after a brief skirmish in the Rio Grande vicinity, Polk asked for a declaration of war against Mexico. With the stated intentions of acquiring New Mexico and California, the war started in earnest.

President Polk called for an enlistment of 50,000 soldiers. In the flood of patriotism that followed the declaration of war, 200,000 Americans enlisted. Free blacks also wished to participate in the war. Many freedmen joined the army to show their loyalty to the country, and upon joining, free blacks were placed in segregated units. Among the many African American units was the 1st Regiment of Volunteers from New York, the Fourth Artillery, as well as many infantry units. There is also evidence of African Americans joining the U.S. Navy. Clearly, the number of African Americans in combat was comparatively low, but their participation cannot be overlooked in the overall success of the war.

The initial goal of the Mexican War was territorial expansion. This was evident because of the emergence of Manifest Destiny, population expansion, and the Young America movement. However, once the war started, the goal and the issue of the war involved the expansion of slavery. In August 1846, the issue of slavery became integrated into the national war debate. President Polk introduced an appropriations bill into Congress. A freshman congressman from Pennsylvania, David Wilmot, attached an amendment to the bill that would have barred slavery and involuntary servitude from all lands acquired from Mexico as a result of the war. The Wilmot Proviso had a profound effect on the national debate during the war. Despite the fact that it passed the House of Representatives, it failed to pass in the Senate. It polarized Northerners in regard to the issue of slavery. It split both the Whigs and the Democrats along sectional lines. The Whigs believed that no extra territory should be taken, and the Democrats believed in popular sovereignty and the right to remove the decision from the federal government.

In response to the Wilmot Proviso and the new territories acquired from Mexico, a new political party emerged that was strictly abolitionist. The Wilmot Proviso planted the seed for the Free Soil Party. Organized in 1848, the Free Soil Party opposed the extension of slavery into the territories. Indeed, it proposed the abolition of slavery. The Free Soil

Party and its ideas evolved from abolitionists in the Democratic Party as well as the Whig and Liberty Parties, which were considered extreme antislavery supporters. In late 1848, the Free Soilers held their first political nominating convention. At the convention, the delegates nominated an abolitionist and former president of the United States, Martin Van Buren, as well as the son of former president and abolitionist John Quincy Adams, Charles Francis Adams. Slavery and its extension into the new territories monopolized the party's political agenda. In the election of 1848, Van Buren received 291,501 popular votes, which accounted for 10.1 percent of the total vote. The results were the most successful third-party tally since the inception of the nation. The favorable results illustrated the importance of slavery in the aftermath of the Mexican War.

In addition to the success of the Free Soil Party, the other two parties split over the issue of slavery in the new territories. The Democratic Party divided between Southern and Northern Democrats. Southern Democrats believed that slavery was an inviolable right, whereas Northern Democrats believed in "popular sovereignty," or the right of the settlers in the territory to choose whether they wished slavery to exist in their territory. The Whig Party divided between Southern Whigs, or "Cotton Whigs," and Northern Whigs, or "Conscience Whigs." The Mexican War not only introduced new territories into the Union, but also politicized the nation over the issue of slavery.

*See also:* Free Soil Party; Missouri Compromise

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## **Missouri Compromise**

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The Missouri Compromise was a congressional agreement passed in 1820 that attempted to resolve the intense hostility that had emerged over the extension of slavery. In 1818, the territory of Missouri applied to admission into the

Union as a slave state, a move that caused tremendous conflict between pro- and antislavery forces. The compromise, fashioned by Henry Clay, was viewed as a temporary solution to the crisis. However, rather than solving the crisis, the Missouri Compromise exacerbated the dilemma of the extension of slavery into the new territories.

By December 1818, the citizens of the territory of Missouri, once a part of the vast Louisiana territory, were prepared for admission into the Union. Most of the settlers who had migrated into the territory were from the South. In 1818, there were close to 66,000 inhabitants in the region, including 10,000 slaves. Thus, it was clear that if the territory were to be admitted into the Union, it would do so as a slave state. Indeed, the territorial legislature accepted the tenets of slavery, and the admission application promoted the tenets of slavery. As the admission bill entered the House of Representatives for debate, the question of slavery was unleashed.

In February 1819, a congressman from New York, James Tallmadge, added to the admission bill an additional amendment, commonly known as the Tallmadge Amendment. The amendment forbade the future importation of slaves into Missouri and called for the ultimate emancipation of all slaves born in Missouri. The House, voting along sectional lines, accepted the Tallmadge Amendment. The Senate, however, refused to accept it, and the bill was subsequently defeated in the Senate. Southern politicians criticized the bill for its sense of intrusiveness, and Northern politicians viewed the bill as inherently weak in its supervision of the "peculiar institution."

In response to the Tallmadge Amendment, the Senate proposed its alternative. Under the Senate bill, there would be no restrictions on slavery in the new state. It was evident that a crisis loomed on the horizon. The crisis was exacerbated by protests throughout the Northeast as well as the disturbing legislation passed by Missouri to forbid the migration of free blacks and mulattoes into the new state. After a protracted crisis, Missouri agreed not to abridge the constitutional rights of any American citizens. The crisis was not resolved. The issue of Missouri's status upon its entrance into the Union was still vague.

The severity of the conflict was indeed colossal. One reason for the severity of the crisis hearkened to the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which banned slavery north of the Ohio River. Since the nation's origins, it had been legally accepted that slavery would not be allowed north of

the so-called Mason-Dixon divide, but Missouri was north of the line. A second, and more noteworthy, problem was political in nature. Since the passage of the Constitution, it had been accepted that in the Congress, there must exist equal representation. In other words, there must be the same number of free and slave states. In 1819, Alabama was admitted into the Union as a slave state, thus equalizing the proportion of free and slave states, at 11 free and slave states. The admission of Missouri as a slave state would offset the balance in the Congress. When Congress was dismissed in late 1819, the crisis still had not been resolved *in toto*.

When Congress reconvened in 1820, an opportunity emerged that would resolve the crisis. With the issue of Missouri lingering, the territory of Maine was prepared for admission into the Union. On January 3, 1820, the territory of Maine, which originated as the northern province of Massachusetts, passed an admissions bill. In 1820, there were two disconnected admission bills on the table: Missouri and Maine. After heated debate, the Congress, led by Henry Clay as well as Jesse B. Thomas, connected the two admission bills in what has become known as the Missouri Compromise.

Under the terms of the Missouri Compromise, the issue of admission and slavery were enjoined under one bill. First, the territory of Missouri was admitted as a slave state (or at least with no federal requirements regarding slavery). Second, the territory of Maine was admitted as a free state. In a controversial aspect of the compromise, the Louisiana territory was essentially divided at the 36°30' line. In the future, the status, free or slave, of any territory that applied for admission into the Union would be determined by the latitude line. A territory that was north of the line must be admitted as free, and a territory south of the line can be admitted as slave. The 36°30' line established a demarcation cord between the free North and the slave South.

After the passage of the compromise, politicians and citizens on both sides believed that peace had been achieved. In the long term, it established a dividing line within the national consciousness. More importantly, it politicized the nation on the issue of slavery for the next 30 years. The division between free and slave continued as the demarcation point until the 1854 passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which specifically repealed the tenets of the 1820 Missouri Compromise.

*See also:* Compromise of 1850; Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Louisiana Purchase

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## Moral Uplift

Moral uplift, also known as racial uplift, describes the processes of moral, social, political, economic, and educational development through which African Americans believed they could create progress within African American communities throughout the United States—and achieve equality—during the 19th and 20th centuries. In the decades leading up to and after emancipation, African American advocates of moral uplift maintained that working toward and achieving social, political, and spiritual progress would help end oppression and bring about equality. Many supporters of uplift ideology believed that moral and racial uplift were naturally intertwined, and they often used the two terms interchangeably. Many argued that racial uplift meant achieving high spiritual goals and likewise that achieving racial progress meant spiritual progress. Additionally, they asserted that moral uplift would undermine and eventually eradicate white American racist attitudes about African Americans, specifically ideas that they were inherently licentious, unintelligent, lazy, culturally bereft, and sexually aggressive. Achieving these goals entailed acquiring education, maintaining a sound family life, and having pride in ownership of property. Although the idea of moral uplift in African American communities throughout the United States emerged prior to the American Civil War and the emancipation of African American slaves, it did not become a concrete possibility until the closing decades of the 19th century, when racial violence, legal segregation, political exclusion, and debt peonage gave it increasing urgency.

Led primarily by middle-class African American community members, the concept and practice of moral uplift fostered African American accommodation to white American mainstream values and behaviors as well as forging African American revolutionary thought and resistance to these mainstream values. Moral uplift for many of its advocates required its adherents to adapt and conform to the behavioral patterns and ethical values reflected in Euro-American Victorian culture. Victorian culture, which remained dominant from the late 19th century well into the 20th century, emphasized strict commitment to Protestant moral ethos of hard work, temperance, and prudence. For many other advocates, however, uplift meant utilizing strategies of self-help and self-improvement to develop social, political, and economic strength in African American communities and families. This entailed modifying negatively perceived behaviors, such as laziness, stealing, or sexual transgressions; it also entailed creating African American-owned and operated institutions, such as schools, women's clubs, and businesses, independent of white American control. Thus, as one of the few African American institutions free of white dominance and interference, churches became platforms for community leaders to convey messages of moral uplift through self-help and self-improvement. They were also the primary sources of community schools and uplift programs, as well as resources of large consumer bases for local and national African American businesses. In short, many African Americans learned the concept of moral uplift through their churches.

For many of its advocates, moral uplift also meant taking the responsibilities of freedom seriously and adapting to traditional gender roles within African American communities and families. Consequently, achieving racial uplift meant that African American men set good examples of manhood for others, acquired and maintained gainful employment, and assumed strong leadership roles in their communities and families. For African American women, achieving this same goal meant that they occupied roles as domestic and moral guardians, champions of high moral standards in and outside of the home. Conforming to these roles was a means of both uplifting the race and challenging notions of African American ineptitude and moral laxity. Nonetheless, conforming also restricted African American men and women and created tensions among the poor and middle class in African American communities.

Although the notion and praxis of moral uplift in African American communities fostered a sense of group unity, moral uplift leaders often projected racist attitudes that white Americans held about all African Americans onto poor African Americans, making moral uplift's message inconsistent with its practice. Consequently, moral uplift was often as divisive as it was harmonious within African American communities. Undergirding the arguments of many uplift spokespersons was the idea that not all African Americans were capable of achieving uplift outside of African American middle-class—often patriarchal—leadership. Indeed, many African American intellectuals, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, asserted that only a percentage of African Americans could achieve uplift through self-improvement. Furthermore, racist notions about poor African Americans buttressed the arguments of many uplift intellectuals and advocates. In particular, many moral uplift thinkers upheld the idea that that poor African Americans were irresponsible in the execution of their personal and civic duties.

One immediate result of the contradiction built into moral uplift was a shift in the nature of the concept from a phenomenon that focused on achieving group freedom and equality to one that focused increasingly on maintaining the high civilization of African American middle-class life. Another result of this paradox was the increasing isolation of the poor within African American communities. The shift in uplift ideals, and in the practice of uplift leaders, ultimately led to an increase of poor African American spiritual and secular institutions that promoted reactionary behavior to those championed by middle-class African Americans. Such institutions allowed poor African Americans to express themselves free of middle-class Victorian etiquette. Thus, as the 19th century came to an end, and the 20th century progressed, moral uplift proved a great paradox. Although it gave African Americans numerous strategies for combating white racism and working toward racial equality, it also served to exaggerate existing class divisions among African Americans.

Despite the problems inherent in moral uplift ideology, it manifested itself in various sectors of African American life, such as in educational institutions and policy, in politics, and in culture. Many proponents of moral uplift believed that education was integral to its success among African Americans. Education, therefore, became a crucial part of uplift traditions and training. Leaders in African American communities held that acquiring education was a way of

creating opportunities for African Americans and a means of enabling them to rise out of poverty. Furthermore, many believed that education helped make African Americans better individuals and well-informed students. Accordingly, African American pedagogy became the impetus for a burgeoning intellectual class. Nonetheless, although many believed in the great contribution education could make to the uplift of African Americans, no cohesive plan existed among leaders as to how they might achieve this.

The clearest example of this is in the philosophical divide between the two most prominent thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—Booker T. Washington, ex-slave turned educator, writer, orator, and social and political leader, and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, civil rights activist, public intellectual, educator, writer, and historian. Washington believed that the best way to achieve uplift through education was to provide students with industrial training—usually for jobs in domestic or public service. Training in agricultural practices and mechanics, he argued, would help earn the respect and trust of suspicious white Americans. Du Bois, however, contended that classical education was more appropriate, for it would prepare African American students for roles as future leaders of American society who could demand equal treatment from white Americans. Most African Americans found themselves on one side of this debate or the other. The debate over the role of education in moral uplift, however, was multilayered; it included many challenging and dissenting voices, in particular African American women, who argued that education—industrial or classical—should include female students as well and prepare them for leadership roles alongside their male counterparts. Conversely, many women argued that education for young African American women should reinforce their future roles in the home as wives and mothers.

Politics represents yet another area African Americans saw as central to achieving uplift. African American political thinkers, however, faced problems slightly different from those faced by proponents of either industrial or classical education. With the rise of more militant and violently aggressive opposition to African American struggles for equality, from the late 19th century well into the 20th, white Americans managed to exclude African Americans from the political arena. The use of lynching, rape, terrorism, and vigilante tactics against African Americans made participation in the political events around them virtually

impossible. Even the threat of white violence against them, however, did not stop African Americans from attempting to participate in American political processes, nor did it stop African American intellectuals from maintaining a dialogue within their communities and without about prevention strategies and means of improving their plight through the political system.

Conversely, challenging voices also filled African American political life, and plans for producing moral uplift through political activity varied. Some African Americans argued that uplift was possible through the help of liberal white Americans, which sometimes entailed accommodating to patriarchal racist white attitudes or assimilation into white culture. Other African Americans rejected this idea and argued that self-help was the key to political success; white American help could too easily become control and interference. Likewise, issues of gender remained in the fore, as African American women increased their demands for greater participation and influence in the political sphere during the 20th century. Class division also complicated the push for uplift through politics, as middle-class African American leaders used uplift ideologies to exclude poor African Americans from leadership roles in many uplift organizations, just as they had used messages of uplift to degrade the poor and solidify their middle-class status.

Perhaps the most expansive area for the development of uplift ideology was within African American culture. Culture provided the greatest venue for uplift ideology, through art, poetry, music, language, television, and film. Messages of uplift continue to permeate African American culture, and the immensity of cultural artifacts allows for the modification of the notion of uplift to suit audiences that span various social, economic, religious, and political spectrums. Leaders in the cultural arena reflect the diversity of the African American community and reveal the blend of heterogeneous perceptions of moral uplift within that community. They also provide a portrait of the many challenging voices to ideals of racial and moral uplift within African American communities, as well as a unique take on those voices. Furthermore, culture provides a far greater, and indeed more complicated, resource for documented thought on racial uplift that stretches across social, political, and economic boundaries. In effect, the realm of culture represents the most comprehensive avenue for uplift ideology. It allows the greatest number of African Americans to voice their interpretations of the meanings of uplift. It has



also provided, and continues to provide, a viable space for African Americans to shape and reshape the meanings of uplift over the course of their history.

Though moral uplift did not represent a perfect solution to gaining freedom and equality, it did generate a sense of cohesion among African Americans. It also provided numerous positions of leadership for both men and women in African American communities in the United States. Additionally, uplift ideology fostered the creation of African American–owned businesses and educational facilities, as well as social clubs, orders, sororities, and fraternities. Consequently, moral uplift has remained a resilient thread in African American social, political, religious, economic, and cultural history.

See also: Cornish, Samuel; Douglass, Frederick; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Hammon, Jupiter; Washington, Booker T.

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## Nell, William Cooper

William Cooper Nell (1816–1874) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, where he became involved in the abolitionist cause alongside such men as Frederick Douglass and

William Lloyd Garrison. Nell is considered to be the first African American to produce scholarly history about African Americans. Nell's abolitionist advocacy and his interest in the history of African Americans were a direct result of his father, William G. Nell, a Revolutionary War veteran, and of the younger Nell's contact with African American activist David Walker. Nell Sr. was a tailor who ran a shop just a few doors down from David Walker's used clothing store in Boston. Both Nell Sr. and Walker were members of the General Colored Association of Massachusetts, an anti-slavery association founded in 1826.

Nell was educated at Boston's segregated Smith School, where he received an elementary education. He excelled as a student there and ended up qualifying for Boston's prestigious Franklin Medal for academic achievement. Unfortunately, Nell was denied this honor because of his race. He was allowed to attend the special dinner in honor of the recipients only as a waiter. This experience greatly affected Nell and fueled his desire to combat racial barriers.

Nell devoted much of his career to abolitionist and integrationist causes. In 1832, at the age of 16, Nell was the secretary of the Juvenile Garrison Independent Society, a group of African American youths dedicated to education, community service, and self-help. In 1849, Nell and other leading integrationists called a meeting to protest the reopening of the Smith School, Boston's segregated African American school. Throughout his life, Nell was a vocal and ardent integrationist. Ironically, this led Nell to condemn black-only institutions such as the Massachusetts General Colored Assembly, of which his father was a member.

Nell channeled his education into work as a copyist and editor, and he eventually became a journalist. His journalistic aspirations brought him into contact with renowned abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Nell became an errand boy for Garrison's *Liberator* and soon was made an apprentice copyist and printer. This experience was directed into a job as a reporter for Garrison's paper, and eventually, Nell became a close friend of Garrison. During this relationship, Nell became an ardent Garrisonian, espousing Garrison's use of moral suasion and nonviolent resistance. Nell also used his writing and editing skills to help Frederick Douglass with the publication of Douglass's newspaper, the *North Star*.

During the period of Nell's newspaper work, he developed a desire to produce a history of African American

servicemen. Nell's determination to chronicle this history was fueled by poet John Greenleaf Whittier's published remarks to the *National Era* newspaper in July 1847, which expressed Whittier's regret and dismay that no attempt had been made to chronicle the history of African Americans who had served in the United States' wars. Despite the patriotism, loyalty, and bravery exhibited by these African American men, they had been neglected while their white compatriots had been lauded as heroes.

In response to this lament, Nell published, in 1851, a 24-page pamphlet titled *Services of the Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812*. The second edition of this pamphlet, published the next year in 1852, was expanded to 40 pages. Finally, in 1855, the seeds of Nell's scholarly desire came to complete fruition, and he published the full-sized text: *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution: With Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans*.

Nell's history was the first African American history that utilized historical sources rather than relying solely on the Bible as a primary source (such as the histories written by black scholars such as Robert Benjamin Lewis and James W. C. Pennington). Nineteenth-century African American history was mostly composed of religious-themed polemics against white supremacy and justifications for African American emancipation. But Nell made auspicious use of historical documents and primary sources such as local and national newspapers, military records, and antislavery written works. Nell's historical interpretation still retained a contributionist character; it was designed to illuminate the contributions that African Americans had made to the United States in an effort to justify the emancipation and equal treatment of African Americans.

Nell died in 1874. He had faded into obscurity after the Civil War, having become a casualty of standing in the shadows of such prominent leaders as Garrison and Douglass. Although Nell was a powerful writer and orator himself, his natural humility never allowed him to take a more central role like the leaders with whom he had surrounded himself.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Douglass, Frederick; Free Soil Party; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Underground Railroad

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## New York Draft Riots

The New York Draft Riots of July 1863 were a clear manifestation of the unpopularity of the American Civil War with the Northern poor. The riots also showed the clear bias of the conscription system toward the wealthy of society and reinforced the notion of "rich man's war, poor man's fight." Attacks on blacks were a clear sign of the difficulties that faced minorities as various ethnic and political groups fought over the lower-wage jobs. In addition, it also showed that the minorities and African Americans were continued targets for white dissatisfaction for political and economic reasons.

By 1863, the federal government had begun to look for new ways to increase enlistments in the Union Army. The Federal Militia Act of 1862 was expected to provide roughly 300,000 men for military service. Unfortunately, widespread opposition prevented the federal government from fully implementing its provisions. Northern states already used a bounty system to increase recruiting of their quota of regiments for military service. On March 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Enrollment Act. This act provided for the enrollment of all households within a congressional district by government agents. Then a lottery was held to see which men would be called up for military service. If enough men volunteered in a district, then the lottery was not held. Drafted men could obtain the services

of a substitute to go in their place or pay \$300 to exempt themselves from military service.

In New York, Governor Horatio Seymour, a Democrat, opposed the act and worked to prevent its implementation in the state. Many Democratic politicians within New York City opposed the national conscription act and continued to encourage popular support against it and the Republican administration of President Lincoln. In addition, anti-black violence was on the rise in Northern cities, especially in New York City. Freedmen, who worked for a lower wage, were replacing immigrant workers. Blacks were brought in to replace striking Irish dockworkers in June 1863, and police prevented the striking Irish workers from using mob violence against these replacements. In the same month, federal enrollment agents started working their way through the congressional districts in the city to enroll men for the first lottery.

On July 11, 1863, the first names of the lottery were drawn in the city. Unfortunately, at the same time, nearly all of the New York State National Guard (NYSNG) was out of the state; the regiments were deployed in Pennsylvania to cover portions of that state during the Gettysburg campaign. On July 13, riots broke out in response to the opening of the draft office. A large mob burned the draft office and looted stores and wealthy homes on Lexington Ave. The bottom floor of the *New York Tribune* was burned, and the Brooks Brothers store was attacked and looted by the crowd. Up to that point, the mob consisted of the poor of the city and was mainly German and Irish. The next day, the mob turned into more of an Irish mob and quickly focused on those minorities who they believed were taking their jobs and were the cause of the war itself. In short order, African Americans were being targeted within the city. Soon, individual blacks were being attacked on the street and lynched in daylight.



*Rioters in New York City lynch an African American in July 1863, illustration from Harper's Weekly. The passage of the Union Conscription Act in March to recruit soldiers for the Union Army was a hugely unpopular act that led to violent riots in New York City. Many Southern sympathizers focused their attacks on abolitionists and African Americans. (Library of Congress)*

Businesses that employed blacks were soon attacked by the mob, and their buildings were burned to the ground. Even the Colored Orphan Asylum was attacked and burned; fortunately, all the children were able to escape.

The New York City police attempted to control the crowds, but they were also attacked by mobs of men and women cruising the city streets. Republicans, policemen, wealthy individuals, and blacks all were assaulted on the streets by the mobs. The crowd overran one armory, and thereby the rioters gained weapons to fight police barricades and assault additional blocks of the city. In Pennsylvania, the deployed regiments of the NYSNG were ordered back to the city. U.S. Army regulars from Governor's Island were sent over to clear the streets with muskets with fixed bayonets. The provost marshal even requested the U.S. Navy to station an armed steamer near the business district and send ashore U.S. Marines to assist the police.

The arrival of the NYSNG regiments soon spelled the end of the riots in the city. Portions of numerous regiments were sent into the street to clear away barricades and return law and order to the streets. As a measure to calm the crowds, the draft lottery was ordered suspended within the city. By July 17, law and order was completely restored in the city. The next day, additional regiments from the Union Army of the Potomac arrived to help patrol the city. Over 1,000 fatalities occurred during the period of July 12–17, 1863, with \$2 million of property damage.

Despite the fears over another citywide riot, conscription officials made plans to hold another draft for New York City in mid-August 1863. On August 17, the mayor and police commissioner requested the First Division, NYSNG, to be deployed to protect the draft locations and vital parts of the city. Maj. Gen. Charles W. Sandford deployed 13 regiments throughout the city. This time, no violence occurred during the draft, and General Sandford left his division deployed until mid-September 1863.

The riots of July 1863 were an indication of the problems that freedmen and other minorities experienced as they competed for the lower-wage jobs in the national economy. In addition, the extreme violence showed that the Northern cities remained a hotbed for Confederate support through political parties fighting over the voting strength of factions within the American melting pot.

*See also:* Union Army; White Mob Violence

*William Harris Brown*

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## Newsom, Celia

Celia Newsom (1836–1855), born into slavery in Missouri, was tried for the murder of her master in 1855, thus launching a little-known, yet significant challenge to the sexual exploitation of women that accompanied the American institution of slavery. Celia's case exemplifies the precarious position of slave women in a society that simultaneously viewed them as sexual objects and property with limited rights.

In 1850, at the age of 14, Celia was bought by farmer Robert Newsom, a widower with four adult children, of Callaway County, Missouri. Newsom purchased Celia the year following his wife's death and immediately established a sexual relationship with the 14-year-old by raping her during the journey home. Celia gave birth to two children, both fathered by Newsom, during her time on the Newsom family farm.

In the beginning of 1855, Celia commenced a relationship with a Newsom family slave named George. Shortly after the start of their relationship, Celia became pregnant with a child fathered by either George or Newsom. George informed Celia that he would end the relationship if she did not cease having sexual relations with Robert Newsom.

One afternoon in June 1855, Celia, ill with pregnancy-related symptoms and desiring to maintain her relationship with George, asked Newsom to stop having sexual relations with her. He refused to end the relationship, and she threatened to harm him if he visited her that evening. Celia later retrieved a stick to defend herself if he returned.

That night, Newsom returned to Celia's cabin. According to Celia, Newsom attempted to touch her and she hit him on the head with the stick she had saved. Newsom staggered toward the floor and raised his hands. Celia, assuming he was going to hurt her, hit him a second time. Newsom fell to the floor and died. Celia placed Newsom's body and the stick in the cabin fireplace. When the ashes finally cooled, she removed and hid the bones and disposed of a portion of the ashes.

The next morning, Celia solicited the help of Newsom's grandson to remove the ashes from her hearth. The grandson, unaware of the content of the ashes, complied. Meanwhile, Newsom's family formed a search party when they realized he was missing. Upon questioning, George suggested that Celia had information about Newsom's location. Celia, after steadfastly denying knowledge of Newsom's whereabouts throughout a threatening interrogation, offered a detailed confession.

On October 9, 1855, a judge and jury of 12 white men began hearing the case, *The State of Missouri versus Celia, a Slave*. Celia, on trial for her life, was not able to give evidence on her own behalf because Missouri state law prohibited slaves from testifying against whites. However, because of a state law requiring court-appointed counsel for slaves indicted for capital crimes, Celia received an attorney. Circuit court judge William Augustus Hall appointed defense attorneys John Jameson, Isaac N. Boulware, and Nathan Kouns to Celia's case. John Jameson, who was lead counsel in Celia's case, had a solid reputation in the community and was considered a competent attorney.

The defense team entered a plea of not guilty for Celia and subsequently employed three strategies to support their argument. First, the defense called an expert witness to challenge the physical evidence and suggest that the ill and pregnant teenaged Celia could not have carried out such a crime on her own. Second, Jameson presented a line of questioning to the prosecution and defense witnesses that established that Celia had been having a sexual relationship with Newsom since age 14, had asked him to stop, and had not intended to kill him but to merely hurt him so that he would cease the relationship and, finally, that she had stated that she hit Newsom a second time because he had thrown his hands up and she feared for her life. This testimony supported the argument that Celia killed Newsom when defending herself, which would lead to a manslaughter conviction and eliminate the potential for execution.

The prosecution objected to the defense's lines of questioning throughout the trial, and such objections were sustained by Judge Hall. After exhausting all lines of defense, Celia's counsel relied on the Missouri state law that permitted both sides of the case to submit special instructions for the judge to choose to present to the jury. Jameson, in an attempt to reduce the crime to manslaughter, desired to instruct the jury to consider Celia's motives and right of self-defense. Additionally, in an attempt to prove justifiable homicide, the defense instructed the jury that Missouri law permitted women to apply deadly force when protecting themselves against unwelcome sexual advances.

The prosecution objected to the defense's instructions and offered counter instructions that noted the evidence did not support the self-defense argument and stressed the fact that Celia was Newsom's property, and therefore he had the legal right to do as he pleased. The judge sustained the prosecution's objections and adopted its instructions. The jury sentenced Celia to hang.

Supporters helped Celia escape to a hideaway until her appeal could be heard. The appeal was rejected, and Celia was hanged on December 21, 1855.

*See also:* Slave Resistance

*Elisa Joy White*

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## Northern Slavery

Slavery in the North, traditionally demarcated by the Mason-Dixon line, separated two systems of slavery that functioned differently in a variety of ways including the type work slaves performed and the extent to which plantation slavery became entrenched in each region. These differences between North and South, supported by religious and philosophical principles such as Quakerism and the rhetoric of freedom from the Revolution, ultimately led

Northern states to decide for abolition through the legislative process during the first years of the new republic instead of adhering to slavery as the South did.

Northern slavery began with the importation of African slaves in 1626, when members of the Dutch West India Company settling in New Netherland diverted shipments of slaves from the West Indies. Although the Dutch had a plethora of land and resources, labor was the limiting factor in their colonization equation. Without a constant supply of white wage labor, the Dutch turned to slave labor. Slaves built roads and forts for defense, as well as cleared land for agriculture, providing a constant supply of food and defenses against British and Indian incursions.

Similar to the Dutch, Swedish colonists in southeastern Pennsylvania as well as English colonists in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut used slaves as substitutes for wage laborers. Bonded Africans soon made their appearance in Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1639, New Hampshire in 1645, and Massachusetts in 1637. The lack of substantial white populations, the availability of cheap land, and the desire of white settlers to own and farm land of their own combined to make wage labor on larger farms or for the public good extremely unpopular. The dearth of wage labor in the Northern colonies soon made slavery a popular and acceptable substitute measure. Therefore, the story of slavery in the North revolves around the availability of wage labor to farm even the most modest of fields.

Elite colonists typically bought slaves because they were able to afford a large capital outlay after they arrived from the West Indies (very rarely were there direct shipments from Africa because it was felt that unacclimated Africans were too dangerous). Those with larger farms or resources purchased slaves primarily for agricultural labor. However, slaves expanded their presence in colonial society by becoming coopers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, and other types of artisans. Slaves also became essential for the burgeoning iron and the New England shipbuilding industries.

After the acceptance of slaves outside of their traditional agricultural roles, slave owners began to hire out slaves for wages. Owners received a constant income from their investment while simultaneously retaining access to the slave during harvest season. Hiring out slaves allowed farmers to recoup the losses they had previously taken when their slaves sat idle during off-peak growing times.

This dilemma was especially felt in the North as compared to the South because the crops slaves helped grow (wheat, millet, barley, flax, corn, vegetables, and apples) were not as valuable economically as the rice, cotton, or tobacco of the South. In addition, because the typical slave of the North grew wheat on a medium-size farm, his economic output was substantially smaller than that of slaves in the South, and thus slave owners had to find a way for slaves to increase their income potential; therefore, the hiring out system became popular.

Because slavery never became associated with cash crop production, remaining a substitute system for wage labor, the slave population in the Northern colonies never matched that of the South. On the eve of the American Revolution, Massachusetts had 5,249 slaves, constituting just 1.55 percent of the state's population, and New Hampshire's slave population accounted for only .93 percent of their population. Rhode Island and Connecticut's slave population were the largest in New England, 5.46 percent and 3.27 percent, respectively, and New York housed the largest slave population, representing 13.42 percent of its population. New Jersey had 6.2 percent of its population classified as slave, and Pennsylvania had .86 percent.

Although the economic roles and numbers of slaves in the North were vastly different from Southern society, their treatment was not. "Black codes" prescribing the legal basis of slavery and regulating the system employed were passed during the late 17th century across the North. New York's slave codes were particularly harsh, mandating severe punishments for criminal offenses and legally defining who qualified as a slave under the law. Treatment at the level of master and slave also mirrored the South, although with significant variance based on the master. Whipping, castration, and death were mechanisms masters frequently employed against disobedient slaves. Maltreatment caused slaves to rebel through a variety of means: work stoppages, running away, or open revolt. Northern farmers noted that without constant supervision, slaves would not complete farm work, and newspaper ads routinely advertised for the return of fugitive slaves. In regard to open revolt, organizing any structured rebellion was difficult in the North because the average slave owner owned only one or two slaves. Large holdings that created an independent slave culture were nonexistent in the North. Therefore, organizing a revolt usually occurred in an urban environment. Two revolts of note occurred in New York City in 1712 and 1741.

In each, slaves conspired to murder their masters but were eventually stopped and apprehended by the white colonial establishment. Twenty-one slaves were executed after killing nine whites during the 1712 revolt, which also produced a harsher state slave code in 1714, and 11 slaves were executed after the 1741 revolt.

The American Revolution dramatically changed the shape of slavery in the Northern colonies. The outbreak of war fueled abolitionist sentiment in the North that had been present since the mid-1700s. The largest group of anti-slavery supporters was the Quakers. Quakers had outlawed slaveholding among their own members by the mid-1700s and determined a noble task would be to rid the United States of the evil institution. Quaker activism helped to introduce numerous bills into the colonial legislatures and began the attack on slavery. Quakers initially lobbied for better treatment for slaves, for ending the importation of Africans into the colonies, and for the end of stringent requirements for manumitting slaves, which in most colonies required a slave owner to post a bond as high as 200 pounds as well as pay a yearly supplement in order to free a slave, leading many slave owners to choose to keep their slaves instead of manumitting them.

The outbreak of the American Revolution caused a new brand of abolitionist spirit that joined with Quakerism to fight for black freedom. Rhetoric touting that the relationship between slavery and freedom was the same as between the American colonies and Great Britain soon galvanized a share of the population to question the suitability of fighting for freedom while at the same time enslaving another race. The first state to emancipate its slave population did so not by a vote of the legislature but by judicial review. In September 1781, Quok Walker, a slave, sued his master to gain his freedom because slaves in Massachusetts had equal access to the judiciary. Quaker support for Walker as well as Boston's leading position in the independence movement led the state supreme court to declare that slavery was inconsistent with the state constitution, therefore ending slavery without legislative action.

Connecticut voted to end slavery next when, in January 1784, legislators revised all of their state laws and unknowingly voted on part of a revised statute that included a provision for the gradual emancipation of slavery when newborn slaves reached the age of 25. The legislature did not repeal the act because legislative activism on the slavery issue over the prior 15 years had galvanized many

against the continuance of slavery. The fact that Rhode Island passed a gradual emancipation bill in February 1784 with the assistance of Quakers also helped Connecticut to continue its plan for abolition. Rhode Island voted to grant freedom to those born to slaves after March 1, 1784, although the state had previously granted freedom to any slave volunteering to fight in the state militia during the Revolution. New Hampshire, through a complicated legislative process, had essentially limited slavery's expansion by the early 1790s. Thus, by 1795, abolition had begun across New England.

Although the majority of the abolitionist sentiment in the North centered on New England, Pennsylvania vied with Massachusetts as the leader in Northern abolition. Philadelphia, the largest center of Quaker activism in the United States, pressured the rest of Pennsylvania to support abolition ahead of her neighbors: New York and New Jersey. Coupled with the rhetoric of freedom stemming from the Revolution, the Pennsylvania legislature passed a gradual emancipation bill in 1780. Although Pennsylvania slaveholders were compensated with the allowance that they could any newborn slaves until they were 28 years old, legislators realized that any loss of labor could be compensated with wage labor from the immigration boom legislators thought would occur after the Revolution. Thus, emancipation in Pennsylvania resulted not only from the support of Quakers and the Enlightenment idea of freedom, but also from an examination of the economic situation in the state. Economic factors coupled with racism led to the failure of advocates of complete abolition in the state legislature in 1800; however, by 1820, only 211 slaves remained in the state, and by 1840, slavery had completely disappeared within Pennsylvania's borders.

Abolition did not come as easily in New York and New Jersey as it did in Pennsylvania or New England. The year 1784 saw the defeat of a New York abolition bill based primarily on economic grounds by Dutch planters in the lower Hudson Valley. After that defeat, New York Quakers allied with the newly formed New York Manumission Society to introduce another abolition bill in 1785. Although the lobbying efforts of the Manumission Society and the Quakers again failed to pass an abolition program, they succeeded in easing voluntary manumission requirements as well as prohibiting the importation of any further slaves into the state. After another intense lobbying campaign, New York passed a gradual emancipation law to take effect on July 4,

1799. Any child born to a slave after that date would be free after 28 years of indenture for men and 25 years for women. Key to the passage of the emancipation bill was a compensated abolition program that allowed slaveholders to abandon their slaves' newborn children to the care of the state. After the abolition of slavery across the North, New York emancipated all slaves born before July 4, 1799, as of July 4, 1827. On July 4, 1827, slavery in New York finally died.

New Jersey, the last Northern state to enact a gradual emancipation program, had, along with New York, the longest relationship with slaves. Dutch settlers from New York had crossed the Hudson River and settled in the eastern half of New Jersey in the mid-1600s, establishing an agricultural economy based on slavery. The western half of New Jersey developed a wage-based economic system primarily because of the large landless population. This, coupled with influence from the heavy Quaker population based in Philadelphia, meant west Jersey had few slaves. New Jersey passed a gradual emancipation bill that took effect on July 4, 1804. The bill essentially provided the same provisions as the New York plan; however, New Jersey never passed a complete abolition program as in New York. Slavery existed in New Jersey until the passage of the 13th Amendment (which New Jersey initially rejected) in 1865, which ended the slave experience in the North.

See also: Middle Colonies; New England Colonies; New York Conspiracy of 1741; New York Revolt of 1712; Pinkster Festival

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## Northup, Solomon

Solomon Northup (1808–1863), a free African American native of New York, was kidnapped into slavery in 1841 and spent 12 years in captivity. His autobiographical memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave*, recounts his capture, transportation, and life as a slave. Long recognized for its comprehensive detail and accuracy, Northup's remarkable chronicle of his experience is an unusually candid portrait of slave life in the antebellum American South.

Solomon Northup was born in Essex County, New York, in 1808. The freeborn son of former slave Mintus Northup, young Solomon was raised on a farm in Sandy Hill, Washington County, where his father worked as a laborer. Crediting his father with instilling virtues of industry and integrity, Northup later drew upon these values to critique slavery. Upon Mintus's death in 1829, Northup married Anne Hampton, a quadroon domestic worker from Sandy Hill. In order to support their new household, Northup cut and repaired canals, chopped wood, worked the railroad, and cultivated a small farm. Eager to distinguish himself, he also gained notoriety as a skilled fiddle player. Using money earned through Solomon's musical engagements and Anne's work as a cook, the couple moved to Saratoga Springs, New York, where they resided with their three children until Northup's capture in 1841.

Northup's harrowing journey into slavery began in March 1841, when he accepted employment as a musician in a traveling circus based in Washington, D.C. Believing he was protected by recently acquired free papers and his close association with his white employers, he arrived ready for work with only mild apprehensions. During his second night in the capital, however, the promise of his journey abruptly ended. He found himself drugged and chained in a dark room, which he soon discovered was the cell of a Washington slave pen. From the pen, he was taken via steamboat to Virginia and then Louisiana, where he would spend the duration of his captivity.

The intimate account of his kidnapping and transportation, especially his detailed portrait of bondsmen and women spirited away from their homes and families, demonstrates the physical and psychological strain that accompanied forced migration from plantations along the East Coast to the cotton and sugar fields of the Southwest. Slaves such as Eliza, a slave mother divided from her two children,





Solomon Northup, from his autobiography *Twelve Years A Slave* (1853). (Northup, Solomon. *Twelve Years a Slave. Narrative of Solomon Northup...*, 1853)

and Lethe, a bondswoman separated from her husband, shared their horrific stories as they collectively prayed to be freed from suffering. In speaking as a free man who described the slave experience from within, Northup's observations provide an unusually objective, yet personal view of the internal slave trade.

Northup's experiences as a newly enslaved man along the low and marshy lands of the Red River offer similar insight. Like his fellow bondsmen and women, Northup participated in various occupations, ranging from "sunup to sundown" cotton picking to the skilled occupations of carpentry and music. During the early years, he experienced kindness from fellow slaves, who shared the joys of holiday and community and the sorrows of servitude. But he also maintained his distance, never confiding in his fellow bondsmen and women that he was a free man, fearing that they would betray his secret, and he would be sold further west.

His relationships with white superiors were similarly complex. Whether operating under a kind or unjust master,

he constantly sounded a similar note: the system of slavery was corrupt. Indeed, as a slave he worked under masters and overseers across the bayou, some of whom he remembered fondly, others with abhorrence. The tension between slave and free came to a climax for Northup when he struck his master during an attempted whipping. The altercation would have resulted in Northup's death by hanging, if local whites had not interceded.

With the help of friends from Saratoga, Solomon Northup regained his freedom in 1853 after 12 years a slave.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery

Erica Ann Bruchko

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## Overseers

The overseer played a vital role in the operation of slavery in the American South from the colonial era through the Civil War. With the exception of the planter, no other figure in the hierarchy of the plantation system was more responsible for the success or failure of plantation agriculture than the overseer, whose primary responsibility was to manage and maintain the plantation's most valuable resource, its slaves. Overseers used the whip, the stocks, beatings, the gun, and the noose to maintain slave obedience, punish rebelliousness, and inspire fear. At the same time, overseers were required to encourage slave morale to promote productivity. An overseer often had to curry the slaves' favor in order to ensure his own employment, which depended on the planter's assessment of the overseer's ability to keep order, produce profits, and maintain the slaves' well-being. The longevity of large-scale plantation agriculture in the



*An overseer rides past cotton-pickers in a field in the southern states of America, about 1850. (MPI/Getty images)*

colonial and antebellum South would not have been possible without the overseer.

Because the typical Southern slave owner in the antebellum South owned fewer than five slaves, most slave owners had no need to employ an overseer. Of the approximately 4 million slaves in the South in 1860, only one-fourth lived on plantations that owned 50 or more slaves. Overseers were rarely employed on plantations or farms that held fewer than 30 slaves. The number of overseers in the seven leading Southern slaveholding states in 1860 was 37,883.

On those plantations that did employ overseers, the overseer usually had the authority to inflict severe punishments on slaves for the slightest infraction of work discipline as well as the power to intrude in every aspect of their daily lives. Overseers could whip a slave for any number of trivial or serious offenses. Many overseers tried to gain sexual favors from female slaves, who might be beaten or raped if they refused the overseer's advances. The overseer's role as enforcer of the planter's rule over the plantation's slave population made the overseer the most prominent

representative of the violence that was inherent in the Southern slave system.

The value of overseers to the operation of slavery was never more apparent than during the Civil War, when service in the Confederate Army required that most able-bodied Southern white males be away from their farms and plantations for long periods of time. Heightened fear of slave uprisings and the need to maintain crop production convinced most planters that overseers should be exempted from military service. An amendment to the Confederate Conscription Act of April 1862 exempted one white male for every plantation that held 20 or more slaves. This exemption provoked outrage among poor and middle-class whites, who believed that their fathers and sons were fighting while wealthy planters and their overseers stayed at home. Popular outcry against the "Twenty Negro Law" forced the Confederate Congress to impose tighter restrictions on which plantations and overseers could be exempted.

Eventually, the advance of Union armies combined to undermine the authority of the overseers who remained at work on Southern plantations. Slaves became more

insubordinate and ran away in ever-increasing numbers with the approach of Union troops. Although most overseers escaped any form of punishment, some captured overseers were forced to work for the Union Army, and a few died at the hands of angry slaves and avenging freedmen. The fall of the Confederacy meant an end to slavery and an end to the peculiar role of the overseer in Southern history.

*See also:* Slave Plantation

*Ridgeway Boyd Murphree*

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## Patrollers

Patrollers were white citizens who composed slave patrols, groups that roamed the Southern countryside and cities in search of slaves, free blacks, and suspicious whites. Slave patrols preserved slavery by limiting the activities of slaves, inhibiting runaways, and making sure that slaves did not challenge the terms of their enslavement to any significant degree. They were racially focused law enforcement groups composed of slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike.

The slave patrol had its origins in the Caribbean, principally Barbados. When Barbadians immigrated to the North American colonies, they brought the system of slave patrols with them. Most of the early patrollers were drawn from the militia, and it seems that the slave patrol system fused fear over slave rebellion with concern over a Spanish invasion into an organization designed to buttress the slave regime. South Carolina created the first official slave patrol system in 1704, and other colonies quickly fell in line.

A host of laws governed the activities of slave and patrollers. In the American South, African Americans were assumed to be slaves unless they could prove otherwise. All slaves had to carry passes if they were to travel beyond

their master's household or plantation. Slave patrols were designed to enforce these laws. Southern states typically mandated patrol duty for white males, and it came to be seen as an inconvenient venture like jury duty. Eventually, the local government appointed patrollers, scheduled them, created territories or "beats" for the various patrol groups, and punished shirkers.

Most patrollers were middle-class taxpayers; about one-half owned slaves, although most patrollers owned fewer than five bondservants. Almost all patrol captains were slave owners and typically owned more slaves than average. The patrol system mirrored Southern society in its structure and designation of power, as large slaveholders tended to control both. Plantation owners often "treated" the men of their patrol with dinner and drinks before going into the field. Slave patrols built a sense of camaraderie and social interaction in the participants because most patrollers knew each other and were assigned to familiar terrain.

Patrollers typically were on duty during nighttime hours and particularly on weekends, when slaves were more active in moving about the countryside. Before going on duty, they took temporary oaths as agents of the city or county. In the country, patrollers rode on horseback and carried guns, whips, and ropes. In the city, they walked their beats and were less conspicuous. Patrollers checked slave passes, tracked runaways if any were reported, dispersed clandestine slave meetings, and searched slave quarters for contraband. They had the authority to arrest slaves on the spot and send them to the local jail for further examination.

The potential for abuse of the patrol system was tremendous. Slaves remembered how patrollers might whip men for no good reason or simply harass bondservants for amusement. Slaves countered the patrollers' power in many ways. Bondservants knew the typical "beat" routes and avoided them when moving about the countryside. A well-forged pass also provided a measure of protection for slaves. Violence in response to patrollers was rare, but not unheard of.

Patrollers were vital to preserving slavery by instilling a sense of dread expectation in slaves. Bondservants thought twice before running away because a patroller might be on duty in the next county. It appears that patrollers also maintained their activities after the Civil War. The Ku Klux Klan adopted the methods and activities of the patrollers

and even replicated patrol “beats” in its efforts to inhibit African American political and social activism.

*See also:* Overseers; Slave Codes; Slave Plantation

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## Payne, Daniel

Daniel Alexander Payne (1811–1893) was one of the most important figures in the 19th-century African Methodist Episcopal Church and was the first black president of Wilberforce College. Born free in Charleston, South Carolina, Payne was the son of mixed-race parents, London and Martha Payne, who died when he was young but still provided for his education. After completing two years at Minor’s Moralistic Society School in Charleston, Payne, always a voracious student, was tutored by Thomas Bonneau, a prominent free African American in Charleston. Payne ran his own day school for free African Americans in Charleston—as well as a less formal night school for slaves—between 1829 and 1835, when South Carolina passed laws prohibiting such efforts.

Payne moved North soon after, stopping first in New York City, where he met Rev. Peter Williams Jr., the Tappan brothers, and a number of other early abolitionists. These interactions arguably marked the beginning of Payne’s more politicized and activist faith. Though he had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1826, he chose to study at the Lutheran seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was licensed to preach in 1837, and was formally ordained by the Franklin Synod of the Lutheran Church two years later. Poor health limited his studies, and racist hesitation to assign him a parish curtailed his preaching. Thus, Payne once again turned to teaching and founded a school for young African Americans in Philadelphia. In 1841, he joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), for whom he traveled extensively and served congregations in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Payne’s desires for both a highly educated clergy and a more formal church structure chafed some of his parishioners and some AME leaders. Further, his health—various respiratory ailments and problems with his sight—continued to trouble him at times, and in what

he later referred to as a time of “trouble and affliction,” he suffered the death of his first wife (Julia Ferris, whom he married in 1847) and their infant daughter. Nonetheless, in 1848, he was appointed the AME historian, and by 1850, he had helped bring about sweeping changes within the AME Church hierarchy that included creating a clearly articulated course of study for all ministers, more formalized record-keeping, greater attention to publications, more services, and a greater attention to expanding AME efforts in the West. He was elected an AME bishop at the church’s 1852 General Conference after being selected by Bishop William Paul Quinn to give the conference’s opening sermon.

In the 1850s, Payne crisscrossed the North (including Canada)—and even occasionally visited the Upper South—advocating for African American faith, education, and civil rights. His book of poetry *Pleasures and Other Miscellaneous Poems* appeared in 1850, and he was a key figure in founding and funding the Indianapolis-based AME quarterly *the Repository of Religion and Literature and of Science and Art*, which first appeared in 1858 and which regularly contained contributions from Payne. He lectured and preached extensively, mentored younger ministers (ranging from Elisha Weaver to Thomas M. D. Ward to Alexander Wayman), greatly expanded AME missionary efforts, and continued to support both church record-keeping and publication—including working on his own *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. In 1853, he married Eliza Clark of Cincinnati; they moved to Tawawa Spring, Ohio—near Wilberforce—three years later.

His place within the AME hierarchy secure, Payne continued to expand his national reach during and after the Civil War. In 1863, he led efforts to purchase Wilberforce, a small college in Ohio that had been founded seven years earlier by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Payne served as the institution’s president until 1876, continued to be active in its administration long after, and made the school a model for other historically black colleges. His fund-raising efforts—first to purchase Wilberforce and then to rebuild it after arson devastated the school in 1865—were massive. At the war’s end, he traveled south with a delegation of AME ministers; this extended tour led to the formation of the AME’s South Carolina Conference in 1865 and marked the church’s first efforts toward a major expansion in the South. In 1866, Payne published some of the work that would eventually make up his *History as the Semi-Centenary and the Retrospection of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*.

During this period, Payne worked with most of the national African American leaders of the time, beginning a long friendship with, among others, Frederick Douglass.

During the final decades of his life, Payne's role became more focused on being the AME Church's elder statesman and chronicler. His *Treatise on Domestic Education* appeared in 1886, followed by his autobiography *Recollections of Seventy Years* in 1888 and his *History* in 1891. His role at Wilberforce shifted to chancellor and dean of the Theological School (which eventually separated from Wilberforce and was later named for him). He attended international religious conferences in 1868 and 1881 and helped open the World Parliament of Religions at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He died at home only a few weeks after his speech at the exposition. The January 25, 1894, *Christian Recorder* eulogized him as a truly great man, and the AME Church instructed all congregations to set aside time to memorialize him at their January 28, 1894, services.

See also: African Methodist Episcopal Church; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Southern Free Blacks; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis; Williams, Peter Jr.

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## Pennington, James William Charles

James William Charles Pennington (1807/09–1871) was an abolitionist, activist, expertly trained blacksmith, educator, and historian and a Congregational, Presbyterian, and African Methodist Episcopal minister. Born into slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore in Queen Ann's County, Pennington was originally given the name James Pembroke. At the age of four, he, his brother, and his mother were given to the son of his master, who moved to Washington County in the western part of the state, 200 hundred miles away from his father.

Pennington made his decision to escape slavery in 1827. After arriving in Pennsylvania in his early twenties, he changed his name. He spent several months studying under a Quaker teacher who took him in and taught him to read and write, and by the early 1830s, he had gained fair proficiency in Greek and Latin. Then he moved to New York City, where he continued his education. Eventually, he studied theology and became a pastor.

In 1831, Brooklyn activists elected him a delegate to the first annual General Convention for the Improvement of the Free Colored People, held in Philadelphia, founded by AME Church bishop Richard Allen in 1830. He was again elected a delegate from 1832 to 1834. In early 1833, he took a position for \$200 a year as the teacher of a segregated school for Africans in New Town, Long Island, seven miles from his Brooklyn home. During 1834, he moved to Long Island, where he continued to pursue an education in night school.

On September 15, 1838, as a 31-year-old minister, Pennington conducted the wedding of the 21-year old refugee Frederick Douglass and his bride Anna Murray, a free woman of Baltimore, in New York City, just shortly after Douglass had escaped, with his bride's help, from enslavement in Maryland's Eastern Shore. Pennington, like Douglass, advocated independently run and controlled African seminaries, manual labor, and normal schools until desegregation in the Northern United States could be achieved. He thought that the colored people ought to do their part in educating men with the whites. The white people established schools for black and white; why should not the colored people start schools and workshops for white and black?

In addition to his involvement in the American Anti-Slavery Society, he became an advocate of African American abolitionist and religious organizations. An evangelical Christian, Pennington tied his work as an abolitionist to his Christian commitment. After some years, he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1834 to pursue theological studies in preparation for the Christian ministry. Because he was African, Yale's School of Divinity refused to enroll him as a regular student. Officials did allow him to attend lectures, but they did not permit him to participate in classes or to borrow books from the library. He successfully completed his training and qualified for the ministry, returned to Brooklyn in 1837, and received his ordination and license in 1838.

One year later, in 1839, he became the pastor of the newly formed African Congregational Church in New Town. In 1840, he left for Hartford, Connecticut, to become pastor of Talcott Street Colored Congregational Church. He was twice elected president of the Hartford Central Association of Congregational ministers, a body composed exclusively of Europeans. He also became a teacher at Hartford's Free African School. In 1848, he left Hartford to take up the highly prestigious pastorate of the First Colored Presbyterian Church in New York City.

From 1847 through 1855, Pennington served as pastor of Shiloh Presbyterian Church, one of the most respected African American Presbyterian congregations in the United States. During the 1840s and 1850s, Pennington held pastorates in African Congregational churches in Newtown, Long Island; Hartford, Connecticut; and New York City.

On September 8, 1841, he met with William Cooper Nell, David Ruggles, and John B. Vashon to organize the first annual convention of the American Reform Board of Disfranchised Commissioners, a radical organization in New York City that advocated for black male suffrage. And he became the founder and president of the Union Missionary Society in 1843 (which later became the American Missionary Society), an African-led organization created to evangelize Africa, Jamaica, and other parts of the world. Pennington also advocated for African emigration from the United States to Jamaica. His work as head of the American Missionary Society launched him into national and international prominence and led to his nomination to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England, at which he represented Connecticut in 1843. While in Europe he called for international pressure against the American enslaver regime and a boycott of all enslaver-produced American goods. He also denounced apartheid caste discrimination against non-enslaved Africans in the Northern United States. Later he was nominated the vice president of the National Convention of Colored Americans and Their Friends, which was held in Troy, New York, on October 6, 1847.

Some of his publications include his 1841 *A Text Book of the Origin and History of Colored People*, one of the first history textbooks for African American teachers, designed to meet the needs of teachers, such as himself, who were dedicated to the inspiration as well as instruction of African Americans. In it he asserted the African origin of ancient Kemetic civilization and the Kushite origin of Africans in the United States. He also argued against European claims

to superiority and established the African origins of western European civilization. In 1849, he authored an autobiographical memoir of slavery, *The Fugitive Blacksmith, or Events in the History of James W. C. Pennington, Pastor of a Presbyterian Church in New York, Formerly a Slave in the State of Maryland, United States* (1849). Pennington kept his status as a runaway slave secret until he published his autobiography. A few of his sermons and addresses were published as pamphlets.

In 1850, he traveled to Europe, where he remained until Scottish friends purchased his freedom for \$150 the following year. In that same year, the University of Heidelberg in Germany awarded him an honorary doctorate of divinity. He also attended the second World Peace Congress in Paris with fellow African abolitionist William Wells Brown and agreed with Brown that enslavement was a form of war against Africans, although he opposed armed struggle. Pennington insisted on the use of moral power and arbitration in international and other conflicts. He argued, however, that slavery, as a system, threatened world peace and must be eliminated. He also urged international economic boycotts of American commodities produced by enslaved African labor. With abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet, he also attended the World Peace Congress in Frankfurt, Germany, where he again urged international cooperation in the struggle against enslavement in the United States and the boycotting of American slave-produced goods. By the time he left Britain, he had become a leading figure in the international abolition, peace, and temperance movements.

Pennington's fame as the author of *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, an international antislavery lecturer, and a New York City civil rights leader caused Harriet Beecher Stowe to single him out in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) as an exemplary figure in the free African American community.

By 1853 he had also become a leading figure in the United States and the pastor of the largest African Presbyterian church in the country. That year, he was elected president of the National Free Colored People's Convention in Rochester—Douglass's base of operations—at which 140 delegates from eight states attended. He was also heavily involved in New York City's covert and illegal smuggling and relocation of African escapees from the enslaver dictatorships of the Southern states.

Pennington's reputation became damaged by accusations of misappropriation of funds, a bout with alcoholism

in the 1850s, and vigorous opposition from abolitionist supporters. Garrisonians felt competitive with Pennington over contributions received and envious of his stature in national and international abolitionism. These issues received considerable attention in the 1850s, but in 1854, Pennington suffered a more devastating blow. His brother, Stephen, and his two nephews were captured as fugitive slaves. Although Pennington raised enough money to purchase their freedom, his nephews had already been sold into bondage in the Deep South.

Even so, Pennington remained politically active. In 1855, Pennington appeared before the Colored National Council and advocated for education. Later that year, he became active in the desegregation movement after he was ejected from a public streetcar in New York City for failing to comply with segregated seating requirements. When he complained to police, Pennington was arrested and jailed, only to have the charges later dismissed. He later formed the Legal Rights Association (LRA) in New York City with the physician Dr. James McCune Smith, who was trained at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, and the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet. The LRA fought to end segregation in public accommodations, taking up cases of African Americans forced off public streetcars until the Civil War. Instead of armed resistance, he proposed forgiveness and the endurance of wrong. But during the Civil War, he reversed himself, advocating African American support of, and enlistment in, the armed struggle. After problems in New York City that took a toll on African Americans lives, and threats to his wife's safety from Europeans, from mostly Irish Catholic ruffians, he, like African nationalists a century later, argued for the study of the use of weapons and the right of self-defense.

Pennington returned to England and in 1861 edited and published the autobiography of J. H. Banks titled *A Narrative of Events in the Life of J. H. Banks, an Escaped Slave, from the Cotton State of Alabama in America*. Banks, who was living in Liverpool, had escaped from enslavement in Alabama. Pennington visited England three times during his career and lectured in London, Paris, and Brussels.

At the end of the Civil War, Pennington broke from the Presbyterians and joined the Missouri conference of the AME Church because of his impatience with the former's reluctance to get involved with uplift efforts for the freed Africans. He served in Mississippi with the AME Church. In the 1860s, he traveled, under the Congregationalists, to Portland, Maine, and under the Presbyterians to Jacksonville, Florida, where he died.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Douglass, Frederick; Fugitive Slaves

Constance Porter Uzelac

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## Poor, Salem

Born into slavery, Salem Poor (ca. 1750–?) was a celebrated hero of the American Revolution. In 1769, he bought his freedom for £27, a year's salary for a 1700s working-class person. He married Nancy, a free African American woman, and they had one son. Under the command of Gen. George Washington, Salem Poor was one of the Minutemen present at the Battle of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts and in the battles at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania; White Plains, New York; and Monmouth, New Jersey. Of the approximately 30 to 103 other African Americans at Bunker Hill with Poor, those named were the following: (1) Seasor and Pharaoh of Col. James Scamman's York County Regiment of Foot (infantry), who were among the troops who received the now legendary order "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes"; (2) Barzillai Lew of Chelmsford, a cooper (barrel maker) prior to the war who became a fifer and was already a veteran of the French and Indian War; and (3) Cuff Whittemore, who survived a musket ball shot through his hat and scavenged the sword of a British officer. With Poor at Valley Forge was the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, which

included 150 to 300 African Americans; one-fourth of the troops at White Plains, New York, were African American.

History credits Poor with killing British Lt. Col. James Abercrombie at Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Six months later, on December 5, 1775, 14 of the officers under whom Poor served petitioned the Massachusetts General Court to recognize Poor for his bravery in that battle. Of the 2,000 to 4,000 patriots present at Bunker Hill, no one else (white or African American) received this honor. Unfortunately, no record exists that he ever received the commendation, and history does not record what became of him after the war.

Although there was no commendation, Poor received accolades later. On July 4, 1876, in a speech for America's Centennial, George Washington Williams remembered Salem Poor, Peter Salem, and all the African American troops at Bunker Hill. In early July 1927, a call went out that July 17, 1927, should be declared "Peter Salem Day," to observe the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill and to honor both Salem and Poor for their exploits that day. The National Equal Rights League issued the call via an advertisement in the *Chicago Defender* (the largest African American newspaper of the time). America again invoked the name of Salem Poor for the Bicentennial. The U.S. Post Office honored him with a postage stamp on May 25, 1975, as part of the 1976 Bicentennial Series. Though court officials of the period ignored his service, modern-day federal workers recognized the "brave and gallant" soldier.

*See also:* American Revolution; Salem, Peter

Karen E. Sutton

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## Port Royal Experiment

The Port Royal Experiment is the term given to a humanitarian effort begun in South Carolina in late 1861 to determine whether former slaves would be self-sufficient, to

test the theory that free labor was more viable than slave labor, and to prepare former bondsmen for emancipation and eventual citizenship in the United States.

On November 7, 1861, a fleet of U.S. Naval ships engaged the Confederate position at Port Royal Sound in Beaufort County, South Carolina. The ensuing battle, called the Battle of Port Royal, was a swift and decisive victory for the Union war effort. The Confederate retreat left the Union in control of this coastal area and the adjacent region, referred to as the Sea Islands, for the duration of the Civil War. As a result of the battle, most of the white residents, including the planter families, evacuated and left behind the vast majority of their slave workforce. On this newly vacated land, which counted roughly 50 plantation properties, were estimated an 8,000 to 10,000 individuals who had recently been held in slavery.

Federal officials experienced grave concern over such a large number of slaves suddenly within their lines. Part of the concern was humanitarian; with the traditional social structure upset, and a large federal force garrisoning in the area, there was the potential for a severe shortage of food, medicine, and clothing. Another issue stemmed from political considerations. President Lincoln's government was not yet ready to take the step of emancipation, for fear of public dissent, but neither did they wish to return the slaves to their masters, where their labor could be exploited to aid the Confederate war effort. As a result, the decision was made to follow a precedent set earlier in the Civil War, and the abandoned slaves were declared "contrabands of war" or simply "contrabands." Another concern was financial; at the time of the Union occupation, a sizable crop of Sea Island cotton, a lucrative commodity denied Northern business since the outbreak of hostilities, was currently in harvest. An attempt to salvage the cotton and return the profit to the government coffers had to be made. The U.S. Department of the Treasury, headed by Secretary Salmon P. Chase, was given jurisdiction over matters relating to abandoned enemy property and thus over the contrabands and the cotton.

In late 1861 and early 1862, Secretary Chase sent several Treasury agents into the region to assess the contraband situation and attend to the cotton interest. The capture of Port Royal and plight of the slaves had made national news. Fearful for the slaves' welfare, a New York American Missionary Association sent their own representative to gather information. After receiving suggestions from these various



parties, Chase decided to back a cooperative venture between the government agencies and Boston and New York philanthropic organizations. The contrabands were placed back into the fields, tasked with harvesting the Sea Island cotton, and were provided wages for their labor. The federal officials' focus was on the cotton crop, and the civilian volunteers agreed to provide such services as public education; both sectors would continue to supply material necessities as able.

In March 1862, a steamer transported the first wave of Northern volunteers into the area; they were from Boston and New York and were called "Gideonites" by the Union soldiers. Although this was meant as a derogatory term, the name has become nearly synonymous with their goodwill efforts. With limited resources and limited support, these volunteers began to establish or organize free school and churches for the contrabands, issue supplies, or serve as advisors to a plantation community.

A month later, a Philadelphian contingent of Gideonites arrived, including Laura Towne, who would reside permanently in the area and found the Penn School. Other Gideonites followed, including Charlotte Forten, the first Northern African American schoolteacher to come south to educate the Port Royal slaves. On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on the Sea Islands, but for former slaves who were already involved in the Port Royal Experiment, conditions did not change significantly. Perhaps the most notable difference was that the term "contraband" was finally dropped and replaced with "freedmen."

Shortly after emancipation, the plantation land in the region was officially seized by the federal government for nonpayment of taxes. Many of those who supported the Port Royal Experiment lobbied the government to institute a program that would carve up these abandoned plantations into smaller plots, which would then be sold at a reduced rate to freedmen families. Instead, much of the plantation lands, numbering over 100,000 acres, was sold to private Northern investors, leaving only slightly more than 34,000 acres for purchase by the freedmen.

In March 1865, as the Civil War came to a close, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, simply called the Freedmen's Bureau, was established, superseding the agencies running the Port Royal Experiment. Former officers of the experiment found they were in a unique position to lend their skills and experience to this new agency and joined their ranks, many staying on until the disbanding of the Freedman's Bureau in 1872.

Although there were difficulties and setbacks, the Port Royal Experiment was ultimately deemed a success, and referred to later as a "Rehearsal for Reconstruction." Interaction between the former slaves and the civilian and military agencies helped to dispel negative cultural stereotypes. In their diaries and letters home, the Gideonites remarked at the intelligence and natural ability exhibited by their students. Despite serious cultural misunderstandings and episodes of graft from unscrupulous businessmen or outright abuse from federal soldiers, the contrabands worked diligently and efficiently, transitioning easily into the role of freed citizens.

*See also:* Forten, Charlotte; Union Army

*Michael Coker*

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## Pritchard, Gullah Jack

Jack Pritchard (?–1822), also known as Cooter Jack, was an African-born spiritualist principally involved in Denmark Vesey's slave conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1822. Not much is known about his origins except for a handful of firsthand accounts before and after the 1822 conspiracy trials. The claim in court records that he was "Angolan" (a Bantu-speaker from West-Central Africa) is likely due to Jack's connection to Gullah culture. Although Gullah culture is a polyglot of African cultures that did indeed include Bantu-speaking, West-Central African components (including Angolan), Gullahs were also connected to import streams from Sierra Leone and Senegambia. According to Zaphaniah Kingsley—a slave trader and planter residing near St. John's River in East Florida—Gullah Jack originated from an East African kingdom or city-state named M'Choolay Moreema. Though he may have originated in East Africa, Kingsley notes that Gullah Jack was

quite familiar with the languages spoken in Angola, and this perhaps explains his easy immersion into Gullah culture in South Carolina on the eve of the Vesey plot. Sold as a prisoner of war near the East African port town of Zanzibar, Gullah Jack was transported to east Florida and, eventually, to South Carolina in the early 1800s. In Charleston, Jack was a slave on the plantation owned by Paul Pritchard where he served as a field hand and, unbeknownst to his master, as an inspirational religious leader.

Gullah Jack's personal charisma and connection to the large number of Gullahs in and outside of Charleston explains his importance in the planning of the alleged plot. In addition, Jack had spiritual affiliations with slaves who attended services at Charleston's African Church and those who respected or feared the power of African conjure. The African Church, an offshoot of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, became one of the central points in the organization of the plot. It would be, however, Jack's role as a conjurer that proved most critical to Denmark Vesey and other conspirators. Through his contact with spiritual realms defined by African parameters, Jack was reputed to be invulnerable to harm. Having served as a "doctor" in Charleston for more than 15 years before the conspiracy, Jack's reputation as a mystic who could not be killed, shot, or caught allowed him to sway enslaved Africans of all backgrounds who respected him as both a conjurer and the "general" of the conspiracy.

Gullah Jack's influence extended into a number of spheres. According to court testimony and other contemporary sources, even country-born slaves—those born within the confines of North America—greatly feared his powers as a conjurer. In his most critical role, Jack was to distribute charms to slave combatants that were said to render them invincible. This particular activity was mirrored in a number of slave rebellions and conspiracies throughout the early modern Atlantic World. The fact that not one slave questioned the validity of Jack's powers during the course of the trials is testimony to the continuing connection they had to African spiritual beliefs and values.

For Gullah Jack's conjurations to work during the planned revolt, slaves had to first fast on corn and peanuts the night before the outbreak. The following morning, the rebels were to place Jack's charms, consisting of crab claws—or what the conspirators referred to as "cullahs"—in their mouths in order to be rendered invulnerable. Jack also presided over a ceremony in which a small group of

conspirators ate a half-cooked fowl to solidify their bond. Oathing ceremonies of this sort were common features of slave rebellions and conspiracies in the Americas.

Gullah Jack's role as a recruiter in the conspiracy was equally significant. The fear inspired by his abilities often became sufficient inducement to compel slaves to join the plot. During the trial of Julius Forrest, for example, Harry Haig testified that Jack had "charmed" both men into joining the conspiracy and that even after Jack was arrested, Haig felt that he was magically bound to not speak about the plot. More than likely, he feared Jack's alleged ability to produce poison and marshal other spiritual means to punish those who would betray the plot. The dread inspired by Jack's ability as a conjurer was not limited to blacks alone. One of his contingency plans, in case the rebellion failed, was so frightening that all mention of it was intentionally omitted from the version of the trial record made publicly available by judges Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker. Henry Haig, one of the conspirators who turned state's witness, told the court that Jack had planned to poison wells and water pumps throughout Charleston as a means of killing as many whites as possible.

Because of his considerable influence, Jack was able to recruit enough slaves to lead an entire unit, known as the Gullah Company. As revealed by court officials during Gullah Jack's trial, this unit was assigned to kill the city guard and capture the arsenal during the outbreak. Leading up to the appointed date for the rebellion, the Gullah Company met on a monthly basis from December 1821 until June 1822 to solidify their plans and involve more recruits from slaves living along the coastline and Sea Islands. To find additional enlistees for his company, Jack was sent by Monday Gell—a noted harness-maker and fellow leader of the plot—to get the support of slaves living in the countryside on the outskirts of Charleston. Jack returned having reportedly enlisted some 6,000 slaves from Goose Creek and Dorchester counties.

Once the plot unraveled, Jack momentarily went into hiding. He even went as far as to cut his mustache and otherwise disguise his appearance. Found guilty in connection to his role in the conspiracy, Gullah Jack Pritchard was hanged on July 12, 1822.

*See also:* Conjure; Slave Religion; Slave Resistance; Vesey, Denmark

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**Purvis, Robert**

Robert Purvis (1810–1898) was an influential abolitionist and activist in the 19th century, born in Charleston, South Carolina. Robert Purvis' father was William Purvis, a white man who had immigrated to America in 1790 and become a naturalized citizen. His mother was Harriet Judah, a freeborn black woman whose Moroccan mother had been kidnapped sold into slavery. Purvis's maternal grandfather was Baron Judah, a German. At age nine, Purvis was sent to Philadelphia for education in a private school. When his father died in 1826, Robert and his brothers, William Jr. and Joseph, inherited their father's estate. Of fair complexion, Purvis could have passed for white but chose to identify himself as black.

He and fellow black abolitionists James Forten and William Whipper drafted a memorial to the Pennsylvania legislature in 1832 opposing a bill barring the migration of free blacks into Pennsylvania. The following year, Purvis joined white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and others in founding the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1834, Purvis protested the "special passport" for colored persons issued to him for travel to England, and he was able to travel to England for a meeting of abolitionists on the customary American "full passport" given to white Americans. In 1835, he helped organize the Young Men's Antislavery Society and the American Moral Reform Society (AMRS). As an AMRS member, Purvis believed that self-improvement, religion, and temperance would win black equal rights. But by 1848, he realized no amount of education or self-help would end racial prejudice and slavery.

Purvis was also active in the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society and the Philadelphia Library of Colored Persons. Purvis opposed the American Colonization Society as a tool of slaveholders who wanted to rid the country of free blacks. In 1837, Pennsylvania approved a new state

constitution disenfranchising blacks. In response, Purvis wrote the "Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens to Protest Disenfranchisement in Pennsylvania." When he and wife Harriet sought to enter Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia for an abolitionist meeting, they were heckled because they were mistaken for an interracial couple.

In 1839, Purvis headed the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, an organization that aided fugitive slaves. From 1845 to 1850, Purvis served as the president of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Group. After he and his family were threatened during the 1842 Philadelphia riot, Purvis moved to Byberry in nearby Bucks County. In defiance of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, Purvis used his house as an Underground Railroad station. But Purvis also fought for the rights of free blacks. When his township excluded his children from attending local schools in 1853, Purvis refused to pay his taxes. The township later reversed its decision, allowing Purvis's children to attend the township school. In 1855, he protested the U.S. Supreme Court's Dred Scott case ruling. Purvis championed black troops in the Civil War; in 1863, he presented the regiment flag to the 6th regiment of the United States Colored Troops. A firm believer in human rights, Purvis promoted temperance, women's suffrage, and prison reform. Purvis died on April 15, 1898, in Philadelphia.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Forten, Charlotte; Forten, James; Garrison, William Lloyd; Southern Free Blacks; Underground Railroad

*Eric Ledell Smith*

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**Quakers (Society of Friends)**

The Quakers (Society of Friends) are a denomination of Christianity that took a relatively strong stance against slavery in the United States. Founded in England in the early

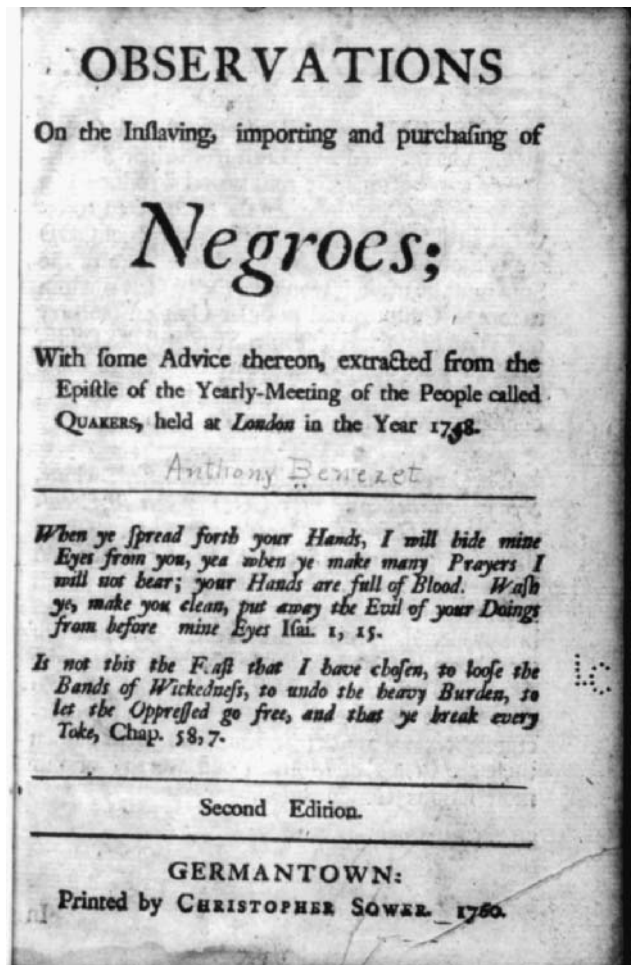
1650s by George Fox (1624–1691), the Society of Friends argued that one could find God through one's own Inner Light without help from a mediator. Rather than being preached to in a church, Quakers sat in a circle in meetinghouses, speaking only when they felt the urge to do so from their Inner Light. Fox's egalitarian belief that everyone could reach God on his or her own, given that each woman and man was equal in the eyes of their creator, resulted in many Quaker members feeling repulsed by slavery. By the 1670s, Fox contended that slavery ran contrary to the teachings of the Bible and represented an affront to God.

The antislavery sentiments expressed by George Fox in England found their way into Quaker meetinghouses in the United States. The earliest extant antislavery proclamation in the United States, dating from 1688, was signed by four Quakers in Germantown Pennsylvania. However, the stance of the Society of Friends in America toward slavery remained ambiguous through the 17th and early 18th centuries, and many Quakers continued to hold slaves.

During the 1750s, the Society of Friends became more decidedly opposed to the institution of slavery, particularly in certain regions of the country. John Woolman (1720–1772), a Quaker from New Jersey, wrote and spoke persuasively to Friends on the issue of slavery in the Northeast. His efforts had a significant impact on the views of Quakers: through the 1770s, Quaker meetings became increasingly hostile toward slavery, and in 1776, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting outlawed the ownership of slaves among its members.

However, during the early 19th century, Quakers continued to disagree over the issue of slavery. In the late 1820s, the Society of Friends split between the Orthodox Quakers, who altered the Quaker religion to resemble other denominations of Protestant Christianity, and Hicksite Quakers, who remained true to traditional Quaker practices. Whereas the Hicksite Quakers commonly opposed slavery in antebellum America, the Orthodox Quakers, who were more prone to follow the views of mainstream society, did not take a strong stand against slavery. Despite these inconsistencies, Quakers disproportionately filled the ranks of the abolitionist movement, including antislavery leaders of note such as Lucretia Mott and Prudence Crandall.

Although Quakers made up an important part of the antislavery struggle, the attitude of antebellum Quakers toward African Americans was not egalitarian. It was not until 1784 that a black woman was allowed to join Quaker meetinghouses, a decision that was not reached without debate.



Title page of Anthony Benezet's *Observations on the inslaving, importing and purchasing of Negroes... presented at the yearly meeting of Quakers in London, 1760.* (Library of Congress)

Even after the formal admittance of African Americans into the meetinghouse, African Americans were frequently disenfranchised, often being relegated to pews located in the back.

In spite of the limitations to Quaker abolitionism, the Society of Friends played an integral part in the antislavery movement. After emancipation, Quaker involvement in issues of race declined, and by the early 20th century, Quakers had become largely uninvolved in issues of race. Nevertheless, some Quakers continued to be associated with groups such as the NAACP. Although Quaker interest in issues of race grew during the Civil Rights movement, they did not play as central a part in the issue of race as they had in the antislavery crusade.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Crandall, Prudence; Cuffe, Paul; Underground Railroad; Woolman, John

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**Ray, Charles**

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Born in Falmouth, Massachusetts, Charles Ray (1807–1886) rose to prominence in the mid-19th century as a religious leader, abolitionist, suffragist, and newspaper editor. Although Ray was first employed as a boot maker, he experienced a religious awakening at the age of 23 and decided to pursue the ministry within the Methodist church. He was first educated at Wesleyan Academy in Massachusetts and then entered Wesleyan University in Connecticut, which offered training to Methodist teachers and preachers. Ray soon left Wesleyan, however, after he endured severe racism from his classmates. By 1833, he had relocated to New York City, and the following year he married Henrietta Regulus, who became the first president of New York's Ladies Literary Society, an organization dedicated to the advancement of black women. Although Henrietta died in 1836, Ray eventually married Charlotte Augusta Burroughs in 1840.

Shortly after his arrival in New York City, Charles Ray became active in the black community's vibrant political life, particularly regarding the issues of abolition and black male suffrage. In 1837, Ray, along with Philip A. Bell and Samuel Cornish, established the *Colored American* newspaper. In 1839, he assumed the editorship of the *Colored American*, a position he held until the paper folded in 1841. Through his role as editor of the paper, Ray gained national fame and was able to articulate his political views to a wide audience.

Even so, Charles Ray also worked within local and national organizations to advance the causes of abolition and suffrage. In 1837, he joined the Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society, an organization that was loosely affiliated with William Lloyd Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society. Soon thereafter, however, the young activist was required to take an important stand on the split within the abolitionist movement. At the 1840 American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) convention, the fragile antislavery coalition splintered into warring factions over a variety of issues, including the proper place of religion in the movement, the question of political participation, and the role of women. One group

sided with William Lloyd Garrison and remained within the AASS; the rest defected from the AASS and joined the New York City-based Tappan brothers, Arthur and Lewis, in forming the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS). Although most of the black New Yorkers supported the Tappan brothers, Charles Ray did not abandon William Lloyd Garrison; instead, Ray ultimately tried to remain neutral and maintain ties with both factions because he felt it was in the black community's best interest to affiliate with anyone who acted on behalf of the abolitionist cause. This event was especially significant because it revealed Ray's deep and abiding commitment to the abolition movement beyond personal or organizational strife.

In fact, Ray's personal commitment to abolition permeated every aspect of his life. In 1847, Ray joined the New York State Vigilance Committee (NYSVC), a biracial statewide organization dedicated to assisting and protecting fugitives founded by Quaker Isaac Hopper. He was also a strident opponent of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, a component of the Compromise of 1850 that imposed harsh regulations in an effort to prevent potential fugitives from fleeing bondage. His concern for the cause of fugitives was so strong that according to some sources, he was a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

In addition to his work on behalf of abolition, Charles Ray was also an ardent supporter of black suffrage rights. In New York State, where black men were subjected to strict (and usually unattainable) property qualifications in order to gain voting rights, Ray agitated unceasingly to obtain universal male suffrage. Beginning in June 1840, Ray and numerous other black activists routinely gathered in statewide "colored" suffrage conventions. They argued, in particular, that their disadvantaged political condition was the root of all the other problems facing the black community and that they must not be deterred in their mission to gain voting rights. Building on the momentum of these gatherings, which met almost annually until the outbreak of Civil War, activists bombarded the New York state legislatures with petitions demanding equal access to the vote. Although black New Yorkers did not gain the right to vote until the passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870, Ray and his fellow activists never surrendered the fight. Indeed, Ray not only advocated black suffrage rights but also supported both the Liberty Party and the Radical Abolition Party.

Despite Charles Ray's strong commitment to racial advancement, he did not always agree with his fellow activists

on the issue of political strategy. In 1843, Charles Ray represented New York at the National Colored Convention. Although he was a staunch abolitionist, Charles Ray attacked Henry Highland Garnet's famous "Address to the Slaves," arguing that it was too radical and that moral suasion would ultimately prevail. Garnet and Ray faced off again in 1849 at a public meeting held in New York City to discuss colonization. Although Garnet was increasingly concerned about the future of the black race in the United States and suggested that the black community should consider repatriation, Ray asserted that black people had a long and proud history in the United States that they should fight to protect. In fact, their differing views on the issue of colonization remained a point of contention between these old friends well into the 1860s.

Later in life, Charles Ray dedicated himself primarily to the issue of black education. In 1847, Ray helped to establish the Society for the Promotion of Education Among Colored Children (SPECC), and in 1850, he formed the American League of Colored Laborers, which advocated for education and training in mechanical skills as a method to improve conditions for black people. Three years later, he represented New York City at the 1853 Colored Convention and likewise focused his efforts on education. In 1859, he was elected as the president of SPECC and called for a thorough review of city-run schools in New York. While president of SPECC (from 1859 to 1865), Ray was instrumental in founding two elementary schools, fighting for the desegregation of all white schools, and lobbying for adequate support for all black schools.

Although Charles Ray is mostly known for his political activities and commitment to education, it is important to note that despite his early fight against racism within the American Christian community, he finally achieved his religious goals and was ordained as a pastor of New York's Bethesda Congregational Church in 1845, a position he held until his death. Charles Ray died in New York on August 15, 1886, at the age of 79.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); *Colored American* Newspaper; Colored Convention Movement; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Garnet, Henry Highland; Garrison, William Lloyd; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis; Underground Railroad

*Leslie M. Alexander*

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## Reason, Charles

Born to Haitian immigrant parents, Charles Reason (1818–1893) attended the African Free School as a young boy and developed a talent for mathematics at a very young age. When he was only 14, Reason became an instructor at the school and used his salary to hire additional tutors. Reason later decided to pursue a future in the ministry, but he was denied entrance into the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church based on his race. Disgusted, he left the church and enrolled at McGrawville College in upstate New York. Beyond his brother, Patrick (who became a famous artist and engraver), little is known about Charles Reason's private life, except that he was married and widowed three times, and his third wife was named Clorice Esteve.

Charles Reason began his political career in December 1833 when he joined the New York Anti-Slavery Society (NYASS), a branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which embraced a radical policy of immediate abolition and black civil rights. In August 1837, Reason became committed to the cause of suffrage and attended a public meeting of young black leaders. Three years later, he and activist Charles Ray issued a call for a state convention of black men to discuss strategies for gaining voting rights. The outcome was a series of state conventions, the first of which was held in Albany in August 1840. The following August, there was another state suffrage convention, where Charles Reason and Henry Highland Garnet were asked to draft a public address to the citizens of New York State. Unfortunately, the two men quickly found themselves at odds. Because the document was going to be widely circulated, Reason was disturbed by a passage that he felt might too

strongly suggest violent resistance and reflect poorly on the black population. In response, Garnet became extremely annoyed, and a raucous debate ensued. In fact, the discussion lasted all night and was not resolved until the following morning when the convention elected to adopt the controversial passage. Notably, although Reason had objected to words of resistance being issued to a wider audience, he drafted another address from the convention, which was directed specifically to the black community and urged them to action. Their message especially targeted black men who, Reason claimed, needed to stand up for their manhood and defend their families against injustice. There were also particularly strong words directed at black ministers who, in his view, had not sufficiently used their influence and position to advance the cause of the race.

Reason's commitment to black rights in the United States also fueled his opposition to colonization. In 1851, he attacked the Liberian Agricultural and Emigration Society, and in 1860, he again strongly criticized his childhood friend, Henry Highland Garnet, for his support of African colonization.

For Charles Reason, however, the key to race uplift was black education. In 1847, Reason and Charles Ray created

the Society for the Promotion of Education Among Colored Children, and he served as a school superintendent in 1848. He also advocated for the creation of manual labor and industrial schools and, in 1850, helped form the American League of Colored Laborers, which focused on industrial education. In 1849, Reason became the first black professor in the United States, when he was hired at New York Central College in McGrawville, New York. Yet just three years later, Reason resigned to become principal of Philadelphia's Institute for Colored Youth. The following year, he represented Pennsylvania at the National Colored Convention. However, in 1855, Charles Reason returned to New York City, where he served as a teacher and school administrator. In 1873, he launched a successful crusade against the city's policy of segregated schools. One year after Charles Reason retired, he died in New York City in 1893.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; African Free Schools; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Garnet, Henry Highland; Ray, Charles; Reason, Patrick

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## Reason, Patrick

Patrick Reason (1817–1857) was born in New York City to parents who had fled from Haiti following the Haitian Revolution. As a young boy, he attended the New York African Free School, where his talent for art was quickly recognized. He was soon apprenticed to a white engraver who taught him the craft. At the age of 13, Reason received attention for designing the frontispiece to a book documenting the history of the African Free School. His brother, Charles, was also uniquely talented in language and mathematics and went on to distinguish himself. However, beyond Charles, little is known about Patrick's personal life. It is not clear whether he ever married or had children. Instead, Patrick Reason made art and engravings his life's work, creating portraits of leading abolitionists during his career. Perhaps his most famous pieces were an engraving of the abolitionist symbol, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother," in 1835 as well



Engraving by Patrick Reason titled "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" 1835. (Library of Congress)

as his creation of a similar image titled “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister.”

While still a young man, Patrick Reason became more actively involved in the abolitionist movement. He joined the New York Anti-Slavery Society, a branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which embraced a radical policy of immediate abolition and black civil rights. When the Tappan brothers, Arthur and Lewis, who were wealthy white New York abolitionists, withdrew from the American Anti-Slavery Society over the nomination of a woman to the executive council, a number of black New Yorkers including Patrick Reason were part of this dissenting faction. Reason ultimately worked with the Tappans to create a new organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Beyond abolition, Patrick Reason was also deeply concerned with suffrage rights. On July 27, 1840, the black community in New York City gathered to discuss the state convention and select delegates. Under the leadership of Patrick Reason, the group attempted to pass resolutions supporting the convention and the need for political elevation. Unfortunately, however, the meeting quickly dissolved into argument and dissension. John Peterson offered a resolution stating that because of overwhelming prejudice, it was ridiculous to believe that black people could advance their cause through any separate action. Although Patrick Reason declared the motion out of order, Peterson and James McCune Smith refused to be silenced. During the rest of the night, Peterson and Smith apparently attempted to pass a series of resolutions opposing the state convention, but they were unable to gain adequate support. The debates persisted until late that night when they were forced to adjourn without any conclusive decisions.

Despite the debates plaguing the movement in the days before the convention, the state meeting in 1840 was apparently quite successful. When it convened in August in the city of Albany, African Americans came from throughout the state to discuss the condition of their people and make plans for obtaining the suffrage. The New York City delegation dominated the convention, with Charles Ray as the chairman and Theodore Wright, Charles Reason, Patrick Reason, and William Johnson holding influential positions. Patrick Reason was also one of the conveners of the second state convention in 1841. Throughout most of the 1840s, Reason committed to his art; however, he reemerged briefly in 1857 to support another suffrage convention. Sadly, the

1857 state convention was a dismal failure because the New York State legislature refused to consider their petitions. Shortly thereafter, in late 1857, Patrick Reason died in New York City.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; African Free Schools; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Ray, Charles; Reason, Charles; Smith, James McCune; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis; Wright, Theodore S.

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## Remond, Charles L.

Charles Lenox Remond (1810–1873) was an abolitionist, a newspaper agent, a Union Army recruiter, and one of America’s first great African American orators. Remond was born in Salem, Massachusetts, one year before his father, John Lenox Remond, a native of Curaçao, was admitted to citizenship by the Essex County Court. Both his parents, John and Nancy, were observers and participants in the antislavery movement.

Charles attended the local Salem schools and at 17 became an abolitionist. He was agent for the *Liberator* in 1832 and the *Weekly Advocate* and *Colored American* newspapers in 1837. He joined the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1834 and became a life member in the American Anti-Slavery Society. He was appointed one of the agents for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1838.

Remond was the first black abolitionist lecturer and was considered to be the most eloquent prior to Frederick Douglass. Beginning his lecturing career in Alfred, Maine, at the formation of a county antislavery society, Remond continued to travel and lecture throughout Maine, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. After several lecture experiences, he wrote to Thomas Cole of Boston that slavery was trembling and prejudice was fading, and he hoped that both would soon be buried.



In 1840, the American Anti-Slavery Society selected him to be one of their delegates to attend the World Anti-Slavery Society Convention in London on June 12, along with such notables as William Lloyd Garrison, Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, and William Adams. His ability to attend had been financially supported by funds raised by the Bangor (Maine) Female Anti-Slavery Society, the Portland Sewing Circle, and the Newport Young Ladies Juvenile Anti-Slavery Society. This support enabled him to remain in the United Kingdom for 18 months traveling and lecturing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

His voyage from the United States to Liverpool was marred by being denied a cabin and forced to travel in steerage. Arriving in London, he thought he would be able to remove discrimination from his thoughts until he learned that all women attending the convention were refused seating on the delegate floor. He, Garrison, and Rogers protested and sat in the gallery along with Lucretia Mott, Lady Anna Isabelle Milbanke Byron, and other women. While at the convention, he spoke at the anniversary meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. He was universally welcomed during his lecture tour.

He returned to Boston on December 4, 1841, and brought with him an address signed by Daniel O'Connell, Lord Mayor of Dublin, and 60,000 Irishmen urging Irishmen in the United States to oppose slavery by peaceful means and to insist on liberty for all regardless of color, creed, or country.

On February 22, 1842, Remond became the first black man to address the Massachusetts House of Representatives Legislative Committee in a speech titled "Rights of Colored Persons in Travelling," protesting his Jim Crow experiences on the railways and steamboats.

His sister, Sarah Parker, a budding abolitionist lecturer, accompanied him on his lectures through New York State in 1856. February 26, 1860, found him at an antislavery meeting in Worcester at the Old Briney Hall. He spoke following Frederick P. Brown, brother of John Brown.

Remond, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Lewis Hayden, and John S. Rock were appointed as commanders to serve as recruiting agents for the Union Army. Recruiting began February 16, 1863, in West End, a part of Boston, and on May 18, Gov. John A. Andres delivered the state and national colors to Col. Robert Gould Shaw, the commander of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.

At the National Convention of the American Equal Rights Association on May 9, 1867, Remond opposed the

word "colored" in one of the resolutions. He was elected one of the vice presidents of the organization and served on its finance committee. This same year, he was back lecturing in western New York and in Boston. His health was taking a toll on him as he suffered from consumption.

In a letter dated April 5, 1869, and published in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Remond wrote that he opposed colored schools with colored teachers and colored churches with colored ministers. In June 1856, he operated a "Ladies and Gentleman's Dining Room" at 5 Higginson Square, a family restaurant. This location had always been a Remond establishment, started by his father, John. Remond's second wife was Elizabeth Thayer Magee, and in 1866, they were living well in Wakefield, Massachusetts. He was appointed a stamp clerk in the Boston Customs House in 1871.

He died at his home in Wakefield on December 22, 1873. John T. Sargent, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison conducted the services. His wife Elizabeth died February 3, 1872. His survivors included two sons, Charles L. Jr. and Ernest R. Remond, and other family members including his sister, Sarah Parker Remond (Pintor), and his father, John. He was buried in Harmony Grove Cemetery, Salem, Massachusetts.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Massachusetts 54th Regiment; Remond, Sarah Parker

*Constance Porter Uzelac*

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## **Remond, Sarah Parker**

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Dr. Sarah Parker Remond (1826-1894), a freeborn antislavery lecturer, writer, and medical doctor, was the first black woman to tour and lecture across Great Britain on behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society. She was a rarity on the international lecturing circuit: educated, passionate, articulate, and black; consequently, her presence generated excitement and attention and inspired numerous press articles, pamphlets, and financial contributions. The devoutly moral

antislavery message that she delivered was one that she had been learning ever since she was a young child growing up in Salem, Massachusetts.

Remond was one of eight children born to John, an immigrant from the Dutch Island of Curacao, and Nancy, a freeborn fancy cake maker whose father had fought in the Continental Army. In addition to owning a successful catering, provisioning, and hairdressing business, the Remonds were part of an elite group of middle-class, educated, freeborn antislavery activists: Sarah's father was a life member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and was active in local politics and school desegregation; her mother and sisters were active members of the Massachusetts and Salem female antislavery societies; and her older brother, Charles Lenox, was the first black lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society and was considered to be the nation's leading black abolitionist up until around 1842 (coincidentally, this is the same year that Frederick Douglass first appeared on the lecturing circuit). That same year, he became the first person of color to testify before the Massachusetts legislature on behalf of the abolitionists against segregated seating on public conveyances. In addition, three of her sisters, Maritcha, Caroline, and Cecilia, co-owned the successful Ladies Hair Work Salon in Salem. Her family was involved in a tight network of abolitionists that included the Philadelphia-based Forten family (Charlotte Forten Grimke lived with Charles and his wife while attending high school), the New York-based Lyons family (conductors on the Underground Railroad who temporarily relocated to Salem when their home was attacked during the New York Draft Riots), William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips.

Although her family was prosperous and successful, they were black, and life in the antebellum North included frequent exposure to racism and segregation. In 1835, Remond and her sister passed the qualifying examination and entered Salem High School. Less than a week later, they were forced to withdraw because of a decision by the segregationist school committee. Her father responded in two ways: first, by relocating the family to Rhode Island so that the girls could attend a private school for blacks, and second, by mounting a successful six-year campaign to desegregate the Salem school system. When Remond and her family finally returned to Salem in 1841, she decided to continue her education through less-structured means, which included reading books, newspapers, and pamphlets and attending antislavery lectures and cultural events.

In 1853, at Boston's Howard Athenaeum, she participated in her first act of documented civil disobedience when she was forcibly ejected after refusing to sit in the segregated gallery. In the midst of the ejection, she was injured by the police and later successfully sued the owners of the theater for \$500 in damages. Three years later, with Abby Kelly Foster's encouragement, she joined her brother and Foster and began lecturing with the American Anti-Slavery Society. Although she was inexperienced, she quickly became one of their most persuasive and effective speakers, and though she had never experienced slavery, she passionately spoke out against the inhumane treatment of slaves and the sexual exploitation of enslaved women. Her passion and commitment to the cause was able to motivate and persuade audiences to financially support the abolitionist movement.

In 1848, Charles became the first black man to travel to Great Britain on behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society; 10 years later, they invited Remond to take their message abroad. She arrived in 1859 and began a speaking tour that included more than 45 lectures in 18 cities and towns. As a result of the tour, her popularity, and her success, she was one of the few people primarily responsible for generating British support for the abolitionist movement. In addition, she began pursuing her degree and attended the Bedford College for Ladies (now part of the University of London). At the height of the Civil War, she began lecturing to raise money to support the Union Army, and when the war ended, she changed her message and began speaking out on the behalf of the Freedman's Aid Association. One year later, she moved to Florence, Italy, and began studying medicine at the Santa Maria Nuova Hospital. When she received her medical diploma in 1871, she began a second career practicing medicine in Italy that lasted for close to 20 years. Six years later, she married Lazzaro Pinter, a native of Sardinia. Although Remond never returned to America, her life and experiences provide a model of how the free black community trained, nurtured, and supported those few women who chose to speak up and out.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Remond, Charles L.

*Karsonya Wise Whitehead*

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## Republican Party

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One of the two major political parties in the United States, the Republican Party or “Grand Old Party” (GOP) was the first political party supported by African Americans, who embraced the party after the American Civil War for its role in ending slavery, for giving freedmen the vote, and for encouraging black education. The Republican Party emerged as a response to the intensification of the sectional crisis during the 1850s. In 1854, a coalition of former Whigs, Free Soilers, and disillusioned Northern Democrats founded the Republican Party in meetings held in Wisconsin and Michigan. Under the leadership of their nominee, Abraham Lincoln, the Republicans won the presidential election of 1860.

Although the Democratic Party attacked the Republicans as “black Republicans,” as standard bearers of abolition and black equality, abolitionists were a minority faction within the party. Most Republicans, including Lincoln, opposed the idea of slavery and its expansion; however, in order to preserve the Union, they were willing to see slavery continue if it remained confined to the South. Only the most radical Republicans believed blacks should enjoy full political and social equality with whites. It took prolonged and bloody civil war to convince most Republicans to support black emancipation.

During the Civil War, the Republicans led the Union to victory and introduced measures to weaken and eliminate slavery. The most important of these initiatives was the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, which proclaimed freedom for all slaves still under Confederate control. Emancipation also meant that slavery would end once the Union won the war. Congress recognized this fact in 1865 by passing the Thirteenth Amendment, which finally abolished slavery in the United States.

Wartime factions within the Republican Party engaged in disputes concerning the conduct of the war but especially on the conduct of the subsequent peace. Radicals believed

Reconstruction must destroy the power of the old slave-owning elite and ensure freedom, suffrage, and civil rights for African Americans. Moderates believed Reconstruction would be successful only if the North pursued a policy of reconciliation with the defeated states, which would have to accept the Thirteenth Amendment and some basic rights for black people, excluding the vote. Lincoln’s death and the pro-Southern policies of President Andrew Johnson allowed Republican Radicals in Congress to take control of Reconstruction policies.

The Radicals overrode Johnson’s opposition to pass the Freedmen’s Bureau bill, civil rights legislation, and the Fourteenth Amendment. They also pushed to build pro-Republican state governments in the South through a combination of military pressure and black male suffrage, which allowed Republicans to win state offices across the South. Among the new officeholders were many African American national, state, and local politicians.

Radical successes were short-lived, however. As early as 1868, Republicans were losing their enthusiasm for Reconstruction and particularly for black suffrage and civil rights, issues that lost white votes to the Democrats. Republican president Ulysses S. Grant used his power to fight Ku Klux Klan violence in the South but failed to stem the backlash against Reconstruction. Republicans held onto power in 1877 as a result of the political maneuvering that followed the deadlocked presidential election of 1876, but the outcome was the end of Reconstruction and the reestablishment of Democratic control throughout the South.

After Reconstruction, African Americans remained loyal to the Republican Party. Blacks remained an important part of the GOP constituency, especially in the South, where 90 percent of the black population still lived in 1900. Black Republicans in the South formed an alliance with the few whites who were still willing to work with them. This “black and tan” coalition opposed the “lily-whites,” Republicans who wanted to build a purely white-controlled party in the South, for control of the GOP in Dixie. In the end, the Republicans failed to break the Democratic hold on political power in the South and alienated black voters. Alienation and the migration of large numbers of blacks to the North loosened the traditional bond between blacks and the GOP. The Great Depression and the popularity of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal finally gave the Democratic Party a majority of the black vote in the presidential election of 1936.

During the 1950s and 1960s, anti-communism and a philosophy of limited government increasingly formed the core of the GOP agenda. Republican conservatism found a home in the South, where the growth of the Civil Rights movement and its growing identification with the Democratic Party led many Southern Democrats to switch their allegiance to the GOP. Republican presidential candidates pursued the votes of conservative white Southerners and working-class whites in the North, the same groups that had once been the core of the Democratic vote. The cultural and economic values of these voting blocks often conflicted with the political and economic goals of African Americans, who saw the Democratic Party as the party most supportive of civil rights and federal policies that addressed issues important to black communities: poverty, jobs, judicial inequities, and education.

With the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in the 1980s, the conservative triumph in the GOP was complete. Reagan attacked government as the problem, not the solution to America's problems, and opposed policies that enjoyed widespread African American support: extension of the Voting Rights Act; the creation of a national holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; affirmative action; and antiapartheid legislation.

After Reagan, the Republican administrations of George H. W. Bush and his son, George W. Bush, failed to increase African American support for the Republicans. President George H. W. Bush's appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court angered most African Americans, who, even though Thomas was black, opposed the conservative appointee as someone likely to seek to overturn federal policies favorable to African Americans. George W. Bush's controversial victory in the 2000 presidential election further angered many African Americans, who believed the Republicans had "stolen" the election by engaging in voter fraud to disenfranchise black voters. Although the junior Bush's administration did see the appointment of two African Americans (Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice) as succeeding secretaries of state, the Republicans continued to lose African American votes: only 11 percent of African Americans voted for George W. Bush in the 2004 election. The unpopularity of the Bush administration in 2008, combined with the Democrats' candidate for president, Barack Obama, the first black presidential nominee of either major political party, made the Republican relationship with African Americans more tenuous than at any other time in the history of the GOP.

*See also:* Compromise of 1877; Hayes, Rutherford B.; Radical Republicans; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Revels, Hiram

*Ridgeway Boyd Murphree*

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## Ruggles, David

David Ruggles (1810–1849), born free in Norwich, Connecticut, became an antislavery activist, journalist and hydrotherapist. The oldest of seven children born to David Sr., a blacksmith, and Nancy, a well-known caterer, Ruggles attended the Sabbath School for the Poor in Norwich. In 1827, the same year that New York freed its slaves, Ruggles moved to New York City, where he started a grocery store. From 1829 until 1933, his grocery business flourished; but in 1833, he abandoned his business to take up the abolitionist cause.

Ruggles began his abolitionist career as a canvassing agent and militant spokesman for the *Emancipator and Journal of Public Morals*, the official weekly of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He spoke on such issues as colonization, black education, and the black national convention movement. Local organizations and churches soon requested Ruggles as a speaker, and he used these opportunities to urge blacks to improve their lives and support abolition. In 1834, Ruggles opened the first known black-owned bookstore and sold antislavery materials.

With the publication of *Extinguisher, Extinguished... or David M. Reese, M.D. "Used Up,"* Ruggles began his journalistic career. In this pamphlet, he lashed out at David M. Reese, a local white proponent of colonization. Vehemently opposed to colonization, Ruggles considered it whites' ploy to rid the country of free blacks in order to perpetuate the

institution of slavery. Using his own press, Ruggles published another pamphlet titled *The Abrogation of the Seventh Commandment by the American Churches* (1835), in which he accused slave owners of violating the seventh commandment when they forcibly copulated with slave women, and in which he lashed out at Southern white women who looked askance at their male relatives who fathered and misused slave offspring.

In January and February 1835, Ruggles published five searing antislavery articles in the *Emancipator*. In these, he urged blacks to subscribe to antislavery journals because subscriptions aided the antislavery cause and kept the black press alive. Deflecting blacks' excuses for not buying newspapers, Ruggles warned blacks that they had a moral obligation to condemn slavery.

Ruggles and others organized the New York Committee of Vigilance in late 1835. He solicited and collected funds for the Committee, went to private residences to inform hidden slaves of their freedom, sought the arrest of suspected slave traders, and personally aided many slaves on the Underground Railroad—the most famous of whom was Frederick Douglass. Ruggles was often incarcerated as an accessory to kidnappings as he helped to free fugitives. With the legal support of the New York Manumission Society, the New York Committee of Vigilance, under Ruggles's direction, petitioned the New York City government to grant jury trials to fugitives for the purpose of establishing their identity.

So intent was Ruggles in rooting out slavery that in 1838, he founded the *Mirror of Liberty*, considered the first black American magazine; from 1838 to 1841, this popular periodical gave accounts of kidnappings, court cases, and other antislavery activities. In his *Colored American* columns, he wrote about kidnappings on interstate transportation, and, in 1839, he listed in *Slaveholders Directory* the names and addresses of all those involved in kidnapping. Ruggles also published an article in the *Colored American* in 1838 that damaged his abolitionist career. The article accused John Russell, a local black man, of trafficking in slaves. Russell sued Ruggles, the newspaper, and Samuel Cornish, the *Colored American's* owner, for libel and won \$600. Cornish subsequently refused to publish Ruggles's letter of self-vindication and sought assistance in removing Ruggles from his post as secretary of the Committee of Vigilance. Exorbitant fines, failing health, and poor

eyesight hastened Ruggles's retirement from the abolitionist movement.

With the help of Lydia Maria Child, Ruggles, now destitute, went to Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1842 to live. As a cure for his ailments, he tried hydrotherapy, which Vincent Priessnitz, a native of Austrian Silesia, had practiced. Ruggles's eyesight and general health improved with water treatment. The results encouraged him to practice the water cure on others. The Northampton Association aided him in housing his practice in a refurbished watermill, the first known water-cure facility in America. His patients came to him from across America.

Ruggles dedicated his life to helping others. When he died at 39 years of age, his body was returned to Connecticut for burial.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; *The Emancipator*; Fugitive Slaves; Underground Railroad

Rita Bernice Dandridge

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## Russwurm, John

John Russwurm (1799–1851) was born in Jamaica in 1799 to an enslaved mother and a white merchant father. His father moved young Russwurm to Quebec when he was only 8 years old, yet shortly thereafter, they moved to Maine, where his father married another woman. Russwurm lived in Maine and was educated at the Hebron Academy. In 1824, he enrolled in Bowdoin College, and when he graduated in 1826, Russwurm was among the first black college graduates in the United States. Russwurm even delivered the commencement address, which was titled "The Condition and Prospects of Haiti." The speech's focus on Haiti reflected Russwurm's political beliefs and foreshadowed his future commitment to black voluntary emigration. Russwurm eventually made emigration and public communication his life's work, becoming a staunch emigrationist and influential

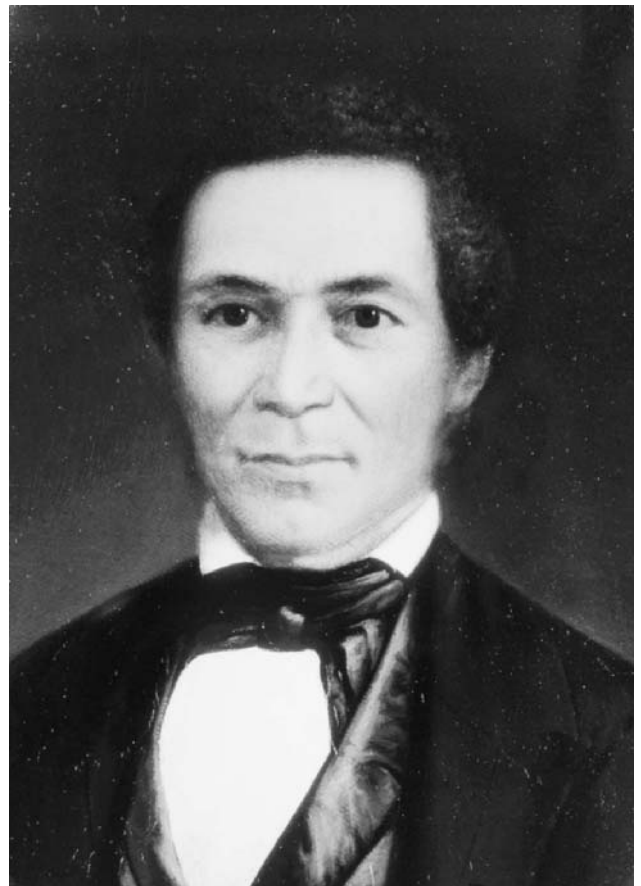
leader in the United States and Liberia. He made a particular impact on black political discourse in the antebellum era, by creating and publishing two black newspapers. Immediately after graduation, Russwurm moved to Boston, where he taught at the Primus Hall School for black children.

By 1827, the year of legal emancipation in New York State, John Russwurm had relocated to New York City and was chosen to edit *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States. *Freedom's Journal* was founded, in part, as a response to the negative depictions of blacks that regularly appeared in mainstream newspapers. Thus, when the first issue of *Freedom's Journal* appeared on March 16, 1827, the editors wanted it to be the voice of the black leadership and hoped that it would present an accurate view of their people to combat the continual racist onslaught on their character. With the assistance of his coeditor, Samuel Cornish, Russwurm built *Freedom's Journal* into a powerful political tool. Its influence reached far beyond New York, and from its inception, *Freedom's Journal* had the support of some of the most recognized black activists in the United States, including Bostonian David Walker.

*Freedom's Journal* was particularly active in the movement to uplift the race by improving black education. John Russwurm was especially committed to education, and he became involved in various movements designed to encourage black children to attend school. In 1828, he became the secretary for the African Dorcas Association, an organization designed to provide necessities to young children who hoped to attend school. In 1829, John Russwurm wrote in the pages of *Freedom's Journal* that more effort should be directed toward the education of youth because the future was in their hands. Respectability was a matter of serious concern for Russwurm, who also routinely denounced the tradition of black parades. Initially, some black leaders seemed convinced of the merits of parading, and the issue became the center of serious debate in the 19th century. Most famously, Russwurm gave a biting indictment of blacks in Brooklyn for holding an emancipation parade in 1828. Although they had participated in the New York celebration, Brooklynites had resolved to have a parade in the streets of their own neighborhood. Russwurm argued that the Brooklyn parade reflected poor taste and brought out the lower members of society, but he was particularly frustrated by the behavior of women. He seemed to be especially concerned with the frivolity and perceived

lack of morality that allegedly accompanied the Brooklyn parade. He used *Freedom's Journal* to urge his brethren to consider their actions more seriously, particularly to consider whether their time and money might be put to some more beneficial use.

Although Russwurm was deeply committed to respectability and proper conduct, his most powerful commitment was to the cause of emigration. In fact, it was his belief in black migration that caused *Freedom's Journal* to suffer from internal division. John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish had both been staunch emigrationists originally, but the rising tide of racism within the colonization movement caused Cornish to reconsider his position. Cornish began to use *Freedom's Journal* to speak out against colonization, and as an alternative, he advocated black settlement in rural areas. However, John Russwurm continued to support emigration, and their conflicting ideologies were doomed to



John B. Russwurm was one of the first black college graduates in the United States and was a co-founder of *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in America. (National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/Art Resource, NY)

collide. By September 1827, Cornish had resigned from the paper, and Russwurm continued to edit *Freedom's Journal* on his own. Although *Freedom's Journal* hung on until March 1829, Russwurm received many complaints about the quality and content of the paper.

In the last issues of the paper, Russwurm publicly endorsed colonization. Despite the colonizationists' severe racism, Russwurm's argument contained a logical and accurate critique of life in the United States in which he argued that the mark of race would always prevent black people from achieving full equality. He advocated that blacks migrate to Liberia rather than remain in the United States, where race prevented black men from reaching their potential. The black community responded angrily because they felt he had become a pawn of the white racist members of the American Colonization Society. In fact, following his announcement about his plans to repatriate, the black community expressed their displeasure in the form of a riot. Chanting "traitor" throughout the Five Points neighborhood, a group of black folks hung an effigy of Russwurm in the square that they proceeded to pelt with rocks and set ablaze. The final issue of *Freedom's Journal* appeared on March 28, 1829. Russwurm's departing words were bitter, stating that he had been mistreated and misunderstood by his community.

Just a few months after *Freedom's Journal* disintegrated, John Russwurm accepted a position as superintendent of schools in Liberia. He was well received in Africa; he edited a newspaper, the *Liberia Herald*, and in 1833, he married Sarah McGill, who was the daughter of the lieutenant governor of Monrovia. Together, they had three sons and a daughter. By 1836, he had become governor of the Maryland colony in Cape Palmas, and he remained in that position until his death in 1851.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; African Dorcas Association; American Colonization Society; Cornish, Samuel; *Freedom's Journal*; Liberia

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Salem, Peter

Born into slavery in Framingham, Massachusetts, Peter Salem (1750–1816) was a hero of the American Revolution. Salem's original owner was Jeremy Belknap, a New England historian. Peter's surname Salem comes from the town of Salem, Massachusetts, where Belknap lived prior to moving to Framingham. Jeremy sold Peter to Maj. Lawson Buckminster, who allowed Peter to enlist when the Revolutionary War began. Salem first saw action at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. He was part of Capt. Simon Edgel's Framingham Minuteman Company. Other African Americans with Salem at Lexington and Concord were Private Pompey, Joshua Boylston's Prince, Cato Stedman, Cato Bordman, Pomp Blackman, and Prince Estabrook.

History remembers Salem for killing the British general John Pitcairn at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. With Salem at Bunker Hill were Season and Pharaoh of Col. James Scamman's York County Regiment of Foot (infantry). They received the legendary order "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!" That order symbolizes the state of mind of the poorly outfitted colonists facing powerful British forces. Also present was Barzillai Lew of Chelmsford. A cooper (barrel maker) before the war, he became a fifer and was already a veteran of the French and Indian War. Yet another African American patriot warrior present at the Battle of Bunker Hill was Cuff Whittemore. He survived a musket ball shot through his hat and went on to scavenge the sword of a British officer.

Unlike Salem Poor, Peter Salem received a commendation from the Massachusetts General Court for his bravery at Bunker Hill. When General Washington issued a decree that forbade military recruiters to enlist slaves, they almost discharged Salem. To prevent this, Belknap freed Salem outright. Washington reversed himself after Lord Dunmore issued his proclamation offering freedom to Patriot slaves.

Salem remained in the army until the end of the war in 1783, after which he settled in a cabin that he built himself in Leicester, Massachusetts, and became a cane weaver. Some time later, he returned to Framingham and died there in the poor house on August 16, 1816. In 1882, the citizens of Framingham, Massachusetts, erected a monument there in Salem's honor.

John Trumbull allegedly immortalized Salem as part of his famous 1786 painting *The Death of General Warren at*



Engraving titled Peter Salem Shooting Major Pitcairn at Bunker Hill, by James E. Taylor, 1899. (Bettmann/Corbis)

*the Battle of Bunker's Hill.* The detail containing that image became a six-cent postage stamp on October 18, 1968. The post office issued the stamp in memory of John Trumbull, as part of the American Artist series. There is some controversy as to the accuracy of Trumbull's painting. We know that about 30 to 103 African Americans were present at the battle, and the one pictured in Trumbull's painting may not be Salem. Recent scholarship says the man immortalized in Trumbull's painting is Asaba, the personal manservant of Lieutenant Grosvenor of Connecticut. Whether or not Trumbull's likeness is actually him, Peter Salem remains a hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill and worthy of our recognition and praise.

See also: American Revolution; Continental Army; Poor, Salem

Karen E. Sutton

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## Saunders, Prince

Prince Saunders (1775?–1839) was an activist, abolitionist, and advocate for immigration to Haitian who influenced black politics in the 19th century. Born free in Lebanon, Connecticut, Saunders spent some of his youth in Vermont and worked as a teacher in rural Connecticut for the African School of Colchester, Connecticut, for several years before moving to Boston in 1808. There, he joined the small but growing free black community, serving as secretary to the African Masonic Lodge under community leader Prince Hall.



In Boston, Saunders continued his career as a teacher for that city's African School, working alongside such prominent Boston blacks as Rev. Thomas Paul. Saunders and Paul sought to improve the educational opportunities for the city's black community and secure support for the school. Saunders negotiated a \$4,000 annual grant for three additional schools in Boston's African School system.

However, Saunders became a supporter of Paul Cuffe, the famous African American sea captain and organizer of African colonization. In 1815, Cuffe transported 38 Boston blacks to West Africa. Interested in moving to Britain's Sierra Leone colony in West Africa, Saunders sailed to London to make additional inquiries. In London, Saunders met philanthropist and abolitionist William Wilberforce, who convinced him that Haiti and the Haitian king, Henri Christophe, needed his skills more urgently than Africa.

Saunders traveled to Haiti in 1815 as part of a delegation of foreigners who came to introduce new farming methods, schools, the English language, and the Protestant religion. Saunders became an advisor to King Henri Christophe and recruited teachers for the nation's schools. Christophe believed the future of his nation depended on the education and economic welfare of the people and instituted universal education for all Haitian citizens.

In the late 1810s, Saunders was dispatched by Christophe on a speaking tour of England and the United States to promote the kingdom. Coinciding with these tours, Saunders published a collection of documents showcasing Christophe's rule, called *Haytian Papers*, first in London and then in Boston. Saunders secured prestigious speaking engagements at the Augustinian Society, a Philadelphia African American elite organization, about the kingdom's progress. He also spoke to the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery in 1818 in Philadelphia, suggesting Haiti as a potential site of African American emigration.

Conditions in the United States during the 1810s pushed many Northern African Americans to consider leaving the United States. Despite the freedom gained after the American Revolution, many free blacks faced a society retreating from its own revolutionary promises of liberty and equality. This retreat took place throughout Northern cities during the first decade of the 1800s and was characterized by open hostility toward free blacks, which manifested itself in the rising street violence against blacks and in the denial of black suffrage rights.

When Saunders arrived in the United States on his promotional tour to discuss Haiti's attractions as an African American emigrant destination, he was met with enthusiastic audiences. This enthusiasm for Haiti was in marked contrast to the resistance proponents of African colonization encountered. Neither Paul Cuffe's Sierra Leone project nor the elite white American Colonization Society's (ACS) Liberian project succeeded in their contemporary missions of sending substantial numbers of free blacks out of the United States.

After Saunders' trip to the U.S., he reported to Christophe that hundreds of African Americans were eager to emigrate from New England and the Middle States. Before the migration scheme could commence, however, Christophe committed suicide in the face of a rebellion, ending Prince Saunders's formal role in sending American blacks to Haiti. Even so, Saunders's early efforts informed subsequent emigration projects. In the 1820s, President Jean Pierre Boyer, the leader of a united Haiti following the deaths of President Alexandre Petion and King Henri Christophe, established an emigration project that brought between 6,000 and 13,000 African Americans to Haiti.

Saunders continued his association with Haiti for the remainder of his life. According to some accounts, Saunders served in President Jean Pierre Boyer's administration as attorney general. When Prince Saunders died in Port-au-Prince in 1839, eulogies commemorating the work he did on behalf of African Americans and for the Haitian nation were published widely.

*See also:* Cuffe, Paul; Destination, Haiti

Sara Fanning

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## Scott, Dred

Dred Scott (ca. 1800–1857) was a slave whose suit for freedom would become one of the most infamous and divisive court cases in American history. Scott first went to the courts in 1846, arguing that residence in the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin had made him a free man. Although Scott lost his initial suit on a technicality, the case made it to the Supreme Court 11 years later. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's 1857 ruling in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* kept Scott in slavery, denied the citizenship of African Americans, and exacerbated the division between North and South.

Scott was born around 1800 in Virginia. He moved with Peter Blow, his master, to St. Louis in 1830. In 1832, Scott was sold to Dr. John Emerson, a surgeon in the U.S. Army. Scott moved with Emerson from Missouri to the free state of Illinois in 1834 and later to the free territory of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, Scott met and married Harriet Robinson, who was subsequently purchased by Emerson. In 1837, Emerson was transferred south, first to Missouri and then to Florida, taking his slaves with him. Dr. Emerson died in 1843, leaving all his possessions to his wife, Eliza, and naming his brother-in-law, John Sanford of St. Louis, executor of the estate. Eliza Emerson hired Scott out to relations and friends for three years. In 1846, Scott tried to buy his freedom, along with Harriet's. Mrs. Emerson refused, prompting Dred Scott to sue for freedom in the Missouri circuit court in April 1846.

In March 1857, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney delivered the majority opinion in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. Taney, a proslavery judge from Maryland, considered his ruling the final word on the slavery controversy. First, his majority opinion stated the unconstitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, passed in 1820, which had ruled that territories north of 36°30' latitude (the southern border of Missouri) would not allow slavery. Although neither Illinois nor Wisconsin allowed slavery, Taney ruled that the Missouri Compromise violated slave owners' right to the free movement of property throughout the free territories. Most importantly, he argued that the federal government had no constitutional right to involve itself with the institution of slavery in any of its states or territories.

In his zeal to kill the slavery controversy and uphold the Southern point of view, Taney went a step further, ruling

that free and enslaved African Americans were not citizens. Although the Declaration of Independence had suggested that "all men are created equal," Taney argued that African Americans were not intended to be considered as part of the body politic and therefore were not entitled to civil rights.

Southern Democrats immediately lauded Taney's decision, elated that the Southern point of view had been elevated to the highest law of the land. Northern Republicans and abolitionists, however, were aghast. Taney had upheld the institution of slavery and provided it with a judicial backing. Although Taney did not go so far as to sanction the spread of slavery to all the states and territories, including those in the North, many feared that it was but a small step from Taney's decision to this eventuality.

The Dred Scott decision must be viewed in the context of the turbulent 1850s, which marked the apex of a 30-year battle between North and South over the legality of slavery and its place in American life. The Compromise of 1850, the work of Sen. Henry Clay, was meant to calm both Northern and Southern tempers. The compromise, however, contained a provision for the strengthening of the Fugitive Slave Act, originally passed in 1793. The stronger bill required Northerners to aid in the capture of suspected fugitives from slavery or suffer federal prosecution. The battle over the territory of Kansas in the mid-1850s and the caning of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner by a Southern congressman in 1856 further alienated the sections and gave fodder to Northern fears of a "slave power conspiracy" to subvert the principles of free government and make slavery a national institution. The Dred Scott decision confirmed the North's deepest fears. Having already witnessed the proslavery inclinations of Congress and President James Buchanan, the North now had to resign itself to a judiciary branch that was staunchly proslavery. The entire government, it seemed, was beholden to the slave power. Further compromise seemed all but impossible.

Peter Blow's sons bought Scott's freedom soon after the verdict was returned. Scott died less than a year after the decision.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1866; *Dred Scott v. Sandford*; Fourteenth Amendment; Missouri Compromise

*K. Stephen Prince Jr.*

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## Second Great Awakening

The “Second Great Awakening” refers to a pattern of Protestant revivals that occurred between 1790 and 1830 throughout the eastern half of the United States. Its title derives from the first Great Awakening, which occurred during the mid-18th century, largely in New England and the Middle Colonies. Although both awakenings emphasized revival worship patterns, including individual testimonials, charismatic preaching, and ministerial itinerancy, the Second Great Awakening codified many of these tactics, producing several new denominations and encouraging sweeping social reform movements.

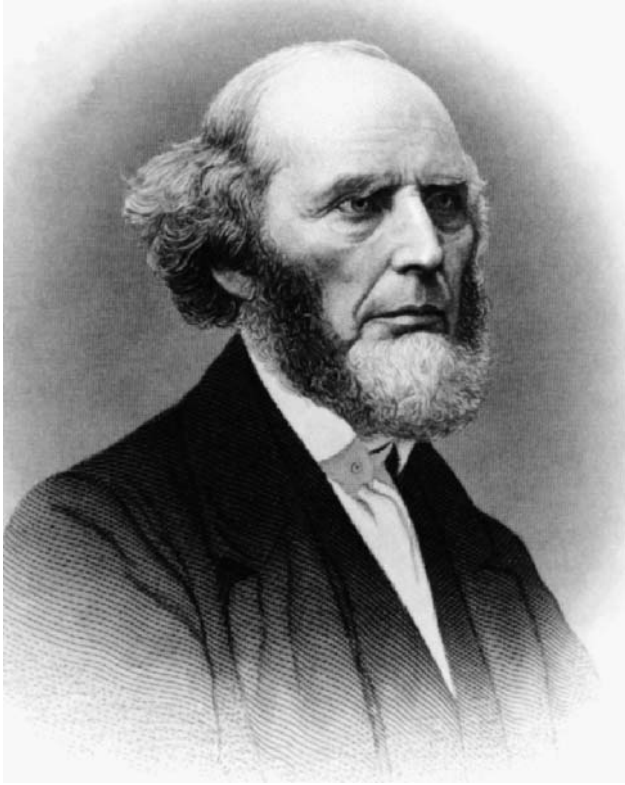
The Second Great Awakening is usefully divided into three areas: New England, the western frontier, and upstate New York. During the first decades of the 19th century, Congregationalists in Connecticut and New Hampshire participated in a series of sedate, cognitive exercises in Christian piety. Led by Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale College, these revivals were less expressions of religious fervor than articulations of religious devotion. Worried that Yale students had collapsed into disbelief, Dwight launched a movement to demonstrate the connection between the intellectual life and Christian commitment. Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel William Taylor, two towering figures in 19th-century American Protestantism, were inspired by Dwight’s call to moral seriousness and religious control. Like Jonathan Edwards, a leader in the first Great Awakening, these men believed that revivals were the work of God and that the purpose of such revivals was to propel sinners to salvation under the guidance of God.

At the same time as these contemplative New England meetings, Methodist and Presbyterian ministers led raucous camp meetings on the western frontier. Including ecstatic behavior, fiery preaching, and socioeconomic diversity among participants, these gatherings would become

the trademark of the Second Great Awakening. The genesis of the frontier awakening can be traced to the preaching of James McGready, a Presbyterian from Logan County, Kentucky, and Barton Stone, the eventual founder of the Disciples of Christ. McGready and Stone ignited a series of revivals at Gasper River and Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Led by Stone, the Cane Ridge revival attracted more than 10,000 people for several days of sermons, testimonials, and hymns. Smaller versions of Cane Ridge occurred up and down the frontier as itinerant preachers advocated the gospel to the far borders of the United States. In their attempts to reach the unlettered in Kentucky, Tennessee, and southern Ohio, these Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist ministers elaborated the ritual process of conversion. Rather than emphasize doctrine or creedal commitment, preachers sought to construct a clear process by which people might be led to salvation. As the U.S. population grew from 5 to 30 million inhabitants during the early 19th century, these awakenings assimilated rural Americans into a common evangelical worldview.

Frontiersmen were not the only beneficiaries of the Second Great Awakening. In the new trading towns of upstate New York, Charles G. Finney blazed a powerful trail. Unlike his New England antecedents, Finney saw no reason to obscure the emotional and ritual aspects of religious experience. He sought to prescribe not only how believers ought to understand Christ, but also how they came to Christ. To do so, he concocted a series of “new measures” to describe the specific tactics of a revival. For some, this seemed to transgress the power of God; for others, Finney’s labors were interpreted as God’s work on earth. Whether you endorsed or dismissed Finney’s measures, his impact was indisputable: through his tours, he converted thousands and encouraged countless more to take up service to God through social reform. When Finney retired in 1832, the Second Great Awakening as a distinct phenomenon effectively came to an end.

By the 1830s, the effects of the Second Great Awakening among African Americans were abundant. Following the American Revolution, few blacks were Christians. However, these statistics dramatically altered over the subsequent 40 years. For example, according to some estimates, there were fewer than 2,000 black Methodists in 1787; by 1815, there were an estimated 40,000. Following the lackluster Anglican missionary efforts, Methodists and Baptist ministers found inordinate success among African



*Charles Grandison Finney was the leading Protestant evangelist of the great religious revival that swept 19th-century America and helped to spark the many social reform movements of the mid-century. (Library of Congress)*

Americans. The revivals that blazed through upstate New York and the western frontier challenged slavery as an institution, encouraged immediate conversion among the uneducated, and emboldened a generation of black preachers. During the course of the Second Great Awakening, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones established the first independent black Methodist and black Episcopal churches in Philadelphia, and black Baptist congregations flourished in the South. However, this racial progress was not without its downside; evangelical America remained predominantly racist, excluding blacks from national denominational meetings and black ministers from positions of authority. Nevertheless, the allowance of black church bodies under the auspices of white sects engendered black leadership and, eventually, black denominational independence.

Furthermore, the theology of the Second Great Awakening spawned some of the most significant social reforms in the history of America, including the abolitionist movement. Early 19th-century revivalists not only attempted to convert citizens; they also tried to convince them that their nation held a special place in the eyes of God. Men not only

were capable of determining their individual salvation, touring evangelicals argued, but also could choose to save their society. Charles Finney, in particular, preached the possibility of present-day perfection. Awakening converts formed the core of 19th-century social reform, including efforts to improve education and promote temperance, abolition, and peace. The subsequent “benevolent empire” would play a critical role in the social improvement of the nascent nation.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Black Churches; Evangelism; Methodist Camp Meetings; Slave Religion

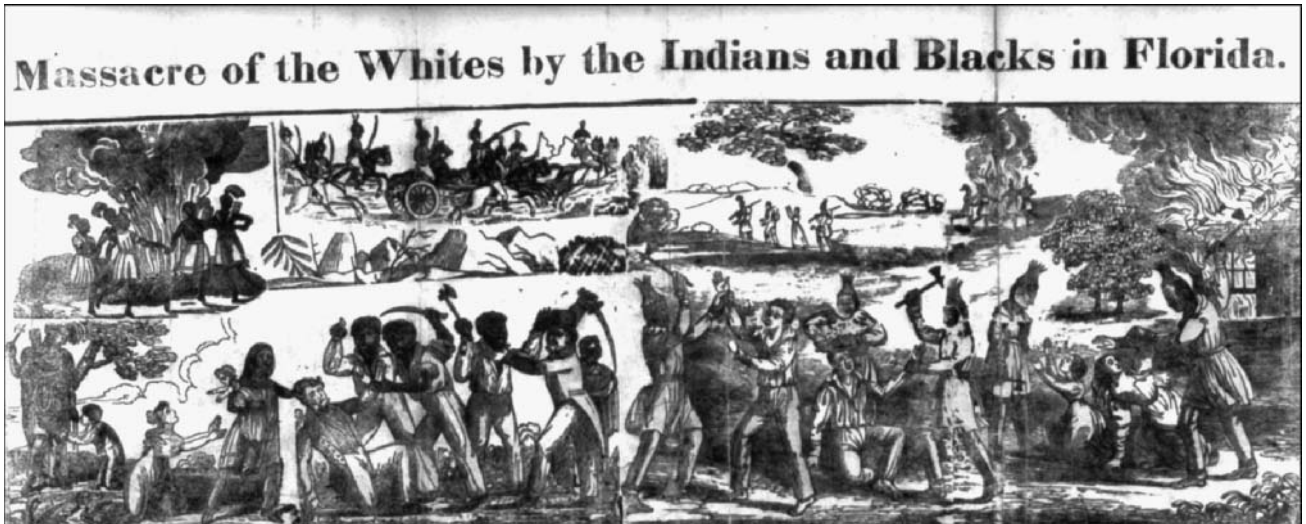
*Kathryn Emily Lofton*

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## **Seminole Wars**

The Seminole Wars were a series of military conflicts waged between the Seminole societies and the U.S. government over territory. More than any other 19th-century conflicts with native peoples, the three Seminole wars (1817–1818, 1835–1842, 1855–1858) were intertwined with the issue of slavery. Even before the War of 1812, American slave owners in Georgia saw the Seminoles in Spanish Florida as a threat to their property. They provided a haven to blacks fleeing enslavement in Georgia and the Carolinas, with runaways forming free enclaves among the Indians and others entering Seminole communities as slaves, albeit of a much less onerous variety, living in separate villages, sharing in the Indian culture, and having obligations amounting usually to one-third of their crops. Because of the importance they put on avoiding capture, they were more determined in their resistance to the whites than their Indian hosts. Also, they served the Indians well as interpreters of the English language and enemy culture.



*Illustration of an attack on white settlers in Florida by Seminoles and African Americans, from An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War, 1836. (Library of Congress)*

The conflict that became the first Seminole War started during the War of 1812 with two invasions of Florida, Andrew Jackson's western campaign against the Creeks and Georgian incursions in the east. In July 1816, Jackson and Creek Indian allies hunting for slaves destroyed the Seminole stronghold on the Apalachicola River, forcing the Indians and their black allies east and south into peninsular Florida. Jackson's 1818 campaign accelerated this movement by destroying Seminole towns in Florida. The United States acquired Spanish Florida in the Adams-Onís Treaty of February 22, 1819, a direct result of Jackson's military operations. This acquisition of Florida had major consequences for Seminoles and blacks alike. In the years leading to the second war in 1835, the U.S. government, pressured by slave owners, considered two options: removal or consolidation on a reservation. Meanwhile, government negotiators in Florida pressed for the return of runaway slaves. In the 1820s, starving Indians raided whites' cattle herds, and slaveholders petitioned for removal of the Seminoles from Florida. The Indian Removal Act of May 28, 1830, providing for the taking of Indian land in exchange for land in the west, resolved the policy debate but not the conflict. Removal plans envisioned placing the Seminoles among the Creeks, but blacks with the Seminoles feared the Creeks would enslave them and sell them to whites.

At the Treaty of Moultrie Creek of September 18, 1823, Seminole leaders promised to apprehend and return runaways. Many were returned, but about 800 black slaves remained among the Seminoles. On paper, the Seminoles

also accepted a 4-million-acre reservation, but most leaders never intended to move, and many harbored runaways.

The Seminoles did not want to leave Florida and worried that the Creeks would steal black people from them. White Florida entrepreneurs, fearing loss of their business, also urged them to stay. But the steadiest pressure to resist came from the blacks among them. When the situation disintegrated into war in 1835, blacks were prominent in almost all major fights, as combatants and as the focus of operations. Attacks on plantations in the St. John's River valley around Christmas 1835 liberated hundreds of slaves, swelling Seminole ranks and panicking sugar-growers. Sporadic but bitter fighting continued until 1842. By then, resistance so diminished that Col. William Worth declared hostilities over. Still, groups of Seminoles remained at large, evidence that the American victory was incomplete.

The effect of the second war spilled over into the national debate over slavery. Congressional opponents of slavery used appropriations bills as opportunities to skirt the "gag rule," enacted by a Congress dominated by slave owners in 1836 to halt discussion of slavery. Some representatives, including former president John Quincy Adams, alert to opportunities to challenge this rule, brought up the issue whenever possible, and the Seminole conflict, involving questions of runaways, slaveholder support, and black fighters among the Indians, fit their purposes.

Among blacks who fought alongside the Indians, an escaped slave named Abraham, formerly the property of a Pensacola physician, emerged as a chief. Known for his

oratory and religious enthusiasms, Abraham accompanied a Seminole delegation to Washington, D.C., in 1826, as interpreter. While pretending to accept removal, he secretly planned war and plotted with plantation slaves in Florida. Although Osceola was the preeminent Seminole leader in the long struggle, Abraham fought alongside him, led war parties, and negotiated with American officers. John Cavallo, also known as Gopher John, John Horse, and Juan Caballo, also emerged as a leader. Cavallo later accepted removal to Indian Territory and then returned to Florida as a guide and interpreter for the army. In 1850, he led the black Seminoles from Indian Territory to Mexico and remained there until after the Civil War. They returned as scouts for the army against southwestern societies, including Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas.

The third war started in December 1855 with an Indian attack on an army encampment. White expansion southward brought on the conflict, which lasted until May 1858. It ended with scarcely 100 Seminoles still at large. A total of nearly 4,000 Indians and their black allies were in Indian Territory, and an unknown number were dead. Army losses were about 1,500, with 328 killed in combat, including 74 officers. Most of the others died from disease. The conflict was the longest, most savage guerilla war experienced by American forces until the Vietnam War of 1960–1975. *See also:* Black Seminoles; Maroon Societies

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## Shadd, Abraham

Abraham Doras Shadd (1801–1882) was a free black shoemaker, abolitionist, activist, and politician. Shadd followed in his father's footsteps and worked as a shoemaker in Wilmington, Delaware. He and his wife, Harriet Parnell Shadd, had 13 children, including the well-known writer and activist Mary Ann Shadd Cary. After gaining some wealth as a shoemaker, Shadd became a prominent member of the

free black community in Wilmington, Delaware, by the 1830s. As a well-known abolitionist and activist for black civil rights in Delaware, Shadd initially opposed efforts by national and local colonization societies to send African Americans out of the country to places such as Liberia, but Shadd himself later moved to Canada.

In 1831, at a meeting of local black leaders in Wilmington, Delaware, Shadd was chosen, along with Rev. Peter Spencer and William S. Thomas, to write a declaration in opposition to the colonization movement. In this declaration, the three men argued that African Americans should be afforded the same rights as other Americans. Because racism prevented African Americans from fully exercising their rights, activists and reformers should work on ending prejudice and improving opportunities for African Americans rather than sending them out of the country, they argued. This anticolonization declaration was published a year later in William Lloyd Garrison's book *Thoughts on African Colonization* (1832) as an example of African American opposition to colonization.

Shadd was also active in the black convention movement of the 1830s. He attended, and actively participated in, several during that decade. At the First Annual Convention of Free Persons of Colour, held in Philadelphia, Shadd was elected vice president of the convention. He attended the 1832 and 1833 conventions as well. In 1833, at the Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Colour, Shadd again played a prominent role and was elected president of the convention. During the early 1830s, Shadd also acted as an agent of William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*, in Delaware, in attempt to expand awareness of and gain subscribers to the newspaper.

In 1833, the Shadd family left Delaware, a slave state, and moved to West Chester, Pennsylvania, located about 15 miles south of Philadelphia. By the early 1830s, life in Delaware was becoming more and more difficult for free African Americans, as new anti-black laws were instituted and as free blacks became the targets of the growing colonization movement. As a prominent member of Wilmington's free black community, Shadd feared that he and his family might become targets themselves, and thus, they moved to a "free" state, nearby Pennsylvania. Shadd undoubtedly also wanted to move closer to the action. Philadelphia had a thriving free black community and was home to many of the important abolitionist meetings and conventions in the 1830s.

Not long after the Shadd family moved to West Chester, Shadd attended the founding meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia in December 1833. Shadd was one of six African Americans named to that society's board of managers. He later attended the 1835 and 1836 annual meetings of the society. By the late 1830s, however, Shadd's interest in black conventions and antislavery meetings waned. Often little was accomplished at the meetings, and usually the same sentiments were declared: an end to slavery and racial "uplift" for African Americans. Although Shadd attended fewer meetings by the late 1830s, his commitment to racial justice never wavered. While living in Wilmington, and later in West Chester, the Shadds actively participated in the Underground Railroad, helping African Americans escape from enslavement in the South.

Shadd continued his activism in the 1840s. In July 1840, he returned to Wilmington to speak before a crowd of African American men as part of the First of August celebrations, which were common in many African American communities. These festivities celebrated the end of slavery in the British West Indies, which officially occurred on July 31, 1834. Shadd spoke in Wilmington's colored schoolhouse about black education and temperance. His talk was later published in the *Colored American*, a black-owned newspaper, in August 1840. Later in the decade, in 1848, he participated in a meeting of local Pennsylvania African American leaders who met to oppose the Pennsylvania law that denied African Americans the right to vote. The law was passed in 1838; prior to that, free men, regardless of color, had the legal right to vote. The new law of 1838 allowed only white men to vote in Pennsylvania. Shadd was one of seven men to draft a letter of protest to the Pennsylvania state legislature, calling for the repeal of the law that disenfranchised African American men.

By the early 1850s, Shadd again was preparing to move with his family, undoubtedly upset by the increasingly repressive measures in both Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole; in Pennsylvania, the legislature was considering barring free blacks from moving into the state, and the U.S. Congress had recently passed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. In 1851, two of Shadd's children, Mary Ann and Isaac, moved to a town in Canada West (present-day Ontario), just north of Detroit, Michigan. Although Shadd had been a longtime opponent of both African colonization and Canadian migration, he and the rest of the Shadd family

soon followed Mary Ann and Isaac to Canada West in 1852, where they settled in Raleigh Township. In 1859, Shadd was elected to the Raleigh Town Council and thus was the only person of African descent to gain an elective office in Canada West prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War. Shadd lived in Canada until his death in 1882.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Cary, Mary Ann Shadd; Destination, Canada; Underground Railroad

David Turpie

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## Sierra Leone

The Republic of Sierra Leone is a small troubled country in West Africa. It is bordered on the west by Atlantic Ocean, on the north and east by Guinea, and on the south by Liberia. Its population is 5.8 million with 71,740 sq km of land and 120 sq km of water. About 10 percent of the population are descendants of freed slaves from the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Cuba. It has tropical, humid summer and rain seasons. Its major cities are Freetown, Koindu, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni. Its major ethnic groups are Temne (30%), Mende (30%), Creole (10%), foreigners (1%), and others (29%). Sierra Leone has 60 percent Muslims, 10 percent Christians, and 30 percent African religions. The official language is English, but many speak Creole. Thirty-one percent of the population is literate. The nation has limited resources and little development because of insecurity and foreign domination of its minerals.

Sierra Leone is a democratic country. The Fulani Muslims converted many Mende and Temne people to Islam in the 18th century.

Archeologists affirm that people have been living in Sierra Leone since 2500 B.C.E. The Portuguese invaded it in 1460, named it “Lion Mountain,” and made it a slave-trade port. In 1787, freed slaves were deported to Sierra Leone from the United States, Cuba and Jamaica. The British invaded it in 1808, trained many slaves as missionaries, and established Fouray Bay College in 1827. Sierra Leone gained its independence on April 27, 1961. During the British rule, little development was made. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected in 1996, reinstated in 1998, and reelected in 2002. Sierra Leone has fought several wars that jeopardized her development. Many peace agreements have been made but not implemented. The United Nations had 8,000 peace-keeping troops in Sierra Leone as of 2004. At present, Sierra Leone is an underdeveloped country with 68 percent of the population living below poverty level.

*See also:* Destination, Sierra Leone; Liberia

*Yushau Sodiq*

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## Slave Breeding

The 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia set the stage for one of the most oppressive practices in the history of plantation slavery in the United States. As profits from tobacco steadily declined in the post-Revolutionary period, convention delegates from the Chesapeake—seeking to find a new source of revenue for their tidewater slaveholding constituencies—sought to end the direct imports of Africans into the United States. In this scenario, the prices for slaves in Virginia and Maryland would increase over time, ensuring the continued profitability of slavery in the Upper South. On the other hand, planters in the Lower

South sought to extend the Atlantic slave trade indefinitely, assuming rightly that an increasing number of slave laborers would be required for the crop that would soon become the most profitable one in human history: cotton.

In the ensuing compromise, delegates agreed to a date certain for the end of the slave trade—January 1, 1808—which would give Lower South planters 20 years to import slaves and make necessary adjustments to accommodate the future need for additional labor. Within that time frame, planters in the cotton-producing Lower South greatly increased the number of African imports and created new mechanisms for the production and distribution of new labor. These two new methods—slave breeding and the domestic slave trade—turned the Upper South into a site for the reproduction of successive waves of new labor, who were then transported to the Lower South to help meet the enormous and ever-growing labor demand in the period between 1810 and 1860.

Between 1810 and 1860, a million enslaved African Americans were traded from the Upper South to the Lower South and into the western states and territories into which slavery was expanding as a result of the Louisiana Purchase, the 1836 Texas Revolution, and the 1846–1848 Mexican War. Many of those involved in this internal or domestic slave trade were children, teenagers, and young adult males. Slave breeding was a particularly vile system in which young enslaved women, often as young as ages 13 or 14, were paired with men and forced to bear children. In some cases, specific enslaved women could have as many as five or six children before turning 20. Enslaved women, at certain points, were offered incentives, and a few were even manumitted for providing their owners with 10 to 15 children. Although a handful of scholars have doubted the ubiquity or even the very existence of this practice, both slave narratives and the ex-slave interviews collected by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s provide harrowing firsthand accounts of the separation of mothers and fathers from their children. It was this very evidence that led sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to draw connections between slave breeding and the domestic slave trade and the instabilities and “webs of pathology” within 20th-century African American families.

Among historians, there is no clear consensus on whether slave breeding was a systematic and conscious attempt to increase slave supply in the cotton-producing regions of the Lower South. Indeed, there is even evidence



that slave breeding may not have been unique to the Upper South and that it might actually have been more prevalent as a practice in the Lower South. Whatever the case may be, it is certain that slave breeding was not simply a figment of the collective imagination of 19th-century abolitionists and a handful of sympathetic 20th-century historians.

*See also:* Slave Plantation

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## Slave Codes

A key component in the complex social and political system governing slavery, slave codes emerged as part of an extensive body of law aimed at regulating the lives and activities of enslaved African Americans in the United States. Slave codes were clear in defining slaves as property without full legal status, and they made slavery a permanent condition that was usually inherited through one's mother. The reach of these codes extended beyond those enslaved, however, given that many also had provisions that regulated free African Americans, their movement, their employment, and their options for housing and setting up permanent residence. The reach, breadth, and severity of individual slave codes varied, but all had a vested interest in curtailing slave resistance, policing the everyday lives of those enslaved, and protecting slave owners. Although these codes are commonly associated with Southern slave states, they could be found in their Northern counterparts as well.

All slave codes shared certain characteristics in terms of the control they attempted to wield over the personal activities of enslaved and often free African Americans, but individual slave states had their own codes in place that dictated their provisions and informed their court systems.

Enslaved African Americans had very few legal rights in a court of law; their testimony was seldom duly considered in any litigation involving whites and could be dismissed in its entirety. Trials for enslaved blacks were occasionally held in taverns or country stores and seldom resulted in parity. Codes banned enslaved individuals from owning property, marrying, or entering into contracts. They were also written to exert dominion over the language that slaves spoke and the clothes that they wore. Speaking words considered defamatory meant that one could be arrested, whipped, and/or sold at auction. Manumission, or the freeing of one's slaves, was also restricted through slave codes in many states, in an effort to secure the growth of slavery and restrict the presence of free African Americans.

Because slave codes were used largely to act as a form of social control, they were always subject to reformulation if a state felt that they needed to be strengthened in order to further discourage slave rebellions or to supplement already existing laws set out to protect the property and physical well-being of slave owners. Those enslaved were not allowed to assemble freely with one another or engage in communal worship, they could not be taught to read or write or possess literature that was considered inflammatory, and they could not vacate an owner's premises without explicit permission. Codes made it illegal for slaves to own firearms, attend unlawful assemblies, and participate in riots. Thus, the codes not only operated in an attempt to inhibit any form of resistance carried out by an individual person who was enslaved, but also were developed to suppress any semblance of communal gatherings that might lead to wide-scale uprisings or rebellions. As the rich history of African Americans makes clear, however, not all resistance could be curtailed, and many who were enslaved remained resolute in their pursuit of freedom.

The sheer brutality of slave codes and their corresponding punishments made them one of the most inhumane aspects of slavery. Submission to these codes was enforced through various measures, most of which exerted extreme force over any enslaved person found to act against a given code. Whippings, beatings, and floggings were commonly used forms of punishment, but other codes called for branding, dismemberment, imprisonment, and for males, castration. A 1690 statute in South Carolina, for instance, stated that slaves or runaways who struck a white person would be severely whipped on the first offense, followed by slitting of the nose and burning of a part of one's face with an iron



*Confederate Home Guard, or Plantation Police, examine passes on the road leading to the levee of the Mississippi River during the American Civil War. (Bettmann/Corbis)*

for a second offense. A third offense could include death or any other punishment. In Virginia, robbing or committing any other major offense could be met with 60 lashes, being placed in stocks, and dismemberment. Slave owners, on the other hand, who killed their slaves or other enslaved blacks were usually subject only to fines.

Slave codes were frequently enforced by what were known as “slave patrols,” or groups of usually white men who went around various plantations making sure that slaves were inside of their quarters or otherwise not moving about freely. These patrols are sometimes seen as precursors to the Ku Klux Klan that flourished following emancipation, given the violence that they inflicted and the haunting presence that they had.

Slave codes were also antecedents to the black codes developed immediately after the American Civil War that extended throughout the earliest waves of Reconstruction. Like their predecessors, these later codes were developed to act as an agent of social control in the interest of curbing the social, political, and economic opportunities available to African Americans, who though legally free from

bondage, were subject to an ever-increasing number of laws that in many ways attempted to reenact the restrictions and chief aims of slave codes.

*See also:* Patrollers; Slave Plantation

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## **Slave Diet**

The slave diet emerged out of enslaved peoples’ practice of “making do” with the leftovers, scraps, and other locally available ingredients and food rations. The slave diet was

also influenced by slaves' incorporation of widely circulated African, European, and indigenous foods and food practices, which they adapted to the material conditions of slavery.

Malnutrition and disease plagued the millions of enslaved Africans who were hoarded onto trading ships and transported to the Americas via the Middle Passage. Slave ship captains and trading companies employed various techniques to ensure that the greatest number of slaves made it to their destinations alive. Some especially astute companies concluded that Africans fared better during transport when they were fed some of their customary foods alongside some European staples such as dried beans, wheat, and barley. Corn, yams, malagueta peppers, millet, rice, palm oil, salt, and rum were a few of the staple provisions commonly stocked on slavers to accommodate the slaves' diet. Journals from several English slavers credit African women with preparing much of the food onboard the slavers. Generally speaking, most Africans who were transported to the United States came from agricultural societies. Those who hailed from Africa's Gold Coast were often transported alongside foodstuffs such as boiled yams, taros, okra, callaloo, watermelon, and plantains, which they incorporated into their New World diets. Bananas, spinach, mustard greens, eggplant, cassava, chilies, coconuts, oranges, avocados, legumes such as black-eyed and cow peas, broad beans, peanuts, and cola nuts were also transported to the Americas with the enslaved peoples and became incorporated into the diets of both slaves and their masters.

The foods that slaves subsisted on while in captivity varied greatly depending on their region of origin, the geographical location and size of the plantation to which they were tenured, the generosity or frugality of the plantation master or mistress, and the division of labor between house and field slaves. Food resources were closely monitored and rationed, and luxury ingredients such as fresh meat, spices, white flour, sugar, coffee, tea, and alcohol were reserved for the plantation kitchens. Slaves who cooked and cleaned in their masters' homes had direct access to these goods and ample opportunity to steal from the big house. House slaves who worked as cooks, maids, servants, mammies, and butlers sometimes lived in or closer to the big house and were usually allocated better quality and greater quantities of foods than the field slaves, who occupied a lesser position in plantation hierarchy. The children of field slaves provided the least amount of physical labor on the plantation

and were sometimes allocated inadequate portions of the least nutritious foods. Sometimes they subsisted on only a stale piece of bread for breakfast, no noon meal, and the equivalent of a shared slop trough of leftovers for dinner. As a result, they were often malnourished.

On the sugarcane plantations of the Caribbean, saltcod was incorporated into the diets of field workers. Saltcod was inexpensive and easily transported and provided a cheap and nonperishable source of protein to sustain Caribbean slaves who performed backbreaking manual labor. Along the Georgia and Carolina Sea Islands, some plantation owners doled out a weekly food ration consisting of a peck of corn and a bushel of sweet potatoes; a quart of salt had to last a month, and slaves were sometimes granted salted meat and molasses to sustain them through especially labor-intensive tasks. Coarse flour, rice, and cornmeal were also distributed in closely monitored quantities. Slaves were allocated the least desirable portions of butchered meats—usually intestines, organs, ribs, heads and tails. Slaves had very rudimentary cooking equipment and little free time, so their culinary methods needed to be efficient. Boiling, frying, and grilling over open flame were popular cooking techniques.

Slaves were subject to harsh working conditions and inadequate food supply. The persistent lack of food, time, and material resources necessitated resourcefulness on the part of the slave. It was not uncommon for slaves to surreptitiously scavenge from the plantation larder under the cover of night to stave off hunger and provide for their families. Hunger and theft of dry goods, meat, livestock, and eggs are commonly cited in slave narratives. Significant numbers of slaves supplemented their meager rations with wild foods gathered from the fringes of their masters' properties. In addition to picking fruits, nuts, wild greens, and berries, many slaves trapped small game in the wooded areas on the fringes of plantation properties. Those with access to streams and coastal areas applied their skills to catch fresh fish, oysters, and shrimp. Some plantation owners also granted slaves permission to raise small barnyard birds and cultivate vegetables in their own private gardens. But slaves could tend their gardens and buy, sell, trade, scavenge, or cook for themselves only after the day's work had been completed.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Slave Culture; Soul Food

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**Slave Driver**

Within the hierarchy of plantation slavery, slave drivers were a vital cog in the operation of forced agricultural labor in the colonial and antebellum South. Drivers, or head slaves, typically supervised work gangs of 20 to 30 field slaves on cotton, rice, tobacco, and sugar plantations. These black men and women were responsible for organizing work gangs, maintaining the pace of work, guarding crops from arson, distributing food rations to field hands, and disciplining slaves lagging in their work duties. Unlike white overseers, who typically carried guns and rode or had access to horses, drivers utilized whips to maintain discipline and, very often, worked alongside members of the work gangs as agricultural laborers themselves.

The task of supervising work gangs was typically set aside for enslaved men and women who had served their owners with some degree of loyalty. They tended to be older, and many were male. Within the slave community, drivers occupied a tenuous space. As part of both the plantation hierarchy and the slave community, drivers had to be careful to perform their supervisory duties without being too harsh or draconian. This is because overly brutal drivers were sometimes killed by poison or other means by fellow slaves. Overt brutality was likely mitigated, in a few cases, by the fact that drivers were sometimes supervising family members and other loved ones. On the other hand, an overly permissive and lax driver could be returned to the status of field hand by his owner. Examples of maintaining this delicate balance include drivers who administered “fake” whippings, drivers who actively protected members of their work gangs from abusive white overseers, and a handful—including Nat Turner—who led or assisted in slave revolts. *See also:* Gang System; Overseers

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**Slave Plantation**

Throughout the Southern North American colonies, and later Southern United States, plantations, or large-scale commercial farms, provided the foundation of the Southern agricultural system. What distinguished the plantation from the farm, in addition to size, was the use of a large slave labor force to grow primarily staple crops for profit. The model established in Virginia, and later adopted by other colonies as the economic pattern, focused initially on tobacco as the primary cash crop. Additional crops such as sugarcane, rice, and later cotton were grown on large plantations for distant markets.

Most white Southerners were farmers and did not own slaves, although most aspired to be able to purchase a slave. Those who did own slaves generally owned fewer than 10 slaves. To be called a “planter,” a plantation owner had to own 20 or more slaves. According to the 1860 census, only 1 out of every 30 Southern whites was a planter; fewer than 11,000 held 50 or more slaves, and fewer than 2,500 held over 100. A privileged elite of 11 planters owned more than 500, and only 1 master held more than 1,000.

From the 17th century, ownership of black slaves, in addition to land, identified the economically privileged. The possession of slaves became a badge of upper-class status. This division between management and labor set the planter apart from the small slaveholders, who often worked side by side in the fields along with the slaves. Within Southern society, the planter group, making up less than 4 percent of the adult white male population, held more than half the slaves. They produced most of the tobacco and cotton and all of the rice and sugar. Additionally, these planters dominated local, state, and national politics. Often planters lived in the grandeur that myth attributes to the entire class. Some planters’ wealth allowed for the leisure time to cultivate “Southern hospitality,” learning, and politics. Yet more regularly, the setting was less appealing. Generally, because

planters managed a large enterprise, they had less time for leisure than legend suggests.

Contrary to popular mythology, most plantation mistresses did not live a life of idle leisure. For most, just as the masters busied himself with the business of managing the plantation, the mistress supervised the domestic household, oversaw the procurement and preparation of food, and organized the house cleaning and care of the sick. Often when the masters were away, the mistress also took on the responsibility of managing both the domestic and the business portions of the plantation.

Most slaves, whether on small farms or plantations, lived with their masters and worked under their supervision. Slaves living on larger plantations or those with absentee owners often worked under an overseer. Overseers on the largest plantations frequently came from the middle class of small farmers or were younger sons of planters. Most overseers desired to become slaveholders themselves; however, some preferred this middle-management position and moved from one plantation to another seeking more profitable opportunities. Generally, overseers were white, yet on occasion there were black overseers. The more common management position to which a slave could rise was that of “driver.” Slave drivers were assigned a small group of slaves and the task of getting that group to work without creating discord. Contemporary observers blamed any discord and much of the cruelty to slaves on the overseers. For much of the 18th century and into the 19th century, overseers were paid with a portion of the plantation’s crops. Thus, the system held built-in reasons for overseers to demand more of slaves than they were often able to give. Even after most planters moved to a salary system for overseers, no overseer who failed to make a good crop could expect to be retained. So the pressure to produce successful crops at the expense of the slaves remained. Therefore, overseers had to find the balance between being too lenient and being too harsh. In the end, power on the slave plantation rested on force. Violence and the threat of violence were an inherent part of this slave society, and standing at the top of this system were the planters.

For the slaves who labored on plantations, the preferred jobs were those of skilled craftsmen or domestic servants. Most, however, labored as field hands. Field hands worked long hours, from dusk till dawn; were housed in small wooden shacks with dirt floors; were provided a new

set of clothes twice a year (shoes provided only in winter); and were seen by doctors only in the event of serious illness. It could be assumed that most slaves, if they had a choice, would have preferred to live on a small farm because the general perception was that life on a farm was less harsh than that on a plantation. However, slaves on the plantation had the advantage of close contact with fellow Africans with whom they shared cultural norms and practices and developed a unique slave culture.

*See also:* House Servants; Overseers; Slave Quarters

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## Slave Quarters

Slave quarters were the designated area on an antebellum plantation where the majority of the enslaved people had their cabins and tended their gardens. On many of the larger plantations, this section resembled a small village, and its size demonstrated the extent of the slaveholder’s wealth and power to visitors and slaves alike. The contrast between the big house and the cabins of the quarters strengthened the existing paternalistic system by reinforcing both physical and psychological distance between master and slave.

The house servants generally stayed in proximity to the main residence above the kitchen, workshop, or stables. Behind and beyond the owner’s domicile, the more numerous farm workers lodged close to the fields in considerably inferior accommodations. Most Southern planters had little incentive to divert their resources for the benefit of slaves until the advent of the agricultural reform movements of the mid-19th century; several of these educational campaigns cited the economic advantages of providing clean, well-built dwellings for the captive labor force.

Slave housing varied considerably as to size and quality and depended on when and where the structures were built,



*Slaves stand before their quarters on the J. J. Smith plantation in Beaufort, South Carolina, in 1862. (Library of Congress)*

as well as the financial situation of the landowner. Depending on geography and local custom, the cabins in the quarters might consist of stone, brick, plank, or most commonly, log. In his autobiography, Booker T. Washington, who was born a slave, described his birthplace as a typical one-room log cabin, about 14 by 16 feet square, without glazed windows or a proper door. A large open fireplace served for both heating and cooking. In the center of the dirt floor was a large, deep hole covered with boards where Washington's mother stored sweet potatoes during the winter.

Rudimentary habitations such as Washington's could be quite crowded. Often entire extended families, from babies to grandparents, shared the same single room and slept on crude beds of straw or corn-shucks. Despite the lack of most material comforts, the relatives living together developed and nurtured close familial ties. The inhabitants of the

other nearby cabins provided additional opportunities for fellowship and community.

This sense of community mitigated the oppressive effects of slavery, to some degree. An elaborate network of kinship linked slaves together. The quarters became a clearinghouse for news that affected the enslaved population and provided a gathering place where storytelling became a primary means of passing survival skills and cultural heritage on to succeeding generations. The residents shared information about births, deaths, illnesses, and separations that had occurred on their own and other plantations. This continuous dialogue enabled the enslaved people to preserve their sense of self-identity and to maintain connections within their often forcibly divided families.

The quarters were the nexus of black family life. As such, they functioned as the primary sites from which the

folkways and customs of a distinctive African American culture emerged and matured. Besides the overseer, few whites ventured into the quarters, and when they did, they did not stay long. Enslaved people created a separate vision of reality within the restricted, yet malleable space allotted to them. This alternative landscape, created almost entirely by the slaves themselves, facilitated racial solidarity and provided temporary respite from their owners' control after the work day had ended.

See also: Field Hands; House Servants; Slave Culture, Slave Plantation; Washington, Booker T.

*Michael Thomas Gavin*

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## Slave Resistance

In 1791, the former Haitian slave Toussaint Louverture transformed a slave rebellion into a revolution and the abolition of slavery. The success of the Haitian revolution instilled fear in the slaveholders of the Southern United States. This fear was well founded. After slave importation was legally ended in 1808, the U.S. South was the only area of the Americas to maintain and grow its slave population by natural increase. But as slavery grew in the Southern states, so too did American slave resistance. By the time of the Civil War, more than 250 small-scale slave revolts had occurred in the South.

One significant revolt was that planned by Gabriel (Prosser). He spent months planning his rebellion for August 1800, in the Richmond area of Virginia. About 1,000 slaves, many armed, met at the agreed-upon place on August 30, but a rainstorm had flooded the roads and bridges, making the rebellion impossible. Meanwhile, two slaves had informed their master of the plot. Responding to the master's plea, Virginia's governor, James Monroe, sent in the state militia. Prosser attempted to escape but was betrayed

again by two other slaves. Along with his 15 other rebels, he was hung on October 7. In total, at least 35 rebels were executed in the wake of the failed rebellion.

Denmark Vesey planned another abortive large-scale rebellion, this time in South Carolina. Vesey—born Telemarque—was brought from West Africa as a slave and sold to Joseph Vesey in 1771. In 1800, he won a lottery prize and purchased his freedom, and in 1822, he began planning a rebellion with other members of his African church. The revolt was scheduled for July 14, 1822, but several slaves confessed the plot to their masters in June. Vesey and his co-conspirators were captured on June 22, and 37 people were executed soon after, including Vesey himself on July 2.

Fears of attempted revolts became more acute in the South—where approximately 40 percent of the Southern population was black, and black-white ratios on larger plantations exceeded 10 to 1. Paranoia became particularly acute after Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831. But for abolitionists, Prosser, Vesey, and Turner became martyrs to the slaves' cause, like Toussaint Louverture. As late as 1855, the black abolitionist William Wells Brown predicted that a great slave leader would yet appear in the Southern states.

Beyond this violent slave resistance in the U.S. South itself, Africans had also mutinied on slave ships 392 times by 1860—on as many as 10 percent of slave-ship voyages. Most famous were the *Amistad* and Creole revolts of 1839 and 1841. In late June 1839, captive West Africans rebelled and seized control of the Spanish slave-ship *Amistad*, which was traveling along the coast of Cuba. The rebel leader was Sengbe Pieh (popularly known as Joseph Cinque), and he ordered the surviving crew members to sail the ship, with its 53 slaves, to Africa. But for two months, the crew moved the ship back west at night, until it was sighted and seized by the U.S. Navy off the coast of Long Island in late August. The Africans were charged with murder, and abolitionists took up their cause. They were declared legally free by a federal trial court in 1840 and by the Supreme Court in 1841. By 1842, they had returned to Africa.

Around the same time, in 1841, Madison Washington led a slave revolt onboard the U.S. brig *Creole* and brought into sharp relief the now-divergent paths of Britain and America around the question of slavery. The ship left the port of Richmond, Virginia, on October 25, 1841, with 135 slaves. It was bound for New Orleans, Louisiana, where the slaves would be sold at auction. As it neared Abaco Island in the Bahamas, Washington and 18 other slaves seized

pistols and knives, subdued the crew, and sailed for British-controlled Nassau, a port in the Bahamas. The British Emancipation Act of 1833 had ended slavery in the empire, and the slaves knew they would be freed upon entering the port. The U.S. secretary of state demanded that the British return the slaves and the ship, but British officials ruled that local laws applied to the *Creole*. The slaves were taken ashore and set free, and the *Creole* eventually reached New Orleans on December 2, 1841, without its human cargo. In 1853, the former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass used elements of the *Creole* incident in his historical novella *The Heroic Slave*.

Such forcible resistance made the antislavery crusade a precursor of the violent Civil War. The white abolitionist John Brown certainly saw the connection between Washington's revolt and his own violent action, taken on the eve of the war. He purportedly sent for Washington while preparing his October 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, and though Washington did not join him, Brown took inspiration from the *Creole* revolt and hoped that an armed slave rebellion across the South would accompany his own raid.

That effort took place on October 16, 1859. With his interracial band of 21 men, Brown launched an attack against the institution of slavery. He captured the town of Harpers Ferry, intending that slaves use arms from its federal arsenal to rise up and claim their freedom. But federal forces overwhelmed the band after 36 hours, and Brown was indicted on counts of assault, murder, conspiracy, and treason. Most of his men were hung, including Shields Green, a fugitive slave from Charleston, South Carolina. Green had escaped from slavery and reached Canada, only to return to the United States to seek out Douglass. On August 19, 1859, he had joined Douglass at a meeting with Brown, in a disused quarry pit near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Brown tried to persuade both Douglass and Green to join his raid on Harpers Ferry, and although Douglass refused, Green agreed.

During the raid, Green severed telegraph wires and helped capture the armory, the arsenal, and the rifle works. He went to bring in slaves from the surrounding areas as soon as the arsenal was captured. This meant he was outside the town when Brown and his men surrendered. But when hearing that all was lost, he reentered the besieged area to be by Brown's side. In a newspaper article a few years later, Douglass put Green alongside Vesey and Nat Turner as men who gave everything and fell as martyrs for the cause of antislavery.

The violent slave resistance attempted by Green, Prosser, Vesey, Turner, Cinque, and Washington also had a long-established rhetorical counterpart. Outnumbered on plantations and alarmed by slave revolts, slaveholders were further disturbed by abolitionists' rhetoric of violent resistance. As early as 1829, David Walker's scripture-infused pamphlet *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens* had called for violent slave resistance. Walker—a free black and most likely a conspirator in Vesey's plans for rebellion—encouraged slave uprisings and prophesied a black revolution. He also instructed blacks to kill anyone who tried to enslave them. In 1830, runaway slaves were purportedly discovered with copies of Walker's *Appeal*, and other armed slaves launched an uprising near New Bern, apparently incited by the same pamphlet.

This abolitionist rhetoric of violent resistance became more prevalent after the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Now the advocated resistance was defensive, rather than the aggressive resistance of slave rebellions. Numerous black abolitionists, including former slaves, promoted defensive action against attempts to enforce the law. One, Joshua B. Smith, circulated weapons at an abolitionist meeting, and at another meeting, in Philadelphia on October 14, 1850, several hundred free blacks passed a resolution that they would resist to the death any attempt to enforce the law. The following year, fugitives fought slave catchers trying to re-enslave them in Pennsylvania, and the black radical James McCune Smith insisted that whites could understand slave resistance only if it was performed in their own language—force.

In fact, fugitive slaves and their allies repeatedly performed defensive acts of resistance. For example, John Brown responded to the Fugitive Slave Law by forming the League of Gileadites, a black self-defense unit named after the biblical army tested by God before battle. To the league's black members in Springfield, Massachusetts, he suggested a range of guerilla tactics. And as another form of resistance to slavery, this defensive action was apparently effective. In June 1854, a few days after both federal and state military forces had arrived in Boston to return Anthony Burns to slavery, William Wells Brown visited Springfield. He observed that the league was more than ready to carry out John Brown's advice. When slave catchers arrived, the authorities anticipated violent resistance and advised them to leave. Fearful for their safety, the slave catchers left town for New York without attempting to take anyone by force. No



fugitive slave was ever disturbed in Springfield after that, remembered William Wells Brown.

Yet although these acts of defensive and aggressive violence garnered the most press attention as methods of slave resistance, American slaves did practice other methods too. On a day-to-day basis, they could work slowly, steal food, and break equipment. Many attempted escape, some for short periods in order to temporarily deny their masters access to labor power and so effect negotiations over marriage rights, free time, and religious freedoms. Others left permanently and formed fugitive communities, or “maroon colonies,” in the surrounding forests, swamps, and mountains. Still others left for the free states. Assisted by the Underground Railroad, a vast network of individuals who helped fugitive slaves reach the North and Canada, as many as 100,000 people escaped between 1830 and 1860.

By the time of the Civil War, Frederick Douglass had summed up and celebrated all these varied methods of slave resistance. As a slave, he had practiced day-to-day resistance, explaining in his autobiography that he would stay at camp meetings longer than expected by his master. He then embraced the method of escape in 1838, commented that northbound fugitives were acting out the Declaration of Independence itself, and praised the Underground Railroad as a profound and perilously achieved gift to enslaved people. But he also celebrated violent resistance. Eventually, he came to see all methods as parts of the same whole: a drive to resist and to gain freedom.

*See also:* Brown, John; Cinque, Joseph; Douglass, Frederick; Fugitive Slaves; Gabriel (Prosser); Maroon Societies; New York Revolt of 1712; Slave Culture; Stono Rebellion; Turner, Nat; Underground Railroad; Vesey, Denmark; Walker, David

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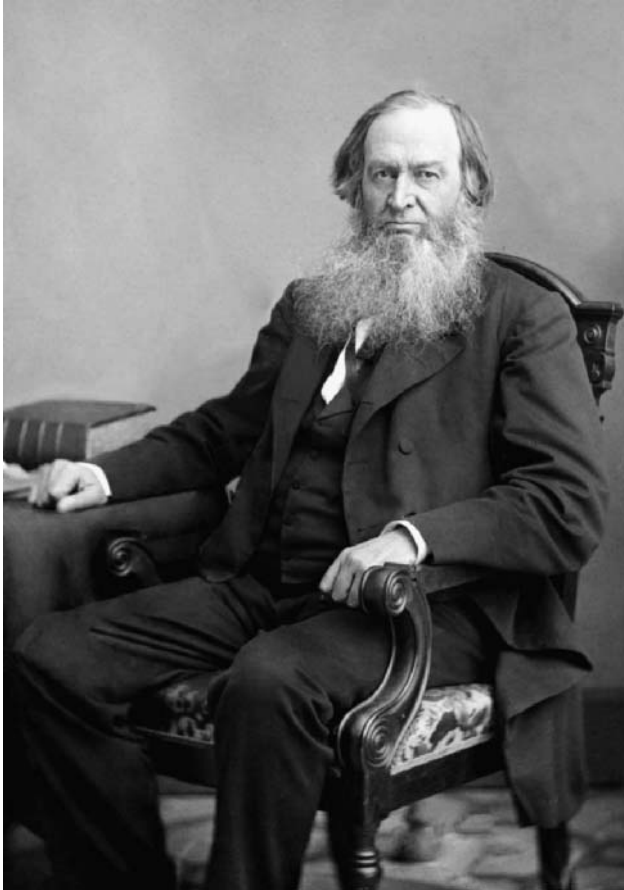
## Smith, Gerrit

Gerrit Smith (1797–1874) was a white abolitionist and philanthropist. He was born in Utica, New York, in 1797. As a teenager, he worked on his father's farm in Peterboro, New York, alongside slaves. Smith always maintained that it was this experience that prompted him to devote his life to ending slavery. Upon Smith's graduation from Hamilton College in 1818, his father gave him most of the land he owned. As a result, at the age of 21, he was one of the largest landowners in New York. In 1822, he married Ann Carroll Fitzhugh, with whom he had eight children.

In 1835, he attended a meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society in Utica, New York. The meeting was disrupted by a mob, and a number of delegates were beaten. As a result, he invited the society to meet at his estate in Peterboro. This deepened his commitment to abolition. In the 1840s, Smith donated over 120,000 acres of land to more than 3,000 poor black men in Northern New York. He wanted to ensure that they met a state requirement that only men who owned property could vote. Additionally, Smith believed that giving the land to the men would allow them to become self-sufficient.

Smith was one of the founding members of the Liberty Party, a national political party that promoted abolitionism in the west. He was the party's presidential candidate in the 1848 and 1852 elections and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1853 as an independent. While in Congress, he was a strong spokesman for the abolitionist movement. After serving only one term, he decided not to run for reelection. He used his home as a station for the Underground Railroad, a group of antislavery activists who assisted slaves escaping from their owners. In 1850, a fugitive slave from Missouri named William John Henry was captured in Syracuse, New York. Smith quickly came to his aid and paid for Henry's legal defense. He was ultimately set free, and for the next seven years, Smith held an annual celebration in honor of Henry's freedom.

Smith had a longstanding friendship with fellow abolitionist John Brown. In 1849, he sold Brown 244 acres of land



Gerrit Smith was an ardent abolitionist, and founding member of the Liberty Party. (Library of Congress)

in North Elba, New York. Brown settled his family, and many black families, on the land. Smith donated money to Brown to establish a refuge for fugitive slaves in Virginia. In 1859, Brown and a group of supporters raided a federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. They wanted to acquire guns to create an army dedicated to freeing slaves. This is generally considered to be one of the primary events that prompted the Civil War. Brown was arrested, and a check from Smith was discovered in his pocket. Smith denied any knowledge of the raid itself and always maintained that he was merely supporting Brown's efforts to build the slave refuge.

After Brown was hanged for insurrection, Smith became worried that he would be arrested and executed. The local militia in Peterboro was called up to protect his estate. The governor of Virginia encouraged slave owners to capture Smith and bring him to the state to stand trial. As a result of his intense fear of being arrested, Smith experienced a mental breakdown and spent seven weeks in a mental asylum.

After the Civil War, Smith remained active in the abolitionist movement. He wrote an essay critical of the nation for failing to strongly support the rights of blacks. Gerrit Smith died on December 28, 1874.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Colonization Society; Brown, John; Free Soil Party; Liberty Party; Underground Railroad

Gene C. Gerard

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## Smith, James McCune

James McCune Smith (1813–1865) was born in New York City to parents who had successfully obtained their freedom. As a young boy, he was educated in the African Free Schools, where he established lifelong relationships with others who would also become significant activists, including Henry Highland Garnet and George Downing. Even as a child, Smith's intelligence singled him out for special recognition. At the age of 11, he was selected by the African Free School teachers to prepare a speech in honor of a visit from Revolutionary War hero General Lafayette. When he was 14, Smith witnessed one of the most historic occasions in New York City's black community, the Emancipation Day celebration. Despite his young age, Smith later wrote one of the most revealing accounts of the commemorative activities, which included a parade complete with drums, dancing, and music. Although Smith was clearly inspired by the excitement of legal emancipation, he was soon faced with the persistence of racism. Despite his obvious gift for science, Smith was denied admission to American medical schools on the basis of race. Sorely disappointed, he soon received assistance from activist Peter Williams Jr., who arranged for Smith to enroll at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Thus, in 1832, Smith sailed for Scotland, where he spent the next five years earning three degrees: a BA (1835), an MA (1836), and an MD (1837).

In 1837, Smith returned to his home in New York City and opened a successful medical practice and two pharmacies. His political activism began almost immediately; he fought openly against slavery and helped to create the Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society shortly after his return home. Yet he soon found that most of his associates were obsessed with another political issue: the growing rise of the American Colonization Society, an organization that they feared would forcibly remove black people from the United States. Smith responded to the call by joining the anticolonization struggle. On January 8, 1839, black New Yorkers convened the "Great Anti-Colonization Meeting" in order to protest against the "scheme" of African colonization. Smith was among the strongest leaders who addressed the crowd, offering an unequivocal manifesto on the horrors of colonization. Describing the notion as anti-republican and un-Christian, they asserted the United States as the only logical home for free blacks. Smith's reputation as an orator also led him to deliver two additional addresses in the 1840s: "A Lecture on the Haitian Revolution" in 1841 and "The Destiny of the People of Color" in 1843.

James McCune Smith's determination to eradicate racism and claim American citizenship on behalf of the race often caused him to assume rather controversial positions. During the 1840s, for example, he was extremely outspoken in his opposition to separate black organizations. He believed that, given racial conflict in the United States, it was necessary to form successful biracial coalitions. As a result, he opposed the call for a statewide colored convention in New York on the grounds that independent black action was a form of racial exclusivity that threatened the cause of racial advancement. After considerable debate and conflict, Smith was finally convinced to attend the New York State colored conventions, but he never relinquished his concerns about potential racial divisiveness. Instead, he increased his public activities on a wide range of political issues locally and nationally.

On the local level, Smith demonstrated his growing concern with the plight of working-class blacks. In 1843, he became the physician for the Colored Orphan Asylum and diligently worked for more than a decade on behalf of these children. In 1850, Smith also assisted in the establishment of a new organization to address the needs of black workers, the American League of Colored Laborers, which advocated for education and training in mechanical skills as a method to improve conditions for their people.

In the following year, he convened a gathering of black New Yorkers to assess the state of their people. Dr. Smith prepared a rather elaborate statement on the socioeconomic status of the black community, outlining the vice plaguing their people and the economic problems that drove people to desperation. He revealed that black people had been denied equal access to education and skilled training and had therefore been reduced to the lowest occupations. In response, Smith developed a practical, though ill conceived, solution to his people's struggles. Although similar plans had not been successful, Smith suggested that black people should abandon the city en masse and relocate back to the country. Through this project, Smith developed a friendship with white abolitionist Gerrit Smith, and the two men collaborated for many years thereafter. Obviously, the plan never fully took shape, but Smith's plan for a return to an agricultural lifestyle demonstrated both his desperation and his dedication to improving conditions for his people.

James McCune Smith's national activism manifested itself in a wide range of issues during the 1850s. At the opening of the decade, he became particularly active following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. Outraged by this legislation, Smith joined the Committee of Thirteen, an organization designed to protect and defend fugitives. He became particularly famous for a public confrontation with his white pastor at St. Phillip's Church, during which Smith chastised him for not opposing the Fugitive Slave Act. After the minister declared that they must uphold the laws of the United States, James McCune Smith confronted him and reportedly "raised the Devil" with his anger. His activism with the Committee of Thirteen eventually caused Smith to refocus his energies on the cause of anticolonization. In January 1852, the Committee of Thirteen convened the black community in Abyssinian Baptist Church to declare their opposition to colonization and assert their rights as American citizens. They were particularly concerned because New York governor Hunt had endorsed colonization and was apparently considering a plan to provide funds to finance forced removal of the black population. Smith was elected as a delegate to a meeting with the governor and ultimately convinced Hunt to reverse his position.

During this period, Smith also gained a reputation within the national black leadership. He was a regular contributor to Frederick Douglass's newspapers under the

pseudonym Communipaw. He also represented New York City at the 1853 Colored Convention and played a critical role in attempting to create a national black organization, the National Council of the Colored People (NCCP). The idea for the NCCP was to implement the success of local associations on the national level and create a power-base of black leaders across the North. However, the NCCP was plagued by disorganization from its inception, and the organization never fully developed. Unable to reproduce their local effectiveness on the national level, activists abandoned the NCCP in 1855, only two years after it commenced.

Despite the failure of the NCCP, however, James McCune Smith remained nationally active. In particular, in 1855, he became the first black man in American history to chair a national political convention. The Radical Abolition Party, formerly the Liberty Party, held its inaugural convention in Syracuse, New York, in June 1855 and hoped to gain the endorsement of black voters by selecting Smith as its chairman. Ironically, Smith had opposed the Liberty Party in the 1840s because he believed the organization had not sufficiently advocated on behalf of the free black population. However, the reorganized political party made a concerted effort to incorporate black men, and Smith had been convinced to provide his support to the struggling organization. Smith was rewarded for his loyalty, for they selected him as the nominee for secretary of state in 1857. Yet despite their best efforts, the Radical Abolition Party did not make major inroads with either the black community or the American political system. As a result, by 1858, most black leaders, including Smith, had abandoned the organization.

Even with all of Smith's political activism, perhaps his most well-known activity was his very public conflict with Henry Highland Garnet beginning in 1858. Garnet had recently founded the African Civilization Society, an organization designed to spread religion and establish business relationships in Africa. In particular, the society was interested in exploring the possibility of cotton production in West Africa, an endeavor it hoped would provide competition for Southern cotton and destroy the system of slavery. However, the controversial portion of the plans lay in the idea that free blacks should migrate from the United States and assist in the development of Liberia. Although Garnet insisted that emigration should be entirely voluntary, both Smith and fellow activists George Downing and Frederick Douglass denounced Garnet and his society. There was, in

particular, a very public confrontation between Smith and Garnet that played out in the pages of the *Anglo-African Magazine*. Smith challenged Garnet to focus his energy on the condition of black people in the United States, instead of other countries throughout the world. According to Smith, he and Garnet had made a pledge 25 years earlier that they would devote their lives to uplift the black race, fight for abolition, and gain the suffrage. Smith maintained that because they had not yet achieved their goals, Garnet was obligated to honor his agreement. For months, the two men exchanged ugly words about each other and the colonization issue, a nasty debate that ultimately deeply wounded both of the old friends. In fact, Smith and Garnet remained at odds until 1862 when they reunited over the cause of slaves during the Civil War.

Up until his death, Smith remained active in the black community. In 1861, he helped finance the creation of the black newspaper the *Anglo-African Magazine* and, in 1863, was appointed as a professor of anthropology at the black Wilberforce College. Unfortunately, a continuing heart problem prevented Smith from actually joining the faculty, a condition that eventually took his life in November 1865. His final major contribution was authoring an introduction to Henry Highland Garnet's address before Congress in February 1865. It was, in the end, a beautiful tribute to his friend, and old adversary, and their shared commitment to black liberation. Smith died on November 17, 1865, just weeks after the passage of the 13th Amendment. He left behind a wife and five children.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; African Free Schools; *Anglo-African Magazine*; Colored Convention Movement; Douglass, Frederick; Downing, George; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Garnet, Henry Highland; Liberty Party; Smith, Gerrit; Williams, Peter Jr.

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## Southern Free Blacks

Prior to the American Revolution, free black people were rare in the South, but following the Revolution, the number of free blacks in the South increased. For example, in Virginia in 1782, less than 1 percent of the total African American population was free; however, by 1800, the number of free blacks was more than 4 percent of the total African American population. In the wake of the Revolution, slaves were freed through manumission, or they simply used the chaos created by the Revolution to flee their masters.

Although the number of free blacks increased in the immediate aftermath of the American Revolution, so too did the fear of free blacks inciting a slave uprising increase in the South. Sensing that free blacks might become agitators of a slave revolt, most Southern states passed laws that required the monitoring of free blacks. In 1793, for instance, Virginia passed a law stating that all free blacks had to register with the local county court. Similarly, a South Carolina law limited the mobility of free black sailors; anytime a ship docked at a South Carolina port, the free blacks were jailed until the ship's departure. It was the responsibility of the ship's captain to pay for the cost of jailing, and if he refused to pay, the free blacks could be sold as slaves.

Laws created after 1800 were aimed at forcing free blacks out of a state or preventing slaves from becoming free. North Carolina required free blacks to leave the state 90 days after receiving their freedom, and Virginia passed a law requiring free blacks to leave the state after 1 year. States such as Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi outlawed manumission by a slave owner.

Following Nat Turner's revolt in 1831, restrictions against free blacks were tightened further. In Raleigh, North Carolina, every free black was arrested following Turner's Virginia revolt. Virginia's state legislature denied free blacks the right to trial by jury and also forbade free blacks from preaching. Throughout the South, the rights of free blacks became severely restricted as they were prohibited from conducting business or even selling produce.

Despite the many limitations placed on free blacks, namely the time that newly freed blacks could remain

in a state, the laws were not enforced actively in all areas throughout the South. Free blacks lived in Southern states for decades with the aid of their former masters or sympathetic whites who proved to the local county courts or state legislatures that a free black was important to the local economy and would be well-behaved.

Regardless of whether free blacks were allowed to remain in a state, there were still certain things that had to be done to protect their freedom. Each free black was required to register with local county courts and carry a freedom certificate at all times. If a free black person was stopped and could not prove his or her freedom, he or she could be fined and sold into slavery. Even if a free black person could prove his or her freedom, the person's safety was not guaranteed. It became quite profitable during the first half of the 19th century to kidnap free black families and sell them into slavery.

Another obstacle confronting free black families was providing for their children. On numerous occasions, free black parents signed indentures for their children that bound them to a white employer. The reasons for indenturing a child were twofold—first, some families were too poor to care for their children, and second, some parents believed that it would prove useful for their children to learn a skill as an apprentice. Despite the parents' good intentions, many white employers treated the indentured children horribly. Conditions for many young apprentices were comparable to that of slaves. The horrible treatment caused many to run away. The free black children were tracked and, if found, confronted severe punishment—their indenture could be extended, or they could be sold into slavery. Many Southern free blacks, despite the dangers, also worked hard to help slaves escape. If a free black was caught helping a slave, he or she could be sold into slavery or in some cases executed. Nonetheless, free blacks hid runaways and obtained vital information that slaves could use to obtain their freedom.

In the mid-19th century, animosity toward free blacks continued to deepen as Southern states tried to find ways to rid themselves of free blacks. Some states pushed colonization as a solution, and some states, such as Virginia, offered free blacks the option to return to slavery and choose their own master. Anti-free black propaganda was rampant as well. For example George Fitzhugh, a native of Port Royal Virginia, wrote a number of works on problems that free blacks created in a slave society.

Despite many repressive laws, Southern free blacks did have some successes. Some were able to purchase loved

ones still on bondage, and others were able to become businessmen and skilled craftsmen. Regardless of their efforts and as much as they tried, however, Southern free blacks would not enjoy any of the basic rights of free people until after the end of the American Civil War.

*See also:* Vesey, Denmark

Jonathan A. Noyalas

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## Stewart, Maria

Maria Miller Stewart (1803–1879) was the first American woman to speak in public to an audience comprising different genders and races. She was also one of the first African American women to conspicuously write and speak boldly about political matters.

Maria Miller was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1803. She was orphaned at the age of five and was consequently indentured to a clergyman and his family until she was 15 years old. Although Miller was born free, she never received any formal education. Her literacy was gained by reading the Bible and through attendance at Sabbath Schools, or schools for religious instruction. Miller's mastery of the Bible would later prove to be one of the major catalysts for her anti-enslavement and women's rights activism. She believed herself to be a God-ordained prophet, activist, and abolitionist.

In 1826, at age 23, Maria Miller married James Stewart, a successful property owner and entrepreneur in Boston, Massachusetts. Maria Miller became Mrs. Maria W. Stewart, after adopting her husband's middle initial as well as his last name. The Stewarts were married by the Rev. Thomas Paul, a prominent figure in both the antislavery and independent black Baptist church movements. Reverend Paul's pastorate was located in the African Meeting House, the epicenter for many of the antislavery activities that took place in the Boston area. Stewart would later give one of her powerful speeches there in 1831. After three years of

marriage, Stewart's husband became gravely ill—perhaps suffering from scarlet fever—and died. This was the same year that David Walker published his antislavery pamphlet titled *An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*.

Because the Stewarts were childless, and because of unscrupulous white businessmen to whom Stewart's husband had entrusted his business affairs, Stewart was left with no inheritance from her husband, although she should have been left with sufficient resources for a comfortable life. The white businessmen with whom her husband had done business for years essentially stole his assets by claiming that he had died while indebted to them. Stewart promptly took her case to court. Although the judge acknowledged the merits of Stewart's case and the unethical behavior of the defendants, the judge ultimately decided the case against Stewart.

This harsh experience led Stewart to encourage black women to sue for their rights and to emphatically resist the social limitations placed on them. Stewart encouraged woman to develop varied interests out of the domestic sphere, fully develop their intellectual capacities, and become activists for equal rights. She also placed high priority on women educating their children in the ways of God, black community solidarity, and knowledge of African history.

Stewart's activism was also heavily influenced by her spiritual conversion and the person and writings of David Walker. After the deaths of both her husband and Walker, which occurred one year apart, Stewart reexamined the Bible as a means to deal with her grief. Her Bible reading led her to conclude that slavery was sinful and that God would undoubtedly punish slaveholders. Stewart was confident in her proclamation because it was God who had "called" her into public service to speak out in support of abolition and justice.

Stewart's first essay, titled "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality," was published in 1831 in the abolitionist publication the *Liberator*. Following Walker's lead, Stewart laid bare the hypocrisy of a nation that claimed Christianity but would allow the wretchedness of enslavement. Likewise, Stewart used her rhetorical skill to stridently chastise blacks who would not take up the anti-enslavement cause for fear of reprisal. A product of her time, Stewart also chastised black women for not striving to be chaste and refined women. Stewart believed that moral defect and character gave white people all the more reason for enslaving them. The core of Stewart's beliefs were that blacks in America possessed a rich history in Africa worthy of duplication in

America; that blacks possessed great intellect and moral virtue; that community solidarity was essential to black people's advancement in society; and that education would lead to liberty.

Stewart's messages underscore the fact that although many whites were sympathetic to the abolitionist cause, there were just as many whites who, although they believed in abolitionism, did not consider any black person, bond or free, as equal in humanity. Belief in black self-help spurred Stewart to become a founding member of the Afric-American Literary Society, whose mission was to advance morality, purity, and knowledge within the black community.

Stewart's rhetoric and style proved to be too revolutionary, even for the black community. Because blacks were working to gain acceptance within the white community, Stewart's forceful rhetoric, denunciation, and exposition of the ills of the black community were seen as a threat to the advancement of the community to which she belonged. The rejection and opposition Stewart received succeeded in muffling her powerful voice. After scarcely three years, Stewart chose to end her public activist career. She died in relative obscurity in 1879.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Garrison, William Lloyd; the *Liberator*; Walker, David

Pearl Bates

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## Still, William

From the 1860s through the end his life 40 years later, William Still (1821–1902) was the model of late-19th-century civic activism, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. Amassing considerable wealth across a variety of ventures (including real estate, heating stoves, and coal), Still simultaneously pushed a reform agenda aimed at bettering the lives of

others. He served on the Freedmen's Aid Commission after the Civil War, supported orphanages and almshouses, organized against some of Philadelphia's earliest Jim Crow laws, and received election to such bodies as the Philadelphia Board of Trade. Yet, had none of this occurred, had his life's achievements included only that accomplished before the Civil War, William Still's place in history would have been assured nonetheless. As his obituary in the *New York Times* reminded readers, he was "the Father of the Underground Railroad."

William Still was born in New Jersey in 1821, the son of a fugitive slave mother and a freed father. As late as 1807, his parents, Levin and Sidney Steel, had been enslaved in Maryland. Levin's owner allowed him to purchase his freedom and leave the state. But that also meant leaving his wife and four children. Undaunted, Levin and Sidney conspired to rendezvous in New Jersey. After one thwarted attempt to flee to her husband with all their children in tow, Sidney Steel fled again, this time with only two of the children (the Steels hoped to return later for their two eldest sons, but the boys were soon sold south).

Changing their identities (Sidney became "Charity"; the Steels became the "Stills"), the family lived under a guise of free status. At least a dozen more children were born to Levin and Charity Still while they were exiled in New Jersey, including William. The Stills eventually acquired land and lived the life of a farm family. William received little formal education but did become literate and avidly pursued a course of self-education. By the age of 24, he felt ready to take on the world and traveled to Philadelphia to seek his fortune.

Philadelphia in the 1840s was a promising place for a young African American man. The city's black population had grown consistently during the antebellum years, largely at the expense of other states' black populations. As the 1850 census demonstrated, only 4 in 10 black Philadelphians were natives of Pennsylvania. More tellingly, 50 percent of blacks in the city had been born in slave states. Despite such beginnings, black Philadelphians supported more than a dozen churches and numerous societies, organizations, and benevolent groups. Indeed, real estate ownership among African Americans in the city was the highest in the North.

Working odd jobs around the city for three years—bricklayer, stevedore, teamster, waiter, and domestic, among other jobs—William met his fate, twice, in 1847. First he

came to know the woman who would be his wife, Letitia George. Next, William answered a help-wanted advertisement from the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Knowing his own family's struggle against slavery, he recognized an opportunity to contribute to the cause. From this decision, he received an unexpected reward in 1850. While working in the Anti-Slavery Society's office, he was introduced to a fugitive slave from Alabama. William quickly discovered the man to be his brother Peter (whom he had never met), one of the children left behind when Sidney Steel fled Maryland. Soon, then, after 40 years, mother and son were finally reunited.

William Still rose to chairman of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society in 1851. The following year, he and nearly two dozen others formed a "vigilance" committee. Like its counterparts elsewhere—especially Boston and New York—the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee aided fugitive slaves coming to the city. Offering shelter, food, medical attention, finance, transportation, and a network of contacts in other cities, the committee helped blacks keep running, urging most on to Canada. Through this organization, William Still made his greatest impact.

Still served as acting committee chairman for the vigilance committee, corresponding with kindred groups across the nation and keeping record of the group's activities—documenting and interviewing persons assisted, maintaining a file of correspondences with co-conspirators, and tracking funds expended to those in the field. The number of fugitives coming to and through Philadelphia increased exponentially as the antebellum era pressed forth.

From 1852 through 1860, Still was perhaps the most active agent of the Underground Railroad, documenting nearly 800 fugitives as having arrived at his Philadelphia offices (more than half from Maryland, Still's own ancestral home). In his work, he came to depend on hundreds of little-known and anonymous Philadelphians; he cooperated and conspired with like-minded reformers around the nation, including Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, and Lewis Tappan. Meanwhile, Still and his Philadelphia cohorts assisted in many daring and noted escapes. Some, such as Henry "Box" Brown, who was "mailed" to freedom from Richmond, Virginia, had been Underground Railroad operations from beginning to end. Most of Still's work, however, involved assistance given to those literally arriving at his door—those whose escapes had been mainly the product of Southern people's efforts. Still used runaway ads

cut from Southern newspapers to track who was on the run and might be coming his way.

In 1859, William Still aided several of John Brown's accomplices fleeing western Virginia after their ill-fated insurrection at Harpers Ferry. Somehow linked to the insurrectionaries, and fearing investigation, Still took several precautions, including burying his journals from a decade of Underground Railroad activity in a local black cemetery, where they remained until well after the war. Still exhumed the journals by 1872 and published them as *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, Etc.* The result of Still's meticulous recordation, the book serves as the most solid documentation that an "underground" of agents, loosely coordinated, did in fact exist for the purpose of assisting enslaved persons fleeing to freedom. William Still died in 1902.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Brown, John; Destination, Canada; Fugitive Slaves; Tubman, Harriet; Underground Railroad

David Taft Terry

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## Stowe, Harriet Beecher

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) was a 19th-century American novelist whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) is forever etched into the annals of African American history. Born on June 14, 1811, in Litchfield, Connecticut, to Rev. Lyman Beecher, a well-known Congregational minister, and Roxanna Foote Beecher (who died when Harriet was five years old), Harriet was one of 11 brothers and sisters. Under Reverend Beecher's direction, Harriet and her siblings—many of whom went on to secure national reputations in





Harriet Beecher Stowe was the author of the best-selling antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), which aroused northern feeling against slavery in the United States. (National Archives)

their own right—committed their lives to education and reform. Harriet's first-rate education (remarkably unusual for a 19th-century woman) was first cultivated within the doors of her sister Catherine's school, the Hartford Female Seminary, where Harriet would later teach.

Her education was further advanced in 1832 when Reverend Beecher was named president of Lane Theological Seminary, and Harriet moved along with her family to Cincinnati, Ohio. There Harriet attended lectures, and shortly thereafter, Harriet married Calvin Stowe, a professor, in 1836. Together, the Stowes had seven children, six of whom were born in Cincinnati, and in 1850, Calvin Stowe became a part of the faculty at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, where the Stowe family lived for the next three years. Calvin Stowe greatly encouraged Harriet to continue writing (also highly unusual for a 19th-century woman), and such encouragement would bring to fruition the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852.

Uncle Tom, an African American slave who in the novel's opening scene is leading prayer among his fellow slaves, quickly learns that he is to be sold to help pay off his master's debts. Instead of fleeing (as he was advised to do by friends and family) Uncle Tom resigns himself to the condition that he faces. Relying on Christian faith and fortitude, the novel chronicles Uncle Tom's heroic endurance of the horrors of slavery, which would ultimately put to shame the Christianity of Southern slave-owning families and sympathizers who often used Christianity to justify enslaving African Americans. In addition to chronicling the sufferings of Uncle Tom, Stowe's novel (in keeping with the genre of sentimentalism) depicts exaggerated characterizations of both African Americans and whites, which together amounted to unflattering portraits of Southern American slavery that would reach as far as Europe.

Stowe's antislavery novel was designed to prick the consciences of both Northern and Southern readers about the horrors of slavery. The novel was first published as a serial appearing in the *National Era* between 1851 and 1852. The story was published in 40 installments, and Stowe was paid a mere \$300. When the story was published as a two-volume novel in March 1852, 300,000 copies were sold in the first year, and nearly 2 million copies were sold worldwide by 1857. Although Stowe's work was largely credited for fostering both open and latent abolitionist sentiment among readers throughout the United States and world, it did not do so without controversy, for the most infamous literary personage in American literary history (the novel's namesake, Uncle Tom) and Stowe's lack of firsthand experience with Southern slavery sparked endless debate about the veracity of Stowe's novel that continued well into the 20th century.

In 1853, Stowe published an apologetic to defend her fictional account, titled *The Key to "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon Which the Story Is Founded*. The work was designed to provide verifiable accounts and documentation for the characterizations used for Stowe's novel, particularly for her depiction of Uncle Tom. Stowe relays in the work that the depiction of Uncle Tom is largely taken from the Rev. Josiah Henson's first autobiography, *The Autobiography of Josiah Henson* (1849). Stowe visited twice with Henson, once at her home in Andover in 1849 and a second time in 1850 at her brother's house in Boston. Although Henson proudly declared in his second edition of the autobiography in 1858 that he

was the historical personage of Stowe's *Uncle Tom* and was proud of it, many African American commentators on the figure were not as enthusiastic.

One such commentator was African American novelist and essayist James Baldwin, whose 1949 essay "Everybody's Protest Novel" severely denounces Stowe's novel. Baldwin—who would eventually publish his *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1952) exactly 100 years after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—labeled Stowe's Tom so thoroughly unrealistic that the book intimates that African Americans must necessarily become implausibly pious in order for American whites to recognize their humanity. This criticism partly fueled Baldwin's realistic portrayal of African American engagement with Christianity in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* through the depiction of his primary character Gabriel Grimes, whose last name and immoral actions in the novel suggested that African American humanity need not be improbable. In spite of such withering criticism, *Uncle Tom's Cabin's* place in the annals of African American history remains secure.

Abraham Lincoln allegedly told Harriet Beecher Stowe that she was the one who started the Civil War, and famed African American scholar William Edward Burghardt Du Bois suggested in an October 27, 1945, article appearing in the *Chicago Defender* that Stowe's work was understandable and necessary given the time period. He goes on to describe Stowe as brave and her efforts as the best and most successful on behalf of African Americans in a century, arguing that thus, neither Stowe nor *Uncle Tom's Cabin* should be roundly criticized by African Americans.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Lincoln, Abraham; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Brian Lamont Johnson

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## Sumner, Charles

Charles Sumner (1811–1874) devoted his life to securing freedom and full civil and political rights for African Americans. As a lawyer, abolitionist, and senator, Sumner gained a reputation as a passionate civil rights advocate and a sparkling orator. In the Senate, Sumner established himself as an uncompromising opponent of slavery and a true radical on issues of race. An 1856 beating on the floor of the Senate by a proslavery Congressman crippled Sumner for more than three years, but upon returning to Washington, he quickly picked up where he had left off, repeatedly urging newly elected President Lincoln to emancipate the slaves after Southern secession. During Reconstruction, Sumner would emerge as the senatorial leader of the radical wing of the Republican Party.

Charles Sumner was born in Boston on January 6, 1811. After graduating from Harvard and being admitted to the Massachusetts Bar, Sumner worked as a lawyer and educational reformer until the mid-1840s. On July 4, 1845, Sumner delivered a speech in Boston denouncing American hostilities toward Mexico, thereby becoming a player in Massachusetts politics and antislavery activism. Three years later, he deserted the Whig party in favor of John Quincy Adams's Free Soil campaign. After Daniel Webster retired, Sumner was elected to the Senate as a Free Soiler in 1851.

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which proposed to invalidate the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and settle the two new western territories on the basis of popular sovereignty. Soon, settlers flocked to Kansas, leading to a bloody guerilla war between pro- and antislavery settlers. In May 1856, Charles Sumner delivered a two-day oration in the Senate titled "The Crime Against Kansas," in which he viciously attacked slavery, the South, and the violence in Kansas. In the course of his speech, Sumner insulted elderly South Carolina senator Andrew Butler. Two days later, while Sumner was working at his desk on the Senate floor, Butler's nephew, South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks, entered the chamber and savagely beat Sumner over the head with his heavy wooden cane, breaking the cane



Senator Charles Sumner, a devout abolitionist, was a champion of black civil rights and strongly opposed compromise with the South. (National Archives)

and almost killing Sumner. The event, known as “Bleeding Sumner,” added to the ferocity of the sectional conflict, as Northerners decried Brooks’ action and declared it indicative of the South’s failure as a civilization, whereas Southerners showered Brooks with praise and sent him hundreds of new canes to replace his broken one. Despite his inability to appear on the floor of the Senate for three years, Sumner’s Massachusetts constituency reelected him overwhelmingly.

After his recovery, Sumner retained his radical posture toward the South, refusing to countenance any further compromise with slavery during the secession crisis of 1860–1861. Upon the outbreak of hostilities, Sumner immediately called for the use of African American troops in the Union Army, a position he would maintain throughout the war. He clashed with Lincoln over the dismissal of Gen. John C. Fremont, who had ordered the emancipation of all slaves in the state of Missouri against the president’s wishes. Sumner continually urged Lincoln to emancipate the slaves and to acknowledge that slavery was at the root of the conflict. In 1864, Sumner introduced the 13th Amendment, which outlawed slavery, to the Senate.

Following the cessation of hostilities in 1865, Charles Sumner demanded full civil and political rights, including manhood suffrage, for the freedmen of the South. He loudly criticized the Reconstruction policies of Andrew Johnson, who had assumed the presidency after Lincoln’s assassination in April 1865. In May of that year, Johnson embarked on a lenient policy of Reconstruction that pardoned most Confederates and did not change the voting laws of the Southern states. As Johnson began vetoing bills passed by Congress, Sumner called for impeachment of the president. The midterm congressional elections of 1866 returned a commanding majority for the Radical wing of the Republican Party, which allowed the passage of congressional bills over Johnson’s veto. Sumner was instrumental in the passage of the 14th Amendment, which secured citizenship and civil rights for Southern freedman, and the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 and 1868, which put the South under Northern military rule in order to restore order and enforce African American civil rights. In late 1867, the House Judiciary Committee voted to impeach Johnson. Despite Sumner’s ferocity during the trial, Johnson was not convicted.

In 1870, Sumner adamantly refused to support President Ulysses S. Grant’s proposal for the annexation of the Dominican Republic. Sumner’s insistence on seeking reparations (known as the Alabama Claims) from England for their material support of the Confederacy further alienated Grant. In 1871, the Senate removed Sumner from his post as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a position he had held since 1861. Disgusted with President Grant, Sumner renounced the Radical Republican Party he had helped to found and threw his support to Horace Greeley, the Liberal Republican candidate, in the presidential election of 1872. Charles Sumner died in 1874.

*See also:* Free Soil Party; Freedmen’s Bureau; Johnson, Andrew; Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; Lincoln, Abraham; Radical Republicans; Republican Party; Stevens, Thaddeus

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## Tappan, Arthur

Arthur Tappan (1786–1865) was, along with his younger brother Lewis (1788–1873), a leading force among antebellum reformers—especially those now known as more “conservative” abolitionists. Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, to merchant Benjamin Tappan and Sarah Homes, Tappan was raised in a deeply Calvinist home. In 1801, he gained a clerkship in a dry goods store in Boston; a few years later, he began his own importing business in Portland, Maine. In 1809, he moved the business to Montreal, where he met and later (on September 18, 1810) married Frances Antill; the couple would later have eight children.

At the beginning of the War of 1812, Tappan returned to New York, but he struggled financially until the 1820s, when he began a very successful silk business. His brother Lewis joined the firm in 1828. Although both Tappan brothers became wealthy, much of that wealth was quickly given to charities—including the American Bible Society, the American Education Society, the American Home Mission, the American Sunday School Union, the American Temperance Union, the American Tract Society, and the New York Magdalene Society. Hoping to use the press to further moralize, Tappan also poured funds into the ultimately unsuccessful *New York Journal of Commerce*. He gave to churches (including the Broadway Tabernacle, because of his ties to activist minister Charles Grandison Finney) and to colleges (including Auburn Seminary, Kenyon College, Lane Seminary, and Oberlin College) as well.

Tappan’s involvement in such reform efforts led naturally to concerns related to slavery. In 1829, he led the effort to finance the return to Africa of Abd-al-Rahman, a Timbo prince enslaved in Mississippi, and he joined the American Colonization Society. Tappan quickly began to question the Colonization Society’s efforts and motivations, however, and soon became involved with abolitionists who believed in the strategy of immediatism. It was Tappan’s money that freed William Lloyd Garrison from a Baltimore jail in 1830 and Tappan’s money that, along with funds from key black and white leaders, allowed Garrison to establish his *Liberator* in 1831. Working with several key figures in the early

abolitionist movement, Tappan helped found the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833; he was elected the society’s first president and largely funded the society’s newspaper, the *Emancipator*. Although Lewis was arguably the more radical of the brothers and ultimately much more active in the abolitionist movement, both were targeted by various proslavery groups, and both were repeatedly threatened. Both—along with many black New Yorkers—suffered losses in the July 1834 New York City anti-black riot. Undeterred, the Tappans fought for and funded more national distribution of antislavery materials and supported causes ranging from Prudence Crandall’s school to the various petition drives against slavery.

The complex factionalism within the abolitionist movement, though, began to marginalize the Tappan brothers. Some abolitionists questioned their emphasis on religion; some, their stance against allowing women to participate fully in the movement’s organizations; some, their occasional racist comments and sense of superiority; some, their desire to hold fast to a nationally controlled organization in the face of various local and state organizations’ sometime-success. The Panic of 1837 also devastated both of the Tappan brothers, and Arthur Tappan was forced to close his silk business, although he eventually regained some of his financial footing. Tensions between the Tappans and other antislavery leaders—especially Garrison—came to a head in 1840 when the American Anti-Slavery Society elected Abby Kelly to its executive board. Both Tappans resigned and quickly moved to create an organization that embodied their more conservative and focused version of abolition, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery (AFASS) Society. This new society was central in establishing the *National Era*—and thus in ensuring that Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which it later serialized, reached a mass audience. The AFASS was also among the factions that supported James Birney and the new Liberty Party in the 1840s. However, it was never as influential as the growing Garrisonian movement.

Tappan himself was, along with his brother Lewis, active in founding the American Missionary Association in 1846—an organization that would become important to postbellum efforts to educate freed people. He also continued his charitable work, although these efforts were limited by another financial failure in 1842. He essentially retired from public life in the 1850s, though he later rejoiced at the Emancipation Proclamation and the Union victory shortly before his death at his home in New Haven.

*See also:* American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); American Colonization Society; Crandall, Prudence; Immediatism; Garrison, William Lloyd; Liberty Party; Tappan, Lewis; the *Emancipator*; Underground Railroad

Eric Scott Gardner

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## Tappan, Lewis

Lewis Tappan (1788–1873) was an ardent and dedicated abolitionist who, along with his brother Arthur, spent most of life battling against slavery. Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, Lewis Tappan grew up in a Calvinistic evangelical home. Entering the business world in his teens, he faced difficult times as a merchant, eventually declaring bankruptcy in the woolen and cotton industries. In the late 1820s, Lewis partnered with his more successful brother Arthur, and the two achieved lucrative success in the silk trade. A matured businessman, founder of the *Journal of Commerce*, and creator of “credit reporting,” Lewis saw his business acumen, along with his Protestant faith, help shape his approach to economic and moral reform.

In the early part of the 19th century, the United States was rapidly turning into a market-driven consumer society. Innovations in transportation, communication, and technology; a chaotic banking system; and the growing tensions between labor and capital decisively reordered American society. Yet one of the most significant market issues that helped increase the wealth of the United States was slavery—an expanding business that underwrote antebellum politics and culture. Although recognizing the profitability of slavery, Lewis believed that chattel bondage violated the moral dictates of the Bible. He worked tirelessly to abolish

the institution despite the numerous threats against his life, which included the burning of his home in 1834. In the early 1830s, both he and Arthur met William Lloyd Garrison, the fiery editor of the radical abolitionist newspaper the *Liberator* and, with the help of Theodore Weld, founded the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS). Lewis financially backed Joshua Leavitt’s *Emancipator*, the most widely read antislavery newsletter, and gave full-fledged support to the Underground Railroad after Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850.

The famous *Amistad* case elevated Lewis to the status of a crucial leader in the antislavery cause. A mutiny on board the slave ship *Amistad* made national headlines in 1839. Lewis found that the incident provided a critical opportunity to legally challenge slavery in the United States. He not only financed the defense for the Mendes—whose recognized leader, Cinque, he befriended—but also garnered the support of a number of early abolitionists, including former president John Quincy Adams, who argued on behalf of the mutineers before the U.S. Supreme Court. After the high court ruled in favor of the Mendes, Lewis facilitated the men’s return to Sierra Leone.

Although committed to the antislavery cause, Lewis was often wary of the direction of the abolitionist movement. Unlike his brother and a majority of antislavery advocates, Lewis was committed to black equality. He worked to eliminate segregation in church-house seating; helped establish Oberlin College, the first interracial and coed academic institution; and supported the presence of black preachers at AASS conferences. At the same time, however, Lewis disapproved of the emerging feminism spawned by the antislavery movement. Many radical abolitionists, including Garrison, supported the public participation of women in moral reform. Lewis, on the other hand, believed that a woman’s place was in the domestic sphere. As women became an increasing presence in the AASS, Lewis and others broke from the society and established the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

After transferring ownership of his credit agency to Benjamin Douglass, he retired from business in order to spend the rest of his life fighting slavery. In 1873, a decade after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lewis Tappan died in New York.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); *Amistad*;

Cinque, Joseph; Garrison, William Lloyd; Tappan, Arthur; the *Emancipator*; the *Liberator*; Underground Railroad

Ryan McIlhenny

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## Thirteenth Amendment

On December 18, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, a Constitutional amendment that freed slaves nationally. Today, the Thirteenth Amendment arguably remains a little-used but potentially important federal power for enforcing civil rights against all vestiges of slavery that reincarnate as racial discrimination.

African American history is partly legal history, and constitutional law is at the heart of it. Although freedom is enshrined as a universal principle in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, in its original form, protected both slavery and liberty. This was as contradictory as it was paradoxical. Striking a compromise with delegates from South Carolina and Georgia at the 1787 Constitutional Convention in a pact-with-the-devil exchange for ratification (William Lloyd Garrison, America's leading abolitionist, stigmatized it as "an agreement with Hell"), several constitutional provisions preserved the institution of slavery: the Fugitive Slave Clause (barring free states from emancipating runaway slaves and requiring their return to their masters); the now-lapsed Slave Importation Clause (allowing the Atlantic slave trade to continue for 20 years, until 1808, by immunizing it from congressional action); and the Three-Fifths Clause (diminishing blacks to three-fifths the value of whites for numeration, thereby giving the South a disproportionate representation in the House of Representatives). The Importation Clause was not truly a sunset clause because it contained no express prohibition of slavery. Even passage of the Bill of Rights (the First through Tenth Amendments) in 1791 failed to attenuate, much less

eliminate, the original Constitution's protections of slavery. This changed in 1865. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and thus radically altered the Constitution, as part of what some legal scholars call the "Second Constitution." Ironically, ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment marked the first time that the word "slavery" appeared in the Constitution, even though the Constitution explicitly protected slavery.

Abolition of slavery is not freedom from all oppression. Slavery's roots are deep in American history and are not yet fully extirpated. Racism is a ghost of the slaver's psyche, and legislation alone cannot transform human behavior. Yet the Thirteenth Amendment empowered the government to strike down any legislation that abridges liberties on the basis of race. But this was not always so. Originally known as the Abolition Amendment, its intent was to give practical effect to the Declaration of Independence's self-evident truths "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Of course, such *unalienable* rights did not extend to *aliens* (non-citizens), which is why the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) had to precede the Fifteenth, by granting citizenship to anyone born or naturalized in the United States. Grounded in liberty and equality principles, the Thirteenth Amendment bans involuntary labor except as punishment for a crime, and it authorizes Congress to pass laws rationally tailored to extinguish all traces of slavery.

Under Section 2, which legal scholars call the Enforcement Clause, the Thirteenth Amendment was also supposed to eradicate any vestiges of forced labor. Thus, to enforce the Thirteenth Amendment, Congress quickly passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (over President Andrew Johnson's veto), the Slave Kidnapping Act of 1866, the Peonage Act of 1867, and the Judiciary Act of 1867. But a series of Supreme Court decisions during Reconstruction effectively emasculated the amendment, through crabbed interpretation and curtailed application. With the splendid exception of peonage cases, the Thirteenth Amendment remained a dead letter under such segregationist Supreme Court rulings as *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which used color as a badge for discrimination while professing an "equal but separate" doctrine. One reason for this is that the Thirteenth Amendment was deficient in that it lacked any formal recognition of equality under the law. This defect would later be cured by

enactment of the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Thirteenth Amendment is far more than an emancipation law. Through its enforcement power, it is also a civil rights instrument, although rarely used. The social transformation that the framers of the Thirteenth Amendment had envisioned could be achieved only where the federal government could enforce freedom. Sadly, it took over a century for the Supreme Court to discover in the Thirteenth Amendment a fresh constitutional source of power for enforcing certain civil rights. The landmark decision of *Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co.*, 392 U.S. 409 (1968), restored the civil rights value of the amendment and transformed it into a potentially potent civil rights instrument. *Jones* established Congress's power to enact legislation against private racial discrimination. It did so by empowering Congress to pass laws that prevent any intrusions on liberty that are "rationally related" to slavery, thus providing a new and powerful basis for federal legislation barring race discrimination.

There are lessons to be learned from the role of the Thirteenth Amendment in African American history. Alexander Tsesis, who may be today's leading authority on the Thirteenth Amendment, observes that each new generation must reexamine the nation's past, its core documents, and its moral progress as a constitutional democracy. Tsesis argues that the Thirteenth Amendment offers a more forthright warranty of freedom than other constitutional provisions on which the Supreme Court has relied. And beyond the amendment's role in barring racist labor practices, Tsesis advocates a progressive legal theory that legislatively and judicially expands the power of the Thirteenth Amendment to curb all coercive practices and repressive conduct rationally related to abridgments of freedom. Congress has virtual plenary power to protect individual rights under the Thirteenth Amendment. Yet this legislative power remains largely untapped. The Supreme Court, moreover, has yet to fully consider what freedoms Congress may protect pursuant to the Thirteenth Amendment. Judicial analysis under the Thirteenth Amendment asks the question, Is the act or law an incident or badge of servitude? An answer of "yes" to this constitutional test should trigger the Thirteenth Amendment's enforcement power. The Thirteenth Amendment has transformed the Declaration's national aspiration for freedom and equality by abolishing the Constitution's protections of slavery—thereby establishing federal power to enforce civil rights against all recrudescing vestiges

of slavery that (as stated previously) reincarnate as racial discrimination.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Lincoln, Abraham; Radical Republicans

Christopher Buck

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## Three-Fifths Compromise

The three-fifths compromise is a term that refers to the taxation and apportionment accommodation reached between Northern and Southern states at the Philadelphia Convention of 1787. Under it, each slave counted as three-fifths of a person for purposes of direct taxation and apportionment of the House of Representatives.

The Philadelphia Convention met under the rubric of an effort to devise amendments to the Articles of Confederation. Proposed in 1777 as a charter for the Revolutionary union of the states, the Articles seemed inadequate to Federalists from the beginning. Even before their ratification, leading figures such as George Washington, James Madison, Robert Morris, and John Jay favored a stronger union. Thus, when the Convention assembled, Madison was prepared. Through its spokesman, Governor Edmund Randolph, the Virginia delegation presented the Virginia Plan, a proposal

for a new federal constitution featuring apportionment by population in both houses of a bicameral congress.

Small-state delegates demurred. Perhaps apportionment by population had theoretical resonance, but it did not seem so abstract a matter coming from Virginia, which happened to be the most extensive and most populous state. Finally, William Paterson of New Jersey presented an alternative plan. Where Virginia had proposed to nationalize the government, giving it its own executive and judicial branches, the ability to conclude treaties without involving the states, and elections for congressmen without state legislatures' involvement, the New Jersey Plan proposed to leave much as it had been before. Most importantly, the small states insisted that apportionment of the congress must remain, as it had been under the Articles, by state. That is, each state, from tiny Rhode Island and Delaware to massive Virginia and Massachusetts, must have an equal vote.

Complicating this matter was the question of how slaves should be counted. When it came to legislative apportionment, Southern delegates said that slaves should count just as anyone else did. Northerners, led by Rufus King of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania's Governor Morris, thought it entirely unjustifiable that ownership of slaves, who were precluded from participating in politics in any way, should give masters more weight in legislation than others. Why, they wanted to know, should slaves count at all?

In the end, however, the slave and free states compromised on the three-fifths ratio. Yet from the beginning, the three-fifths compromise was controversial. It provoked heated debate in some Northern states, whereas Federalists in South Carolina pointed to it as evidence that the proposed federal charter should be ratified. It became an especially sore subject after the election of 1800, in which the Republican ticket of Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr unseated incumbent President John Adams by a three-electoral-vote margin, which could be accounted for in its entirety by the three-fifths clause's bonus to slaveholders in the Electoral College.

As the Virginia Dynasty of 1801–1825, and the accompanying Republican domination of Congress, wore on, Federalists in New England noted that policies such as the War of 1812 hurt their section. The Hartford Convention of 1814 therefore included among its proposals a constitutional amendment to eliminate the three-fifths compromise in the area of apportionment. Nothing came of this proposal, however.

The presence of the three-fifths clause in the pre-Civil War Constitution was one bit of the evidence to which defenders of slavery pointed in arguing that the existence of slavery was taken for granted by the men who made the United States, that its continued existence was part of the bargain to which the states all subscribed when they entered into the “more perfect union” of Morris's Preamble. The Thirteenth Amendment ultimately made the three-fifths clause inoperative, although it remains part of the constitutional text.

*See also:* Fourteenth Amendment; Thirteenth Amendment

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## Transportation (as Punishment for Slave Resistance)

As punishment for serious crimes such as attempted murder, burglary, or slave resistance, antebellum Southern lawmakers and judges increasingly sold slaves out of state, in a practice known as transportation. Transportation accomplished the same purpose as execution; it removed the offending individual from the local slave society and also protected the master's investment. The sale of the slave paid for the cost of jailing at the local and state level, covered transferal of slaves from their master's residence to jail and on to prospective buyers, and compensated owners for their loss.

Many Southern slave owners believed transportation protected their capital investment and also improved the conditions of slavery. Thomas Jefferson first advocated transportation for slave convicts and endorsed Virginia's 1801 transportation law after the planned uprising led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800. Jefferson and others viewed capital



punishment of slaves as a condemnation of the already condemned.

Generally, the practice of transportation moved slaves from the Upper South to the Lower South and later to states in the Southwest. Occasionally, slaves were transported out of the United States and sold in the Caribbean. As the practice was codified into law, most states required that slaves convicted and sentenced to transportation be removed from their borders. Slave traders usually complied with this requirement; however, this was often due to the demands of the market rather than a desire to follow the letter of the law. Increasingly, buyers from the Deep South complained that the Upper South used them as a dumping ground for all of their enslaved criminals.

*See also:* Slave Resistance

*Ira Lee Berlet*

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## Truth, Sojourner

Sojourner Truth (1797–1883) was born in slavery to James and Elizabeth Baumfree (or Bomefree) on the Hardenbergh estate located in Ulster County, New York, then a Dutch settlement, as Isabella Baumfree. She was one of 13 children. As a young child, she spoke only Dutch until she was sold at the age of nine years and subsequently forced to speak English. Her second owner, Charles Hardenbergh, died in 1808, and she was sold to John Neely for \$100 along with a herd of sheep. While with Neely, Isabella was beaten and harshly treated for mispronouncing terms in English. In her own words, it was at this early age that she began to embrace religion through fervent prayer. Between the years 1808 and 1810, Isabella was sold twice more. She was purchased by Martinus Schryver for \$105, leaving the Neely home and remaining only a year before she was sold to John Dumont in 1810. She remained with the Dumonts from 1810 to 1827. While in the Dumont home, Isabella endured harsh punishments that also may have involved sexual abuse and harassment. In 1815, Isabella entered a

forbidden relationship with a slave called Robert who had a different owner. One night, after Robert managed a secret visit with Isabella, he was savagely beaten, never to be heard from again. A daughter, Diana, was born of this relationship shortly thereafter. John Dumont forced Isabella to marry in 1817 to an older slave named Thomas. They had a total of four children together, including Peter, James, Elizabeth, and Sophia, all born between the years 1822 and 1826.

Isabella eventually ran away from the Dumont home in 1827, leaving with her daughter Sophia. Upon her escape, she found herself in the service of Isaac and Maria Van Wagenen. Though Dumont demanded compensation from the couple, they agreed to pay only \$20 to allow Isabella to remain with them. Contact with the Quakers helped Isabella retrieve her son Peter from a plantation in Alabama. She was the first African American to sue successfully in court over the issue of slavery when she retrieved her son; he had been sold in an illegal sale. Isabella left Ulster County with a white evangelical teacher by the name of Miss Gear in 1829 after claiming to have undergone a serious religious conversion.

Between the years 1829–and 1834, Isabella Baumfree began to develop her skills as a public speaker and as a dynamic preacher. The Second Great Awakening was in progress, as marked by a series of revivals and reform movements, and she began to preach regularly at camp meetings in the late 1820s and through the 1830s. During this time, she met the religious reformer Elijah Pierson, who advocated a strict following of the Old Testament. He led a small group in his home where Isabella came to serve as the housekeeper. Isabella embraced this religious revivalism and along with it the utopian cooperative ideal because she was seen as a spiritual equal. It was at this time that she also met Robert Matthias (known as Prophet Matthias), who took over the group until the death of Pierson in 1834. Upon the death of Pierson, Matthias was accused of orchestrating his death but was subsequently acquitted. Matthias relocated west, and Isabella moved to New York City with little or no possessions, eventually becoming an itinerant preacher. In 1843, she formally changed her name to Sojourner Truth, informing friends that she was “called” by the Holy Spirit on June 1, or the day of Pentecost (which commemorates the day when the Holy Spirit filled the disciples of Jesus and gave them the power to preach to strangers). It has been suggested by at least one biographer that Isabella Baumfree became fixated on the concept



Sojourner Truth, a former slave, spoke out for the abolition of slavery and for women's rights in America. (Library of Congress)

of “the truth” as a result of several events prior to 1843. These events included her experience as a slave, having been abused, the court case involving her son Peter (when she was forced to prove that she was indeed the mother of Peter), and having to prove her credibility once again in 1835 after being accused of poisoning by a couple for whom she worked. One can say that the word “truth” combined with Sojourner, which connotes traveler, embodies the life work of Sojourner Truth as an activist for social reform in American history. These events, combined with the influence of 19th-century Perfectionism (early Pentecostalism), helped to shape the ideas and reform efforts of Sojourner Truth. Sojourner Truth joined the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts in 1844, thereby broadening her role in American reform.

The Northampton Association of Education and Industry was founded by abolitionists and consisted of 210 members living on 500 acres of farmland. They promoted

women's rights, antislavery activities, and cooperative labor through the running of saw mills, operating a silk factory, and raising livestock. Sojourner Truth became acquainted with William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and David Ruggles while at Northampton. Association members such as George Benson and Olive Gilbert gave their support and encouragement to Truth after the community's profit-making ventures failed. William Lloyd Garrison published *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave* in 1850 after Truth dictated her story to Olive Gilbert. This 128-page pamphlet detailed Truth's life as a slave, her conversion, and her association with the “Kingdom” of Robert Matthias between the years 1832 and 1835. Truth often relied on friends to dictate her letters and memoirs. She never went to school, nor did she learn to read or write over the course of her lifetime. The spoken word and photographs became the chief forms of communication through which Truth was able to personally transmit knowledge about herself to the public.

On the eve of the Civil War and during the war, Sojourner Truth became a popular supporter and orator for the antislavery cause, women's rights, spiritualism, and non-violence. She attended the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, where she may have delivered her now-famous “Ain't I a Woman?” speech, as was recorded by women's rights activist Frances Dana Gage. Truth worked with antislavery editor of the *Bugle* Marius Robinson during 1851–1853. In 1853, Sojourner Truth spoke at a suffragist convention and met Harriet Beecher Stowe. Sojourner was also influenced by the Progressive Friends (a splinter sect of the Quakers). This group advocated some of the same beliefs embraced by Sojourner Truth. She eventually sold her home in Northampton in 1857 to relocate near the Progressive Friends in Harmonia, Michigan.

Sojourner Truth was one of few African American women to become famous for her social activism through her speeches on the antislavery lecture circuit before the Civil War. She was a commanding figure at more than six feet tall with a booming voice. Truth often distributed prints of herself on small cards to raise money for her many causes. These photographs along with her writings were used also used by Truth as a form of self-support as she traversed both the antislavery and reform lecture circuits of the 19th century. Truth was not only an important figure in the abolitionist movement, but also a central figure in American reform despite the challenges she faced as

an African American woman. In 1858, when challenged about her gender, Truth reportedly bared her breasts before a crowd of spectators. She continued to speak out against slavery and supported the Union's cause during the Civil War by calling for the enlistment of African American troops (her grandson James Caldwell served with the all-black 54th Regiment of Massachusetts).

Sojourner Truth as a now-popular figure in American reform was characterized by Harriet Beecher Stowe in an article about Truth titled "The Libyan Sibyl" (also the title of a statue created by William Story presented at the London World Exhibition in 1862) that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1863, and she also appeared in a painting with President Lincoln upon a visit to Washington, D.C.

Truth worked for the National Freedman's Relief Association, a government camp for refugee slaves, and the Freedman's Hospital. She also worked to assist the Freedmen's Bureau in relocating refugee slaves from Washington to Ohio and Michigan. While in Washington, she was instrumental in calling for the desegregation of streetcars. After the war, she moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1867. She continued to preach, teach, and advocate for reform through the 1870s. In 1871, she was one of the first women to vote in a Michigan election.

Sojourner Truth did not end her many reform efforts after the Civil War. In the 1870s, she became a supporter of the idea of the distribution of land allotments from the federal government to free slaves. She spoke on this issue while traveling through New York, New Jersey, and New England. The westward expansion of the country inspired an "exodusters" movement in the late 1870s as many ex-slaves began to migrate west. Sojourner Truth gave her support to these exodusters by helping those in need and in stump speeches. She continued to make limited appearances around Michigan between the years 1880 and 1882, speaking on topics such as temperance and capital punishment until her death in 1883.

Sojourner Truth occupies an integral place in the history of African Americans and in the history of America. She was involved in many of the major reform movements of her day, including abolition, women's rights, temperance, and desegregation. She was an ex-slave and self-made woman with no formal education at a time when the majority of African Americans were forced into impoverishment because of discrimination. Her path to prominence occurred largely before the Civil War and emancipation, and this is

significant. The black bourgeoisie in America remained virtually nonexistent before, during, and immediately after the Civil War. Through her writings and speeches, Truth was able to purchase first a home in Northampton, Massachusetts (1850), and then a home in Harmonia, Michigan (1856). Although she did receive a modest sum as a result of her work with the Freedmen's Bureau, her means of support was primarily self-generated. Both her activism and her personal struggle to survive embody the tradition of self-help intrinsic to the black experience in America. Although scholars will continue to debate her words, Truth should be understood within the matrix of the history of the African American experience in which oral tradition plays an important role. We can associate the legacy of Sojourner Truth with the rise of abolition, the antecedents of black feminism, and the Civil Rights movement.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Douglass, Frederick; Garrison, William Lloyd; Ruggles, David

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## Tubman, Harriet

Harriet Tubman (1822?–1913) was a fugitive slave who rose to prominence as an abolitionist and active conductor on the Underground Railroad; it is believed that she was personally responsible for liberating numerous slaves.

Originally born with the name Araminta Ross, Harriet Tubman was one of at least eight children born to Ben Ross and Harriet Green Ross of Dorchester County on

Maryland's Eastern Shore, probably in 1822. Though Araminta (or "Minty" for short, as she was also known) was enslaved, freedom had come to an expansive segment of Eastern Shore blacks by the 19th century. Accordingly, most black families in the region straddled the divide between slavery and freedom. Indeed, Araminta's parents received freedom during her lifetime. Yet unlike some other places, no self-segregating free black community existed on the Eastern Shore, separate and apart from the enslaved. Rather, meaningful relations and voluntary connections made for a single black community, at once enslaved and free.

Araminta worked as a domestic slave during her childhood, largely hired out by her owner to other masters. Subjected to the harshest physical and mental abuses, young Minty was often returned broken to her home plantation, where her mother would be allowed to nurse the girl back to health, only to see her sent out again to another damaging environment. Yet it was in these years, as Araminta grew from an adolescent to a young woman, that she first began to recognize her own strength, physical and moral. The harshness of her enslavement often tested these traits, and one particular event changed the course of Araminta's life. While in a general store, Araminta witnessed another enslaved person fleeing a pursuer close behind. The pursuer picked up a large metal object and flung it at the fleeing man. Missing the intended target, the object struck a crushing blow to the side of Araminta's head. Left bleeding and dazed by the incident, she spent months recovering. For the remainder of her life, she suffered an undiagnosed disorder that caused her to lapse into deep unconsciousness without warning, for several minutes at a time. She also began to experience what might be termed an extra sensory perception, and her attempts to reckon with this fostered an intensified religious spirituality. Reaching adulthood, Araminta took her mother's name, Harriet, and eventually married a free man, John Tubman.

In her late twenties, with kinfolk all around her, Harriet Tubman might have felt somewhat stable within the context of slavery (though certainly never content). Yet the specter of the domestic slave trade between the Upper South and the Deep South haunted her. The trade had claimed at least three of her siblings over the years and a great number of extended kin. A relative or loved one being sold south was like a death in the family. Unlike actual death, however, a "social" death tormented black families in ways that lingered over lifetimes.



Hailed as "the Moses of her people" because of her courageous rescues of hundreds of slaves on the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman was a living symbol of the resistance of African Americans to slavery in the United States. (Library of Congress)

In 1849, upon hearing rumors that they would be sold south, Harriet and two of her brothers decided to run. Quickly, their owner advertised the escape, offering a \$300 reward for their return. In a matter of days, however, the trio returned voluntarily; Harriet wanted to remain at large, but her brothers convinced her to go back. A few weeks later, Harriet fled again—this time alone, this time forever. She likely told only a few of her closest acquaintances of her intentions. She could not convince her husband to flee with her.

The route to freedom was a familiar one for fugitives of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Moving northeastward along the Choptank River, Harriett passed into neighboring Delaware. From there, she trod on to Philadelphia and freedom. Along the way, she sought and received assistance from an array of folk—whites, Quakers, free blacks, enslaved blacks, kinfolk, and kind strangers. Beyond these broadest details, little else is known of Tubman's escape from slavery in 1849.

At the time of Harriet's arrival, Philadelphia represented a forward guard of sorts in the emerging national conflict over slavery. Although a native free black population had developed following the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania during the late 18th century, by the mid-19th century, blacks born elsewhere, who had come to Philadelphia seeking freedom, overwhelmed the numbers of freeborn black natives. Likewise, abolitionist and antislavery sentiments pulsed in the city. An antislavery society had begun there in 1833, and a committee of vigilance was active, functioning chiefly to aid fugitive slaves passing through the city, plotting against a strengthening slavocracy as it appeared certain to all that a reckoning drew near. Thus, the overlapping communities of abolitionist Philadelphians and freedom-seeking Southerners made for a unique context for the fugitive Tubman.

It is likely that Tubman would have been aware of the political movement afoot (abolition), recognizing in it perhaps timely and practical applications as she designed to rescue her family from slavery. It is clear that some form of communication—however sporadic and imperfect—allowed Tubman to keep tabs on affairs back in Dorchester County, Maryland. Indeed, she took her first steps toward her destiny in response to news from home that family members were to be sold.

Philadelphia was the commencement point for the eastern lines of the Underground Railroad. Fully decentralized, though at least loosely coordinated over long distances, the Underground Railroad operated as the practical expression of vigilance committees' work. In the broader context, however, what became known as the Underground Railroad actually drew from older processes of resistance, assistance, and escape that had begun in the South, on plantations, with the enslaved themselves. Runaways generally escaped the South—got off of the plantations—without abolitionists' help. A communication system existed among the enslaved populations and could be especially effective where they enjoyed regular contact with itinerant blacks and free blacks. Such conditions existed throughout the antebellum Chesapeake, and Harriet Tubman came to rely on these lines in plotting her rescue missions.

Methodologically, over her career in this work, Tubman rarely ventured onto plantations herself, preferring instead coordinated rendezvous. On the plantation, word would go out that Harriet was coming—selection of a particular

hymn for Sunday service, for example, is known to have been one manner of announcement. Preparations for those intending to go away with her were made immediately. Harriet conducted her first rescue mission to save a niece from the auction block in Dorchester County. Though she acted as a central organizer of the mission, Harriet's niece and her niece's husband actually executed the escape. Tubman met the couple in Baltimore and escorted the woman to Philadelphia. On other trips, Harriet moved into the heart of the plantation districts to steal away with family members and others. On only one or two occasions did Tubman initiate a mission not intended to include a family member; nearly all Tubman-aided fugitives moved out of Maryland's Eastern Shore counties. With unwavering faith, unshakeable courage, and unlimited resourcefulness, Harriet ventured repeatedly into the South and came out with freedom-seekers in tow. Though some of these charges settled in the Northern United States, many more followed Harriet to St. Catherine's, Canada, where communities of fugitive expatriates had emerged by the mid-19th century.

One of Tubman's earliest biographers, Sarah Bradford, exaggerated Harriet's accomplishments in assisting slaves to freedom, claiming 19 trips and 300 fugitives. Why the fabrication was deemed necessary is unclear, but historians have since documented an impressive record of at least a dozen trips with approximately 75 rescued.

Tubman's Underground Railroad activity ceased early in the American Civil War, when her efforts shifted to support for the Union cause. Though she played many roles during the conflict—field nurse, spy, guide—she proved most effective in moving slaves off of plantations following the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), assisting hundreds in liberating themselves within the hostile environment of a recalcitrant South. In the refugee and contraband camps, her experience with the needs of fugitives on the run proved equally vital. She took to the work with great energy.

If Tubman emerged from the war a hero and national figure, unlike others, she parlayed neither into wealth, power, or position. Rather, the ordinary woman of extraordinary abilities went back to work for those in need, assisting elderly and indigent blacks in her adopted hometown of Auburn, New York. From the personal vantage, though, the rewards of her struggle were satisfying. After nearly two decades, her family was free and largely together with her. She was unable to recover a sister sold south during her

childhood but had managed to save that sister's children and grandchildren, seeing them grow into adulthood a free people. Harriet also found romantic love again. Her marriage to John Tubman in 1844 had ended with her flight five years later when John, who was already free, had refused to go with her. When she returned to take him away two years later, in 1851, he declined, having moved on and remarried. After the war, however, Tubman came to love another man, Nelson Davis, a Civil War veteran 20 years her junior. She married Davis in 1869 and lived happily with him until his untimely death (1888) ended their union.

By the late 19th century, as racism, pseudoscience, and discriminatory practice threatened not only the African American future but perspectives on black history as well, reform leaders sought out heroines and heroes to celebrate. Tubman proved an easy choice. She emerged as one of the first African American women to be conceded icon status. Similarly, when women began to push gender and equity issues to the forefront of national debate during the last decade of the 19th century, in Tubman they found hard evidence of past greatness. Tubman was a featured speaker at the inaugural meeting of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in 1896, introduced to the convention-goers as "Mother Harriet." After the turn of the 20th century, as Tubman entered the concluding years of life, she continued to work tirelessly to establish a home for the aged and needy, the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn, New York. Harriet Ross Tubman Davis died on March 10, 1913.

*See also:* Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Slave Resistance; Underground Railroad

*David Taft Terry*

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## **Turner, Nat**

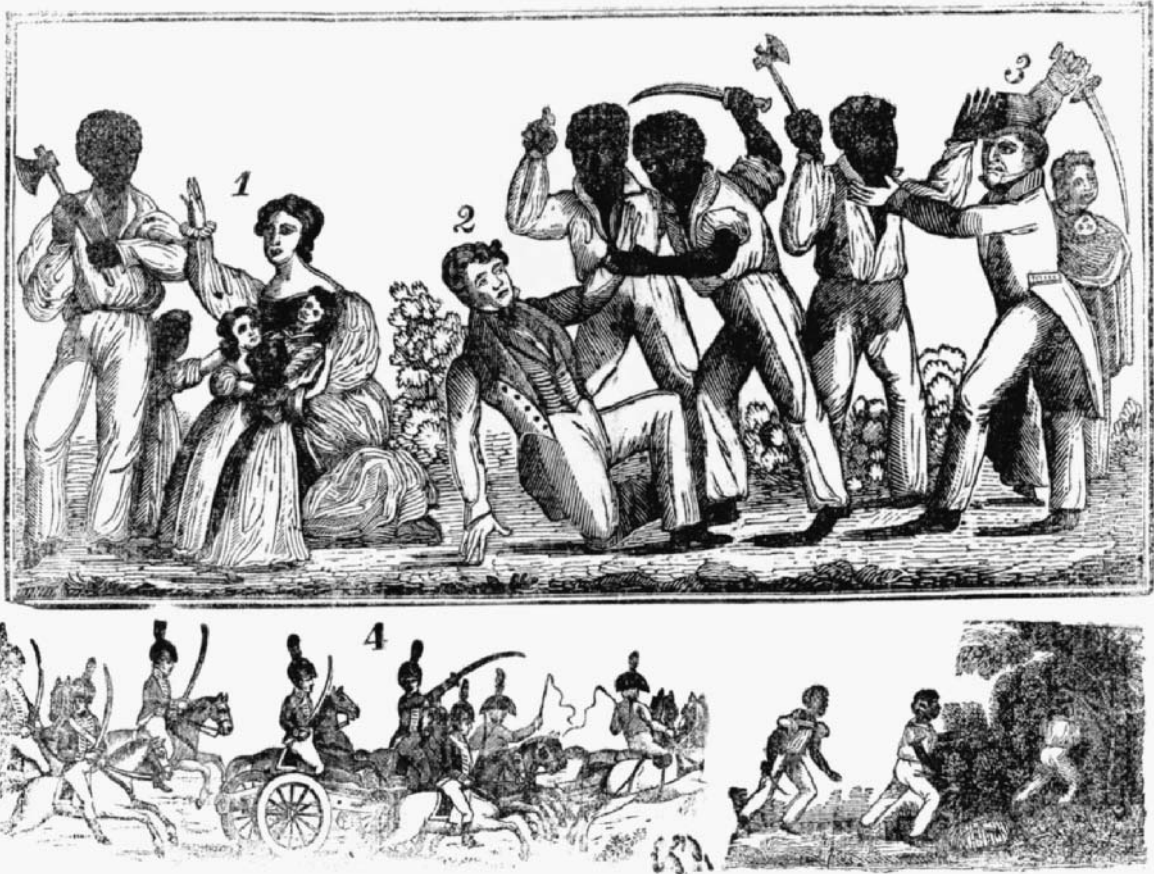
In August 1831, Nat Turner led 70 other slaves in a rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. The insurrection and its aftermath left approximately 160 people dead, black and white, and is the most famous slave revolt in American history. Criticized for his indiscriminate slaughter of whites, while simultaneously celebrated as a black resistance hero and a martyr to the slaves' cause, Turner continues to be a controversial topic in historiography and popular culture.

Born on October 2, 1800, Nat was called by the surname of his owner, Samuel Turner of Southampton County. He was deeply religious from a young age and repeatedly received visions and messages from God. By early 1828, he felt sure that God had selected him for a special purpose. On February 12, 1831, he interpreted a solar eclipse as the final sign from God that he should begin preparations for his armed revolt in Southampton County. Like David Walker, Turner saw himself as a prophet doing God's work, and in fact, Turner may also have been inspired by Walker's fiery and widely distributed pamphlet *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, which appeared in the South during 1829 and 1830.

Initially, Turner recruited only a small number of fellow slaves, but the plan soon grew to include at least 70 rebels—both slaves and free blacks. On August 21, he led his brigade into an armed rebellion. Using knives and hatchets, so as to move quietly without the sound of guns, Turner and his men visited houses, killed white people, and freed slaves. A total of 55 whites (including women and children) died, most as a result of stabbing or bludgeoning. Historians disagree, however, about the premeditated nature of these murders. Stephen B. Oates states that Turner asked his followers to kill every white person they encountered, but Herbert Aptheker cites a newspaper explanation that the rebels did not intend to slaughter whites and resorted to killing only in order to intimidate their enemies.

By August 23, local white militia and three artillery companies had fully suppressed the rebellion. Turner went into hiding, where he would remain for several months. But other militias arrived from Virginia and North Carolina counties and began several weeks of violent retaliation against black people. At least 100 blacks were slaughtered during the vigilante justice, both participants in the revolt

## HORRID MASSACRE IN VIRGINIA.



A newspaper cartoon depicts the violent slave uprising led by Nat Turner that began on August 22, 1831. (Library of Congress)

and others who had had nothing to do with Turner. By way of a legal response, the Virginia General Assembly passed new legislation that prevented literacy for free black people (as well as slaves).

Turner was eventually discovered hiding in a swamp on October 30. His trial lawyer, Thomas Gray, conducted interviews in prison, soon publishing that material as *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. Turner himself self-consciously fashioned himself as a Christ-like figure: when asked what he thought of his fast-approaching execution, he observed that Christ, too, had been crucified. On November 5, he was sentenced to death by hanging, and on November 11, he was executed in Jerusalem, Virginia. His body was beheaded and quartered. Another 48 black men and women were charged with conspiracy, insurrection, and treason, and 18 black people (including one woman) were sentenced to death.

Turner was dead, but his message traveled. The geography of the rebellion, which took place around the Great

Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina, took on a mythic quality. For slave narrators and fiction writers, the swamp became an alternate slave space within the boundaries of the South. Although the presence of escaped slaves in Southern swamps was not a new image, it was only in the wake of the Nat Turner rebellion that slaves were imaginatively linked to the swamp as a sanctuary.

The insurrection continued to resonate down the years politically too—especially within the abolitionist movement. Some abolitionists looked past Turner's violence and explained it as self-defense within an existing state of war (slavery) that had been declared on black people. For example, in August 1861, the *Atlantic Monthly* published an article by the abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Defending Turner's slave revolt, Higginson pointed out that his men were impressively self-possessed during the insurrection. Most had been systematically brutalized from childhood and had witnessed the rape of their wives,

mothers, and sisters, yet they avoided any similar abuse of whites, he explained. Others framed the rebellion as an act of patriotic dissent in line with the American Revolution, claiming that Turner had initially planned the rebellion to take place on July 4, 1831.

Still other abolitionists used Turner's revolt as a warning to the South of more violence to come. In November 1859, Wendell Phillips claimed that Turner's success showed slave rebellion to be possible and slavery an institution under threat. Continuing to reflect on the message of Nat Turner's violence, the *Anglo-African Magazine* published an article on December 31, 1859, that examined his "terrible logic" and wondered if the only future for black emancipation was by Turner's method: the "extirpation" of whites. The magazine reprinted Turner's public confession for its readers. And in 1881, Frederick Douglass claimed that the South remembered Turner with fear for decades after his insurrection and that this shaped the Southern response to events such as John Brown's raid. Turner may also have inspired Brown's actions at Harpers Ferry. The epitome of the rebellious slave, Turner proved to Brown that slaves would fight. Brown admired Turner and remembered 1831 as he planned his own violent insurrection of October 1859.

See also: Slave Driver; Slave Religion; Slave Resistance

Zoe Trodd

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## Uncle Tom's Cabin

Written in 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life among the Lowly*, was a novel describing her vision of life in the slave South. The book had such a profound effect on Northern abolitionist thought that it radically altered Northern public opinion of the "peculiar institution." Thus, it drastically weakened the tenuous peace between North and South in the 1850s.

In 1850, amid the national dialogue over the viability of slavery in the newly conquered territories of the West, Congress pressed through Congress the Compromise of 1850. The compromise stipulated that California would enter the union as a free state and that the other conquered territories—that is, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah—would be admitted into the union through popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty was a political doctrine by which the citizens of a territory would vote on the status (slave or free) of the territory upon admittance into the union. The most heated component of the compromise was the Fugitive Slave Act. According to this act, any runaway slave caught in the North must be immediately returned to his or her Southern plantation owners. This law inflamed the passions of the Northerners, who viewed the law as immoral. Essentially, the law made Northerners responsible for patrolling slaves. One of the most vocal of the abolitionists was Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Litchfield, Connecticut. Her father was the staunch abolitionist Congregationalist preacher Lyman Beecher, and her brother was the equally famous Henry Ward Beecher. In 1836, she married Calvin E. Stowe, who was also involved in the abolitionist movement. Angered by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet Stowe initiated writing for an abolitionist newspaper called the *National Era*. Throughout 1851, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* emerged in a serialized form in the newspaper. On March 20, 1852, the serialized articles were published as a full-scale book that was widely disseminated throughout the nation for its harsh criticism of the institution of slavery. In the first nine weeks, the book sold 10,000 copies. By the end of 1852, Northerners had bought 300,000 copies of the book. The astounding number of copies sold made the book the second best-selling book of the 19th century, after the Bible.

The narrative of the story deals with the lives and travails of three slaves: Tom, Eliza, and George. The life of each of these slaves assumes a drastic turn. Eliza and George escape slavery and get married in the novel. Tom, however, is not entirely lucky. In the novel, Tom is sold to numerous masters—some masters are good, and some were exploitative. In the end, after many trials and tribulations, Uncle Tom meets his death at the hands of his last master, Simon Legree.

A major theme throughout the book is a harsh criticism of the institution of slavery. After its publication, *Uncle*



*Tom's Cabin* served as a symbolic criticism of the institution of slavery as well as the political system of the South. The book was a major critique of the institution, and it catapulted slavery into the limelight. Most scholars agree that the publication of the novel was an immediate cause of the American Civil War.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Compromise of 1850; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Lincoln, Abraham; Stowe, Harriet Beecher

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## Underground Railroad

Thousands of fugitive slaves escaped from the South and traveled north to reach freedom in Canada and the northern United States in the years before the Civil War. The network of escape routes, the people who helped the escaping slaves, and the loosely organized system that these people developed became known as the Underground Railroad. It is not certain when the "railroad" began, but as early as 1787, Quakers had organized a system for helping fugitive slaves. By the 1830s, transporting slaves into freedom had become a more frequent happening. Although the exact origin of the name Underground Railroad is unknown, it is thought the name was first used either because of the popularity of the new steam railroads or because a slave owner who was unsuccessfully pursuing his runaway slave commented that the slave seemed to have disappeared on an underground road. The word "underground" may also have been used because of the secret nature of the network. Two Underground Railroad networks existed—the Northern Underground Railroad and the Southern Underground Railroad. Each complemented the other but had different functions. The Southern railroad helped the slaves run and escape to the Northern states. Once the fugitives had crossed the Mason-Dixon Line and the rivers that served

as boundaries between slave and free states, the Northern railroad network began its work to keep the fugitives from being captured and returned to their owners in the slave states.

Railroad terms were used in the escape network. "Stations" were the hiding places, places of safety, and stops along the freedom route and were usually spaced between 10 and 30 miles apart. The routes between stations were known as "lines." "Station masters" sheltered the slaves in the stations and provided the fugitives with food, clothing, and protection until they were transported to the next station. Hiding places included homes, barns, and churches and cellars, well-concealed secret rooms, attics, and crawl spaces within those buildings. Slaves were also hidden in cornfields and wagons, and in one Michigan location, they were hidden in a cave. "Conductors" were primarily white abolitionists or free blacks who traveled to the South to collect the slaves and escort them north. The conductors also arranged transportation for the slaves and were responsible for getting the escapees to the next station. Fugitive slaves usually traveled at night and were hidden by the station masters during the day. Canada was referred to as "Heaven" and "Canaan," and the escaping slaves were referred to as "baggage," "bundles of wood," "loads of potatoes," "parcels," and "cargo." The Big Dipper and North Star were used as navigation guides for the escapees, and the Big Dipper was referred to as the "drinking gourd." Coded phrases were also used to signify the arrival of slaves, to indicate that fugitive slaves were in the area, to remind escapees that dogs were unable to follow scents through water, and to alert slaves that an escape was being planned. Candles were sometimes placed in windows as codes to indicate "stations" on an escape route because people involved in the Underground Railroad may have known only locations of stations and not the names of the station masters. Church sermons contained coded words to alert railroad participants to the arrival of runaways, and quilt designs informed slaves of routes and available shelter.

Reaching freedom was not an easy task for the fugitives. Some slaves walked to freedom. Others were transported north by boat, train, horse, wagon, and even caskets that were carried by other escapees in "funeral" processions. Black and white abolitionists denounced slavery, and many Quakers and other religious groups that mirrored the attitudes undertook important roles in the Underground Railroad to help escaping slaves on their way to freedom.



*Slaves escape by way of the Underground Railroad, painting by Charles Webber, 1891. (Library of Congress)*

The names of sympathizers and participants in the railroad network were often not known to each other or to the public. People often worked independently to assist the fugitive slaves because their activity was illegal, and they did not know whom they could trust. Many Quakers served as conductors and station masters. Levi Coffin, a Quaker and former Southerner, had become active in assisting fugitive runaway slaves in North Carolina before he moved to Indiana. When Coffin moved to Newport, Indiana, near the Ohio border and Ohio River Valley, he continued his efforts and enlisted the assistance of local Quakers. Coffin is said to have been the “president” of the Underground Railroad because of his assistance to more than 2,000 slaves in their attempts to reach freedom.

Harriet Tubman, a Pennsylvania resident and former slave from Maryland, became a famous conductor of the Underground Railroad when she secretly returned to help numerous slaves escape into freedom. Tubman was known as the “Moses of Her People” because of her bravery and dangerous undertakings, and slave owners offered large rewards for her capture because she also was a fugitive slave

and was breaking the law in slave states by helping other slaves escape.

The Underground Railroad encompassed 14 Northern states. Most escapees who fled to Canada settled in Ontario, but fugitives’ traveling routes through New York and New England reached the province of Quebec. The two most important crossing points into Canada, however, were Niagara Falls and Detroit. The Underground Railroad’s lines ran thousands of miles and stretched from the Deep South, Virginia, and Kentucky through Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. From Maryland, lines ran across Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and New England. Routes also ran from Iowa and Missouri to Canada through Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Many runaway slaves from the territory west of the Delaware River were taken to Philadelphia before following a route into Canada. One route took the fugitives from Philadelphia to Jersey City, New Jersey, by crossing the Delaware River and then going on to New York. A second route began on the Delaware River approximately 50 miles south of Philadelphia and continued through New Jersey. A third

route, which also began on the Delaware River, started near Dover, Delaware, and eventually joined the lines leading from Philadelphia. A fourth line running through New Jersey was a branch of the Philadelphia line that ran through Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and on to New York.

Abolitionists, Quakers, and other progressive religious groups in Boston and other New England cities helped fugitives continue their journey north to Canada. Many of the fugitives reached the New England port cities by ship and then continued their journey by land through New Hampshire and Vermont into Quebec province. Other fugitive slaves arrived in New England from Pennsylvania routes that crossed New Jersey and New York before entering New England.

Several escape routes, which began at the Ohio River and continued north through Ohio to Lake Erie or through Indiana and Michigan into Canada, were used by approximately 40,000 fugitive slaves. The Ohio River towns of Marietta and Ripley were important stations. One Ohio route branched out near Washington Court House and continued to Sandusky, Lorian, Ashtabula, or Cleveland before ending at Lake Erie. Another route from the Ohio River took runaways north through Chillicothe or Columbus. The John Rankin home in Ripley, Ohio, was an important station on the shores of the Ohio River, and it was at this home where Harriet Beecher Stowe listened to a slave's story from which she later crafted *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Indiana's escape routes ran from the Ohio River near Evansville, Jeffersonville, and Madison to the Chicago-Detroit route or to the terminus at Lake Erie near Toledo. Two main routes led from Evansville—one north to Michigan City close to the Michigan state line and the other through Terre Haute and Lafayette to the Wabash River. Another main line ran through Indianapolis to South Bend and on the Michigan line. The eastern line in Indiana ran north from Fountain City, formerly Newport, to Fort Wayne and beyond, where it either terminated near Toledo or continued into Michigan.

Michigan had at least seven routes, and more than 200 stations harbored slaves before they were transported to Canada and freedom. Some routes ended near Sault Ste. Marie, Port Huron, and Saginaw, but most routes ended in Detroit. Six lines ran through Cass County, one of the state's southern gateways. The county's prairies and rich fertile soil were attractive to Quaker settlers who came to the area in the 1830s, and the townships in which they lived became locations for sheltering and assisting the fugitive slaves as

the slaves traveled to freedom. The Illinois line that began near St. Louis and the Quaker line that ran through Cincinnati intersected near Vandalia, a small Cass County, Michigan, community. Nathan Thomas, a Quaker, founding member of the Republican Party, and Kalamazoo County's first physician, was an active conductor for the railroad and helped arrange transportation for more than 1,000 fugitive slaves from his home in Schoolcraft to the next stations in the Battle Creek area.

Slaves escaping through southern Illinois received shelter in Alton and Illinoistown before being transported north. Illinoistown, which is in the modern-day East St. Louis area, presented a potential hazard to the fugitives because of the city's proximity to the slave state of Missouri, but it was a point from which the runaways were led up the Mississippi River to Alton and other stations to the north. Once in Alton, the slaves traveled by tunnel and overland to northern areas. Iowa also had an Underground Railroad network. Towns near the Missouri border such as Salem, Iowa, became important stops for the railroad, as did other Iowa communities such as Tabor and Lewis. Cities across central Iowa also provided shelter for the escaping slaves.

As the exodus of slaves from the South became more pronounced, slave owners began offering rewards for the return of their property. Some Northerners who were aware of the reward offers pretended to befriend the fugitive slaves but betrayed them to receive the rewards. Slave hunters made raids into Northern states to gather slaves for return to their owners. Sometimes the raiders were met with resistance, and other times, they were able to retrieve the slaves. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which required citizens in free states to assist in the return of slaves to their owners. The federal act made it illegal for anyone to help escaped slaves and fined or imprisoned those who refused to return runaways. The stringent act's purpose was to deter slaves from escaping and to enlist the assistance of those who were aware of the runaways in their region. The act, however, did not deter the efforts or success of the Underground Railroad network. Before the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, many runaway slaves did not continue on to Canada but settled in both urban and rural areas where other blacks had settled in Northern states. After the act's passage, it became more dangerous to assist the fugitives and more risky for the fugitives to settle in any area where there was a possibility of being returned to an owner. As a result, many escaping slaves continued on into Canada or

fled to the Caribbean or Europe. After the federal act's passage, some states also enacted laws that made it illegal for state and local officials not to assist slave catchers.

The number of slaves who traveled the Underground Railroad to freedom cannot be stated with certainty, but it is estimated that between 70,000 and 100,000 used the routes in attempts to escape to freedom from the 1830s until the 1860s.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; Brown, John; Destination, Canada; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Tubman, Harriet; Wills, Frank

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## Union Army

During the Civil War of 1861–1865, more than 180,000 African Americans served in the Union Army, the Northern military force that defeated the Confederate rebellion and by so doing enforced emancipation.

In the early years of the Civil War, the federal government did not allow black men to enlist in the Union Army. But on July 17, 1862, government officials authorized the enlistment of blacks as laborers or soldiers, and on August 25, Brig. Gen. Rufus Saxton, military governor in the sea islands of South Carolina, started to recruit five regiments of volunteers. The officers were white, setting a pattern that remained virtually unbroken throughout the war, with only about two dozen black chaplains and surgeons and with three men of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry briefly attaining officer status at the end of the war. With the

Emancipation Proclamation in September and the flight of slaves to Union lines, the army and emancipation became inextricably and permanently connected.

By the middle of 1863, there were 30 black regiments, among them the renowned 54th Massachusetts Infantry. On May 1, the War Department established a Bureau of Colored Troops to manage recruitment of men and officers for new regiments, usually known as “U.S.C.T.,” or United States Colored Troops. Most were infantry units, of nearly 1,000 men each. Many state units were re-designated as U.S.C.T. units at the same time. Ultimately, there were 120 infantry regiments, 24 regiments and 10 batteries of artillery, and 7 cavalry regiments. Overall, they were 9 percent of Union forces, and at the end of the war, the number of black Union soldiers under arms equaled the entire strength of the Confederate Army.

During the spring and summer of 1863, black units served in their first major battles. The first of three major engagements, the assault on Port Hudson, Louisiana, on May 27, 1863, resulted in a Union defeat but favorable publicity. The second, also in Louisiana, at Milliken’s Bend, was part of Gen. Ulysses Grant’s Vicksburg campaign and may have been the only major combat action in which black soldiers won a victory that was critical to the Union cause. The third, and best known, was the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, on July 17, by the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. These battles brought black soldiers favorable attention and public respect. Overall, black soldiers participated in 449 engagements, including 39 major ones. About 37,300 died, primarily from disease (as did white soldiers). Seventeen received the Medal of Honor. But partly because many white commanders remained reluctant to trust them in combat, and partly because many black units served in the secondary western theater of operations, the major contributions of African Americans remained in carrying out other duties—building and maintaining railroads and fortifications; protecting bridges and telegraph lines; and securing camps set up for escaped former slaves, known as “contrabands”—that freed white soldiers for combat.

Only from the summer of 1864 did this change substantially. The need to bring more manpower to bear against Richmond, Virginia, led to the largest assembly of black combat power of the war, major black involvement in the battle for Petersburg, and ultimately establishment of an entire corps of black soldiers (the 25th) in the Army of the James. Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, who commanded

the Army of the James, was a vocal advocate of the combat use of black soldiers. Fourteen black soldiers in his command received the Medal of Honor for bravery in the September 29, 1864, assault on New Market Heights near Richmond. Fittingly, black soldiers were among the Union forces who marched victoriously into the Confederate capital at the end of the war.

Service for black soldiers differed from that of white soldiers in significant ways. Above all, they viewed the conflict differently, as about abolition, rather than merely restoration of the Union. Second, they had to fight discrimination within Union ranks. The most glaring example was the denial of equal pay. In June 1863, the War Department decided that black privates would not get the same \$13 per month earned by white privates and instead would be paid as laborers, \$10 per month, minus \$3 per month for clothing. A storm of protest, including the mass refusal of black troops to accept any pay less than their rightful wage, led to restoration in October 1864, after more than a year of hardship for soldiers and their families.

Black soldiers knew that their enemy perceived them differently. Confederate policy provided for sale into slavery of captured black soldiers. Moreover, black soldiers and their white officers were sometimes summarily killed by Confederate captors. The best-known example took place at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on April 12, 1864. Some Union commanders tried to protect their men from Confederate mistreatment. In the fall of 1864, Benjamin Butler in Virginia learned that the enemy used black captives to build James River fortifications. So he put Confederate prisoners to work on Union defenses, drawing enemy protests and threats but ultimately ending Confederate use of Union prisoners as forced labor. Ultimately, black soldiers fought two wars, one against an unrelenting military foe and another to establish their claim on citizenship and equality. Their success led directly to the opening of the regular army to black enlisted men after the Civil War.

*See also:* Confederate States of America; Confiscation Acts; Field Order No. 15; Fort Pillow Massacre; Lincoln, Abraham; Massachusetts 54th Regiment

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## Urban Slavery

Although most often associated with rural plantation society, slavery was also an important part of American urban life, both North and South, during most of the antebellum period. Urban slavery was dramatically different from what was found in rural areas. The city, with its economic, demographic, and social vitality, provided a context that not only shaped the organization and experience of slavery but also undermined slaveholders' ability to control their slaves. The result was an urban environment that afforded enslaved men and women greater opportunities to resist the dehumanizing effects of slavery in a number of ways.

Two of the best opportunities slaves had to reclaim their humanity came from their living and working conditions. The demography of urban slavery was such that a high proportion of urban families owned at least some slaves. In the absence of agricultural labor and with a premium on space, the vast majority of urban enslaved individuals worked as domestic servants and lived if not in the same household as slaveholders, then on the same lot. For these slaves, such proximity meant both a severe lack of privacy and the potential for more intimate interactions with those in the position to grant their freedom.

Not all urban slaves lived and worked within the master's household. Against the vigorous protestation of city authorities, many urban slaves were able to live beyond the reach of slaveholders in boarding houses or the homes of free blacks. Many urban slaves also leased their labor to others under an arrangement known as "hiring out." More than a means for urban slaves to earn the cash needed to purchase their freedom, hiring out engendered a less dependent relationship between slaveholders and slaves, one more akin to that of employer-employee. Whether they performed outwork or not, urban slaves were still seen throughout the city doing a variety of jobs from factory work to laundry, portage, the skilled trades, and everything in between. Regardless of where or how they labored, urban slaves achieved a significant amount of autonomy simply in the completion of the daily errands of urban life.

Close living and working conditions in the city also enabled enslaved men and women the opportunity to forge lasting ties with other urban residents. In grog shops, friends' homes, the church, and even the city street, slaves established and maintained supportive relationships with free blacks, sympathetic whites, and each other. Though prescriptions against slave marriage and an overabundance of black women complicated the formation of monogamous heterosexual relationships in the city, fairly stable family units were not unusual among urban slaves. Through these connections, urban slaves gained not only experience with the practical side of freedom but also membership in a community that viewed them as much more than another's property.

It was this community-building with free blacks, whose very presence in the city challenged notions of African American inferiority and bondage, that most dismayed urban whites. The very visible cooperation between free and enslaved blacks fed the fears of urban whites who were constantly paranoid about slave insurrection. Seeking to neutralize subversive elements, municipal authorities responded with measures aimed at curtailing the freedom of the city's entire black population. Urban slaveholders and their allies instituted armed patrols, segregated spaces, and publicly administered corporal punishments in the hopes of terrorizing urban blacks into submission. Throughout the antebellum period, urban slaveholders also attempted to discourage rebellion by selling young enslaved men to the country, leaving a population of supposedly passive slave women in their place. Despite these efforts, many urban slaves refused to accept their subjugation. Enslaved men and women not only persistently engaged in small-scale acts of resistance; they also continued to join rural slaves in using the anonymity of the city to escape human bondage.

Despite these hardships, urban slaves led lives their rural counterparts would have envied. They were overall much better fed, clothed, housed, and cared for than slaves living out in the country and enjoyed liberties impossible on the plantation. Slaves also constituted as much as 20 percent of the population in some cities and provided an important source of cheap, menial labor in many others. However, by the 1860s, slavery had been declining in most parts of urban America for more than a generation. Ultimately, life in the city enabled enslaved men and women too much independence for slaveholders and municipal authorities to easily control. Their continual insubordination

coupled with increasing demand for slave labor as the Civil War approached led many urban slaveholders to sell their slaves to rural planters farther south. Those who remained in the city continued to make use of opportunities to resist the inhumane and oppressive realities of slavery that the bustling urban environment provided them.

*See also:* Gabriel (Prosser); Slave Resistance

*Seneca Joyner*

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## Vesey, Denmark

Denmark Vesey (1767–1822) was the alleged leader of one of the largest slave conspiracies in the history of North American slavery. On May 25, 1822, the uncovering of the Vesey plot sent shock waves throughout the slaveholding South. After being implicated in the conspiracy by a house servant, three slaves—William Paul, Mingo Harth, and Peter Poyas—were arrested by city authorities on May 31. Because they maintained their composure, both Mingo Harth and Peter Poyas were released the same day after questioning. William Paul, however, remained in custody as late as June 8. Fearing what he believed to be his imminent execution at the gallows, William made additional revelations about the plot. He claimed in his confession to have been aware of the conspiracy for some time and claimed that it was extensive, involving the massacre of all whites in Charleston. In addition, William made mention of a conjure man, Gullah Jack Pritchard, who had created charms that would render the conspirators immune to the weapons wielded by whites. This testimony was the first hint of the central role that African cultural factors had played in the formation of the planned rebellion.

Even after this initial admission, it was not until June 14 that the information provided by William was confirmed by Charleston city officials. On that date, Maj. John Wilson—commander of a local militia company—visited Charleston city intendant James Hamilton and presented him with additional proof of the existence of a large-scale slave conspiracy. His wife’s slave, George, had told Major Wilson that a plot to rise and burn the city was to commence on June 16 at midnight. George voluntarily served as a spy, and the intelligence he relayed to his master was particularly damaging for the conspirators’ plans.

On June 14, 1822, Intendant Hamilton communicated the plans for the revolt to Governor Bennett, who immediately acted to ensure the security of Charleston. Five military companies under the command of Col. Robert Hayne were ordered to patrol city streets and guard against insurrection. On the night of the planned rebellion, the rebels discovered Colonel Hayne’s troops and a sizable contingent of volunteers patrolling the area surrounding the city. The rebel leaders—Denmark Vesey, Monday Gell, and Peter Poyas—decided to delay the revolt, but after a number of slaves were arrested on June 18, the plot was effectively over. With these arrests, full disclosure of the conspiracy soon followed.

The plot reportedly included between 6,600 and 9,000 slaves divided into six attack units. According to the confession of John Enslow—an enslaved African-born cooper (barrel maker) involved in the plot—the original plan called for five of these groups to storm Charleston, capturing weapons caches and killing all whites they found. After the main guard houses, the arsenals, a naval store, and the city magazine were taken, the rest of Charleston would be set on fire to create an additional distraction. The sixth unit of rebels would patrol the city’s streets on horseback initially and would later be used to recruit more slaves from the surrounding countryside. By mid-June, some 500 weapons had been crafted, bought, or stolen, and access to a local militia company’s arsenal was made available by a slave who had a copy of the key. The conspirators reportedly made note of every store and house in Charleston containing weapons, while hundreds of slaves who were expert horse handlers and riders were actively recruited. They even made use of a barber who had volunteered to craft wigs and mustaches to conceal the identities of the conspirators. Once the city was completely captured, the rebels planned to plunder Charleston’s banks of all available gold and silver specie and

set sail for the black Republic of Haiti, where they hoped to receive political asylum. The revelations made by William Paul completely undermined these plans, and with the arrests of key figures in this conspiracy on June 18, all hopes of a successful revolution were soon ended.

The trials of the captured conspirators began on June 19. Arrested soon after was Denmark Vesey, leader of the insurgent army. A great deal regarding his early life was revealed to court officials during trial testimony. At the age of 14, Denmark was one of 390 slaves whom Captain Joseph Vesey transported onboard a Massachusetts brig named the *Prospect* from St. Thomas to Cape Francois, Saint-Domingue, in October or September 1781. During the passage to Saint-Domingue, young Denmark—nicknamed Telemaque by the crew—was distinguished for his “beauty, alertness, and intelligence” and became a “pet” onboard the ship. Once the ship arrived at Cape Francois, Captain Vesey, “having no use for the boy,” sold him and returned to St. Thomas. Allegedly subject to periodic epileptic fits, however, young Denmark was judged unsound by the French sugar planter who purchased him, and he was returned to Captain Vesey sometime after April 23, 1782.

Denmark likely lived with Captain Vesey in Norfolk, Virginia, until the British completed their evacuation of Charleston in 1782. Having mastered French, Creole, Danish, and English, young Denmark proved useful as a shipmate on Captain Vesey’s voyages. Denmark traveled extensively and may have visited West Africa on more than one occasion. By 1783, Captain Vesey had settled in Charleston, and Denmark remained his slave until 1799. In that year, Denmark won a \$1,500 prize in the East Bay Street lottery. On December 31, 1799, the 33-year-old Denmark petitioned for his freedom. He paid Captain Vesey \$600 to be released from service and used the rest of his lottery earnings to open a carpentry shop in downtown Charleston. As a carpenter, Denmark Vesey entered a sizable class of free black skilled professionals in Charleston. He utilized his considerable talents as a carpenter to amass a great deal of wealth. It was reported that by 1822, he owned property worth about \$8,000. Though contemporary accounts note that Vesey owned as many as three houses in Charleston, no proof exists to confirm this claim. He did, however, rent a house from a Dr. Trezevant on 20 Bull Street according to an 1821 city directory.

Not much is known about Vesey’s ethnic background. David Robertson has recently forwarded the possibility that

he was a Muslim from the Western Sudanic region of Upper Guinea. Robertson claims that Vesey's actions demonstrate an accordance to Islamic teaching, given that he apparently had multiple wives throughout Charleston and abstained from alcoholic drinks. Robertson has also postulated that the date chosen for the planned rebellion and even the numbers he picked in winning the lottery that paid for his freedom had numerological meanings linked directly to Islam. The date for the rebellion, July 14, 1822, according to Robertson was representative of the Prophet Muhammad's name. Also, this day on the Islamic lunar calendar marked the last two months of that Islamic year—Dhu al-Qa'dah and Dhu al-Hijah. The etymological base for Dhu al-Hijah—*Hijrah*—means “to migrate, withdraw, or to make an exodus” in Arabic, which was exactly what the rebels had planned once Charleston was destroyed.

Aside from Robinson's largely unfounded speculation that Denmark Vesey was a Muslim of possibly Mande origin, there is a stronger possibility that he either was an Akan or was born to Akan-speaking parents. Denmark was bought in 1781 by Captain Vesey on the Danish Caribbean island of St. Thomas. Although we do know with some certainty that he was born in 1767, it is not known where Denmark was from originally—leaving open the possibility that he was from either Africa or Danish St. Thomas. During the 18th century, some 41 percent of imports from identifiable regions sent to the Danish Virgin Islands were from the Gold Coast. Other enslaved African groups that were brought to the Danish Virgin Islands in large numbers included those from West-Central Africa (21 percent), the Bight of Biafra (21 percent), and the Windward Coast (7 percent). Although Douglas Egerton claims that Denmark was of “Ashanti” origin, there simply is no reliable way to verify his ethnicity as Akan or to show that he was specifically from the kingdom of Asante.

Though Denmark's ethnicity is largely uncertain, a great deal has been written about the implications of his socioeconomic status in the shaping of the 1822 plot. The fact that many of the conspiracy's leaders were urban artisans has prompted Richard Wade to contend that there was likely no real plot beyond a few loose words from disenfranchised free people of color residing in Charleston. According to Wade, the nature of urban slavery—which provided significant degrees of freedom and latitude—was not very conducive to slave resistance. This relative sense of freedom, in addition to the well-organized police forces in the major cities,

would sufficiently deter those seeking to engage in resistive acts. But with examples of slave uprisings and plots in North American urban areas, what becomes obvious is that even an increase in the relative amount of freedom enjoyed by urban slaves did not alter their determination to seek true liberty. Even quasi-free blacks, such as Denmark Vesey, understood that their liberty would always be limited and threatened as long as slavery existed in North America. In some very real sense, free blacks were simply slaves without masters.

A variety of Pan-African elements influenced this conspiracy and demonstrate a level of intercultural collaboration. Along with Jack Pritchard's Gullah Company, Denmark Vesey also relied on aid from the “French band” in formulating his plot. This band, which had apparently been prepared for some time before June 1822, was composed of about 300 slaves who had fled Saint-Domingue with their masters in the wake of the 1791 uprising led by Toussaint Louverture. Once the rebellion was to begin, they were to raid a Mr. Duqueron's store near the Inspection and procure weapons and ammunition. Similar to the members of the Gullah society, the Saint-Domingue slaves also used a subversive language, in this case Creole French, to help plan the revolt while maintaining a high level of secrecy.

Haiti influenced other crucial areas of the conspiracy. Vesey was reported to have read passages in the newspapers that related to the revolt on the former French Caribbean island as a means of encouraging his fellow conspirators and enlistees. One particular newspaper article used by Vesey related the story of the Haitian defeat over an invading Spanish army. Having spent some time earlier in his life in Saint-Domingue, Vesey had learned French and used this ability as a tool to facilitate resistance. During the planning of the rebellion, two letters requesting military aid from Haiti were reportedly drafted by Vesey. One of the letters was to be carried by a ship's steward whose brother was allegedly a general in the Haitian military. The other, addressed directly to President Boyer of Haiti, was to be conveyed via a ship's cook. Despite the fact that he was not in direct contact with Haitian officials, Vesey and other leaders frequently claimed that armies from both Santo Domingo and Africa were to provide assistance as a means to further inspire fellow conspirators.

In addition to Gullah and Domingan elements, other more directly African elements were present in the conspiracy. Monday Gell led a company of “Ibos,” and Africans



from Senegambia and Sierra Leone were another segment of South Carolina's slave population playing an integral role in the events unfolding in 1822. Imported in large numbers because of their expertise in rice cultivation, Africans from the Western Sudan were to have a profound impact on cultural developments throughout the region. The two most apparent Gambian-born slaves involved in the conspiracy—Mingo Harth and Perault Strohecker—engaged in activities bearing a strong cultural stamp from their West African places of origin.

Identified by his first name as possibly a Gambian-born Mande-speaker, Mingo eventually became one of the most important figures in the conspiracy. Perault, according to his brief biography detailed in the court proceedings, was a Mande-speaker born in the Western Sudanic region near Gorée. Both men were expert horse handlers and had the responsibility of either recruiting for or leading the slave cavalries. Monday Gell testified that Mingo was to take his master's horse and fight on horseback during the revolt. In the trial of Mingo's younger brother, Isaac Harth, Monday further claimed that he also belonged to a cavalry company and was an accomplished horse rider. Perault was to lead a horse company and, like Mingo and Isaac, was a noted horse rider. During the outbreak of violence, the various horse companies were to patrol the streets and prevent whites from assembling. Understanding the strategic importance represented by having use of a cavalry, Vesey actively recruited men with some experience with horses. In this manner, Vesey ultimately recruited about 100 draymen to serve in the slave cavalry during the revolt.

The fact that as many as three enslaved Gambians—Mingo, Isaac, and Perault—were intimately involved with recruiting for, leading, or joining the slave cavalry demonstrates an important continuity of Gambian military culture in North America. From as early as the year 1100, the Mande and other Gambian groups had been renowned in the Western Sudan for being fierce horse warriors. Between 1100 and 1500, Gambian cavalry forces swept across an extensive territory in the Sahel, savanna, and woodland areas of the Western Sudan and became primarily responsible for the rise of the Mali and Songhai empires. The unique disease ecology created by trypanosomiasis-infected tsetse flies contained the spread of horse warrior empires, as well as the horses themselves, to the region north of the Upper Guinea coastal rivers. Even as late as the mid-19th century,

horse warriors continued to be a determining factor in warfare and state formation in the Western Sudanic region of Upper Guinea. Gambian horsemen were infamous among Europeans around the Atlantic World for three centuries prior to the Vesey conspiracy.

After the conspiracy trials, 35 men were executed, 32 were banished from the state, and 53 were either acquitted or discharged. Denmark Vesey, the principal leader of the conspiracy, was hanged on July 2, 1822, along with five of his followers. In the aftermath of the conspiracy trials, South Carolina lawmakers worked diligently to pass a harsher slave code and to cut off any dangerous influences from Haiti. The Negro-Seamen's Acts, passed in December 1822, banned free black sailors from entering Charleston and forced them to stay aboard their ships. This specific law was meant to prevent any form of communication—and thus inspiration—from reaching the enslaved masses in South Carolina from Haiti, as a direct response to the plan initiated by Vesey and its Pan-Africanist implications. *See also:* Negro Seamen Acts; Pritchard, Gullah Jack; Slave Resistance

Walter C. Rucker

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## Walker, David

David Walker (1796/97–1830) was perhaps the most influential African American author in the 19th century because he wrote a highly inflammatory, searing exposé of American slavery in 1829, the first nationally circulated critique of slavery written by a black person.

Born free to a slave father and a free mother in Wilmington, North Carolina, Walker moved to Boston in ca. 1824, and in 1829, he published and disseminated one of the most influential and radical antislavery essays written in America: *Appeal in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America*. Because of this pamphlet, Walker is considered both one of the most important 19th-century African American writers and a precursor of the more radical strains of African American social and political writing.

Although David Walker's birthday has traditionally been given as September 28, 1785 (the date provided in a biography written by Henry Highland Garnet in his 1848 reprint of Walker's *Appeal*), this same biography states that Walker died at age 34 (not 44). Also, records in Boston give Walker's age at death as 33. Using this and other evidence, historian Peter P. Hinks makes a convincing case that Walker was born in Wilmington in 1796 or 1797.

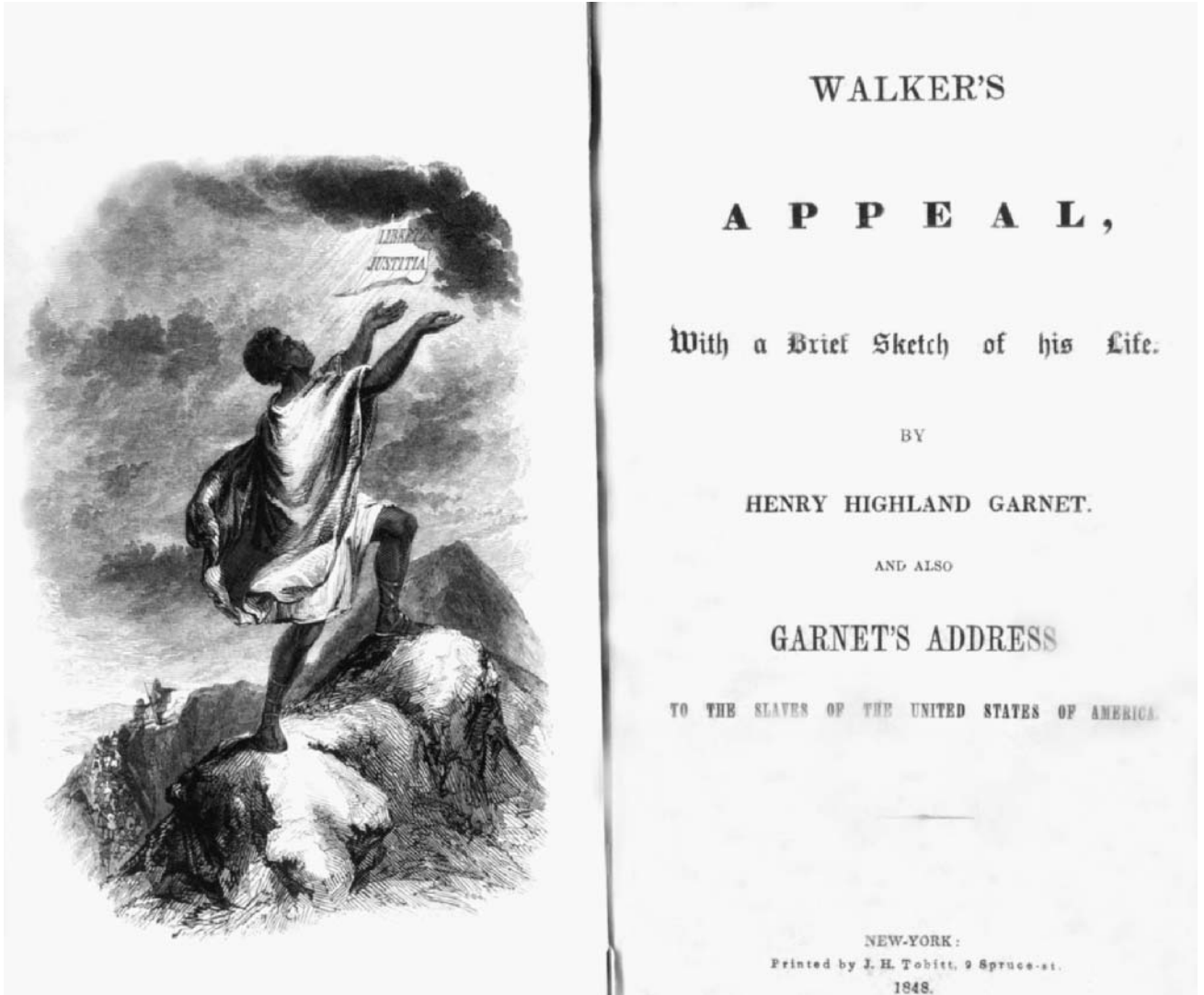
Sometime between 1815 and 1820, Walker moved south to Charleston, South Carolina, with its large population of free blacks (including many who had been influenced by the Haitian Revolution) and its superior employment opportunities. Charleston also offered both numerous politically oriented black organizations and significant educational opportunities—thus helping account for Walker's sense of blacks as a potentially powerful political group and the wide-ranging knowledge and sophisticated writing in his *Appeal*. Additionally, Charleston's mix of ready employment, black political discussion, and educational support was intertwined with black churches that proclaimed that the Bible supported both racial equality and uprisings against injustice. Although we do not know Walker's views on Christianity at this time, his later views and actions were very much in keeping with these beliefs so prevalent in Charleston.

Probably in 1824, Walker moved north to Boston and opened a used clothing store. In 1826, he married Eliza

Butler, with whom he apparently had three children. That same year, Walker joined the most powerful black organization in Boston by becoming a Freemason in the African Lodge (#459) of Boston's Prince Hall Masons. Thus, within approximately two years of his arrival in Boston, Walker (now 30 years old) had married into an established (although not especially important) Bostonian black family and had joined an influential organization that promoted abolition and the rights of African Americans. From this beginning, Walker quickly rose to prominence in politically active circles in Boston, becoming both a community leader and an abolitionist writer and speaker.

In 1828, Walker helped create and then became a spokesperson for the Massachusetts General Colored Association (MGCA). The MGCA was important not only for its political position against slavery and racism but also for its national perspective that promoted coalitions with African American organizations in other cities. Walker also supported and published in America's first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, one of whose main goals was to argue against the American Colonization Society's advocacy for the return of African Americans to Africa (African Americans, *Freedom's Journal* argued, were an integral part of the new nation and would not accept a second uprooting). From early speeches and articles, we see that even before publication of the *Appeal*, Walker's historically informed public arguments, which used biblical scripture to advocate the elimination of racism for the good of the nation, cast Walker as America's earliest example of a Martin Luther King Jr.-type figure.

From September 1829 to June 1830, three editions of Walker's *Appeal* were published, each increasingly heated in its criticisms. In addition to publishing his pamphlet, Walker also worked to facilitate distribution of his *Appeal* through the South, largely via a combination of sailors, merchants, and Southern ministries. Although the level of success of this distribution seems to have been moderate in number of copies, the message spread widely. Also, the discovery of the *Appeal* by authorities led to states strengthening existing legislation as well as passing new legislation to repress slave literacy, to restrict the autonomy of black churches, to limit the mobility of free blacks, and to reduce freedom of the press (discussing the *Appeal* in the press counteracted the effects of confiscating Walker's text). Such unusually dramatic reactions stemmed primarily from the



Frontispiece to David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. (Library of Congress)

unmistakable power of Walker's argument, but additional factors contributing to these reactions included anxieties resulting from increasing resistance to slavery among Southern blacks, the growing tendency of black churches to conflate spiritual with political deliverance, and the fact that the *Appeal* was from "the North."

Soon after the third edition of the *Appeal*, Walker died. The traditional date given for the death of David Walker is June 28, 1830, and speculation that Walker was murdered, perhaps by poisoning in response to one of the many bounties purportedly put on his head by persons in the South, has become a nearly accepted fact by many. The Boston Index of Deaths, however, indicates that Walker died of consumption and not on June 28, but on August 6, 1830. This death was a week after the death of Walker's daughter

Lydia Ann Walker, who died of "lung fever." Whatever the reason, David Walker's death brought an early end to his life but not to the influence of his *Appeal*.

The continued (and continuing) influence of the *Appeal* stemmed from Walker's ability to present evidence in a global-historical context as part of an argument based on both Enlightenment political philosophy and Christian ethics. Walker's *Appeal* embraced the ideals grounding the U.S. Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution (the latter of which is echoed in Walker's title). It situated America's republican democracy as a political system that should but did not allow "God's will" because that system had been corrupted by greed and hypocrisy. Walker sharpened this overall argument by marshaling historical facts to declare that the condition of slaves in America was worse than the

condition of any other people (any other group of slaves) in the history of humankind. Like Walker's most similar literary predecessor, Olaudah Equiano, Walker presented himself in the Christian tradition of Jeremiah, criticizing the evils and hypocrisy of his society. Unlike the more muted Equiano, however, Walker predicted that without reforms, godly retribution was inevitable.

Walker's *Appeal* predicted that if blacks did not rise up and destroy slavery and its proponents, God would destroy the United States. The fiery predictions in Walker's *Appeal* frightened many white Americans and spoke to the self-governance and separation of Black Nationalism later advocated by, for instance, Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X.

But Walker's *Appeal* was a complex and nuanced argument that cannot be reduced to mere advocacy for (or predictions of) revolt, civil war, and Black Nationalism, for Walker also promised that if the white population used its position of power to educate and Christianize blacks and offer them equal opportunities, then past injustices would be forgotten, and blacks would work with and join whites in a brotherly union of benefit to all Americans. Walker did make predictions of violence and suffering—many of which came true—but these predictions were not desired outcomes but undesired outcomes that Walker hoped to prevent by convincing America to choose another path.

This other path was not merely another path for whites but one also for blacks. Walker's *Appeal* had two distinct audiences, one white and one black. His white audience, Walker wanted to convince that although their society was based on the most civilized ideals of any society in the history of humankind, it was also the administrator of the most inhumane and barbaric economic system of that same history—a system of slavery based on a degree of unparalleled *avarice* (one of the most-repeated words in the opening of Walker's *Appeal*). Walker's avowed goal was to help white Americans see the truth of America's cruel and oppressive system and from this realization to enact change.

Walker's second audience was black Americans both free and enslaved. Although Walker was deeply sympathetic to the plight of African Americans, this sympathy did not prevent him from insisting that they also choose another path, a path of far greater and more courageous political activism based on more rigorous educations reinforced by religious (i.e., Christian) rigor and spiritual renewal. Walker declared deep agitation toward African Americans who professed acceptance of their current stations in life.

Thus, although Walker spent considerable time refuting the logic and evidence of, for instance, Thomas Jefferson's declarations of black inferiority in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), the restrictiveness of black life in America did not prevent Walker from demanding African American agency obtained through self-help and reinforced by African American communities that insist on education, religion, and moral integrity for all members. Although the reputation of Walker's *Appeal* has traditionally rested on Walker's self-defined public perception as a "restless disturber of the public peace" who predicted revolution and Black Nationalism, the lion's share of the *Appeal* (i.e., some of Article One and much of Articles Two, Three, and Four) spoke to the exigent need for African Americans to rise up not only physically (as in resistance and perhaps revolt) but also educationally, spiritually, and politically.

Because of the wide range of Walker's concerns and tone, his *Appeal* stands as a precursor to nearly all subsequent African American, nonfiction writing. Walker's emphasis on education, self-help, and the generosity of African Americans makes the *Appeal* an early expression of ideas later professed by, for instance, Booker T. Washington (e.g., "The Atlanta Exposition Address"). But although the "brotherly" elements of Walker have received too little attention, his *Appeal* nevertheless stands more clearly on the radical and fiery side of African American letters and political resistance.

Although there is no known evidence that Nat Turner, for instance, read Walker, it is likely that he at least knew of the *Appeal*, and many portrayed Turner's insurrection (August 1831) as a manifestation of Walker's pamphlet. There is ample evidence that people associated with other insurrections, or with potential insurrections, in the years leading up to the Civil War possessed copies of Walker's *Appeal*, and Walker's text was a major rallying point for opposition to slavery in antebellum America. Also, in addition to prominent white abolitionists, 19th-century African Americans who specifically acknowledge the influence of Walker included Maria Stewart and Frederick Douglass.

During the 20th century, we could hear Walker in W. E. B. Du Bois's analysis about the persistent race problem in America and the psychological impact of racism on African Americans, as well as Walker's inclusion of Africa in world history. Although Du Bois may not specifically have derived these themes from Walker, on more than one occasion, he acknowledged the importance of Walker to African American political thought.

Walker's themes could also be heard in the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr., but Walker's influence surfaced most strongly in figures such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, and Eldridge Cleaver. These "black nationalist" expressions of Walker downplayed the Christian and integrationist elements of Walker's pamphlet while emphasizing Walker's call to immediate, physical (material) action.

The wide-ranging insights, global perspective, and eloquence of Walker's *Appeal* along with its influence on antebellum America, practically guaranteed both its impact on 20th-century African American letters and its continuing impact in this 21st century. As a historical document, Walker's *Appeal* remains one of the best early studies of the material and psychological results of racism, results that America continues to struggle with today.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Du Bois, W. E. B.; *Freedom's Journal*; Prince Hall Masonry; Turner, Nat

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## Ward, Samuel Ringgold

Samuel Ringgold Ward (1817–1866?) is best known for his work for the antislavery societies of New York and Canada, his help in founding the Free Soil Party in 1848, and the publication of his *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labours in the United States, Canada and England* in 1855. Ward was born in Maryland on October 17, 1817, the only child of slave parents who escaped to New York around the time he was three years old. In his subsequent life as a free person, Ward became a teacher and later a preacher who served an all-white congregation.

According to Ward, it was his mother Anne's idea to run away from the plantation rather than risk being sold away from her son, and his father William complied. The young family made it to a Quaker colony in New Jersey in 1820 and stayed for six years. By then, slave captures were on the increase. Ward had a second cousin and two first cousins kidnapped and returned to slavery, so his parents moved farther north for security, arriving in New York City in 1826.

According to family oral history, Ward's father was descended from an African prince, and his mother was the great-granddaughter of an Irish slave owner. Though no written proof existed, these stories served as proof to Ward that he was meant for better things. Rather than work full-time as a child, Ward attended public schools, apprenticed in a law office, and became a teacher in 1833 at the age of 16. Five years later, he married Emily Reynolds, with whom he would eventually have four children.

Ward began his antislavery efforts slowly, delivering an oration before a Literary Society in July 1837, with Lewis Tappan in the audience. His ministry and abolitionist work grew together over the years. In 1839, Ward earned his license to preach by the New York Congregational Association and became a minister. He also became a traveling agent of the New York Anti-Slavery Society and a member of the new Liberty Party and began editing antislavery newspapers with profits from his ministry.

After serving as the pastor of a church in Wayne County, New York, he preached at churches all around the state, settling again as a pastor in Cortland Village and later in Syracuse. It was from that city in 1851 that Ward and his family were forced to flee because of his involvement in the Jerry Rescue case. Since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, runaway kidnappings had risen dramatically. As Ward railed against these acts while attending the Liberty Party's annual convention in town, a local barrel maker named Jerry was taken by force under the auspices of the act. After failing to rescue the man on a first attempt, a large crowd of free persons and abolitionists gathered at the commissioner's office. They demanded his release and, in the meantime, there was a speech from Ward and famed lawyer and abolitionist Gerrit Smith, who was in town for the convention. Their virulent rhetoric caused the crowd to storm the building, and the marshal freed Jerry to avoid an act of mob violence. The authorities issued indictments for treason to all involved who could be named, so Ward quickly crossed into Canada. His family followed a few months later.

In Canada, Ward continued his abolitionist work as an agent for the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society. Though slavery had been abolished there in 1834, the society worked toward gaining Canadian support for antislavery work in the United States as well as working against racial discrimination in their country. Ward worked in Canada from 1851 until 1853, when he was sent to England to garner further support for the cause. His ticket had been purchased by Lewis Tappan. Yet onboard the steamer, Ward was required to eat meals in his room rather than the main dining hall to avoid unrest among the other passengers. He received superior treatment once in England and met many abolitionists known worldwide, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the previous year, and Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, America's first black concert singer, also known as the Black Swan. Ward also succeeded in raising over £1,200 for the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society in his 10-month tour.

In 1855, Ward wrote his autobiography on the suggestion of several antislavery activists in the United States and England. In the autobiography, he briefly discussed his early years and focused on his antislavery work in Canada, detailing many legal cases of discrimination and their outcomes, and overseas. With the proceeds, he purchased land in Jamaica from one of his English benefactors and moved his family there when his tour concluded. He worked as a minister and a farmer and died in 1866.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; African Free Schools; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Free Soil Party; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Fugitive Slaves; Liberty Party; Smith, Gerrit; Tappan, Lewis

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## Whipper, William

William Whipper (1804–1876) was a black abolitionist and advocate of equal rights for all people, regardless of race.

Whipper was born on February 22, 1804, to a slave woman and her white master. His obituary states that he was born in Little Britain Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. But there are no extant records to prove that claim or document his early life. It is known that by 1828, Whipper was in Philadelphia, working as a steam scourer. Whipper had little formal education but was in demand as an orator in the Philadelphia African American community. In 1828, Whipper gave an “Address before the Colored Reading Society of Philadelphia.” In 1833, he delivered a eulogy about the British abolitionist William Wilberforce and was a founder of the Philadelphia Library of Colored Persons. In 1834, Whipper spoke before the Colored Temperance Society of Philadelphia.

Like other black abolitionists, Whipper was influenced by William Lloyd Garrison's ideas, especially that of moral suasion, which emphasized the sinfulness of slavery. Once slaveholders realized that slavery was sinful, then racial prejudice would cease, and slavery would be abolished. But Whipper differed from Garrison in becoming politically active. He joined James Forten and Robert Purvis in 1832 in petitioning the Pennsylvania state legislature against a proposed law banning black immigration into Pennsylvania. Whipper also attended all the national colored conventions between 1830 and 1835. At the 1832 and 1833 meetings, he voted against the migration of free blacks to Canada. Whipper attended the 1848 State Convention of Colored Citizens of Pennsylvania as well as the 1853 and 1855 National Negro Conventions. But it was at the 1835 convention, where the American Moral Reform Society (AMRS) was founded, that Whipper emerged as a national black leader. Although James Forten was elected president of the AMRS, Whipper controlled the organization. He helped draft its constitution, served as its secretary, and edited its journal—the *National Reformer*—from 1838 to 1839. The newspaper promoted Garrisonian ideals such as the equality of women, the boycotting of consumer goods made with slave labor, the uplift of the human race, and opposition to any “complexional” designations or black separatist institutions. In order to realize the Christian ideal of brotherhood, thought Whipper, men must drop all racial and geographical distinctions. This creed brought Whipper into conflict with the black nationalists Samuel Cornish, Frederick A. Hinton, and Junius Morel, who accused Whipper of lacking race pride. In 1837, Whipper published in Cornish's newspaper—the *Colored American*—his essay on nonviolence, “Non-Resistance to Offensive Aggression.” Cornish

disagreed with Whipper, arguing that sometimes, militant action by African Americans was justified. These disagreements put an end to the AMRS in 1841. But in an 1849 letter to Frederick Douglass, Whipper reversed his earlier view, telling Douglass that he now saw that black institutions were necessary.

Whipper moved from Philadelphia to Columbia, Pennsylvania, in 1835, but life there was not easy. In 1835, a race riot broke out, and Whipper reportedly stopped rioters from burning down the town. On March 10, 1836, he married Harriet L. L. Smith. Whipper and Harriet's brother, Stephen Smith, formed a lumber and coal company based in Columbia and Philadelphia. The company prospered, enabling Whipper to use his profits to finance his interests. Between 1847 and 1860, he donated \$1,000 annually to the abolitionist cause. Whipper also purchased stock in the Reading and Columbia Railroad; he used these railroad cars to harbor fugitive slaves and send them to Canada. Fugitive slaves came from Maryland and crossed the Wrightsville-Columbia bridge over the Susquehanna River to Whipper's house at the end of the bridge. In William Still's book *The Underground Railroad*, Whipper claimed to have helped hundreds of slaves escape to freedom. In retaliation for his Underground Railroad activity, arsonists tried to burn down Smith and Whipper's lumberyards in Columbia several times.

The passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act made Whipper change his mind about Canadian migration. In 1853, he and Stephen Smith began visiting Canada and bought property in the black community of Dawn, near Dresden, Ontario, where his sister Mary Ann and his brother-in-law James Hollinsworth lived. In 1861, Whipper was about to move to Canada when the Civil War broke out. He kept busy managing his lumberyard in Philadelphia with his nephew, James W. Purnell, an associate of Martin Delany. Whipper also was active in the Social, Civil, and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Philadelphia. In 1866, Whipper was in the delegation headed by Frederick Douglass that presented to President Andrew Johnson African Americans' civil rights concerns. In 1867, Whipper was appointed head cashier of the Philadelphia branch of the Freedman's Bank, and this job prompted him in 1868 to sell his Columbia house and purchase a home in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Although Whipper's bank was solvent, the collapse of the national Freedman's Bank in 1873 caused the closing of the Philadelphia branch and the loss

of much of Whipper's personal savings. He died in Philadelphia on March 9, 1876.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American Moral Reform Society; Cornish, Samuel; Destination, Canada; Douglass, Frederick; Forten, James; Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; Garrison, William Lloyd; Purvis, Robert; Underground Railroad

*Eric Ledell Smith*

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## Wilberforce, William

William Wilberforce (1759–1833) was one of the most active and influential British abolitionists in the 18th and 19th centuries. Wilberforce was born in Hull to a prosperous Yorkshire merchant/banking family on August 24, 1759. The Elizabethan house of his birth is now the Wilberforce House Museum. A serious and scholarly youth, it is said his campaign against slavery began at the early age of 14 when he wrote a letter to the *Yorkshire Gazette* condemning the institution. At age 17, he entered Cambridge University and at university met William Pitt, the future prime minister, who would be a friend throughout his life.

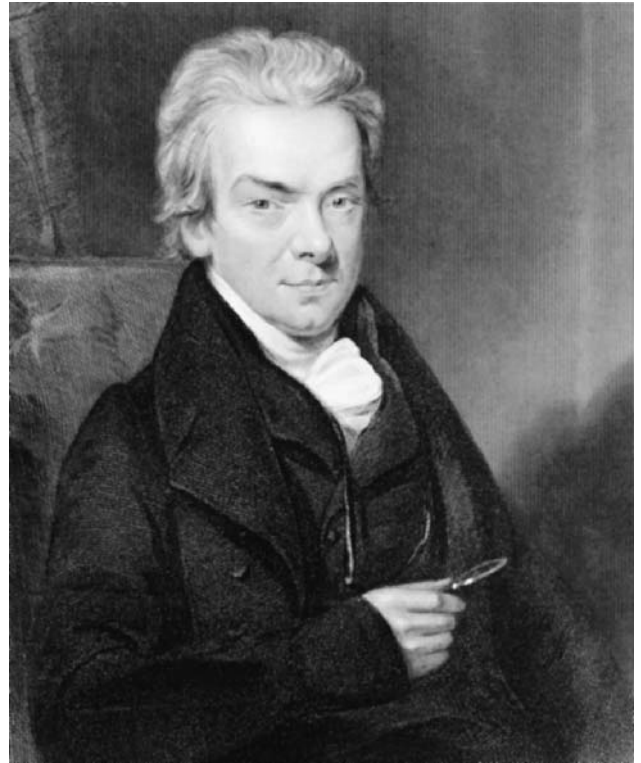
His affluent background gave him the freedom to pursue his political ambitions. At age 21, he became a member of Parliament for Hull, advancing four years later to occupy the more important county seat of Yorkshire. His initial parliamentary career as a backbencher was not particularly distinguished, although he was noted for his spirit, charm, and impressive oratory. The turning point in his life and politics came with his acceptance of evangelical Christianity in 1785. From this time on, Wilberforce's politics were driven by morality. He waged campaigns for criminal law reform and the suppression of vice as well as the improvement of public manners. Following the suggestion of William Pitt, he became Parliamentary leader of the abolition movement, although he did not join the Abolition Society until 1794.

Working with Thomas Clarkson, Wilberforce reviewed the accumulated evidence against the slave trade. He then presented this evidence to the Privy Council in 1788 at a time when abolitionist feelings had grown. This hearing went poorly, and other political crises pushed slavery off center stage. Nevertheless, in 1789, Wilberforce presented his Abolition Bill to Parliament. His speech on this occasion was celebrated as one of the most eloquent ever delivered.

The slave trade abolition bill faced many delays and was sent to a select committee for additional review. A new general election pushed the matter further from the forefront of politics. It was not until April 18, 1791, that Wilberforce again put his bill before Parliament. However, Parliament failed to endorse the measure, and the Abolition Bill failed. He next took the matter forward on April 2, 1792. This effort was compromised through the efforts of Henry Dundas, and immediate abolition became gradual. This compromised measure did pass, with the slave trade set to end in 1796. Delaying tactics again, led by West Indian interests along with war with France and the rise of Napoleon, pushed abolition aside. Yet Wilberforce did not surrender.

The cause of trade abolition improved after 1804, and the Abolition Society was reformed, drawing new converts while maintaining the old parliamentary guard. The bill again failed in 1804 and 1805, but Wilberforce stood firm and wrote an important abolitionist tract in 1806 that stirred public sentiment. In January 1807, the bill was introduced once more and received positive endorsements by the Whig government and by the new Irish members. On February 23, 1807, Parliament finally voted in favor of abolition. The Abolition Act received Royal Assent on March 25, 1807, and became law. Wilberforce's untiring efforts for this cause reached fruition, and he was readily applauded by the House of Commons and by the nation for his achievement.

The slave trade was now illegal in British ships, but the problem of slavery remained, and enforcement was difficult. Wilberforce knew that the only real solution was the end of slavery. Unfortunately, total and immediate emancipation lacked political support. During this time, Wilberforce, now in his fifties, took up other causes such as Catholic Emancipation and the Corn Laws. In 1812, suffering from poor health, he gave up his demanding Yorkshire seat and took on a less stressful seat in the Bramber pocket borough. He also worked on a Slave Registration Bill that was



*William Wilberforce, an elected member of the British House of Commons, advocated the abolition of the British slave trade and later the abolition of the practice of slavery worldwide. (Library of Congress)*

necessary for slave trade regulation. Wilberforce made little progress in this campaign and after 1815 gave up compromise and demanded a complete end to slavery.

Unfortunately, his poor health diminished his old ardor, but he still managed to attack slavery in public and in the House of Commons. In 1823, he published a pamphlet denouncing slavery and through this effort helped in the establishment of the Anti-Slavery Society. The goal was now complete emancipation in all British colonies.

In 1825, Wilberforce resigned from Parliament and retired to his home at Mill Hill, 10 miles north of London. The parliamentary leadership in the slavery campaign now passed to Thomas Fowell Buxton. Wilberforce's last public engagement was to chair an Anti-Slavery Society meeting in 1830.

The Emancipation Bill's final reading came on July 26, 1833. Wilberforce lived to witness the event, but three days later, on July 29, 1833, he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Under terms of the act, the slave masters were handsomely compensated with £20 million, whereas the slaves received only graduated freedom and a life of



continued plantation labor. Yet British emancipation gave courage to American abolitionists who also saw the drive to end slavery as a moral crusade.

See also: Abolition, Slave Trade; Cugoano, Quobna Ottobah; Equiano, Olaudah

*Theodore W. Eversole*

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## Williams, Peter Jr.

Peter Williams Jr. (1786–1840) was unique among his brethren, born a free man in 18th-century New York City. His mother was a free woman from the West Indies, and his father, a known activist in the black community, had purchased his freedom about the time young Peter Jr. was born. As a child, Williams Jr. attended New York's African Free School and was inspired to become an activist and community leader at a young age. When Williams was only 18, he was selected to give an address to honor the abolition of the slave trade. On January 1, 1808, Williams delivered "An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade," which was a powerful political treatise highlighting the horrors of the slave trade and the duties of free blacks. His carefully constructed message demonstrated his ability to combine notions of African pride and racial unity with moral uplift and personal responsibility. Ultimately, Williams's plan for the future blended morality and African heritage to create a vision of unity and empowerment for Africans throughout the Diaspora.

Just six months later, he helped to redesign the most enduring autonomous black organization in New York City, the African Society for Mutual Relief (ASMR). Although the ASMR was originally founded as a mutual relief

organization, its organizers had an alternative purpose from the beginning: to combat the racism and oppression that plagued their lives and uplift the race. The ASMR became the leading black organization in 19th-century New York, eventually focusing not just on mutual relief but also on abolition, colonization, education, and suffrage. As one of the ASMR's leading members, Williams Jr. eventually became an ardent abolitionist and was also deeply committed to emigration and education.

Following Williams's participation in the 1808 slave trade commemoration, he also became converted to the Episcopalian Church. This was a controversial move at the time, given that his father was a devout Methodist and had helped create the independent African Methodist Church in New York City. However, in 1809, Peter Williams Jr. rebelled against his father's example and became a lay reader for the black Episcopalian church in New York City. By 1818, they had constructed a building located in the heart of the black community, which they named St. Phillips after the first priest to convert Africans to the faith. One year later, on October 20, 1820, Peter Williams Jr. became the first black man to be ordained by the Episcopal Church, and in July 1826, he advanced to the priesthood and became the first black Episcopal priest in the United States.

In addition to his religious contributions, Williams was, at his core, an activist. Deeply committed to moral uplift and efforts to gain citizenship, Williams hoped that service in the military would convince American society that black men could be useful contributors to the country. In 1812, Peter Williams Jr. became deeply involved in the war effort and called on his brothers and sisters to help fortify the city of New York against the British. However, following the War of 1812, Williams began to explore alternative strategies. Perhaps disappointed by the persistent racism that kept his people as second-class citizens, he began to question whether black people truly had a future in the United States.

By 1816, Peter Williams Jr. had become a public advocate of emigration, and he urged his people to consider leaving the United States in favor of more hospitable locations such as Sierra Leone, Haiti, and Canada. Influenced by the journeys of black emigrationist Paul Cuffe, Williams became increasingly interested in African emigration and became the leader of the New York City branch of the African Institution, an organization designed to promote

migration to Sierra Leone. Between 1815 and Cuffe's death in 1817, the two men corresponded regularly and discussed various emigration schemes. In particular, by 1816, Cuffe and Williams also had become interested in migration to Haiti. Even after Cuffe's death, Williams continued his passion for emigration. In 1824, Peter Williams became the president of the New York Haytien Emigration Society and visited Haiti to investigate the conditions on behalf of the free black community in the United States. Yet immigration to Haiti was soon plagued by internal conflict in the Haitian government, and Williams reportedly returned to Haiti to help rescue some of his people who wanted to return to the United States. Likewise, the rising tide of racism in the colonization movement caused Williams to withdraw his support for African migration.

As a result, Williams eventually reversed his position on African and Haitian migration in favor of Canada. In fact, Williams became a passionate opponent of African colonization but still advocated for immigration to Canada. Indeed, in 1830, Williams appeared before his people and urged them to consider immigrating to Canada in case they were forcibly removed from the United States. Since Williams had become a staunch emigrationist, he had harbored a fear that the United States might eventually become uninhabitable for free blacks, a belief that was certainly bolstered by the 1829 riot in Cincinnati, which had forced their Ohio brethren to flee to Canada. Perhaps most painful for Williams was the realization that, in spite of their loyalty and patriotism, the free black population was being pushed out of the country by evil forces in the form of the American Colonization Society (ACS). Therefore, Williams's pragmatic solution was for black people to consider voluntary migration to Canada.

Despite William's commitment to emigration, he never gave up hope that free blacks might create a place for themselves in the United States, and he tirelessly agitated for the rights of his people in this country. In fact, he was part of a group of black activists who initially developed the idea for a colored convention movement. Peter Williams Jr., Thomas L. Jennings, Peter Vogelsang, Theodore Wright, and Benjamin Paul formed the Wilberforce Colony Society in 1830 for the purpose of investigating the possibility of Canadian migration. Shortly thereafter, they commenced their most influential activity; they issued a call for Northern black leaders to craft a unified position on colonization

and emigration, either to collectively remain or to leave. Among those to receive the appeal was Hezekiah Grice, a well-respected activist in Baltimore who had been a long-time supporter of emigration. Grice replied enthusiastically to the idea and sent a circular to his brethren throughout the North requesting their attendance at a convention to discuss the black community's destiny. These events ultimately served as the foundation for a series of meetings that brought black leaders together from across the North for the first time in history; scholars would later refer to these gatherings as the national colored convention movement.

Although Williams never attended the colored conventions himself, he remained committed to the cause of abolition. In 1833, Williams became active in the American Anti-Slavery Society, which ultimately made him a target for a virulent anti-abolition riot. In the blistering heat of July 1834, a mob formed in lower Manhattan, and thousands of rioters descended on the black regions of New York City. Perhaps the most vehement rage was directed against St. Philip's Church and the home of its minister, Peter Williams Jr., who they believed had performed an interracial marriage ceremony. For two hours, the mob devastated the church and his home without any intervention from the police or authorities. Sadly, the 1834 riot marked the end of Peter Williams Jr.'s public career as an abolitionist and agitator for black civil rights. His mentor, Bishop Benjamin T. Onderdonk, demanded that Williams resign from the American Anti-Slavery Society and refrain from future public appearances or statements regarding political matters. Compelled to obey his bishop, Williams retired from the public eye in all political matters, although he continued in his role as the minister of St. Philip's Church. Thus ended Peter Williams Jr.'s political career; after 26 years of service to New York City's black community, one of the community's most articulate and dedicated spokesmen was publicly silenced.

Over the next six years, Williams focused his energies on his church and congregants. However, in October 1840, Peter Williams Jr. caught a cold while standing in the window of his home one evening and never recovered. His death was a devastating blow to the black community, and he was universally mourned. Along with the congregation at St. Phillip's, members of the African Society wore badges of mourning for 30 days.

*See also:* Abolition, Slave Trade; Abolition, Slavery; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Colored Convention

Movement; Cuffe, Paul; Destination, Canada; Destination, Haiti; Williams, Peter Sr.

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Williams, Peter Sr.

Peter Williams Sr. (1749–1823) was born into slavery on Beekman Street in New York City, to parents who had been enslaved in Africa and sold into bondage. Little is known about his parents, except that they had survived the horrors of the Middle Passage and were later named George and Diana Williams. In a contemporary account of Peter Williams's life, his parents were described as "genuine Africans." Peter Williams Sr. was one of 10 children born in the barn of his master, Mr. Boorite. As a young man, Williams married a free woman named Mary "Molly" Durham, who was born in 1747 in the West Indies. Little else is known about Molly, except that she was described by a member of her church as a model wife, mother, and Christian, certainly the highest compliments that could be given to a black woman at the time. Even after his marriage, however, Peter Williams Sr.



Peter Williams Sr., founding member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. (J. B. Wakeley. *Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism*. New York: Carlton and Porter, 1858)

was still enslaved and worked for a tobacconist, Mr. Aymar. Aymar taught Williams tobacco manufacturing, the trade that ultimately became his livelihood.

During the Revolutionary War, Peter Williams distinguished himself for service to the rebel cause. Although he did not officially fight in the war, he saved the life of an American revolutionary by refusing to disclose his whereabouts. According to contemporary accounts, Williams warned the revolutionary, Parson Chapman, that he was in danger, and even when threatened with death and offered gold in exchange for information, Williams protected Chapman's safety. After the war, Williams's master, who was a Loyalist, was forced to flee the country. For a while, Williams worked for another tobacconist, Mr. Milledollar, until he purchased his freedom. In 1783, Williams sold himself to the John Street Methodist Church as part of an arrangement to free himself. The church purchased Williams for 40 pounds on June 10, 1783, and he agreed to pay them back

in installments. By November 4, 1785, Williams had fulfilled his obligation and was legally free. Although unable to read or write, Williams was obsessed with his free papers. According to Reverend Wakeley, one of Williams's biographers, he treasured his emancipation papers and treated them as if they were more valuable than gold or diamonds. In fact, he further remarked that the papers were carefully preserved by his family after his death because they proved that Williams had lived and died as a free man.

Shortly after obtaining his freedom, his son Peter Williams Jr. was born, and a few years later, Molly and Peter Sr. adopted a little girl named Mary. Both of his children went on to become activists in their own right. Peter Williams Sr. opened his own tobacco manufactory and gained notoriety for being the first in the city of New York to use steam power to operate the machines. Located on Liberty Street, his business was extremely successful; he eventually owned his own house and store, as well as other property.

Beyond his personal success, however, Peter Williams Sr. was an activist in the black community. In 1796, he played a key role in the establishment of the autonomous African Methodist Church in New York City. Although this move was a religious matter, it was also deeply political. Despite the fact that this fight for independence took place within a religious institution, the division was not the result of doctrinal discord. It was racism that ultimately drove blacks out of the white-dominated Methodist Church. Refusing to submit to racial indignities, such as segregated pews, Peter Williams Sr., along with James Varick and William Hamilton, demanded equal rights and eventually led an exodus of black members from the John Street Methodist Church. This must have been a powerful moment for Williams because he was forced to turn his back on the people who had allowed him to purchase his freedom. Asserting their racial pride, the newly independent congregants called themselves the African Methodist Church. Within a short time, the African Methodists had raised enough money to buy a sizable plot of land on the corner of Church and Leonard Streets. Peter Williams Sr. was selected as one of the founding trustees, and in September 1800, he laid the cornerstone for the first church built exclusively for the black community in New York. Less than a year later, on February 16, 1801, the State of New York officially extended the African Methodists the right to be legally incorporated.

For the remainder of his life, Peter Williams Sr. remained active within the church, but he otherwise faded

from public life. Still, Peter Williams Sr. was remembered as a pillar of New York's black community, and his son soon took up his commitment to advancing the race. His beloved wife, Molly, died on April 29, 1821, at the age of 74 and was buried in the old Methodist burying ground on Forsyth Street. Just two years later, in February 1823, Williams also died at the age of 74. He was buried at St. John's Episcopal Cemetery because the Methodist Church did not have sufficient space; however, there is no tombstone to mark his grave.

*See also:* Abolition, Slavery; African Methodist Episcopal Church; American Revolution; Williams, Peter Jr.

Leslie M. Alexander

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## Wright, Theodore S.

Theodore Sedgwick Wright (1797–1847) was a Presbyterian minister, writer, orator, and abolitionist from New York City. He was born in Providence, Rhode Island, to free black parents. His father, R. P. G. Wright, advocated for abolition and anticolonization among Northern blacks. The younger Wright inherited these convictions and continued the causes.

Wright attended New York City's African Free School, where he received instruction and mentoring from Samuel E. Cornish. Wright also studied at Princeton Theological Seminary, becoming the first African American to graduate from a theological seminary in the United States in 1828. Shortly after, he accepted the pastorate of First Colored Presbyterian Church in New York City (later called Shiloh Presbyterian). The Albany Presbytery ordained Wright on

February 5, 1829. He assumed this pastoral role to replace Cornish, whose ill health limited his work.

From Cornish, Wright inherited various avenues of abolitionist work. While in seminary, Wright worked as an agent for Cornish's *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States and a prominent abolitionist periodical. After replacing Cornish as the pastor at Shiloh, Wright was intimately involved in various organizations for the advancement and liberation of blacks in America. Like Cornish, he was an educator, founding the Phoenix Society, a lyceum for black males, in 1833 and becoming president of Phoenix High School in 1836. He also sat on numerous temperance, missionary, and antislavery committees with Cornish, including the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) and the New York State Convention of Negroes. He was also an accomplished journalist, having contributed to *Freedom's Journal*, the *Colored American* (also edited by Cornish), and the *Liberator*. In 1840, Wright collaborated with Cornish to publish the popular anticolonization tract *The Colonization Scheme Considered*. Wright's relationship with Cornish was mutually advantageous for their careers and for the promotion of their cause.

Wright's friendships with white abolitionists such as Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Theodore Weld, and William Lloyd Garrison were also important to Wright's success. He hosted Garrison's orations in Shiloh Church and was one of the presiding clergy in Theodore Weld's marriage to Angelina Grimké in 1838.

Despite close friendships, Wright's convictions steered his course in promoting abolition. He was a member of the executive committee for the American Anti-Slavery Society in the 1830s. However, as tensions between abolitionists strengthened over issues of gradual versus immediate abolition and moral reforms, Wright and others departed into their own camps. When the division between Garrisonians and the Tappans separated the abolitionist cause into factions, Wright sided with the Tappans. In 1840, Wright worked with Lewis Tappan to found the AFASS and was instrumental in founding the Liberty Party in 1844; however, Wright did not believe that party identification was necessary for blacks.

In 1835, he began serving as the chairman of the New York Vigilance Committee, an organization devoted to preventing the kidnapping of freed blacks and fugitive slaves. Wright was also a conductor for the Underground Railroad,

and his home and Shiloh Church were stations aiding run-aways. He was elected the treasurer of the Union Missionary Society in 1841. When the society merged with the American Missionary Association (AMA), Wright, Cornish, and other prominent ministers became officers of the AMA. Eventually, Wright was elected vice president of the association.

Wright's greatest contribution to the abolitionist cause in America was his criticism of racial prejudice. He reminded his coworkers that prejudice and slavery were deeply intertwined, and he criticized white abolitionists for neglecting to consider prejudice, even their prejudices that relegated blacks to subordinate roles in the abolitionist movement. On October 20, 1836, Wright stood before an interracial crowd of 450 at Bleecker Street Church in Utica, New York. There he addressed the New York State Anti-Slavery Society (NYSASS). Having been attacked by a white Southerner during a visit to Princeton one month before, Wright knew that racial prejudice and hatred were scourges to American society. Calling all African Americans, enslaved or free, slaves to ubiquitous oppression, Wright beseeched his audience to consider alleviating injustices as a means of legitimizing the abolitionist platform.

Wright's address gave him historic fame. The speech was printed in the *Friend of Man* a week later, solidifying him as a paragon of racial justice to a larger American audience. Just over 10 years later, Wright died on March 25, 1847, of unknown health complications. A monument was erected in his honor at Union Cemetery. He was survived by his wife, Adaline T. Turpine, whom he had married on May 29, 1837. *See also:* Abolition, Slavery; American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS); Cornish, Samuel; Garrison, William Lloyd; Tappan, Arthur; Tappan, Lewis

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# Political Activity, Migration, and Urbanization: Reconstruction, Civil Rights, and Modern African America

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With the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment on January 31, 1865, came a new era in African American life in the United States. The promise of freedom finally realized, the post-Civil War and Reconstruction Era was a time of simultaneous hope and despair. The chains of bondage forever shattered, many African Americans used their new freedom as an opportunity to reconnect with lost family, gain the rudiments of education, and carve out a space for themselves in American society. Reconstruction was a watershed in the sense that the era represented a complete break from the central paradox in American life—slavery in the land of freedom and savage inequity in a country premised on the equality of all. Reconstruction also paved the way to the African American future as progressive legislation—the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Fifteenth Amendment—set important precedents that laid the foundation for the Civil Rights movement of the mid-20th century.

In the period between 1865 and 1877, African Americans in the South enjoyed a brief experiment with democracy, justice, and the protections normally afforded all citizens. With the Reconstruction Act of 1867, which serves as the beginning of Congressional or Radical Reconstruction, the federal government became even more of an active agent in guaranteeing and protecting African American rights. Under martial law, Southern states had to rewrite

their constitutions, and through the principle of universal male suffrage, African American men would play an integral role in this process. Creating public schools, eliminating property qualifications for voting and holding political office, and rebuilding the infrastructure of the South were just a few of the many achievements of these new governments and the many Reconstruction-era black politicians who participated in them.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, Reconstruction would be a failure because of the reluctance of Congress to support land redistribution. As W. E. B. Du Bois recounts in his 1935 masterpiece, *Black Reconstruction in America*, Radical Republican Thaddeus Stevens

recognized [the need to distribute land] and sought to transform the emancipated freedmen into peasant proprietors. If he had succeeded, he would have changed the economic history of the United States. . . . But to furnish 50,000,000 acres of good land to the Negroes would have cost more money than the North was willing to pay. . . . The whole attempt to furnish land and capital for the freedmen fell through, and no comprehensive economic plan was advanced until the advent of Booker T. Washington.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, freedmen were betrayed and their high hopes in the era immediately after emancipation were dashed. By 1876, the Republican Party had lost interest in waving the “Bloody Shirt” of race and slavery, and with the

Compromise of 1877 came the official end of Reconstruction with the withdrawal of federal troops from the South. Between 1877 and 1896, African Americans witnessed a steady erosion of their rights as white redemption and “home rule”—euphemisms for white Southern supremacy—became the counter to the more progressive elements of the postemancipation period.

The 1896, *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court ruling gave federally sanctioned form to the substance of Jim Crow segregation and the nearly insurmountable color line that had long been a major component of American society. By establishing the “separate but equal” doctrine, this pivotal decision rendered two previous civil rights acts (1866, 1875) and the Fourteenth Amendment essentially null and void. Southern blacks would be forced to suffer through what Rayford Logan refers to as the “Black Nadir,” as they would have to face the five-headed hydra of sharecropping, political disfranchisement, social segregation, antiblack propaganda, and racial violence during the century after the Civil War. In 1903, when Du Bois prophetically announced that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line,” he, like many of his contemporaries, saw the 1896 ruling as the pinnacle of the movement by state and federal government officials to make white supremacy the official law of the land.<sup>3</sup>

Undeniably, the most heinous expression of white supremacy in late 19th and early 20th century America was the act of lynching. Defined as the extralegal murder of an individual accused or convicted of a crime or otherwise violating social mores, lynching and other forms of sadistic torture went unchecked by the federal government. Not one American president had the courage to support anti-lynching legislation before the 1960s and three anti-lynching bills were defeated in Congress in the early half of the century. In the 1890s alone, lynching claimed the lives of 104 black men, women, and children each year. As historian Leon Litwack notes: “Between 1882 and 1968, an estimated 4,742 blacks met their deaths at the hands of lynch mobs. As many if not more blacks were victims of legal lynchings (speedy trials and executions), private white violence, and “nigger hunts,” murdered by a variety of means in isolated rural sections and dumped into rivers and creeks.”<sup>4</sup> Lacking the ability to serve on juries, to hold political office, or even to vote, African Americans throughout the South were virtually powerless in the face of violent antiblack repression of this sort.

African Americans in the South responded to these multiple layers of oppression through a variety of means. They left the South, particularly during the 1879 Kansas Exodus and the Great Migration (1910–1940). At first tens of thousands and then millions left for better lives in the North, the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the West. In their eyes, anything had to be better than the constant assaults against their very presence and existence in the South. Although their new hosts were not always accommodating (e.g., Red Summer Race Riots of 1919), the new economic opportunities in urban regions throughout the country meant an end to back-breaking agricultural life and the ability to accumulate wealth and property for the first time for entire African American families.

In addition to leaving the South, African Americans used any means at their disposal to eke out an existence. Resistance to the various forms of oppression; accommodation with Southern whites; back-to-Africa movements; religious conversion to Islam; the creation of positive images of blackness through literary, visual, and expressive art; and embracing radical ideologies (e.g., socialism and communism) as means of breaking the cycle of capitalist exploitation were among the many activities African Americans engaged in during the early- to mid-20th century. Indeed, tracking African American history in the period between 1896 and 1968 is akin to tracking the myriad movements they developed to ameliorate their condition and achieve rights granted to them during the Reconstruction era. The capstone of this would be, of course, the modern Civil Rights movement that gained momentum after the landmark *Board v. Brown* decision in 1954.

The tumultuous decades encompassing the Civil Rights movement can be described as perhaps one of the most significant movements for social change in the history of the Western Hemisphere. Literally tens of thousands of dedicated individuals sought to create an American reality that truly reflected certain American ideals concerning justice, democracy, and equality, reflecting a continuity of aspirations existing at least since Reconstruction. The successes of the Civil Rights movement were not due entirely to the work of activists; the context of the Cold War provided both a significant hurdle and a facilitating environment in which fundamental change in America could occur.

The Cold War hindered activism because, at least during the 1950s, McCarthyism and red baiting shaped the contours of “acceptable” protest and ensured that radical

ideologies would not typify the views held by most pre-1965 civil rights activists. The examples of Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois are instructive in this regard. Both men, avowed socialists, were sent before the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC), had their passports and ability to travel abroad stripped away, and were, in effect, silenced by the U.S. government. In addition, because of a keen fear of being labeled communists, many civil rights organizations between 1947 and 1955 avoided direct action protest methods.

More important, the reality of racial strife and segregation in the United States meant to the nonwhite world that America was not the standard bearer of liberty and justice, and this reality undermined American efforts to sway third world countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa away from the orbit of the Soviet Union. Thus one could argue that in the absence of the external pressures exerted from abroad during the Cold War, perhaps the movement would not have been as successful as it eventually was. From Harry Truman through Richard Nixon, every American President—Democratic or Republican—was keenly aware that every time a civil rights worker was murdered or beaten, every time dogs and water hoses were used to assault black children, and every time another American city was set ablaze in the aftermath of a race riot the entire world was watching.

The tremendous impact that the Civil Rights movement had on the course of history in the Western Hemisphere and the world begs a significant question: how did the movement begin? Scholars from a variety of disciplines have dealt with this question of origins, and that will be the dominant theme of the first half of this essay. One of the more popular perspectives on origins deals with the movement as the “second Reconstruction.” This notion has recently been popularized by Manning Marable’s *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1990* (1991); however, one can find this theme resonating in the works of Du Bois, C. Vann Woodward, and Eric Foner among others.

For Du Bois, the first Reconstruction was an idealistic attempt to create an egalitarian, democratic, and interracial society that was thwarted by a counterrevolution in which property triumphed over labor.<sup>5</sup> In 1956, C. Vann Woodward wrote an influential article in which he compared the 1950s with Reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> The idea developed by Du Bois that Reconstruction was a promise unfulfilled can also be

found in Eric Foner’s *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*. To Foner, property also triumphed over labor, but the main failure of Reconstruction was that land was not distributed to ex-slaves. Land ownership was prerequisite to the self-sufficiency and autonomy that black families sought after abolition, but this would have threatened the goals of Northern capitalists who feared a severe labor shortage and a drop in cash crop production. The point implicitly made by both Du Bois and Foner is that if the first Reconstruction had truly been revolutionary, then there would have been no need for a 20th-century Civil Rights movement and, therefore, a second Reconstruction.

Another work that emphasizes this theme is Jack Bloom’s *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement* (1987). In his analysis of Reconstruction, Bloom states that the Reconstruction governments “set aside some of the Black Codes, tried to enact a free labor market, established the conditions and to some degree regulated the contracts for labor, and tried to protect black civil rights.”<sup>7</sup> White planters inspired by visions of home rule, however, consolidated their efforts to drive Northern whites out of the South and blacks from both government positions and the political franchise.

For Bloom, Southern Redemption meant the end of democracy in the South and created the need for the second Reconstruction beginning even before the 1954 *Brown* decision. He concludes by stating:

the term *Second Reconstruction* [as] applied to the civil rights movement is apt: the first Reconstruction attempted but failed to do away with the power of the Southern landed elite. The Second Reconstruction succeeded where the first failed; it accomplished this change by carrying out what was, in effect, a social revolution.<sup>8</sup>

Referring to the Civil Rights movement as a “social revolution” is problematic at best, but one can generally agree that the societal position of African Americans was relatively better in the post-1960s era compared to the post-1870s era.

The last work of the “second Reconstruction” genre, Manning Marable’s *Race, Reform, and Rebellion* (1991), contends that “[t]he failure of the federal government to recognize the necessity for massive land redistribution, along the lines of what blacks themselves called ‘forty acres and a mule,’ would be the principal reason for the failure of the First Reconstruction.”<sup>9</sup> White planter intransigence and entrenchment along with Republican acquiescence to



Southern Democratic demands of home rule led to the establishment of Jim Crowism and the context against which 20th century activists fought.

Quite obviously there is a certain amount of continuity between the first and second Reconstruction; the failures of one created the problems that made necessary the second. The major flaw in many of these perceptions is the notion that the Civil Rights movement was less a product of human endeavor than of an almost deterministic cycle of history. In fact, one could argue that the “second Reconstruction” notion does not explain the origin of the Civil Rights movement; instead it shows how unresolved problems from one era created problems in a later period. Simply put, the mere existence of major problems does not begin to explain why thousands of activists worked for social change after the 1950s. In sum, the “second Reconstruction” school is ultimately a subtle denial of human agency.

Aldon Morris, in *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (1984), promotes the idea that even if the starting point of the movement was the 1953 Baton Rouge boycott, the “modern” movement was related to previous civil rights activities and protest movements. Morris discusses a “protest tradition” that included slave uprisings, the Underground Railroad, protest organizations, the Garvey movement, and A. Philip Randolph’s March on Washington Movement (MOWM).<sup>10</sup> Thus important precedents in activism were being set by African Americans even before the Civil War era, and important lines of continuity exist between protest movements of the past and present.

One can extrapolate from Morris’s views that essentially the Civil Rights movement actually began in 1619, the year when the first enslaved Africans reached North America. This is an overly broad conceptualization, and Morris is careful to avoid this type of conflation. He distinguishes what he refers to as the “modern” Civil Rights movement from other protest movements of the past. To him, “the modern movement was directly linked to the activism of the 1940s via civil rights organizations and activists who played important roles in both periods.”<sup>11</sup>

There is still a major flaw in Morris’s analysis of continuities. Placing protest movements, past and present, under the rubric of “Civil Rights movements” misstates the purpose and goal of certain types of organizational efforts of the past. One of the underlying principles of civil rights advocates is their goal to bring about the inclusion

of a formerly marginalized group into mainstream society as citizens whose rights are guaranteed and protected by the federal Constitution. Civil rights advocates of the 1960s sought black political enfranchisement, social equality, justice, and rights within the context of the American system. Slave rebels and Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) members were not seeking further inclusion into American society, but rather and escape from it. The term “civil rights” therefore does not reflect the goals of those individuals in any shape or form. Instead, perhaps, the nascent and embryonic origins of black power can be found within the writings of David Walker, the actions of Nat Turner, and the organization apparatus created by Marcus Garvey.

In terms of Morris’s explanation of the causes of the modern movement, he takes a grass roots approach and identifies the black church (not organizations like the NAACP) as providing the necessary impetus to facilitate change. The church played a decided role in organizing and sustaining the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955–1956.<sup>12</sup> The black church also played a profound role in the event that sparked the activist stage of the modern movement, the Baton Rouge bus boycott of 1953. In this boycott, the church provided the grass roots leadership (Rev. T. J. Jemison), the numerical support for the protest (Mt. Zion Baptist was the largest church in the city with about 3,000 supporters), the experience in organization, the financial backing, and the moral fervor to facilitate a successful protest.

The black church in general also created an organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which replaced the NAACP as the main cog in civil rights activism and which also gave birth to one of the most important protest organizations in the 1960s, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The success of the Baton Rouge movement encouraged similar protests in Montgomery, Tallahassee, and New Orleans in subsequent years.<sup>13</sup>

Morris’s essential argument that African Americans led and created the Civil Rights movement is generally accepted now, but there are other scholarly opinions predating his work that offer different interpretations. A work that epitomizes this is Anthony Oberschall’s 1973 work entitled *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Oberschall contends that Southern rural blacks lacked the ability to make massive changes themselves. Although he recognizes human

agency on a certain level, Oberschall's perspective is skewed because of a lack of appreciation of grass roots leadership and organizations. He instead sees the movement as the product of an emerging black middle class and also points to the significance of college students as key leaders in the movement.<sup>14</sup>

Also important to his analysis were white allies and the major national level organizations like the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In essence, these variegated forces converged to help uplift the basically passive black rural masses who lacked the ability to help themselves. This demonstrates a surprising lack of understanding, especially as his model cannot explain the Baton Rouge boycott, the Montgomery boycott, and the thousands of other grass roots movements throughout the South.

In terms of the issue of the origins of the Civil Rights movement, monocausal explanations are obviously useless. Several factors played a part in stimulating African Americans to initiate this massive movement for social justice and citizenship rights: the pre-World War II northern migration and subsequent urbanization of blacks, the returning World War II veterans who fought the evil of racism abroad, the pre-McCarthy era influence of Communist organizers among rural blacks,<sup>15</sup> the powerful role of the black church, the existence of a continuity of struggle in the urban North and rural South, and the inertia created by local movements and community organizers.<sup>16</sup>

The Civil Rights movement has had lasting impacts and became a shaping influence on other types of movements and organizations, namely black power (and other empowerment movements), the New Left, the free speech movement, and the women's liberation movement. Specifically, both Sara Evans and Clayborne Carson have offered interpretations about the role of SNCC in the Civil Rights movement and how the organization impacted Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Economic Research and Action Projects (ERAP), and the New Left in general, as well as the resurgence of feminism in the second half of the 20th century. Sara Evans, a white southern activist/feminist turned scholar, analyzes the reemergence of feminism in the mid-20th century in *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (1979). Feminism itself, according to Evans, had a life of its own. The latest incarnation of the ideology was given birth in the reaction against dominant themes of domesticity during the relatively apolitical 1950s. Important

aspects of both feminism and the women's liberation movement, however, were given impetus and shape by the Civil Rights movement.<sup>17</sup>

It is no surprise that according to Evans, SNCC was to be the organization that exerted the most influence on the women's movement; it was the only organization that involved young southern white women; both SCLC and CORE members and leadership tended to be older and male. During the freedom summer campaign in 1964, SNCC enlisted the help of hundreds of white northern students, and once again many of these students were women. Problems soon mounted as Evans states, "self-assertion generated new forms of anxiety; new expectations existed alongside traditional ideas about roles; and ideas like 'freedom' and 'equality' were often subordinated to assumptions about women as mere houseworkers and sexual objects."<sup>18</sup>

Evans notes clearly, however, that SNCC would not have been created nor would it have sustained itself without the tireless and continuous efforts of women. Ella Baker first came up with the idea of an independent student and youth oriented movement organization. She was the one who urged students to maintain an independent existence from SCLC and single handedly fought off attempts by SNCC's parent organization to exert influence and control. Diane Nash was clearly the most charismatic member of the "Nashville group," which gave SNCC its original numerical impetus and moral foundation; in fact, Nash was a popular choice for the first chairperson of SNCC, although she turned down the offer. It must also be remembered that Fannie Lou Hamer's impassioned televised testimony at the Atlantic City Democratic convention gave the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (SNCC's political arm) and SNCC national legitimacy. But the women described here were all black women, and the roles inhabited by white women in the movement were much more circumscribed in comparison.

The marginalization that white women experienced in the movement was best expressed by Casey Hayden and Mary King's SNCC position paper presented at the Wave-land Retreat in 1965. Some of the grievances included being referred to as "girls" and the automatic assignment of clerical and secretarial work to women.<sup>19</sup> Despite the validity of these problems, Stokely Carmichael responded derisively to the question of women's positions in SNCC by stating they should be "prone."<sup>20</sup> In spite of this, the sexism white women would face within SNCC ranks would not compare,

according to Evans, to what they would face in New Left organizations.

In sum, Evans concludes that feminism grew within the contradiction that an increase in sexism occurred in the same places (e.g., SNCC, SDS, Economic Research and Action Projects, ERAP) where women found new strength, potential, and self-confidence. In response to this contradiction, Hayden and King collaborated again in 1965 to draft a feminist manifesto. Also at the annual national conference for SDS in 1967, a “Women’s Liberation Workshop” was organized to sensitize men in the organization to sexism and sexual oppression. The women were met with the same type of derisiveness that was strikingly reminiscent of Carmichael’s 1965 comment.

The experience of women like Hayden and King in SNCC provided both negative and positive stimulus for feminism and women’s liberation. The black power phase, which is usually seen as the beginning of the end for SNCC, served also as a positive model on which feminism would build. As Evans contends, the type of sexism faced by women in both SNCC and SDS proved that women needed a women’s organization to fight against sexism and for women’s liberation. Taking cues from black power advocates, drafters of the paper titled “To the Women of the Left” presented at the 1967 National Conference for New Politics made the following statement:

Women must not make the same mistake the blacks did at first of allowing others (whites in their case, men in ours) to define our issues, methods and goals. Only we can and must define the terms of our struggle... it is incumbent on us, as women, to organize a movement for women’s liberation.<sup>21</sup>

This statement demonstrated quite explicitly that the move toward racial separation and black power within SNCC ranks had broader implications.

One major problem with Evans’s analysis of the Waveland paper written by Hayden and King emerges with the complaint made by Mary King that Evans simply misinterpreted the meaning of the “Women’s Position” paper. In her massive work entitled *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 1987), King states:

One damaging notion implanted in the literature, even by such pathfinding authors as history professor Sara M. Evans... was that in the years after 1965 the movement

became increasingly alienating for women. This was true for me, but *not* for the reasons given. As this story goes, women in the movement were relegated to typing, running mimeograph machines, preparing and serving coffee, washing dishes, and being available for sex. This is not correct and is not an explanation of Casey’s and my protests.<sup>22</sup>

Essentially King goes on to argue that the contentions she and Hayden were writing about had more to do with the “freedom high” versus the “hierarchical structuralist” debate that, according to both Evans and Carson, convulsed SNCC during the postfreedom summer era.<sup>23</sup> Hayden and King were advocates of the democratic, antihierarchical, and pro-decentralization “freedom high” sect. King states clearly that with centralized hierarchy, the problems she and Hayden wrote about in the women’s position paper would persist. Evans took King’s testimony and twisted it until it fit within the confines of her ideological critique of SNCC and the positive and negative stimulus it provided both feminism and the women’s liberation movement.

Carson’s work entitled *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* demonstrates the impact SNCC had on other organizations of the civil rights era. More specifically, he devotes an entire chapter to SNCC’s role as the model by which New Left groups found a sense of direction and purpose. As Sara Evans also points out, before 1965, SDS was primarily known as an enclave of radical white intellectuals that were initially both hierarchically structured and not involved in active protest. After the summer of 1964 when many northern whites returned home after the freedom summer voter registration drive in Mississippi, SDS and other New Left groups were invigorated by the new energy derived from students who gained invaluable experience working with SNCC.

On the most obvious level, Casey Hayden was married to Tom Hayden who was the chair of SDS in 1964. Also individuals such as Betty Garman, Jim Monsonis, Bob Zellner, and Maria Varela played significant roles in both SNCC and SDS. But direct influences, demonstrated by both Evans and Carson, appear in other forms. Carson notes that “[s]ome observers attributed SNCC’s radicalism to the presence of white leftist in the southern struggle; yet SNCC is more accurately seen as a source of insights and inspiration for the New Left.”<sup>24</sup>

The SNCC-derived notion of participatory democracy and the debate between freedom highs and structuralists

prefigured the anarchists factions of SDS.<sup>25</sup> Also, the launching of SDS's ERAP demonstrates to Carson that SDS was "attempting to apply many of SNCC's techniques developed in the deep South to the problems of the northern urban poor."<sup>26</sup> ERAP ushered in a new era of SDS and New Left activities that went far beyond the relatively passive intellectualism of their pre-1965 past. The open infatuation that SDS leaders showed for SNCC efforts are reflected in the "Port Huron Statement" of 1962, which, according to Carson, applauded the political emphasis of the southern student movement.<sup>27</sup>

The view that SNCC inspired SDS and the New Left in a variety of ways is mirrored in the works of Aldon Morris and Todd Gitlin. And although Carson notes that some "observers" have tended to attribute SNCC's radicalism to the influence of white leftists, these observers remain unnamed and no major historical monograph makes that argument. Hence the consensus is aptly summed up by Morris's comment that "the activist stage of the modern white student movement was generated by the 1960 sit-ins, because they provided these students with a protest model with both a tactical and an organizational blueprint."<sup>28</sup>

The Civil Rights movement was a product of both impersonal and personal forces. The Cold War provided the political backdrop, the failures of the Reconstruction era provided the enemy, while rural and urban southern churches produced the means to bring about momentous changes. Southern churches began the movement in Baton Rouge, and soon boycotts appeared throughout the Jim Crow South. Southern churches (in the guise of the SCLC), and more specifically Ella Baker, helped coalesce the student sit-in movement into an organization (SNCC) that fought for much more than hamburgers and Cokes. SNCC was to eventually fight for voter registration and rights, for black power, against the Vietnam War, and against imperialism. In turn, SNCC affected both the New Left and the women's liberation movement in significant ways, as mentioned earlier. In a very tangible sense, SNCC was also the bridge between Civil Rights and Black Power, especially beginning after 1965.

Looking back from the vantage of the events of November 4, 2008—with the historic election of President Barack Obama—it would be impossible to track a linear historical trajectory from Reconstruction to that date without using words like "miraculous," "surprising," or "extraordinary." In a very real sense African Americans stood at

the edge of Armageddon in the 1890s and bore witness to a conscious and concerted campaign to eliminate their rights and to rid the country of their presence. Their survival and, later, their ingenuity in facilitating a Civil Rights movement that overturned centuries of racist legislation, executive orders and actions, and judicial rulings were as monumental an undertaking as any other in human history. Combined, the Civil Rights and Black Power movements created a foundation (e.g., the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the creation of the Congressional Black Caucus) from which the election of President Barack Obama was even possible. Perhaps then, when viewed from this particular perspective, the first Reconstruction should be considered a success.

Walter C. Rucker

#### Notes

1. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), passim.

2. W. E. B. Du Bois, "A Negro Nation within a Nation," *Current History and Forum* 42 (June 1935):266–67.

3. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: New American Library, 1982; originally published in 1903), xi.

4. James Allen, Hilton Als, Leon Litwack, et al., *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe, NM: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000), 12.

5. C. Vann Woodward, "The 'New Reconstruction' in the South: Desegregation in Historical Perspective," *Commentary* 21 (June 1956): 503–7.

6. Jack Bloom, *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 30.

7. *Ibid.*, 214.

8. Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1990* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1991), 6.

9. Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1984), x.

10. *Ibid.*

11. This is in definite evidence in Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1958). Although the back-of-the-book blurb states that King "led the first successful large-scale application of non-violent resistance in America," King states on page 9 that the boycott is instead "the chronicle of 50,000 Negroes who took to heart the principles of nonviolence, who learned to fight for their rights. . . ." It should also be noted that the boycott began before King became involved, deriving much of its energy from grass roots leaders like Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, the Women's Political Council, E. D. Nixon and the tireless efforts of thousands of black maids and servants who walked miles to work for more than a year. See Robinson, Jo Ann Gibson, and David J. Garrow, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir*

of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987).

12. Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 17–26.

13. Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 187–211.

14. See Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

15. In terms of the continuity of struggle, August Meier and Elliot Rudwick make the argument that despite a long black protest tradition “the use of [nonviolent] direct-action tactics has been episodic and characterized by sharp discontinuities.” See Meier and Rudwick, “The Origins of Nonviolent Direct Action in Afro-American Protest: A Note on Historical Discontinuities,” in David Garrow, *We Shall Overcome: The Civil Rights Movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1989), 3: 908. It should be noted that nonviolent direct action did not start with King; this concept resonates in the moral suasionism of the mid-19th century championed by both Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, as well as the tactics espoused by A. Philip Randolph and the 1941 March on Washington Movement. Even if direct lines of continuity cannot be demonstrated, what is important is that the tactic of nonviolent direct action has a history that precedes King by at least a century.

16. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Random House, 1979).

17. Evans, *Personal Politics*, 76.

18. *Ibid.*, 233–34.

19. *Ibid.*, 87. Evans tries to explain this statement by assuming Carmichael was referring to the fact that many white women spent Freedom Summer on their backs. Despite efforts to recuperate Carmichael's image, the comment remains as a glaring example of insensitivity.

20. *Ibid.*, 200.

21. Mary King, *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Morrow, 1987), 459.

22. *Ibid.*, 460. In her words, King notes “[a]utonomous local movements as opposed to a centralized hierarchy would have supported diversity and variation.”

23. Carson, *In Struggle*, 175.

24. Evans, *Personal Politics*, 95.

25. Carson, *In Struggle*, 175.

26. *Ibid.*, 176.

27. Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 223.

28. Leon F. Litwack, “‘Fight the Power!’ The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement,” *Journal of Southern History* 75 (February 2009): 3–28.

the games altogether. For Germany, the games became an arena to trumpet Aryan supremacy while pacifying the anxieties of the world community. For many Black and Jewish athletes—including African Americans like Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalf—successful participation in the 1936 Olympics damaged Nazi racial ideology and helped to codify antifascist sentiment in America.

When the International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded Berlin the games in 1931, few anticipated Adolf Hitler becoming chancellor in 1933 and the subsequent rise of the Nazi party. IOC organizers respected German sports leaders and viewed the Berlin games as a way to reintroduce Germany to the world sports community. The IOC felt that German participation was necessary to revitalize the fledgling Olympic movement. World War I had already forced the cancellation of the 1916 Berlin games, and German teams were not invited to Antwerp in 1920 or Paris in 1924. Furthermore, worldwide economic depression severely limited participation in the 1932 games, as many European teams could not afford the trip to Los Angeles. In awarding Berlin the 1936 games, the IOC was anxious to create a strong Olympic field by centering the games in Europe and drawing participants from Germany.

On seizing power in 1933, Hitler was intent on building a “New Germany.” In public speeches and political pamphlets, the Nazis stressed the importance of Aryan racial purity and the superiority of the “Germanic race.” Hitler launched a widespread campaign of fear and intimidation aimed at Jews, blacks, political dissenters, homosexuals, Gypsies, and even the mentally and physically handicapped. Foreign journalists revealed to the entire world the rapid expansion of Nazi racial policies. In July 1933, a Nazi law sought to cleanse the Aryan gene pool by mandating the sterilization of individuals with certain physical and mental conditions such as epilepsy, blindness, or schizophrenia. In September 1935, the “Nuremberg Laws” prohibited sexual relations between Aryan Germans and those of “alien blood.” Germany's small black population also faced the brunt of Nazi white supremacy. Most blacks in Germany were the teenage descendents of French-African soldiers and German mothers, settled mainly in the Rhineland after World War I. Referred to as the “Rhineland bastards” in Nazi propaganda, these African Germans were also subject to forced sterilization.

Nazi propaganda stressed physical prowess and athletic achievement as hallmarks of Aryan supremacy. Hitler saw

## 1936 Summer Olympics, Berlin

The 1936 Olympics took place during a politically tense period in which growing disapproval over Nazi aggression and racism prompted many countries to consider boycotting

the Olympics as an international forum to showcase German athletic achievement and reinforce the racial ideology of social Darwinism. The Nazis, however, also recognized the need to pacify foreign nations and address the concerns of the world community surrounding Nazi atrocities. Hitler and Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels launched a campaign to deceive foreign journalists, athletes, and visitors by showing only the positive aspects of life in “New Germany.” Immediately before the games, the Nazis censored German newspapers and periodicals from publishing offensive, racial rhetoric. In addition, Hitler ordered that the streets be cleared of anti-Jewish posters and the city of Berlin thoroughly cleaned. While the new and massive Reich Sports Field remained draped with Nazi banners and symbols, police cleared 800 Gypsies from Berlin’s streets and imprisoned them outside the city for the duration of the festivities. The regime even removed anti-Jewish newspapers, such as *Der Stürmer*, from newsstands. For many foreign visitors to Berlin in 1936, the city’s façade of hospitality successfully shielded the world from the oppression and atrocity of Nazi rule.

Many officials in America, however, remained unconvinced that U.S. athletes should participate in the Berlin games. Spurred by the Nuremberg Laws and reports of Jewish oppression, the president of the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAU), Jeremiah Mahoney, called for a complete American boycott of the games. Some former Olympians supported such a move, as did a wide spectrum of American society including liberal Catholics, evangelical Protestants, trade union leaders, and a coalition of university presidents. Avery Brundage, head of the American Olympic Committee (AOC), became the leading voice of support for U.S. involvement and helped defeat the boycott movement. Many on the AOC board called for Congress and President Franklin D. Roosevelt to intervene on behalf of a boycott, but Roosevelt remained silent on the issue throughout the entire ordeal. The president even denied requests from the AOC to speak with U.S. athletes upon their departure and did not invite the team to the White House after its return.

Most African American newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Philadelphia Tribune*, supported participation in the games and trumpeted the opportunity for America’s black athletes. Sportswriters and editorials agreed that athletic achievement on such a high-profile stage would strike a powerful blow to Nazi racial ideology. Yet many reporters placed even more importance on the

opportunity to make significant statements about discrimination and civil rights at home in America. Throughout the 1930s, Jim Crow segregation barred African Americans from numerous jobs and public areas while the country wallowed in economic depression. Segregation remained entrenched on many playing fields as well. At the college and professional level, discrimination limited the opportunities for black participation in nearly every sport. Professional boxing was one of the few exceptions, and beginning in 1935, many African Americans had come to support black fighters like Joe Louis. Louis had even garnered national support from both white and black Americans when he fought a series of bouts against foreign fighters including the Italian Primo Carnera in 1935 and the German Max Schmeling in 1936 and 1938. Louis, however, had suffered a bitter defeat at the hands of Schmeling in June 1936, just months before the Berlin games in August. While Germany’s ministry of propaganda had lauded Schmeling’s victory as an affirmation of Aryan supremacy, many African Americans immediately turned their attention to a group of young, amateur Olympians whom they hoped could defeat Nazi ideology on its home turf.

A large number of African Americans contended for the 1936 team, most of them from northern universities. In all, 19 athletes—17 men and 2 women—eventually went to Berlin. Although this was the largest group of African American athletes ever to compete, they were not the first African Americans to make headlines in the Olympics. In Paris, University of Michigan track star William DeHart Hubbard became the first black athlete to win an individual gold medal in track and field, setting a world record in the long jump in 1924. Nevertheless, three times more African American athletes went to Berlin in 1936 than had participated in the 1932 Los Angeles games.

A total of 49 nations chose to attend the Berlin games, sending nearly 4,000 athletes to compete in 148 events. The Americans dominated the popular track and field competition, led by Ohio State track star Jesse Owens. Owens took home four gold medals, equaling the world record in the 100-meter sprint with a time of 10.3 seconds. Owens also broke the world record in the 200-meter run (20.7 seconds) and the running broad jump (26.4 feet). In addition, Owens ran the final segment for the U.S. team in the 4 × 100-meter relay, helping to set another world record (39.8 seconds). On hearing of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, Owens had publicly declared his intention to withdraw

from the competition. Some African American sportswriters supported a black boycott of the games and applauded the star athlete, but Owens's coach Larry Snyder eventually convinced the young star to compete.

Owens was the biggest American star in Berlin, yet many other black athletes contributed to the team's success. Marquette University sprinter Ralph Metcalf finished right behind Owens in the 100-meters, taking the silver medal. As an Olympic veteran, Metcalf took a role as team leader, urging his African American teammates to avoid political confrontations in Europe and make their statements instead on the field of play. Another black athlete, Matthew "Mack" Robinson of the University of Oregon, finished second to Owens in the 200-meters. Robinson's younger brother Jackie became the first African American major league baseball player in 1947. Cornelius Johnson of California and Ohio State graduate David Albritton finished first and second in the high jump competition; two other African Americans—University of California, Berkeley star Archie Williams and James LuValle from UCLA—took gold and bronze, respectively, in the 400-meter run. University of Pittsburgh freshman John Woodruff took gold in the 800-meter run, and Frederick "Fritz" Pollard, from the University of North Dakota, finished third in the 110-meter hurdles. In addition, African American fighter Jack Wilson won the silver medal in bantamweight boxing. Two African American women—Louise Stokes and Tidy Pickett—also competed for the U.S. track squad in Berlin.

The German public treated America's black athletes with approval, inviting African American athletes into their homes and cheering Owens every time he entered the Olympic stadium. The mainstream press in America reported widely on the developing friendship between Owens and the German Carl Ludwig Long, his competitor in the long jump. Germans routinely besieged Owens for his autograph outside the stadium and quickly made him the most popular athlete in the city.

Nazi leaders, however, reacted more tepidly, censoring the German press from demeaning the athletes' race yet criticizing America's "black auxiliaries" in private. Many American newspapers reported that Hitler refused to shake Owens's hand or speak to African American participants, yet the Führer had decided before the competition not to receive any athletes. Nevertheless, Hitler had appeared publicly with athletes throughout the smaller Winter Games, held also in Germany (Garmisch-Partenkirchen)

in February 1936. There Hitler frequently spent time with white athletes, such as Norwegian figure skater Sonja Henie, and many Americans viewed Hitler's policy during the Berlin games as a sign of his disdain toward America's black participants.

Many black commentators charged the American public with hypocrisy for echoing concerns over Nazi discrimination abroad while maintaining indifference toward African American struggles at home. Upon the athletes' return, the black press celebrated the success of Owens, Metcalf, and the other African American participants yet lamented the continued social and economic discrimination that existed in the United States. Unlike other Berlin athletes, Owens did not receive the endorsements or Hollywood contracts that many expected. Owens even struggled to make money in the wake of his success, performing as a nightclub entertainer and political campaigner, and participating in athletic exhibitions including races against horses. Some African American stars from Berlin joined heavyweight boxer Joe Louis and served in the armed forces during World War II, including Archie Williams and John Woodruff.

Although many Americans trumpeted the success of black athletes—specifically in track and field—as a blow to Nazi ideology and global fascism, the Berlin Olympics were nevertheless a success for Hitler. The German team dominated many events and captured the most medals of any nation. In addition, foreign journalists and athletes praised the city of Berlin and the reception they received from its citizens. In a calculated plan, Hitler and the ministry of propaganda had temporarily stopped its brutal harassment of Jews and foreign aliens and convinced many observers that a "New Germany" had emerged from the ruins of Versailles, once again ready to join the world stage. The success of African American athletes, however, complicated Nazi ideology and confronted many Americans with a choice between supporting racial discrimination at home and exhibiting antifascist patriotism abroad.

*See also:* Black Athletes; Owens, Jesse

Lane Demas

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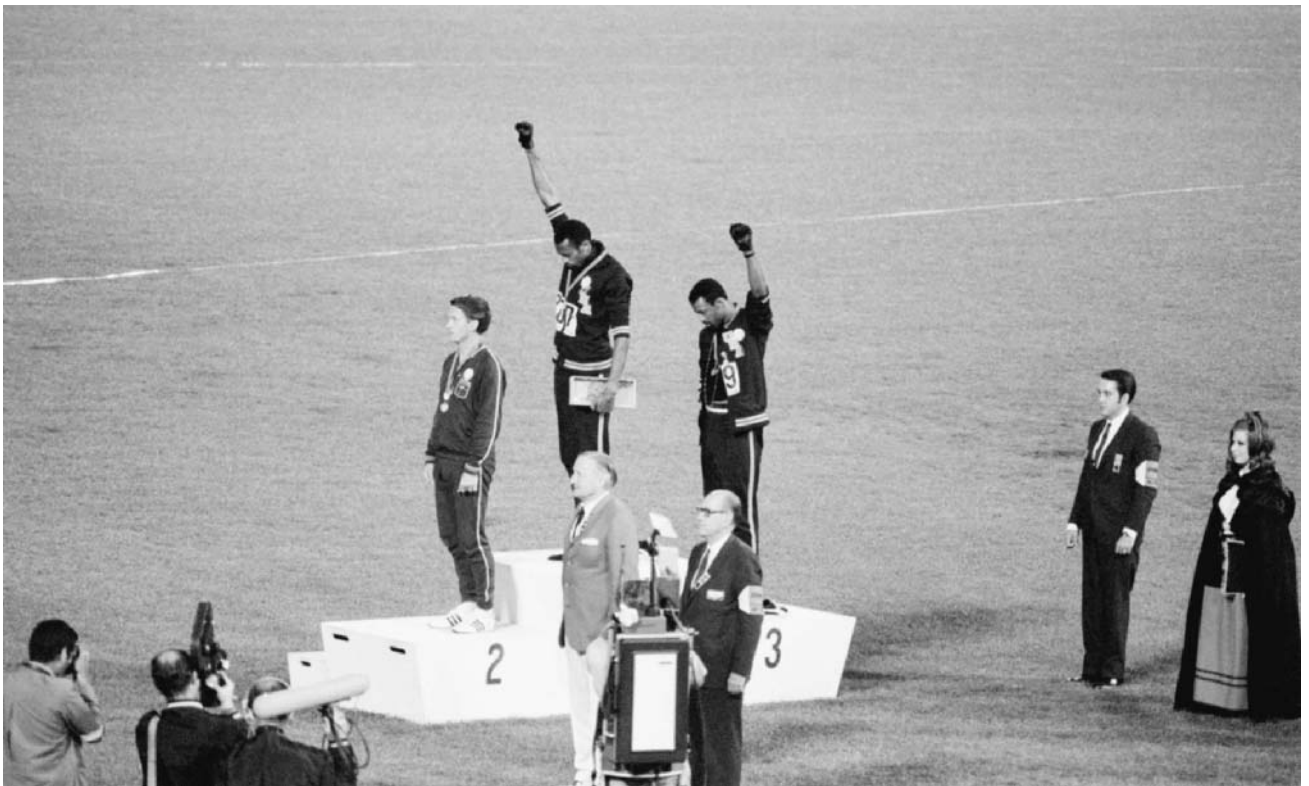
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## 1968 Summer Olympics, Mexico City

On the morning of October 16, 1968, the Black Power movement found expression at the XIX Olympiad in Mexico City. In the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the rise of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Tommie Smith and John Carlos of the U.S. track and field team provided a lasting, if controversial, image for the world stage after the 200-meter race. Teammates at San Jose State University, both men were initially influenced by calls for African American athletes

to boycott the 1968 Summer Olympics as a means of bringing attention and focus to the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the movement against South African apartheid. Organized by sociologist Harry Edwards, a professor at San Jose State, this initial call for a boycott led to the establishment of an organization called the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR). Although the call for a boycott was not successful, the OPHR did gain the support of several prominent athletes, intellectuals, and civil rights leaders, including Smith and Carlos.

Influenced by the goal of OPHR and the leadership of Dr. Harry Edwards, Smith and Carlos staged a silent protest to occur during the awards ceremony after the 200-meter race. Although the most discussed aspect of their protest were their black-gloved raised fists and bowed heads during the playing of the national anthem, the men were adorned with symbols of protest. Smith, who won the race in world-record time, wore a black scarf to represent African American pride. Carlos, who placed third, unzipped the top of his track suit to symbolize solidarity with blue collar workers in the United States and wore beads around his neck in protest of the violence of the Middle Passage,



At the Summer Olympic games in Mexico City, Mexico, in October 1968, runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos gave black power salutes during the medal ceremony to show their solidarity with radical black activists in the United States. (Bettmann/Corbis)



slavery, and Jim Crow-era lynchings and race riots. Both men received their medals shoeless, wearing only black socks, to symbolize African American poverty. In solidarity with Smith and Carlos, Australia's Peter Norman, who placed second in the race, wore an OPHR badge and even suggested that Carlos don Smith's left-handed black glove and wear it as a symbol of unity among African Americans. During the course of the protest, the crowd booed the two athletes, and this would only be the beginning of the backlash.

Avery Brundage, president of the International Olympic Committee, responded almost immediately to the protest. Brundage, who had served as the U.S. Olympic Committee president in 1936, raised no objections to the Nazi salutes and symbols, including swastikas, adorned by German athletes during the XI Olympiad, but he was openly appalled by the actions of Smith and Carlos. Because the Nazi salute was considered as the national salute of Germany at the time, it was not seen in the same light as the black power salutes of Smith and Carlos, which indeed were meant as protests against their sponsoring country. Noting that the Olympic Games were to be apolitical and generally devoid of overt political statements, Brundage ordered the two athletes suspended from the U.S. team and prohibited them from entering the Olympic Village. When the U.S. Olympic Committee initially balked, Brundage began maneuvering to ban the entire U.S. track team. With this threat and its implications, Smith and Carlos were formally expelled from the XIX Olympiad. Upon their return home, both men and their families received scores of death threats. Even Australian runner Peter Norman faced a backlash when he returned home after the Olympic Games. Australian Olympic authorities ostracized him and went as far as banning him from participating in the 1972 Summer Olympics despite the fact that he had officially qualified to participate.

The infamous black power salutes became one of the two most lasting images of the Olympic Games; the other, ironically, were the various depictions of Jesse Owens smashing the conceptualization of the superior Aryan athlete during the 1936 Summer Games. Both Smith and Carlos went on to brief stints in the National Football League and have coached track and field teams at various levels. Between 1997 and 2008, both men individually and together received a number of honors in recognition of their courage and commitment to social justice including the Courage of

Conscience Award from the Peace Abbey and the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage, and a statue in their honor has been erected on the campus of San Jose State University.

*See also:* Black Athletes; Black Power

Walter C. Rucker

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## A Negro Nation Within the Nation

When W. E. B. Du Bois wrote "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" in the June 1935 edition of *Current History and Forum*, he was expressing decades of frustration in his longstanding battle against white supremacy, racism, and imperialism. Lynching and other forms of racial violence, the systematic denial of education to black youth, disfranchisement, various economic distresses, and Jim Crow segregation defined the collective condition of African Americans nationwide and demonstrated to Du Bois that, despite the presence and activism of the NAACP, little had actually changed in America. He became extremely disillusioned with the NAACP and left the movement after taking public stands on some rather controversial issues. In 1934, Du Bois wrote a series of editorials in *The Crisis* that seemingly advocated segregation and racial separation. These ideas would coalesce more fully by June 1935. In "A Negro Nation Within the Nation," he called for racial separation, which would foster economic cooperation, organize self-defense initiatives against white repression, and build pride and self-confidence among African Americans.

Black economic development was something that Du Bois began to value after Booker T. Washington's death in 1915 and especially after he visited the Soviet Union in 1926. Although it is true that Du Bois officially joined the Socialist Party as early as 1911, his connection with the party was brief, and he would sever his ties within a year. His ambivalence regarding the Socialist Party was primarily due to his fears that they tended to be short-sighted on the issue of race in America. Du Bois did begin to understand the dangers of ignoring the economic side of black life and, through personal experiences, he began to become extremely critical of the talented tenth. Instead of leading the masses in the movement for liberation, the black educated elite and black intellectuals were more interested in distancing themselves from the masses and adopting the norms and values of white American society. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia and Du Bois's earlier interest in socialism played a role in this reorientation, but another factor was that Du Bois likely saw some value in Washington's emphasis on industry, vocational training, and economic development. Both Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad saw in Washington a man who had the tools, although not the inclination, for nation building, and both the UNIA and the Nation of Islam would serve as quite ironic legacies of Washington's approach.

This emphasis on economic dimensions led Du Bois down the path toward his resignation as the editor of *Crisis* in June 1934. He began to advocate, once again, the need for independence from the white community and reliance on black institutions and organizations. In a series of *Crisis* editorials in 1934, Du Bois made plain his notion of self-segregation. In the April 1934 edition, he wrote that blacks should organize their collective economic and political strength in order to run and support black institutions. After he left the editorial office of the *Crisis*, Du Bois gave a number of speeches that advocated self-segregation. These efforts culminated in the publication of "A Negro Nation Within the Nation" in June 1935. It would be the most sustained treatment on the issue offered by Du Bois to date. He begins the article with a discussion of the social, economic, and political problems facing blacks in the Depression-era South and North. According to Du Bois, the inability to garner a sound economic footing was the principal weakness of black communities in the decades after emancipation and Reconstruction. The failure of Radical Reconstruction was ultimately the failure

to provide freed people with land on which they could base an independent existence in America. This was the revisionist argument that would serve as the basis for his 1935 work *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880*. In essence, Du Bois argued in this work the same thing Thaddeus Stevens predicted 70 years earlier—that without land, the newly freed African American masses might as well remain slaves. Sharecropping, debt peonage, tenant farming, and other forms of labor use in the postbellum South relegated African Americans to subordinate and dependent status. The acquisition of land would effectively and permanently break the chains of bondage and would allow for advances in other arenas, namely black suffrage rights.

In later years Du Bois would claim that the key success of the Bolshevik revolution was the massive land reform effort that fundamentally changed the face of Soviet Russia. The failure to redistribute land in the American South in the wake of the Civil War forced blacks into dependent economic relationships with their former masters. By emphasizing vocational and industrial education, Booker T. Washington hoped to break this cycle of dependency. The main flaw Du Bois saw in Washington's program was that it sought to build a new economic foundation for black southerners by incorporating them into white industry. Washington did not heed the various "glass ceilings" that inhibited the growth and advancement of black men in certain trades and that would relegate the mass of black people into a permanent underclass.

Because he saw few available allies and no forthcoming changes in American society, Du Bois concludes this article by stating that the only plausible solution was voluntary racial separation. This call for "self-segregation" closely mirrors the idea of community-control black nationalism espoused by black power advocates in the 1960s and 1970s. Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Huey P. Newton would have found a great deal of resonance with Du Bois's suggestion of a set of cooperative relationships within black communities and the need for self-defense.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; Du Bois, W. E. B.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Self-Segregation

Walter C. Rucker

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## Abernathy, Ralph David

Ralph David Abernathy (1926–1990) was a leading civil rights activist. He was born on March 21, 1926 in Lindon, Alabama. After serving in the Army in World War II, he became an ordained Baptist minister in 1948. He graduated from Alabama State University in 1950, receiving a BA degree in mathematics. The next year he graduated from Atlanta University with an MA degree in sociology. He married Juanita Jones and they had five children.

In 1951, he became the minister of the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 5, 1955, Rosa Parks violated a Montgomery city law when she refused to give up her seat on a municipal bus to a white man. She was promptly arrested. The black community sought to protest her arrest, and they turned to Abernathy for assistance. He met with another local minister, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and they formed the Montgomery Improvement Association to organize a boycott of the city’s buses. The boycott lasted for 381 days and resulted in the desegregation of the municipal bus system. This protest is generally considered to have sparked the modern Civil Rights movement.

Abernathy helped to organize a meeting of civil rights groups in Atlanta, Georgia in January 1957. During the meeting, Abernathy’s home and church in Montgomery were bombed. Groups from 10 states attended the meeting, which culminated in the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Dr. King was elected president of the organization, and Abernathy was elected secretary-treasurer.

Abernathy, working on behalf of SCLC, assisted in organizing 21 meetings in prominent southern cities as part of the “Crusade for Citizenship” in 1958. The goal of the meetings was to vastly increase the number of black voters throughout the South. In 1960, both Abernathy and

Dr. King moved their families to Atlanta, Georgia. The two men worked closely together for the remainder of Dr. King’s career. Abernathy participated in the “Freedom Rides” of 1961, in which civil rights activists challenged segregation on buses and in public accommodations throughout the South. That same year he was elected vice-president of SCLC.

In 1963, Abernathy, along with Dr. King, organized a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, which many considered to be the most segregated city in America. Both men were arrested for holding a demonstration without a permit and served eight days in jail. Later in 1963, Abernathy helped organize the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,” which brought an estimated 100,000 demonstrators to the nation’s capital to protest racial discrimination. Abernathy also helped coordinate the “Freedom Summer” of 1964, in which numerous civil rights groups went to Mississippi to increase the number of black registered voters.

In 1965, Abernathy helped organize a large civil rights protest in Selma, Alabama. The protest turned violent when numerous activists were beaten and one was killed. This prompted Abernathy to lobby for passage of the Voting Rights Act to ensure that blacks had equal access to voting polls in the South. Later that year, Congress did pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. After Dr. King’s assassination in 1968, Ralph Abernathy was elected president of SCLC. In the late 1960s, he led several strikes on behalf of black workers. He resigned in 1977 and returned to Atlanta to serve as a church minister. He died on April 17, 1990. *See also:* Albany, Georgia Movement; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Gene C. Gerard

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## Abu Jamal, Mumia

Mumia Abu Jamal (1954–) was convicted and sentenced to death in 1981 for the murder of a police officer named Daniel Faulkner. He is currently serving his sentence at the

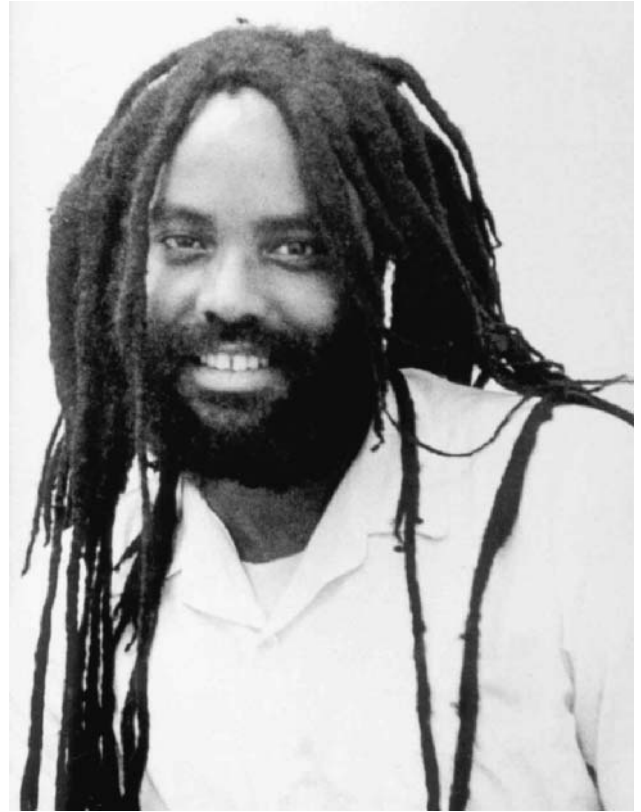
State Correctional Institution Greene near Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. His case has received much national and international attention. Abu Jamal's supporters claim that he is not guilty of murder and that his trial had a number of irregularities.

Abu Jamal was born Wesley Cook in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 24, 1954. In 1968, he started his career at the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party as an assistant spokesman. He dropped out of Benjamin Franklin High School and joined the Panther Party in 1969. He lived and worked with his colleagues in New York City and Oakland. In October 1970, he quit the Black Panther Party and returned to his old high school, but he was suspended for calling for "black revolutionary student power." He studied briefly at Goddard College in Vermont. Between 1975 and 1980, he had been working for several radio stations, pursuing his vocation as a journalist. He became renowned for giving exposure to the anarchist MOVE commune in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood. In 1981, he was the president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. At the time of the killing of Daniel Faulkner, he had quit his job at the WUHY public radio station and started working as a taxicab driver in Philadelphia.

On December 9, 1981, officer Daniel Faulkner of the Philadelphia Police Department was shot during a routine traffic stop. The car belonged to Abu Jamal's younger brother, William Cook. In the altercation Faulkner shot Abu Jamal, who collapsed on the side walk. He was taken to Thomas Jefferson University Hospital where his injuries were treated. Abu Jamal was later charged with the first-degree murder of Officer Faulkner.

Three independent eye-witnesses testified that Abu Jamal appeared right at the moment when Faulkner and his brother started to bicker, and he shot the police officer in the back. Before collapsing, Faulkner shot back once and hit Abu Jamal. Despite being injured, Abu Jamal moved over to Faulkner and shot five bullets into his head. The cartridges of the .38 caliber revolver belonging to Abu Jamal were found at the crime scene. The shell castings and the rifling characteristics of his Charter Arms revolver were consistent with the bullet fragments taken from Faulkner's body.

During the turbulent trial, Abu Jamal was evicted from the court room several times. He insisted in proceeding *pro se* and requested defense assistance from John Africa



*Mumia Abu Jamal, convicted in 1981 of killing a Philadelphia police officer, is the center of an international movement against the death penalty in the United States. (AP Photo/Jennifer E. Beach)*

of the MOVE organization, but his demands were refused by Judge Albert Sabo, an active member of the Fraternal Order of the Police who, according to the court stenographer in a 2001 interview, had stated that he would help the defense "fry the nigger." On July 3, 1982, the jury delivered a guilty verdict and Abu Jamal was subsequently sentenced to death. During the sentencing phase of the trial, several of Abu Jamal's writings as a member of the Black Panther Party were used to demonstrate his disdain for law enforcement officials.

William Cook did not make any statement at all until 2001, when he claimed that he had not seen who shot the police officer. In May of the same year, Abu Jamal provided a sworn statement, telling for the first time his version of events. He claims that he was sitting in a taxicab across the street when he heard his brother shouting. While running to him, Abu Jamal was shot by a police officer. He does not mention either the gun that was found at the crime scene, nor the gun shoulder holster he was wearing at the time he was arrested.

On December 18, 2001, Judge William H. Yohn Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania voided Abu Jamal's death sentence as a result of irregularities in the process of sentencing, but he still upheld the conviction. Both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, who wanted the original sentence to be upheld, and Abu Jamal, who wanted the conviction overturned, appealed. On May 17, 2007, the case was argued in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia before a three-judge panel. They affirmed the decision of the District Court on March 27, 2008.

During his imprisonment, Abu Jamal continued his political work. In 1999, he contributed comments for Pacifica Radio Network's "Democracy Now!" He has a weekly column in the German language Marxist daily newspaper *Junge Welt* in which he shares his anti-imperialistic interpretations of world affairs. Besides his journalistic works, Abu Jamal published several books and pamphlets. In *All Things Censored* he examines issues of crime and punishment. *Life from Death Row* describes life in prison. It also includes several commentaries on crime and punishment that should have been broadcast by National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" in May 1994, but were cancelled owing to several complaints. *I Write to Live* is a collection of essays and reflections on social life and individuality. *Death Blossoms: Reflections from a Prisoner of Conscience* deals with religious topics, and *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* has a strong autobiographical background.

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International U.S.A., and activist groups criticized his trial for being unfair and not meeting minimum international standards safeguarding the fairness of legal proceedings. Several artists, such as Rage against the Machine, Anti-Flag, or Immortal Technique dedicated songs to Abu Jamal's cause. In April 1999, mass protests were staged in several cities across the United States and the world in opposition to the death penalty and in support of a new trial for Abu Jamal. Since then, Abu Jamal has become an honorary citizen of 25 cities around the world, including Paris, Montreal, and Palermo. In the Parisian suburb St. Denis, a newly paved street was named after him on April 29, 2006. The *rue Mumia Abu-Jamal* commemorates the 25th anniversary of the abolition of the death penalty in France. In December of the same year, 25 years after the murder, the executive committee of the Republican Party of the 59th Ward of the City of Philadelphia

filed two criminal complaints against the City of Paris and the City of St. Denis for glorifying Abu Jamal.

*See also:* Black Power; COINTELPRO

Carmen De Michele

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## Accommodationism

Accommodationism is a strategy first outlined by formerly enslaved educator and leader Booker Taliaferro Washington in his famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech delivered at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia on September 18, 1895. In exchange for the white promise to trust blacks with some responsibilities that would lead to a solution of the problems surrounding race relations and the poor social and economic conditions blacks endured in the South, Washington pledged that blacks would strive toward an education that would dignify and glorify common labor, begin to reconcile with and forgive the South, and discourage agitation for equal rights and an integrated society.

Born a slave in Virginia in the spring of 1865, Washington attended Hampton Institute, a school founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong in Virginia. Here young Washington began to perceive success for blacks in America in the shape of cooperation and hard work. Initially well received and widely discussed in newspapers around the country, the philosophical tenet of accommodationism was soon understood by many blacks as the sacrifice of equality for economic progress and acceptance. Quintessentially surrendering the promise of an integrated society, Washington held that social segregation was fine as long as blacks and whites in the South could come together for things essential for mutual progress.

To carry out the compromise, Washington issued several guarantees. First, accommodationism advocated the cooperation and coexistence of the races in a segregated

society through “industrial education” of African American youth. Washington had already begun this element of the accommodationist strategy when he became headmaster of a school in Tennessee called the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in 1881. As a reaction to the southern antipathy to the education of black children and young adults, Washington developed this program, which led whites to believe that his school was meant to keep blacks in subordinate roles such as cooks, printers, bricklayers, housekeepers, mechanics, carpenters, and factory workers. But in fact, Tuskegee students not only learned to read and write, but many also went on to enroll in universities such as Fisk or Atlanta University, and others became teachers themselves. On the other hand, many feared that the accommodationist philosophy would cause the development of a dual standard of education—one for whites leading to advanced studies and curricula, and one for blacks that trained students to work and contribute to society with little hope of upward mobility or advancement.

In addition to the upkeep and contributions of the students enrolled at Tuskegee, Washington was able to operate the school with unprecedented financial success as a result of the second guarantee he professed in his Atlanta speech. By promising to leave the past behind and move forward, Washington was able to attain the financing to operate the school from the pockets of wealthy whites in the Northeast and Southerners attempting to resurrect the impoverished economic and political landscape in the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Regrettably, most of these “philanthropists” had less than benevolent motives. They understood how the structure and programming of an industrial education could directly benefit them by keeping blacks “in their place,” not to mention providing a competent labor force for their factories and farms.

The third guarantee the accommodationist philosophy gave whites was the discouragement of protest and agitation for civil rights, including abandoning politics and cooperating with segregation. Washington saw that open protest of Jim Crow laws only further antagonized white Southerners and would exacerbate the condition of blacks living in the South, whether rural or urban.

Ultimately, many blacks saw the compromises of accommodationism as a way of keeping them in a subordinate role in the postemancipation society. In addition, accommodationist thought and action were the ultimate exchange of respect for political power, civil rights, and educational

opportunities beyond the industrial type, for all blacks. In fact, the deepest criticisms of Washington’s philosophy of accommodationism came from his contemporaries. Perhaps his most significant opponent was scholar and activist W. E. B. Du Bois. According to Du Bois, an advocate of higher education and the assertion of rights and privileges through protest, implementing the guarantees of accommodationism led to total revocation of voting rights for blacks, reinforcement of Jim Crow laws, and removal of support and funding for black institutions of higher education.

Southern whites interpreted accommodationist thought in one of two ways. According to Du Bois, some who were more extreme saw it as a surrender of civil and political rights for blacks. Others that were more conventional saw it as a charitable means for mutual acceptance of a racially divided society.

In the end, Washington’s accommodationist philosophy failed to improve race relations in the South and a part of the time period in which it was implemented has been termed the “nadir” or low point in African American history. Still, Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of accommodationism and the “Atlanta Compromise” speech still have relevance and remain important to the historical making of America.

*See also:* Black Nadir; Cotton States Exposition; Jim Crow; Washington, Booker T.

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## Affirmative Action

Affirmative action, one of the most contentious outcomes-oriented civil rights policies of the 20th century, first entered the public lexicon on March 6, 1961, when President John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925. Facing mounting pressures from civil rights activists, Kennedy called on

employers to engage in “affirmative action” to address the race issue in America. The policy began with the stroke of the presidential pen. Kennedy’s vision focused on the need for the federal government to foster and promote fairness and equal opportunity in federal employment practices. Given the expansiveness of government involvement with private employers, the initial efforts focused on businesses that received federal support through lucrative governmental contracts.

On September 26, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson strengthened affirmative action policy when he reaffirmed the government’s position in Executive Order 11246. The order prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, and national origin, but not sex. At that time, women were not identified as an underrepresented group in need of legislative protection. In 1973, President Richard Nixon amended Executive Order 11246 with 11375 in order to include sex as a protected class. This concluded the presidential initiatives that launched affirmative action policy. Over the next several decades, affirmative action’s evolutionary process was marked by the passage of various legislative and regulatory acts, laws, executive orders, and Supreme Court decisions. Its early supporters argued that the concept of equal opportunity for all of America’s citizens was grounded by legal mandates of the Constitution, the Fourteenth Amendment, and civil rights acts; and, if aggressively applied, affirmative action could become an important aspect of the nation’s civil rights initiative.

In the 1960s, affirmative action was endorsed by many who lauded the government’s efforts to increase minority participation in the workforce. Access to blue-collar positions was the primary target of the federal government’s enforcement efforts. As businesses and unions began organized forms of resistance, they were rebuffed by liberal politicians and scholars who believed that strong governmental enforcement was an essential component of the policy. As the federal initiative expanded to include hiring and admission practices at institutions of higher education, however, strong public opposition to the policy emerged.

Proponents argued that affirmative action was a morally justified approach to redress the nation’s historic practices of racial and sexual discrimination. Opponents advanced the concept of “reverse discrimination,” contending that whites, and more specifically white males, were being victimized by college and university efforts to include members of diverse groups on their campuses. Although many

opposing voices acknowledged the devastating impact of past discrimination on African Americans and similarly situated groups, they posited that a “color blind” approach was the only legitimate way to end centuries of social discrimination and social injustice.

Supporters on both sides eagerly waited the 1978 Supreme Court decision in *Regents of California v. Bakke*. Alan Bakke, a 36-year-old, white male engineer, had been denied admission to the University of California’s Medical School at Davis. He sued on the basis that the institution’s affirmative action program, which used a quota system to guarantee minority inclusion, violated his constitutional rights as an individual. In a split decision, the Supreme Court affirmed that quota systems were a violation of constitutional law; however, the Court also affirmed its support for affirmative action, ruling that race could be used as a factor in the admission and selection process. Thus, the national debate on which criteria would be acceptable under the government’s affirmative action policy began. And repeated legal challenges to affirmative action in both the public and private sectors made it difficult for institutions committed to diversity to continue their efforts.

As popularity for affirmative action waned, many looked to the Office of the President to help clarify the nation’s direction. The Carter Administration (1976–1980) was supportive of affirmative action policy. By the early 1980s, however, the Reagan Administration’s (1980–1988) open opposition to civil rights and race-sensitive solutions to the nation’s social problems helped to usher in a new era of social resistance. The Bush Administration’s (1988–1992) lack of enthusiasm for affirmative action was consistent with that of his predecessor. The Clinton Administration (1992–2000) offered hope that affirmative action initiatives would be strengthened, particularly as it related to the appointment of federal justices who shouldered primary responsibility for interpreting the nation’s policy. Early in his administration, George W. Bush (2000–2008) indicated his opposition to affirmative action as policy, and decision makers continued to muddle through the legal morass. The legal challenge to the University of Michigan’s affirmative action program, which finally made its way to the Supreme Court in 2003, was the most anticipated affirmative action ruling in the 21st century. It was the first opportunity for the Supreme Court to rule on affirmative action policy in nearly 25 years.

In two closely related cases (*Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*), conservative activists sued the University

of Michigan hoping to strike down the school's race-sensitive admission programs at both the undergraduate college and the law school. Support for Michigan's affirmative action program was broad based. Colleges, universities, Fortune 500 companies, and retired military personnel from throughout the nation filed amici briefs (friends of the court) supporting the university. In another split decision (5–4), the Supreme Court affirmed the Bakke ruling, noting that talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity should be given opportunities. Race could be considered. In a related decision, however, the Court invalidated the school's undergraduate policy that used a point system to help diversify its student body, further weakening the institution's diversity efforts.

The debate on the merits of affirmative action continues. For many in the African American community, affirmative action is the unfinished business of the Black Power movement, the Civil Rights movement, Reconstruction, and the Freedmen's Bureau. It is a quest for redistributive justice and will remain a strategic path to equal opportunity until another viable policy option takes its place.

See also: Fourteenth Amendment; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald

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## African Blood Brotherhood

African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) was a semi-clandestine, militant liberation organization that merged black nationalism with Marxism. Taking its name from the blood brotherhood ceremony of black African tribes, the organization was established after the race riots during the Red Summer of 1919 by Cyril Briggs, a West Indian immigrant of mixed

parentage. ABB represented the first independent Communist organization composed solely of people of African descent. It was a defiant response to the perceived shortcomings of numerous contemporary liberation movements. Briggs disavowed the reformist policies of the NAACP. He believed Du Bois's organization had been compromised by white liberalism. He rejected the capitalist orientation of Garvey's UNIA. He was even critical of the Socialist Party's failure to establish an African American policy.

ABB sought to unite radicals around the themes of anticapitalism, anticolonialism, race patriotism, armed defense against racist assaults, and the establishment of an independent black socialist commonwealth. In 1920, Briggs formalized the aims of the ABB with a nine point program: (1) a liberated race; (2) absolute race equality—political, economic, social; (3) the fostering of racial self-respect; (4) organized and uncompromising opposition to the Ku Klux Klan; (5) a united Negro front; (6) industrial development; (7) higher wages for Negro labor, shorter hours, and better living conditions; (8) education; and (9) cooperation with the other darker peoples and with the class-conscious white workers.

The primary propaganda apparatus of the ABB was *The Crusader*, a newspaper Briggs launched in 1918 after he resigned from *The New Amsterdam News* in protest against attempts to censor his editorials that criticized the imperialist foreign policy of the Wilson administration. The readership of *The Crusader* reached nearly 36,000, but the membership of the ABB peaked at less than 3,000. Most of the organization's activities were centered in Harlem. Briggs suggested that although some regional posts were established throughout the country, ABB made few inroads west of the Rockies: "The Brotherhood was more a regional than a truly national organization" (Briggs). ABB gained notoriety outside of Harlem in 1921, when its Tulsa post was linked to the armed resistance of local blacks during the race riots of that summer. Although the ABB's direct role in the riots was later proved to be tenuous, the events in Tulsa resulted in a substantial increase in national support. This, along with Briggs's participation in the Workers Party of America convention in December 1921, signified ABB's transition from an underground to an aboveground organization.

ABB began as an independent organization. It was not originally an adjunct of the Communist Party. Briggs's interest in communism was inspired by the national policy



of the Bolsheviks and the anti-imperial orientation of the postrevolution Soviet state. Yet initially, he claimed he was more interested in national liberation revolution than in the social revolution. When Briggs joined the Communist Party in 1921 (as the organization's third black member), however, ABB began to shift away from its staunch black nationalism to embrace class-conscious interracial solidarity. ABB formally dissolved in 1924, when many of its members joined the Communist Party's American Negro Labor Congress. Nevertheless, Briggs's amalgamation of black liberation and revolutionary socialism continued to influence black activists for decades. The ABB's brand of radical black Marxist political thought later manifested itself in black liberation organizations of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Harlem Renaissance

*Rob Walsh*

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## African Imperialism

The end of the 19th century heralded the new imperialist scramble for European dominance of Africa, which resulted in the gross economic exploitation of the continent. The stagnant European economy encouraged entrepreneurs and adventures to seek new markets to further Western industrialization and profits. As a result, Europe added almost one-fifth of the land area of the globe to its overseas colonial possessions. European nationalism and racism resulted in numerous atrocities and ethnocentricities on the part of the colonists, such as forced slave labor, mutilations of the native population, and the notion that Africans were uncivilized.

Imperialism was a longstanding practice in Africa, dating from ancient times. In North Africa, Phoenician

colonists founded Carthage in modern Tunisia. The city became a Mediterranean power by the fourth century BCE. After the Third Punic War, Carthage fell to the Romans, who made it the capital of their African province. The Vandals established a North African kingdom in the fifth century before its conquest by the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire. The Egyptian empire fell to the Greeks, later passing to the Romans. During the seventh century, Arab invaders conquered North Africa, spreading the Islamic religion and Arabic language. Arab trade with sub-Saharan Africa led to the colonization of East Africa, particularly around Zanzibar.

Early European expeditions established trade bases along the African coastline and colonized previously uninhabited islands such as Cape Verde and Sao Tome. Trade bases later served as the nucleus for slave trading operations. The interior of the continent, however, remained free from European penetration until the 19th century.

Africa became increasingly open to Western exploration during the 19th century. By mid-century, Europeans had mapped most of northwestern Africa. By the end of the century, explorers had charted the source of the Nile and the courses of the Niger, Congo, and Zambezi Rivers. The findings of such expeditions made Europeans aware of Africa's economic potential and vast amount of raw materials necessary for industrialization unavailable in Europe.

From 1876 to 1914, European powers, including Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, and Italy, scrambled for control of the African continent with the self-proclaimed goals of spreading civilization, Christianity, and commerce to the "uncivilized" indigenous population. Technological advances in Europe facilitated the new imperialistic onslaught. Industrialization brought advances in transportation and communication in the form of railroads, telegraphs, and steam navigation. Medical advancements allowed Europeans to effectively combat tropical diseases, enabling penetration of the African interior.

Europeans targeted sub-Saharan Africa for several reasons. European governments had not entered into any formal agreements or treaties with the governments of sub-Saharan Africa, which could be argued as giving legal recognition to a particular African government. Absent a legal position acceptable to Europeans, Western nations considered the area available for occupation. In their minds, sub-Saharan Africa was undeveloped and required more capital for industrialization than it could provide by

itself. Economic stagnation and protective tariffs in Europe prompted those countries to seek an open market that would garner a trade surplus. Overseas investment became popular as a means of obtaining profit owing to the availability of cheap labor, limited competition, and an abundance of raw materials.

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the acquisition of the Congo by King Leopold II of Belgium were the first major initiatives to launch the European scramble for African territory. From November 1884 to February 1885, the Berlin Conference, initiated by Otto von Bismarck, chancellor of Germany, met to discuss the Africa problem. The conference was concerned with formulating understandings on the freedom of commerce in the Congo basin, the application to the Congo and Niger Rivers of the principles adopted by the Congress of Vienna concerning the preservation of freedom of navigation on international rivers, and the establishment of effective procedures for the occupation of new territory along the coasts of Africa.

Britain was concerned with controlling the African interior to dominate the flow of overseas trade. Securing the Suez Canal in Egypt was essential for security for lucrative British markets. In the 1890s and early 1900s, Britain seized Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda. It used Cape Colony in southern Africa as a base for the subjugation of adjacent African states and the Dutch Afrikaner settlers. Britain desired to construct a railway connecting its southern base at Cape Colony to Cairo. The French penetrated the African interior from its colonies in West Africa eastward in an attempt to establish a link between the Niger and Nile Rivers, and thereby control trade. Increased pressure from investors led colonizers to inflict forced labor conditions on the indigenous population to lower costs of production and increase profits. European manufacturing plants extracted raw materials, developed by an indigenous labor force under European management.

European capitalism revolutionized the economies of Africa, inducing radical social and political changes that forever altered African societies. European efforts to maximize production and minimize costs conflicted with traditional, seasonal patterns of agricultural production, shifting African subsistence-based economies to ones of specialization and surplus accumulation.

The period of European imperialism heightened tensions between the European powers, ultimately paving the

way to World War I. Some Europeans perceived the dangers that imperialism posed to Europe and questioned the morality of colonialism.

John Hobson, a British reformer, studied economics in an attempt to solve the problem of poverty.

*See also:* Berlin Conference, 1884–85; Fanon, Frantz; Pan-Africanism

*Eric Martone*

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## African National Congress

Since the establishment of majority rule in May 1994, the African National Congress (ANC), which won 63 percent of the vote, has been South Africa's ruling party. Founded in 1912 by John Dube, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, and Sol Plaatje, along with African chiefs, the body answered a call by Seme to unite. Seme believed that Africans were essentially one people. Formed at a time when the South African economy blossomed because of the discovery of diamonds and gold, respectfully, in 1867 and 1886, the ANC faced problems concerning the prohibition on Africans from buying land except in the reserves, places marked expressly for African occupation. Citizenship, the economy, and the franchise also emerged as other key issues that the ANC lobbied for change. Dube also used his newspaper, *Ilanga laseNatal*, as a forum to discuss and debate the aforementioned concerns in isiZulu. Not until 1944, when many people migrated to the cities, and squatter and bus boycotts abounded, did Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and others create the ANC Youth

League (ANCYL) and advocated for mass mobilization, did the ANC begin to change its strategies for confronting racial and economic discrimination. With the belief that Africans would be liberated by their concerted efforts, the ANCYL militarized the parent body, causing it to reform by the 1950s.

In the 1950s, the mass movement took off. Initiated by the 1952 Defiance Campaign, when participants publicly burned their passes, the ANC, under the leadership of Dr. James F. Moroka, united disparate political groups as result of its endorsement and involvement. Closer relations developed with the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO), and the Congress of Democrats (COD). This merging of political bodies led to the formation of the Congress Alliance, an umbrella organization organizing different political bodies into one unit. Besides unification, the Congress Alliance advocated for better housing, equal pay, better working conditions, and equity in education. The Freedom Charter, a document detailing these demands, was presented at a meeting held in Kliptown in Soweto on June 26, 1955. As an adoption by the four aforementioned political parties, the Freedom Charter documented the political parties' commitment to nonracialism. The document proclaims that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people. The Freedom Charter sought to end oppression orchestrated by either blacks or whites. The document also calls for a government, equality for all national groups, equal distribution of the country's wealth, land equity, equality before the law, the right to human decency, houses for all, end to adult illiteracy, and a government that represents the people.

In calling for democracy, human rights, land reform, nationalization, and labor rights, the Freedom Charter was a radical document for its time. This blueprint for a democratic South Africa aroused suspicion by the government. Officials labeled the Freedom Charter as Communist inspired, resulting in the arrests of ANC and Congress leaders. Arrested leaders faced legal ramifications in the Treason Trial, where 156 people (105 blacks, 21 Indians, 23 whites and 7 coloreds) were indicted, because the state believed that they planned to overthrow the government. The state also concluded that the accused had adopted a policy of violent direct action. They all faced the

death penalty. A legal counsel consisting of Bram Fischer, Vernon Berrange, Sydney Kentridge, and Israel Maisels represented the accused, who were supported by a Treason Trial Fund. Two stages delineated the trial. The first was the preparatory examination in a magistrate's court, which determined the sufficiency of evidence to support a trial. If evidence existed then the accused faced trial by the Supreme Court and would be at the state's mercy. It took more than a year for the preparatory examination to conclude; at the end, 61 of the accused were acquitted and the remaining 95, which included people such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Ahmed Kathrada, still faced trial.

In 1961, all the defendants were found not guilty. Oliver Tambo, who left the country during the trial, faced exile. Other trialists would eventually be arrested at a Rivonia farmhouse and later convicted. Some, like Nelson Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment or a specified time period on Robben Island, an Alcatraz-like prison in Cape Town. While the Treason Trial occurred, protests around the country erupted even in the rural areas, and the government forced women to carry passes, resulting in women forming a march in Pretoria where they stormed the Parliament steps and demanded justice. Little did any one know at the time, but the 1960s would usher in a new period of resistance and successful government repression of opposition for 16 years until the 1976 student uprising against the imposition of Afrikaans.

Clamping down against opposition groups began after the Sharpeville Massacre. Organized by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), a splinter ANC group, which opposed nonracialism and called for an "Africa for Africans," the Sharpeville protest originally began as a demonstration against the pass books. Bedlam would soon ensue. Police officials shot running participants in the back and killed 69 people and injured 186. Newspapers captured the carnage. Bodies lay strewn in the positions that they fell. After this violence, government officials banned political organizations. The PAC and the ANC could no longer operate as legal political bodies. A state of emergency also followed, as well as the arrests of Congress and PAC activists. Neither political body lay idle. Both the ANC and the PAC created military wings and engaged in an underground movement. The ANC created Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) and the PAC established POQO, which means alone in Xhosa. Formed on December 16, 1961, Umkhonto we



Supporters of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), wearing the colors of their party on their sleeves, gather on August 12, 1952, in Johannesburg as part of a civil disobedience campaign to protest the apartheid regime of racial segregation. The protesters were later arrested. (AFP/Getty Images)

Sizwe launched attacks against government installations. This tactic raised the government's ire. While operating from its base at Rivonia, a Johannesburg suburb, Umkhonto weSizwe was labeled a terrorist organization by both the government and the media.

See also: Antiapartheid Movement; Mandela, Nelson, Pan-Africanism

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## Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is an intellectual concept and theoretical approach that argues for an understanding and study of world phenomenon from the perspective of people of Africa and the African Diaspora. The approach situates black people as subjects and agents of history, as opposed to objects or props in other people's history.

Although the term was used by Du Bois in the 1960s and by black intellectuals in the 1970s, Molefi Asante, professor of African American Studies at Temple University, is widely credited for coining the term. Asante's book *Afrocentricity: A Theory of Social Change* (1980) represents the first full-fledged attempt to clearly define the term and explore its implications for the study of African people. In the book, Asante outlined a tradition of black intellectuals and

activists that he built on in order to construct the idea; the list included Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and Maulana Karenga. Along with these figures, Afrocentricity also built on the intellectual work of the Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop and the black arts movement theorists and historians of Africa such as George James, John Henrik Clarke, Yosef Ben Jochannan, Ivan Van Sertima, and Chancellor Williams.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, afrocentricity garnered mainstream media attention with its challenge to classical European history. Great controversy was caused by two arguments emerging from the Afrocentric school of thought. The first asserted that Egypt was the foundation of black world culture and history, just as Greece was the foundation of Western civilization. The second argument, and the one that caused more controversy, asserted that Egypt was a black civilization that served as the major philosophical, intellectual, and cultural foundation and inspiration for Greece. *Black Athena: Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilizations, Volume 1: the Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985* (1987) and *Volume II: the Archeological and Documentary Evidence* (1991) by Martin Bernal, the Cambridge trained Orientalist, and Molefi Asante's *KMT, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (1997) stood at the center of this debate. Although Bernal did not declare himself to be an Afrocentrist, his work gave credence to the group of African historians named here that had largely been excluded from mainstream historical canon.

Afrocentricity became a central aspect of the “culture wars” and debates over “multiculturalism” that raged in all areas of American life, especially education, in the 1980s and 1990s. At the height of the debate, *Newsweek* magazine featured a stone image of Cleopatra wearing a red, black, and green African earring, and the cover read: “Afrocentrism: Was Cleopatra Black? Facts or Fantasies—A Debate Rages Over What to Teach Our Kids About Their Roots” (1991). The leading intellectuals that supported and developed the Afrocentric position through writing, speaking and program development were Molefi Asante; Malauna Karenga, Cal State University Long Beach Black Studies professor and creator of Kwanzaa, the pan-African holiday; Leonard Jeffries, Black Studies professor at City College in New York; Asa Hilliard, black psychologist; Theophile Obenga, African historian and student of Diop; Wade Nobles, black psychologist and professor of Africana Studies

at San Francisco State University; Naim Akbar, black psychologist; and Jacob Caruthers, the founding director of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC). Although several women championed Afrocentricity, four key women produced landmark texts in Afrocentric thought: Vivian Gordan, former professor of Black Studies and author of *Black Women: Feminism and Black Liberation* (1987); Clenora Hudson-Weems, professor of English at the University of Missouri Columbia and author of *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (1993); Marimba Ani, former SNCC field organizer, professor of Black Studies, and author of *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (1994); and Ama Mazama, professor of African American Studies at Temple University and editor of *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (2003).

The major critics of Afrocentricity included Mary Lefkowitz, professor of Classical Studies at Wellesly College and author of *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentricism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (1996) and *Black Athena Revisited* (1996); American historian and former Kennedy advisor, Arthur Schlesinger; Stephen Howe, author of *Afrocentricism: Mythical Past and Imagined Homes* (1998); Clarence Walker, author of *We Can't Go Home: An Argument about Afrocentrism* (2000); world-renown professor of African Studies, Ali Mazrui; Henry Louis Gates Jr., professor of Afro American Studies at Harvard University; Paul Gilroy, author of *the Black Atlantic* (1993) and *Against Race* (2000); Kwame Anthony Appiah, Harvard professor and author of *In My Father's House* (1992); and Tunde Adeleke, professor of African American Studies at Iowa State University. Although each of the critics challenged Afrocentricity for different reasons, their collective work represents the major oppositional voices.

Regardless of the strength of its intellectual adversaries, Afrocentricity made a major impact on black popular culture and American institutions in general. During the height of the debate, several Afrocentric schools emerged in Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and other major American cities, providing education for children from elementary to high school. Some public schools adopted Afrocentric themes or incorporated black history into the state curriculum, as was the case in Philadelphia and New Jersey. Colleges were impacted the most, as hundreds of Black Studies programs across the country designed their curriculum to adhere to an Afrocentric approach. In fact,

Temple University established the first doctoral program in Black Studies in 1987; under the leadership of Asante the program championed an Afrocentric approach to Africana Studies. In the political sphere, Afrocentricity rode the wave of the anti-apartheid movement and gained currency with the development of Kwanzaa and the Million Man March, led by the Nation of Islam in 1995. The idea also influenced hip-hop music, as Afrocentric themes emerged in the lyrics of Boogie Down Productions, Public Enemy, the Poor Righteous Teachers, Queen Latifah, Ice Cube, Brand Nubain, Arrested Development, and others.

Although the intensity of the intellectual debate has abated since the 1990s, Afrocentricity remains a lasting ideological fixture in African American thought and culture. Black graduations are still celebrated every year on college campuses, Afrocentric conferences are still held, Kwanzaa themes have become standard for greeting cards, Temple's Department of African American Studies continues to produce graduates, and mud cloth has become a conventional signifier of African American and African Diasporic culture in fashion and interior home decorating.

See also: Asante, Molefi Kete; Karenga, Maulana; Kwanzaa; National Council for Black Studies

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## Al-Amin, Jamil Abdullah (H. Rap Brown)

Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (1943–), also known as Hubert Gerold Brown and H. Rap Brown, was a civil rights activist and proponent of black power who served as the chair of

the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the justice minister of the Black Panther Party. He is, perhaps, best known for his statement that “violence is as American as cherry pie.” Born on October 4, 1943, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Al-Amin attended Southern University from 1960 until 1964 before becoming an active member of the Non-Violent Action Group (NAG) and SNCC. He became known as H. Rap Brown because of his mastery over playing the dozens and signifying. Al-Amin's quick wit and oratorical skills made him a legendary dozens player, and he often set his verbal jabs to rhymes, earning him the nickname “Rap.” While Al-Amin was at Southern, his brother Ed encouraged him to read W. E. B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, Marcus Garvey, and Richard Wright; in many ways, this was the beginning of his political education. After joining NAG and then later SNCC, Al-Amin became involved in a series of protest activities including sit-ins, voting rights campaigns, and marches.

In 1965, Al-Amin's transformation into an advocate of black power began when he, along with several other African American leaders, were called to the White House to meet with President Lyndon Baines Johnson. As Al-Amin would later reflect in his book *Die Nigger Die!*, Johnson's impatient arrogance coupled with the passivity of the group of African American leaders meeting with him led Al-Amin to personally engage President Johnson in his typically brash manner. It was after this exchange that Al-Amin would claim that he became a marked man. In rapid succession after this meeting, he would be called up for the draft, he was involved in a shootout with police in Cambridge, Maryland, and he was arrested twice in Virginia. Al-Amin was certainly one of many targets in the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign, particularly after he ascended to the chair of SNCC in 1967. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Black Panther Party to serve as their justice minister in 1968. The potential coalition of two of the most prominent black power organizations—SNCC and the Black Panthers—was actively disrupted by the FBI, and both Al-Amin and his close friend and associate, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), found themselves in a precarious situation.

In 1970, Al-Amin went underground for 18 months during the course of a trial in Maryland on the charges of inciting riot and carrying a gun across state lines. As a direct result, he appeared on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List. By 1972, Al-Amin resurfaced and was arrested for attempted robbery of a bar in New York City. Released from



*H. Rap Brown (later Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin), national chairperson of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a leader in the Black Power movement, holds a press conference on July 27, 1967. Brown was shot and wounded in 1967 after delivering a fiery speech. The Black Power movement encompassed the more strident attempts of African Americans to establish their own political, cultural, and social institutions, independent of white society. (Library of Congress)*

prison in 1976, Al-Amin moved to Atlanta, Georgia to open a grocery store. Having converted to Islam in prison, he became leader of the National Ummah and worked to eradicate drugs, gambling, and prostitution in Atlanta's West End. On March 16, 2000, when two sheriff's deputies attempted to serve an arrest warrant, both men were shot and one died the next day from his wounds. The surviving deputy identified Al-Amin as the shooter and, on March 9, 2002, he was convicted of 13 criminal charges including murder. Al-Amin is currently serving a life sentence at the ADX Super Maximum Security Prison in Florence, Colorado.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Black Power; COINTELPRO; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

*Walter C. Rucker*

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## **Albany, Georgia Movement**

The Albany, Georgia movement refers to both the campaigns to end racial segregation and the organization founded to achieve this goal. The Albany movement began in 1960, as an umbrella group composed of various civil rights organizations in Albany, a town in southwest Georgia. Some of the community groups involved included the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Negro Voters League, and various churches. Led by Dr. William G. Andrews and Slater King, the Albany movement sought to dismantle the system of racial segregation that excluded African Americans from full participation in the political, social, and business affairs of their city.

Undaunted by the arrest of some its members, the Albany movement held mass meetings in churches to plan strategies. During the meetings, members sang freedom songs that became a common feature of civil rights marches in the 1960s. These songs demonstrated the spirit and resolve of the protestors while also providing a cultural link between the present day and hundreds of years of African American suffering. SNCC members also instructed Albany residents nightly on nonviolent tactics.

Although the Albany movement had existed for almost a year, it was a demonstration at the city bus depot by five students on November 1, 1961, that served as a catalyst for the acceleration of protests. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) had found racial segregation in interstate transportation facilities unconstitutional with the order to take effect on November 1. As the African American

students attempted to enter the waiting room reserved for white Americans, Albany police blocked their way. Threatened with arrest, the students left the bus terminal but vowed to return another day.

Impressed by the demonstrations, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., accepted a one-day invitation to speak at a mass meeting. On December 15, 1961, Dr. King spoke at Shiloh Baptist Church, urging Albany residents to continue their struggle. King eventually decided to stay and participate in a protest march at City Hall planned for the next day, where Albany police arrested him along with more than 250 others. Initially claiming he would remain in jail over Christmas to highlight the treatment of African Americans in the South, Dr. King left jail on bail when city officials announced they had reached an agreement with the Albany movement. The city was to drop the charges levied against the 250 demonstrators and comply with the ICC ruling. It was soon apparent that the city did not plan to keep its part of the bargain.

The decision to leave jail helped Albany Police Chief Laurie Pritchett devise a strategy to defeat the demonstrations. Whenever Dr. King was arrested, Pritchett would now find someone to bail him out, thus preventing King from publicizing the arrests. In addition, Pritchett, who had read King's book on nonviolent direct action campaigns, reserved jail space in surrounding counties so the media in Albany would not see African Americans jailed in overcrowded conditions. Also, he ordered the police force to remain peaceful while arresting demonstrators. In this regard, Pritchett downplayed the violence that lay at the root of racial segregation and appeared somewhat reasonable to the national media. While Pritchett continued to outmaneuver African American leaders, the Albany city government remained committed to racial segregation. In essence, the Albany campaign seemed a stalemate. African Americans would continue to protest, Chief Pritchett would quietly arrest them, and the city government would maintain racial segregation.

The lack of progress led to problems within the campaign. Racial violence erupted on a number of occasions in July 1962 when African American protestors threw stones, bottles, and other items at police. Upset by this turn of events, Dr. King called for a temporary halt in the marches and a day of penance to atone for the violent outbreaks.

There was also dissension between SCLC, led by Dr. King and other nationally prominent leaders, and the other civil rights groups involved in Albany. Some had

perceived of the desegregation campaign as a local initiative, only inviting Dr. King and the SCLC to help publicize the situation. Once joining the Albany movement, however, SCLC leaders became assertive in a way that angered the sensibilities of those who thought the Albany movement should remain in the hands of Albany citizens.

In the end, beset with internal problems and a strategy that seemed ineffective against Chief Pritchett, the campaign did not achieve the tangible goal of desegregating city facilities. Nevertheless, the Albany movement did become a sustained effort by local African Americans to end racial inequality. When the SCLC and Dr. King left the area in 1962, the Albany movement continued protesting against discrimination. Before this period, as was common in many communities, the various civil rights groups competed against each other for the allegiances of local African Americans. Under the Albany movement umbrella, there was unity among elites, professionals, and workers that had not existed previously. *See also:* Abernathy, Ralph David; King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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## Ali, Muhammad

Muhammad Ali (1942–), the three-time heavyweight champion of the world, became an important symbol of black nationalism as a member of the Nation of Islam who refused to serve in the Vietnam War. Born Cassius Marcellus Clay and raised in Louisville's mostly black West End, his family was working-poor. Clay lived in a small house with his brother and parents. His mother worked as a maid and



his father was a sign painter. His father was an early influence on the fighter's racial consciousness. Clay Sr. had been influenced by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association as a young man and believed that racism had kept him from achieving greater heights as an artist. His father also had several run-ins with Louisville's police department and felt that blacks in the city were unfairly targeted by law enforcement. Young Cassius's understanding of race grew when he learned of Emmett Till's murder. In his autobiography, the fighter claimed to be deeply affected by the lynching.

Clay became interested in boxing after his bicycle was stolen. He cried to police officer Joe Martin that he wanted to beat up the offender. Martin, who trained amateur boxers, offered his services to Clay, who accepted them. Clay progressed rapidly, appearing often on a local television show called *Tomorrow's Champions*. Twice he captured the national Golden Gloves title. In 1960, Clay represented the United States in the Rome Olympics, where he won a gold medal in the light-heavyweight division. Clay showed little inclination for political controversy at the time. During interviews, he downplayed America's race problems. He called the United States the greatest country in the world. He told reporters that America's race problems would soon be solved. Clay also favorably compared the living conditions of black Americans to those of Africans, who he characterized as living in mud huts. He would express regret about these comments in later years.

After the Olympics, Clay decided to become a professional boxer. His emerging race consciousness affected his choices when selecting advisors and managers. Clay's first suitor was Billy Reynolds, the Louisville metals magnate. Although Reynolds made a lucrative offer, Clay felt that he would not be treated fairly by someone he considered to be a racist. Clay based his conclusion on experiences he had while working at the Reynolds estate shortly before the Olympics. Members of the Reynolds family treated him poorly, and Clay believed that the abuse was racially motivated. Reynolds also insisted that Joe Martin be Clay's trainer. Clay was against this for two reasons. First, he felt that Martin was not capable of taking him to the top as a professional. Second, he was influenced by his father's distrust of white policemen. These factors led to the rejection of Reynolds's offer to become his manager. While deciding on a team to guide his career, Ali employed blacks in key positions whenever possible. For his first bout, he named

as his manager of record former amateur opponent George King. For his professional debut, Clay's trainer was Fred Stoner, who guided many of Louisville's black fighters, professional and amateur. He also hired Alberta Jones, the first black woman to become a member of the Kentucky Bar Association, as his attorney. Jones was the sole negotiator of Ali's first professional contract.

In October 1960, Clay signed a six-year contract with the Louisville Sponsoring Group, a syndicate of 11 white men from his hometown. Almost all of the partners were millionaires. The terms of the arrangement were fair and generous, giving Ali a large signing bonus and an annual salary, which would grow according to his ring earnings. The partnership also paid all of his living and training expenses. In exchange they received a share of the purses from Clay's fights. It was an excellent arrangement for Clay because the group's wealth ensured him first-class accommodations and allowed him to be brought along without being rushed into profitable but dangerous matches. Local newspapers lauded the fighter's sensibility and praised his choice.

The one problem that many people had with the young fighter was his demeanor. Ali talked loudly, downgraded his opponents, predicted the rounds in which he would win fights, and refused to be silenced by reporters and fans who believed that he needed to be more reserved. Clay's persona sometimes affected his professional relationships. He clashed with Archie Moore, the former light-heavyweight champion who had become his trainer. Angelo Dundee replaced Moore in that role and was with Clay for the remainder of his career. There were also people who enjoyed Clay's bombast. Some found him entertaining and funny. Others saw his defiance as something political. His insistence that he was "pretty," for example, anticipated the Black Power movement mantra "black is beautiful."

Because he evoked strong feelings, Clay's fights did very well at the box office and rejuvenated a sport that had been racked by scandal and government crackdowns. The national press took an interest in him. In his first year as a professional, *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Sports Illustrated* ran features on the young boxer. Shortly thereafter, he appeared in the Anthony Quinn film *Requiem for a Heavyweight*. His eighth and ninth professional bouts were televised nationally. When Clay entered major markets like New York and Los Angeles, his fights did amazing business. His 1962 match with former trainer Moore set a California indoor sporting events box office record. His bout

the next January against Charlie Powell set a Pittsburgh indoor attendance record, despite being held on one of the coldest days in the city's history. Two months later, despite a newspaper strike in New York that curtailed coverage of the contest, Clay's fight with Doug Jones became the first boxing event in Madison Square Garden's 38-year history to sell out in advance. The bout created the arena's largest gross receipts for any event of the previous 10 years. Clay made the cover of *Time* magazine. He was more than just a national phenomenon. That summer, his match with British heavyweight Henry Cooper produced England's largest fight crowd since 1935, as 55,000 fans packed Wembley Stadium. Because of his talent and his personality, Clay was an international sensation by the time he landed his chance to fight for the heavyweight championship of the world.

Most people did not know that Clay was already a part of the Nation of Islam. The Nation of Islam was troubling to some people because it espoused the separation of black and white people. According to his longtime best friend Howard Bingham, Clay's membership in the organization went back to 1958. But Clay did not discuss religion or politics with reporters in the first years of his career. He felt that public knowledge of his beliefs would jeopardize his chances to fight for the title. There were some outward signs, however, of his affiliation. Nation of Islam devotees were sprinkled around his early training camps. He wore dark suits, bowties, and white shirts, which was standard Nation garb. He lectured on the evils of pork to a writer who ordered a ham sandwich during a lunchtime interview.

By the time of the Jones bout, Clay was starting to speak more clearly. He told reporters that integration was an ignorant philosophy. He charged that police officers in the South targeted him for harassment. Clay also refused to deny a newspaper report that placed him at a Nation of Islam meeting in Philadelphia. The clearest sign emerged in Miami, where Clay was training for a February 1964 title match with Sonny Liston. There, he spent time with Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam's national spokesman. Clay told the press that he found the organization's meetings to be inspiring.

Opposition to Clay materialized as his relationship with the Nation of Islam came to light and then increased when he defeated Liston. First, the promoter threatened to cancel the fight. But with hundreds of thousands of dollars already invested in the event, it was difficult for him

to do so. Eventually, he and Clay's representatives reached a compromise in which Malcolm X would leave town for the remainder of the training period. Most people did not expect Clay to beat Liston, so they did not worry much about his political and religious leanings. In a surprise outcome, however, Liston refused to answer the bell for the seventh round, claiming to have injured his shoulder. Clay was winning the match up to that point. Afterwards, the new champion told reporters that they were wrong to pick against him. He announced that his name was no longer Cassius Clay, but Cassius X. Like Malcolm X, Clay rejected the name given to his family by slave masters. Soon after, Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad renamed the fighter Muhammad Ali. Newspapers often carried articles that cast Ali in a negative light. A rematch with Liston further turned the public against Ali. Ali won the fight by knockout in the first round, and many people felt the bout was fixed. In addition to those who disliked Ali's demeanor and politics were those who felt that he was a sham champion, one whose confidence did not correspond with his ability.

In his second title defense, Ali took on former champion Floyd Patterson in November 1965. The rivalry between the two fighters focused on their contrasting visions of race relations. Patterson was an integrationist and a supporter of the Civil Rights movement. He moved into an all-white neighborhood and was married to a white woman. Although these things were repugnant to the separatist Ali, it was Patterson who escalated the prefight rhetoric beyond boxing. In a series of articles for *Sports Illustrated*, Patterson wrote that for the good of the country, Ali must be defeated. Patterson referred to him as Cassius Clay, refusing to acknowledge Ali's chosen name. Some sportswriters criticized Patterson's efforts to construct himself as a heroic alternative to Ali, but the majority of the press cast the fighters as Patterson had. Ali responded to this by calling Patterson a white man's champion and promising to punish him. The fight was one-sided, with Ali winning nearly every moment before the referee stopped it in the 12th round.

Muhammad Ali began to phase out the Louisville Sponsoring Group, replacing them with a corporation known as Main Bout, Inc. At a press conference in January 1966, Ali announced that Main Bout would control the ancillary rights to his fights, starting with a bout two months later against contender Ernie Terrell in Chicago. Main Bout's ownership of these ancillary rights gave them access to the

vast majority of revenues from Ali's bouts. The major money from big-time boxing matches during this period came from closed-circuit television, which was controlled by the ancillary promoter. Because seating at and revenue from the hundreds of closed-circuit theaters nationwide greatly outnumbered what could be generated at the arena where a given fight took place, such bouts usually had closed-circuit television takes much larger than from other sources.

Main Bout was controlled by the Nation of Islam, which meant that at least some of the revenues from Ali's fights were going to that organization. Main Bout had five stockholders. Herbert Muhammad, son of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad, was its president. John Ali, the Nation of Islam's national secretary, was Main Bout's treasurer. Together, they shared 50 percent of its stock and half of its board's six votes. The closed-circuit television operator Michael Malitz and his attorney Bob Arum were Main Bout's vice-president and secretary, holding 20 percent of Main Bout's stock and one vote each. Jim Brown, the professional football player and Main Bout's vice-president in charge of publicity, controlled one vote and 10 percent of the company. Malitz and Arum were Main Bout's sole white members. Ali told reporters that he hoped Main Bout would become the linchpin of a larger economic network that would result in the empowerment of large numbers of African Americans.

In February 1966, less than a month after Main Bout's formation, the United States Selective Service reclassified Muhammad Ali as draft-eligible for the Vietnam War. Originally, Ali had failed the mental aptitude portion of the U.S. Army's entrance exam. He had then been retested in front of government psychologists and failed again. Ali had always had trouble with school, and he was not prepared to answer the questions. As a result, he was declared ineligible to serve in the Armed Forces. By this time, however, the government needed more troops to continue the fight in Vietnam. As a result, it lowered the qualifying standard for its mental aptitude exam, and Ali was retroactively declared eligible. Some people saw Ali's drafting as a political act, an attempt to silence an outspoken and militant black man. Others believed it fair, that there should be no reason to prevent a healthy and intelligent person like Ali from serving.

When reporters asked Ali for comment, he declared his opposition to the Vietnam War. Combined with the Nation of Islam's entrance into the promotion of his fights,

it caused a major backlash against him. In Chicago, politicians and the press rallied against the upcoming bout with Terrell, and it was driven out of the city. When Main Bout tried to shop the contest around the United States, it found no takers. Nationwide, mayors in more than 100 cities announced that they would not host an Ali fight. Main Bout was forced to move the fight to Canada, where they made very little money. Furthermore, Ali had to have his next three bouts in Europe, where there had not been a world heavyweight title match in more than 30 years. The movement to ban Ali from fighting in the United States grew.

Ali refused to be inducted into the U.S. Army in May 1967 and was indicted on draft evasion charges. Almost immediately, state athletic commissions around the country indicated their refusal to grant Ali a boxing license. The next month, a federal court convicted Ali and sentenced him to five years in prison. He remained out of jail while appealing the case, but he was barred from fighting. No state would allow him to box, and because he was a convicted felon, the government stripped him of his passport, preventing him from fighting abroad. For three-and-a-half years, as his case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, Ali was exiled from the sport. During this time Ali made money by speaking on college campuses, commenting on boxing telecasts, and acting.

Ali tried to resurrect his boxing career. He lobbied Indian tribes to hold fights on reservations, which were outside the purview of state athletic commissions. He asked the government to grant him a one-day visa to fight in Tijuana. A breakthrough finally came for Ali when Georgia State Senator Leroy Johnson led a campaign to hold an Ali fight in Atlanta. Because Georgia had no state athletic commission, Johnson, an African American, knew that white supremacist governor Lester Maddox would have no political oversight of the match. Therefore, Johnson worked within Atlanta's city government and used his contacts and leverage to get the bout made over the objections of a number of state-level politicians. In October 1970, Ali returned to the ring, scoring a victory over Jerry Quarry. About a month later, Ali defeated Oscar Bonavena in New York. He then agreed to terms for a fight with Joe Frazier, who had replaced him as heavyweight champion during Ali's exile from the sport.

Ali's rivalry with Joe Frazier was the most important of both fighters' careers, and their first bout was perhaps the biggest event in boxing history. The March 1971 battle

between Ali and Frazier became a key backdrop through which people made meaning of larger political and racial conflicts. Frazier became a symbolic representative to many people who despised Ali's draft resistance, although Frazier did nothing to cultivate their allegiance, unlike a number of Ali's previous opponents. Ali seized on this public sentiment in his treatment of Frazier. Because he had become the heavyweight champion during Ali's exile, Ali framed Frazier as a tool of the establishment, calling him an Uncle Tom. Throughout the buildups for their three matches, Ali insulted Frazier, calling him ignorant, ugly, and comparing him to a gorilla. As a result, Frazier's bad feelings for Ali have endured long after their bouts. Each fighter made a record \$2,500,000. Frazier won a 15-round decision and retained the championship in a bitterly fought contest.

That summer, the Supreme Court overturned Ali's draft evasion conviction. Although its decision caused all criminal charges against Ali to be dropped, the Court did not officially exonerate him for his draft resistance. The Court reversed Ali's conviction because the fighter's draft board had never indicated to the defendant why his conscientious objector status had been denied. A technicality, rather than Ali's innocence or the government's mistaken refusal to grant him a ministerial deferment, was the court's given explanation for the reversal. This was an important distinction because by ruling in this manner, the Supreme Court did not set a precedent that would alter the draft status of large numbers of people. At the same time, it seems clear that the Supreme Court's decision was motivated by its belief that Ali's draft resistance was legitimate and that the federal court's ruling was incorrect.

In the next couple of years, Ali pursued the championship. He capitalized on his worldwide popularity, fighting in Switzerland, Tokyo, Vancouver, Dublin, and Jakarta. Most observers, however, questioned whether or not Ali still had what it took to regain the title. A pair of matches in 1973 against little-known Ken Norton seemed to signal Ali's decline. In the first, Norton broke Ali's jaw and won a decision. In the second, Ali narrowly escaped with a decision victory. Ali's struggles against Norton were highlighted by the performances of George Foreman, who had knocked out Joe Frazier in two rounds that year to become the champion. When Norton challenged Foreman for the title, Foreman knocked him out in the second round. Although Ali captured a decision victory over Frazier in their

1974 rematch, it looked improbable for him to regain the title. Foreman had steamrolled the two fighters who had beaten Ali.

The 1974 fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman happened because boxing promoter Don King was able to convince Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko that hosting the bout would increase his country's fortunes. Mobutu paid \$10,000,000 for the honor, which gave King the money to get Ali and Foreman to Kinshasa for record purses of \$5,000,000 each. It was the first world heavyweight title fight held in Africa, but it was not Ali's first visit to the continent, and he was the popular favorite of the hometown crowd. The bout cemented Ali's reputation as an all-time great fighter. Although it appeared in the early rounds that Ali was losing the fight, he had in fact devised a strategy in which he would stay along the ropes and cover up while Foreman punched himself into exhaustion. The "rope-a-dope" plan worked as Ali absorbed the seemingly invincible Foreman's best blows and came back to win with an eighth-round knockout. Twenty-two years later, *When We Were Kings*, a film about the Ali/Foreman match, won the Academy Award for outstanding documentary.

With the victory over Foreman came an outpouring of support for the new champion. A number of sportswriters who had always disparaged Ali's boxing skills finally acknowledged his excellence. Later that year, President Gerald Ford invited Ali to visit the White House. TWA Airlines showed films of the Ali-Foreman bout on selected flights. Although Ali still held beliefs about race and religion that many Americans opposed, it was clear that huge numbers of people admired him. Part of this came from the changing public sentiment about the Vietnam War. As the conflict declined in popularity, Ali's position became more acceptable. When Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, Ali chose to align himself with Muhammad's son Wallace, who wanted to take the Nation of Islam in a direction that followed orthodox Islam more closely than his father had. As a result of this move, Ali disassociated himself over the years from the racial separatism he espoused during the 1960s and 1970s. This, too, increased Ali's acceptability to many people.

Ali remained champion until 1978, but his skills declined during this period, and he took a lot of punishment in the ring that would later contribute to serious health problems. A third fight with Joe Frazier in 1975, known as the "Thrilla in Manila," ensured Ali's status as a boxing

legend, but also subjected him to severe physical damage. In his final year as champion, Ali lost the title to upstart Leon Spinks, but regained it in a rematch that made Ali the first fighter to hold the heavyweight championship three times. Ali then retired, but came back to challenge Larry Holmes in 1980. Holmes pummeled Ali, who could not answer the bell for the 11th round. Ali fought and lost once more before retiring permanently in 1981. The years immediately following the end of his career were difficult for Ali, as Parkinson's syndrome, probably a result from his years in boxing, depleted him. Although he did not vanish from the public scene throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, his place in American consciousness became somewhat recessed.

During the late 1990s, and into the 21st century, Ali has made a remarkable resurgence into public prominence. There are many causes for this, but three stand out. Ali's 1986 marriage to Yolanda "Lonnie" Williams helped him regain control over his health and finances. Lonnie Ali manages Ali's business decisions and has made their family millions of dollars through her marketing of the fighter's image. Thomas Hauser's best-selling 1991 biography *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* is the most thorough of all books about Ali, and it presents Ali as a great man. Hauser's book institutionalized the idea of Ali as a national treasure. Ali's lighting of the ceremonial torch to open the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta showed the fighter struggling with Parkinson's syndrome and positioned him as an American hero in front of a huge television audience. In 2001 a major motion picture called *Ali* was released. Despite health problems, Ali still travels for many weeks every year in pursuit of humanitarian and religious service to the world. The 93,000 square foot Muhammad Ali Center, headquartered in Louisville, will preserve Ali's legend for many years to come. At the turn of the 21st century, Ali's popularity seems unmatched as he stands as a symbol of love and tolerance to billions of people. Tracing his journey to this point from his days as a more controversial figure is an exciting pursuit that can tell us a great deal about American society.

See also: Black Athletes; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; Till, Emmett; X, Malcolm

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## Ali, Noble Drew

Noble Drew Ali (1886–1929), born Timothy Drew, ascended from obscurity to become the founder and leader of the Moorish Science movement. Little is known of Ali's early years. According to some reports, he was raised by Cherokee Indians; others claim he wandered with a gypsy tribe. In his adulthood, Ali told various stories to explain his knowledge of Islam and Egyptian mystery cults; for example, he claimed to receive the title of "Ali" from Sultan Abdul Asis Ibn Saud during a visit to Mecca. It is unclear whether he actually traveled abroad or whether he acquired his interest in Islam from American libraries. The first established fact about Ali is that in 1913, he founded the first Moorish Science Temple in Newark, New Jersey.

The temple was organized around Ali's revision of African American history. Ali preached that black people were actually not African, but Asiatic (or Moors). Their true homeland was not West Africa, but Morocco, and their true religion was Islam. Ali's job was to restore African Americans to their rightful status on earth: to restore their true nationality, true religion, and true genealogy. The central text of his movement was a 60-page pamphlet by Ali titled, *Holy Koran*, that included Christian Bible passages, quotations from Marcus Garvey, anecdotes from the life of Jesus, and Ali's own codes regarding dress, diet, and morality.

The primary theme of the *Holy Koran* was a retelling of Jesus' life story, focusing on his exploits in India, Europe, and Africa. Although the book glorified Jesus as a genealogical forebear of the Moors, it still insisted that Christianity was a religion for Europeans and that Islam was the religion of the Asiatics. Ali had been sent by Allah, the god of Islam, to tell black Americans that their identity had been stolen by Christian Europeans. Once their nationality and religion were restored, these newly cast Moors could take over society.

To affirm his followers a new identity, Ali issued them identification cards and encouraged the wearing of fezzes and turbans. Combining aspects of Islam, Freemasonry, Theosophy, and 19th-century black nationalist philosophies, Moorish Science appealed to a new generation of urban black Americans seeking to differentiate themselves from their enslaved ancestors. Ali was convinced that he could change the political and economic destiny of African Americans by recasting their ethnic identity and erasing the stigma of slavery. From the outset, Ali had many competitors within his organization, and in 1923 he removed to Chicago to escape his New Jersey rivals. There he set up the permanent headquarters of the Moorish Holy Temple of Science. In 1928, he changed the name to the Moorish Science Temple of America and finally organized all of his temples under the name of the Moorish Divine and National Movement of North America, Inc. With branches in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, and several southern cities, the Moorish Science movement would, at its height, achieve a membership of nearly 30,000.

Under the auspices of the Moorish Manufacturing Corporation, many became rich selling Asiatic charms, herbal preparations, and literature. Some leaders decided to get rid of Ali and take over the increasing fortune of the organization. In 1929, Ali's leadership was challenged by the murder of his business manager, Sheik Claude Green. Although Ali was out of town at the time of Green's death, he was briefly jailed for the crime. Following his release on bail, he, too, died under mysterious circumstances.

See also: Black Nationalism; Moorish Science Temple

Kathryn Emily Lofton

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## Antiapartheid Movement

The African American antiapartheid movement was actually a series of intrarelated and interrelated movements that contested apartheid policies and practices from 1937 to 1994. Apartheid was a political system of separate development that became state policy in South Africa in 1948 and lasted until Nelson Mandela became president in 1994. Based on rigid racial divisions, the purpose of the policy was to privilege the political, cultural, and economic interests of the white minority population in South Africa while maintaining a cheap work force of people of color. The African American antiapartheid movement primarily sought to disrupt the South African economy by appealing to U.S. policymakers and the United Nations to impose sanctions and a trade embargo on South Africa. The movement also consisted of cultural and political sanctions. At the heart of the African American antiapartheid movement was the struggle to end white supremacy both at home and abroad.

The earlier movements against apartheid were part of a larger struggle that aimed to raise awareness about African liberation and help African states gain independence. The earliest organization to address South Africa's racist laws was the Council on African Affairs. Originally organized as the International Committee on African Affairs in 1937, it was renamed the Council on African Affairs by 1943 (CAA). The CAA was composed of internationally renowned African Americans, including W. E. B. Du Bois, singer and activist Paul Robeson, Howard University political scientist Ralph Bunche, Harvard anthropologist Raymond Leslie Buell, and YMCA Baptist missionary Max Yergan. The CAA was a powerful voice for anticolonialism and Pan-Africanism and linked the struggles of African Americans with the struggles of colonized African people. The organization's publications, including *Spotlight on Africa*, were relied on by activists and scholars for credible information about South Africa.

The first notable action of the CAA with regard to apartheid came in 1946 when the CAA, along with India, launched a campaign for international sanctions against South Africa at the first United Nations General Assembly meeting in London. The CAA would maintain a lobby at the UN. Although this campaign was unsuccessful at achieving sanctions, the CAA's activity and sponsored demonstrations and letter-writing campaign gave rise to global consciousness about the plight of millions of oppressed South Africans. The CAA called for the United States to sever relations with South Africa. Apartheid would become the single most important international issue concerning African Americans.

In 1952, the CAA initiated mass protests that coincided with the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws in South Africa. Black and white leaders from churches, labor unions, and civic and peace organizations from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston initiated the CAA campaign. These leaders pledged to obtain 100,000 signatures on a petition and raise \$5,000 to assist in relieving some of the suffering and funding some of the legal costs for those South Africans who were arrested in the defiance campaign.

The antiapartheid movement emerged during a period of Cold War and communist hysteria. Anticommunism sentiment curtailed early efforts and took its toll on organizations like the CAA. The hysteria fragmented antiapartheid and African liberation movements. CAA fell victim after it was labeled a communist organization, and several of its members, including its primary financier, Paul Robeson's passports were revoked. CAA collapsed in 1952.

A new organization called Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR) emerged in that same year. AFSAR was assembled by African American liberals who had been involved in the antiapartheid movement. The secretary, George Houser, was careful not to conflate AFSAR objectives with communist sentiment. One of the first actions of AFSAR was a rally at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem in April 1952 where 800 members were in attendance and a US\$300 check was sent to Walter Sisulu as the first installment in a series of contributions in support of the non-European congresses in South Africa. AFSAR was disbanded in 1953 and transformed into an organization that could relate to the entire anticolonial struggle in Africa. The new organization was named the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) and would include prominent African American activist and leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was exposed to South African issues when his father invited Albert Lithuli, the president of the African National Congress, to speak at his church in Atlanta in 1948. As a pastor, King constantly compared South Africa to the Jim Crow South and urged the usage of nonviolent resistance in South Africa. ACOA organized a Declaration of Conscience campaign in 1957 in the United States to protest the unjust arrest of 156 leaders of the liberation movement in South Africa who were being charged with treason. The unveiling of the campaign coincided with Human Rights Day, and Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King Jr. were cosponsors of the declaration. ACOA organized the South African Defense Fund, which aimed to collect \$100,000 to help pay for legal fees for the defendants of the treason trial in South Africa.

During the early 1960s, black nationalism came to prominence, with young leaders like Malcolm X leading the way. Malcolm X visited several heads of states throughout Africa where he laid out a plan to internationalize the black freedom struggle in America by placing it at the level of human rights. His insistence on linking racism in South Africa and the United States and his militancy was a source of contention for some African American antiapartheid leaders.

The independence of many African countries in the 1970s reinvigorated the antiapartheid movement. Many athletes now joined the struggle against apartheid. African American professional athletes became important actors in the antiapartheid struggle. The sports boycotts against South Africa attracted supporters from around the world. World tennis champion, Arthur Ashe was one of the most prominent athletes to oppose apartheid. After being denied a travel visa by the South African government, he used the media to bring focus on the oppressive regime in Pretoria. He became involved with the movement that boycotted South Africa's participation in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. His further activism resulted in South Africa's expulsion from the governing body of world tennis, the Davis Cup, and from the International Olympics Association. Ashe opposed apartheid and protested the policy throughout the next two decades until his death in 1993.

Besides athletes, African American workers, students, legislators, and activists directed their frustration of proapartheid U.S. foreign policy toward corporations with investments in South Africa. Black workers in Boston led

a campaign against the Polaroid Corporation, accusing them of supporting apartheid because the passbook identification cards in South Africa were being manufactured using Polaroid cameras and film. The passbooks were one of the most intrusive components of apartheid because it restricted the movement and residential patterns of South African people of color. The anti-Polaroid activists went to the streets using direct-action techniques. They began informing local shop owners of Polaroid's connection to apartheid and insisting that the shops stop selling Polaroid products. They addressed the United Nations, proposing an international boycott of Polaroid products, and lobbied Congress, where they worked with members of the Congressional Black Caucus who soon met with President Richard Nixon about installing sanctions against South Africa. As a result of the Polaroid campaign, the company lost \$4 million in sales and pulled out of South Africa by 1977.

The lobbying group, TransAfrica, was formed in 1977 and would become the most important lobby for Africa and the Caribbean ever created by African Americans. This organization was made possible by the sustained mobilization of African American groups throughout the 1960s and 1970s. TransAfrica, which was led by African American liberals who felt a kinship with Africa based on history and shared experiences of racial discrimination, combined direct-action techniques and educational campaigns to influence foreign policy. One of the most prominent leaders was founder Randall Robinson, who served as the president until 2001. Robinson had previously worked for Congressman Charles Diggs, at which time he was engaged in foreign policy activities. TransAfrica met regularly with Congress, conducted press conferences, obtained grants, and published policy statements, reports, and newsletters on apartheid in South Africa and effectively galvanized worldwide support of the antiapartheid movement. TransAfrica built a mass base of supporters by reaching out to the black church, an institution with a long history of community activism for social justice. TransAfrica's profile was raised when President Jimmy Carter, pressured by the organization, decided to maintain sanctions against Ian Smith's minority government in Rhodesia. Antiapartheid sentiment was widespread in the African American community by 1980. White students and religious groups shared this sentiment and TransAfrica quickly became a multiracial organization. The organization came to international attention when Robinson addressed the Organization of African Unity's Heads of

State Summit in Nairobi in 1981. Although Malcolm X had met with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1964, Robinson's address marked the first time since then that an African American had addressed the OAU.

Ronald Reagan administration's constructive engagement policies toward South Africa signaled a sharp contrast from Carter's human rights approach. Many antiapartheid activists considered Reagan to be in full partnership with South Africa's racist regime, and this support became a catalyst for the resurgence of the antiapartheid movement. By 1984, apartheid had become a major issue in African American politics. At this time, Jesse Jackson entered the race for the nomination of the Democratic Party's candidate for president in 1984 and 1988. Jackson, who carried on King's ideas on foreign policy, helped to reshape African American consciousness by providing a link between Africa and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the pan-Africanist movements of the 1980s. His views on apartheid forced the issue onto the national stage of American politics and increased national and worldwide attention on the issue.

TransAfrica's Randall Robinson, Congressman Walter Fauntroy, Civil Rights Commission member Mary Frances Berry, and law professor Eleanor Holmes Norton entered the South African consulate's office on November 21, 1984. They met with the consular and presented their case that all South African political prisoners be released. Afterwards, they occupied the meeting room and refused to leave until their demands were met. They were subsequently arrested. This event led to the formation of the Free South Africa Movement, which brought the issue of apartheid home and declared constructive engagement a failure. There were numerous sit-ins and demonstrations outside the South African embassy, at other federal buildings throughout the country, at businesses with South African interests, and at coin shops that sold the gold Krugerrand. Numerous celebrities and officials participated in these demonstrations and sit-ins including Harry Belafonte, Detroit mayor Coleman Young, Coretta Scott King, Jesse Jackson, Amy Carter, and Gloria Steinem. This movement spread to hundreds of colleges and universities and included a coalition of church, student, civil rights, and women's groups. These actions represented a surge in antiapartheid grassroots activism, and more than 5,000 people were arrested across the country within one year. *Time* magazine and the *Washington Post* compared the new antiapartheid activism with



the tactics used during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. This increased activity influenced Congress to adopt the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986 over President Reagan's veto. Before passage of this Act, Representative William Gray of Pennsylvania sponsored a similar bill in the House that called for the cessation of all loans and investment in South Africa and imposed hefty fines and jail time for individuals who ignored the law.

The increase in state violence in South Africa was brought into American living rooms on the evening news, further fueling antiapartheid activists. On the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, police opened fire on a funeral procession held to bury three black South Africans who had been killed the week before. Nineteen funeral-goers were killed on that day alone and no less than 400 youth had been killed within a 12-month period. The Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) protest continued outside of the South African embassy every weekday for eight months. These protests and high-profile arrest of former first daughter, Amy Carter, two of Robert Kennedy's children, and Coretta Scott King focused the national spotlight on South African repression. Before the FSAM demonstrations, many Americans knew little about apartheid.

During this time, Jesse Jackson traveled around the country addressing colleges and universities about the importance of the antiapartheid movement. While he visited Princeton University, a sit-in was in progress. Jackson attacked the university administration for refusing to divest financial holdings in South Africa. Similar scenes played out at Harvard University and Rutgers University in New Jersey. Jackson further fought apartheid by touring the front-line states, addressing the United Nations, popularizing the issue of sanctions, and raising awareness about the impact of apartheid. Jackson was very outspoken toward the Reagan administration for their failure to abandon constructive engagement and spoke of the deaths, tortures, and imprisonments perpetrated by the apartheid regime. His efforts played an important role in pressuring Congress to pass the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. Fourteen years earlier, this act was originally sponsored by California Representative Ronald Dellums, an antiapartheid activist and member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Dellums was at the center of the African American antiapartheid struggle and cleverly used the legislative machinery, finally gaining a victory with the passage of the act. In 1988, the act was modified and included broader new trade restrictions

that eventually took its toll on the South African economy, essentially blocking economic growth. As a result, political prisoners were released, including Nelson Mandela who had been imprisoned for over a quarter of a century. Mandela would go on to become the first freely elected president in the new South Africa, closing the chapter on apartheid and the African American antiapartheid movement.

*See also:* Ashe, Arthur; Congressional Black Caucus; Jackson, Jesse; King, Coretta Scott; King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Pan-Africanism; X, Malcolm

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## Antilynching Campaign

Between 1882 and 1968, at least 4,743 people, including around 3,450 African Americans, were lynched in America. In the single year of 1892, which marked lynching's peak, at least 230 black people were killed (Brundage, 4). But that year also marked the beginning of the country's first sustained antilynching campaign. Three of the men who died in 1892 were friends of the Memphis-based journalist Ida B. Wells.

Wells began to investigate the lynchings of the previous decade and wrote a controversial editorial challenging the concept that the assault of white women by African American men was at the core of these acts by white mobs. She followed the editorial with a pamphlet, *Southern Horrors*, which discussed consensual interracial sex, connected lynching to slavery, and advocated black boycotts of white

businesses, armed self-protection, migration, and legislative action. In another antilynching pamphlet, she asked readers to support the Blair Bill, a resolution coming before the House of Representatives in August 1894.

She continued her work into the 20th century, and, in 1909, she helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which launched its own antilynching campaign. Led by Walter White, who personally investigated more than 40 lynchings, the association amassed vast amounts of lynching data. From 1916 onward its Anti-Lynching Committee developed legislative and public awareness campaigns, and in 1919 it documented the deaths of 3,224 people in a 30-year period. Throughout the early 1920s, it advertised lynching statistics in national newspapers and lobbied for the passage of the federal Dyer Bill, which proposed to punish anyone who participated in a lynching or who failed to prosecute lynchers.

Introduced in 1918 and passed by the House in January 1922, the bill was halted by a filibuster in the Senate. But one important legacy of the failed bill was the organizational model of the Anti-Lynching Crusaders. Established in 1922, this group of black women within the NAACP raised money to promote the Dyer Bill and attempted to unite black and white women around a renewed antilynching effort. After the death of the bill, the Anti-Lynching Crusaders' model was taken up by Jessie Daniel Ames's Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL).

On November 1, 1930, Ames held a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, for southern white women who wanted to help end lynching. This was an important role, she explained, because lynching was frequently justified in their name, as a method of protecting them from rape. Women from seven of the southeastern states attended the meeting and on November 6, another group of women—from



Members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) New York City Youth Council picketing for anti-lynching legislation before the Strand Theatre in Times Square in 1937. (Library of Congress)

Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas—joined with Ames’s group to create a South-wide movement. The newly formed association launched an informational campaign condemning lynching and disavowing the notion of “protection” for white womanhood. They followed this with outreach efforts, asking sheriffs to protect the rule of law. Within their communities, southern white women congregated wherever a lynching was rumored to take place and tried to prevent it from unfolding.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall notes that the ASWPL was deeply subversive to the southern social and sexual hierarchy. By speaking out, its members overturned the patriarchal order that had kept white women in their place and in need of white male “protection.” And although results are impossible to quantify with any precision, the ASWPL may have contributed to a 50 percent reduction in the incidence of lynching by 1938. Membership had reached 40,000 by 1939.

Other activism during the 1930s included the campaign to pass the Costigan-Wagner Bill of 1935, led by the NAACP. The bill’s text was the same as the Dyer bill, proposing fines and imprisonment for any governmental body that failed to protect an individual from a mob. Some campaigners felt these proposals did not go far enough, and so a coalition of left-wing organizations, including The League of Struggle for Negro Rights, proposed its own legislation—a “Bill for Negro Rights.” This made lynching punishable by death and outlawed the Ku Klux Klan. It garnered little support and Congress also failed to pass the Costigan-Wagner Bill. The 200 other antilynching bills introduced between 1882 and 1968 met the same fate.

Yet while their lobbying efforts failed, antilynching campaigners did succeed in challenging both the gender dynamics surrounding lynching (including the stereotype of the black male as a sexual beast) and the white supremacist notion of racially redemptive violence. The legacy of antilynching campaigning was further evident in 2005, when the Senate finally passed a resolution related to lynching. Summarizing the long history of antilynching campaigns, the Senate went on to issue an apology to lynching victims for its own failure to enact antilynching legislation. *See also:* Du Bois, W. E. B.; Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; National Association of Colored Women; Terrell, Mary Church; Wells-Barnett, Ida; White, Walter

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## Asante, Molefi Kete

Molefi Kete Asante (1942–), scholar, author, and Afrocentric theorist, was born Arthur Lee Smith Jr. in Valdosta, Georgia. The oldest of 16 children, he is the first born son of Lillie Wilkson and Arthur L. Smith. As a child in the small southern town of Valdosta, Asante witnessed firsthand the social injustices perpetrated against black people under a system of de jure segregation. A racist encounter at the age of 11 left an indelible mark on his childhood memories and was the beginning of his quest to end racism and discrimination.

A precocious and gifted child, Asante showed his academic capabilities early in life. Fully cognizant of the suffering around him and mindful of the stories told to him about the powerful role of family and ancestors, Asante often used his intellectual gifts to aid others. His superior academic achievements earned him acceptance at the Nashville Christian Institute. Located in Nashville, Tennessee, it was one of a handful of black boarding schools in the United States dedicated to developing academic excellence in black children. After graduation in 1960, Asante enrolled in Southwestern Christian College. He remained there for two years before transferring to Oklahoma Christian College where he received his BA in Communication in 1964. He received an MA in Communication in 1965 from Pepperdine University, and, in 1968, the PhD from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

Asante’s academic career began in 1968 with his first appointment, albeit brief, at Purdue University as an assistant professor of communication. In 1969, he returned to UCLA to accept the position of associate professor of communication and director of the Center for Afro-American

Studies. During this period Asante began to re-create himself as an African-centered scholar dedicated to the study of black people. Asante played an instrumental role in the establishment of the masters program in African American Studies at UCLA and served as co-founder of the *Journal of Black Studies*. In 1976, before his move to Buffalo, New York (SUNY) to accept the position as professor and chair of the Department of Communication, he legally changed his name from Arthur Smith to Molefi, “keeper of the traditions” in Sotho, Kete, lover of music in Akan, and Asante, a general surname among the Akan.

From 1977 to 1979, Asante served as chair of SUNY’s Department of Black Studies, an opportunity that undoubtedly played a role in his decision to switch career focus from communications to African American Studies. He often refers to this decision as indicative of his ability to commit “discipline suicide.” Asante believed that this was a critical and necessary choice. Although many colleges and universities appointed faculty to positions in black studies during the formative years of program development, none possessed the traditional prerequisite of a PhD in the discipline. This contributed to a high level of role confusion, as many faculty members straddled the fence, attempting to generate significant scholarly activity in two separate disciplines. Asante rejected this dichotomous confusion.

With the 1980 publication of *Afrocentricity*, his transformation was complete. In this critical work he puts forth his theory based on self-conscious cultural awareness of African-ascended people. Asante rejected the Eurocentric hegemony of Western culture and insisted on recognizing the existence of African epistemologies that existed before European dominance. He built on the works of Carter G. Woodson, Cheikh Anta Diop, Maulana Karenga, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Marcus Garvey. Advocating the need for an African-centered approach to knowledge, understanding, and being would be the focus of his life’s work. It was Asante’s appointment as chair of the Department of African American Studies at Temple University in 1984, however, that would alter the face of the discipline and gain him national recognition as a leader in the field.

Under Asante’s leadership, Temple University created the world’s first PhD program in African American Studies in 1988. Its instant popularity was astounding, demonstrating the thirst for knowledge about the African American experience at the most advanced level of study. The

program attracted hundreds of students from within the United States and around the world. It also drew heavy criticism from those who challenged its validity as a legitimate field of academic inquiry. Asante’s emergence as the pre-eminent Afrocentric scholar drew praise and controversy. He was seen as a visionary by some and was demonized by others. Asante’s views were also frequently attacked by scholars within the discipline who questioned his advocacy of Africology as the primary foundation for the study of African people. Asante ended his chairmanship in 1997, but he remains on the faculty as professor of African American Studies.

With hundreds of publications in the form of books, articles, essays, and editorials, Asante has gained worldwide recognition. He has lectured on college and university campuses throughout the world. Several of his most important works have been translated into French, Portuguese, and Spanish. One of the highest forms of recognition came in 1993 when he was honored as a traditional king of Ghana, Nana Okru Asante Peasah, Kyidomhene of Tafo, in a public ceremony in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

An activist scholar, Asante remains committed to the empowerment and liberation of African people. He has distinguished himself as one of the foremost African-centered scholars and intellectuals of the 20th and 21st centuries. *See also:* Afrocentricity; National Council for Black Studies

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## Ashe, Arthur

Arthur Robert Ashe Jr. (1943–1993) was a tennis champion, author, and activist known equally for his accomplishments off the court as on. Ashe was born in Richmond, Virginia, and grew up next to the city’s largest playground for the black community and ultimately learned to play tennis there. His tennis playing began to attract attention and his tennis coach Ronald Charity arranged for Ashe to spend the summer with Dr. Walter Johnson, tennis champion Althea Gibson’s coach.

After attending segregated schools and competing in segregated tournaments, Ashe transferred to an integrated high school in St. Louis during his senior year. An "A" student who graduated first in his class, Ashe accepted a tennis scholarship to UCLA in 1962. At 20, Ashe was selected to the U.S. Davis Cup team, becoming the first African American on the team. Ashe stayed with the team until 1970 but returned in 1975, 1976, and 1978. He won 27 of 32 cup matches, more than any other American to that point.

In 1965, Ashe helped the Bruins capture the NCAA title by winning the singles tournament. One year later, Ashe graduated from UCLA with a BS in business administration. He then went to West Point to serve a two-year Army commitment as an officer, eventually attaining the rank of second lieutenant. In 1968, while still an amateur, Ashe defeated Tom Okker of the Netherlands to win the U.S. Open men's singles title. The victory made Ashe the first American to win the title since 1955, as well as the first African American to win a men's title at a Grand Slam. Because he was still an amateur, however, he could not collect the prize money totaling \$14,000.

One year later, Ashe, along with Charlie Pasarell and Sheridan Synder, established the United State Tennis Association's National Junior Tennis League to introduce tennis to and help develop inner-city tennis players. Ashe won his second Grand Slam, the Australian Open, by defeating Australian Dick Crealy in 1970. At that time Ashe, who was the top-ranked American in the world, applied for a visa to play in the South African Open, but his visa application was denied because he was black. Ashe called for South Africa's expulsion from the tennis tour to protest the country's system of apartheid. The call gained widespread support from both inside and outside the tennis world. Three years later, Ashe was granted a visa and became the first black professional player in South Africa's national championships.

In 1975, Ashe won his last Grand Slam single's title when he upset defending champion Jimmy Connors at Wimbledon, making him the first African American male to win that title. Partially because of the win, Ashe became the No. 1 ranked tennis player in the world. Two years later, Ashe married Jeanne Moutoussamy, a photographer he had met during a tennis tournament.

Ashe suffered a heart attack in July 1979 and underwent quadruple bypass surgery five months later. He retired the next year with a professional record of 818–260 and 51 titles.

Despite the retirement, Ashe continued to stay involved with professional tennis, serving as the Davis Cup captain in 1980. He coached the team from 1981–85. His activism also continued; he served as national chairman of the American Heart Association in 1981. One year later Ashe underwent a double bypass surgery.

In 1985, Ashe was inducted into the Tennis Hall of Fame just months after being arrested outside the South African embassy in Washington during an antiapartheid protest. In 1988, Ashe authored and published the three-volume *A Hard Road to Glory*, which chronicles the history of African American athletes in the United States. That same year, Ashe was hospitalized and learned that he was HIV-positive. His exposure was traced to a blood transfusion received after his double bypass surgery.

In April 1992, believing *USA Today* was about to report that he was HIV-positive, Ashe called a press conference and made the announcement himself. Five months later while protesting the U.S. crackdown on Haitian refugees, Ashe was arrested outside the White House. On World AIDS Day, Ashe addressed the United Nations General Assembly and pled with the delegates to boost funding for AIDS research and to increase knowledge of the disease and its effects. He was later named *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsman of the Year.

On February 6, 1993, Ashe died of AIDS-related pneumonia in New York at the age of 49. His body lay in state in Richmond where it was viewed by more than 5,000 people. Ashe is the first person to lie in state at the governor's mansion since Confederate General Stonewall Jackson in 1863. In 1996, on what would have been his 53rd birthday, a statue of Ashe was dedicated on Richmond's Monument Avenue. Ashe is depicted carrying books in one hand and a tennis racket in the other. In 1997, the U.S. Tennis Association announced that its centerpiece tennis center would be named in Ashe's honor. In 2005, the U.S. Postal Service honored Ashe with a postage stamp.

*See also:* Antiapartheid Movement; Black Athletes

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## Association for the Study of African American Life and History

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The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is one of the oldest African American professional organizations today. Its continued existence is owed to the extraordinary efforts of its founder, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the second African American to earn a doctorate in history from Harvard University in 1912. The Association's goal is to research, promote, publish, preserve, interpret, and disseminate scholarly information on the history and culture of people of African descent to a global audience. It counts among its members both academic scholars and history buffs. The organization is responsible for founding a scholarly journal, a publication for primary and secondary educators, and a publishing press; but it is probably best known for creating Black History Month, a national celebration of African American history and achievement during the month of February.

Carter G. Woodson, assisted by four others, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH, later known as Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History or ASALH) on September 9, 1915 in Chicago, but its headquarters were in Washington, D.C. Its mission was to conduct historical research; publish books on African American life and history; promote its work through black colleges, fraternal organizations, public schools, and churches; and collect and preserve historical documents. An executive council governed the organization and George Cleveland Hall, a physician and civic leader, served as the first president. As executive director, Woodson would single handedly guide and direct the organization as it sought to establish the scientific study of the history and culture of people of African descent as a legitimate endeavor at a time when African Americans were denied their citizenship rights.

The association worked to counter the misrepresentations of African Americans by teaching black folks that they had a history to be proud of while demonstrating to whites that people of African descent made major contributions to the history and culture of the United States and the world. Although the ASNLH, with its devotion to an accurate and truthful rendering of the black past, largely through the efforts of Woodson, did not have a specific political agenda, it could be viewed as an organization of social activism, as it worked incessantly to bolster black pride while eroding white prejudice.

To provide an outlet for the research of Woodson and other scholars of African American history, the Association founded the *Journal of Negro History* on January 1, 1916, with Woodson as editor until his death on April 3, 1950. The journal would be largely responsible for establishing the study of black history and culture as a legitimate field of inquiry, publishing the work of reputable scholars—black and white, male and female, in a range of disciplines—from its inception. Although most of its focus was on African Americans, it did publish articles on Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Starting in 1917, the ASNLH also held annual conferences, usually in October, to bring together scholars to present research papers on various topics to promote both scholarly and popular interest.

One of the association's main goals was to reach a wider audience, particularly young people, and toward that end, it created the event that it is best known for. Taken from the annual celebration of Negro Achievement Week begun in 1924 by Woodson's fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the Association established Negro History Week in 1926 during the month of February to incorporate the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, two important figures in African American history, and developed an overall theme for each yearly celebration. The response was tremendous, and branches of the association sprang up across the country to provide history enthusiasts a link to the organization. The association also established the Associated Publishers in 1921 to publish historical materials and in 1937 created the *Negro History Bulletin* as a tool of instruction for primary and secondary teachers.

After Woodson's death, the association continued to grow. Owing to increased black consciousness, the organization changed its name to the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) in 1972 and Negro History Week became Black History Month in 1976.

Later on, the name was further changed to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the *Journal of Negro History* became the *Journal of African American History* in 2002, and the *Negro History Bulletin* renamed the *Black History Bulletin*. Several prominent African Americans held important positions in the organization during Woodson's tenure and after, and helped to establish the association as the premier African American historical organization, including Mary McLeod Bethune, John Hope, Rayford Logan, Charles Wesley, M. Sammye Miller, Robert Harris Jr., and Bettye Gardner.

Today, the association, still headquartered in Washington, D.C., is under the leadership of President Dr. John Fleming and Executive Director Sylvia Cyrus-Albritton. The *Journal of African American History* is under the editorship of Dr. V. P. Franklin and the *Black History Bulletin* is co-edited by Dr. Alicia L. Moore and Dr. La Vonne I. Neal. It has published the *Woodson Review*, a magazine on the National Black History Theme, since 2005.

*See also:* Woodson, Carter Godwin

*Tony Gass*

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## Atlanta, Georgia, Riot of 1906

The genesis of the Atlanta riot of 1906 lay in the vituperative racist gubernatorial campaign of that year. The two principal candidates, Hoke Smith and Clark Howell, seemed to try to outdo each other in their race-baiting. Already negative white public opinion had been aroused by a series of unconfirmed reports in the city newspapers of physical assaults on white women by black men. Additional racial tensions had surfaced because of increased competition between black and white men for jobs during a period of economic recession.

As tensions grew, both races began to fear an open confrontation. The black mortician, David T. Morgan, for

example, smuggled a box of weapons into the city from Chicago in a casket. The actual riot began on the evening of September 22, 1906, in the red-light district of Decatur Street near downtown Atlanta. This was an area frequented by both poor blacks and whites, lured by bars, gambling, prostitution, and other vices. On that evening, a mob of whites paraded through the streets, attacking unsuspecting blacks who were either shopping or traveling through the area. The riot continued for three days, eventually spreading to black residential sections in the southeast, northeast, and southwest quadrants of the city.

When the mob approached the Darktown portion of northeast Atlanta, near the black business district on Auburn Avenue, George White, a black postman and father of future NAACP leader, Walter White, secured weapons and waited in anxious anticipation with his family. As the mob stopped at the White home, the son of a white grocer with whom the black family had done business pointed out where White and his family lived and urged the mob to set fire to the house. George White, then turned to his 13-year-old son, Walter, and told him to shoot the first man to step foot on their lawn. But as the mob moved toward the house, the Whites' neighbors fired and drove them away. The white mob retreated toward downtown.

On their way toward Darktown, the rioters had passed the black First Congregational Church at Houston and Courtland streets. The church's pastor, the Reverend Hugh Proctor, saw the mob as it came into the churchyard. A number of children were sheltered in the parsonage nearby. But the whites scattered when some of the black residents shot out the streetlights.

In southeast Atlanta, in an area called Brownsville, a panic developed as a white mob approached. Several of the residents sought refuge in the Gammon Theological Seminary. On the first night there, many sat up all night praying. The school's president, John W. E. Bowen, later said that he had not been able to sleep for several days in anticipation of the arrival of the mob. On Sunday, he called for police protection, but none was provided. On Monday evening, a squad of county police did arrive, and, even though there had been no trouble reported at the time, they arrested blacks, with the aid of several white citizens, for carrying weapons illegally. During one of these incidents, one white policeman was killed, another was wounded, and several blacks were killed or injured. Although the blacks contended that they had fired on the officers because they mistook them for

a mob in the darkness, some were charged with murder. At least two were shot in police custody.

Because of the riot in Brownsville, Clark University delayed its fall opening, which probably served to prevent a dangerous altercation between the mob and black college students. Similarly, on the city's west side, area blacks clustered in refuge with President John Hope at Morehouse College, but the mob was driven away from the campus by neighbors before a melee developed. Nevertheless, President Bowen of Gammon, one of the city's most influential black leaders, was beaten over the head with a rifle-butt by a police officer.

When state and local police, with the aid of a rain-storm and dissipated energies, finally brought turmoil to an end, the best estimates were that at least 25 blacks had been killed, 150 seriously injured, and a thousand had fled the city. At least 2 whites were killed and 10 wounded. W. E. B. Du Bois and others, however, placed the number of black and white casualties much higher and contended that the riot produced at least 5,000 black refugees. The higher white death toll is partially attributed to a statement by the black mortician Howard that no one had an idea of the number of white casualties, as he had been forced to bury an untold number of whites in the black cemetery. This was done to conceal the number of whites being killed by blacks during the course of the riot.

The riot profoundly affected the individual and collective lives of all Atlantans, particularly black Atlantans. Many black families, who were terrified and left unprotected, sold their homes, often at great sacrifices, and fled to the North and West. Labor remained scarce and wages high in Atlanta because of the riot. The roles of such men as Hope at Morehouse and Bowen at Gammon increased their stature in the black communities and fostered closer relations between the colleges and their neighbors. A similar enhancement of influence was accorded to the Reverend Proctor and his First Congregational Church. It became known as the "church that saved a city." But for Walter White, the events produced a transformation of his entire life. For although he had blue eyes and blond hair and only a fraction of African American blood, he came to know, in the wake of the riot, who he really was—a black man who could be marked for indiscriminate murder by whites. And so, despite his white features, he decided in those hours of racial warfare in Atlanta to cast his lot with the Negro race and to do what he could for its elevation and liberation. He became active

in the local NAACP, then assistant secretary in the national office of the civil rights organization, and finally executive secretary from 1931 until his death in 1955. During these years he used his pale complexion to infiltrate the ranks of white lynchers and later exposed the perpetrators to law enforcement authorities.

The calamitous events of the early fall of 1906 also had a sobering and beneficial, if only a temporary, effect on white attitudes and race relations, generally, in Atlanta. The Journalist Ray Stannard Baker, who traveled to the city immediately after the riot, found that the most important and far-reaching effect of the tragedy was that it aroused the white men of the city. Some of these men first met at the Piedmont Hotel on the Sunday after the first rioting and then again at the county courthouse Tuesday afternoon following the news from Brownsville. They resolved that the rioting must stop. Among those in attendance was Sam D. Jones, president of the local chamber of commerce, and Charles T. Hopkins, a businessman. Hopkins decried the financial damage that the events had created in the city.

While Hopkins's statements were replete with paternalism, they represented, at the time, a major metamorphosis in prevailing white attitudes and was a foundation on which better racial harmony could be built. Hopkins's extension of the olive branch on behalf of whites was first met by Dr. W. F. Penn, a prominent black physician, who had graduated from Yale College. He told a meeting of concerned whites of his own experience during the riot. A group of white men, some of whose families he had treated professionally, came to his house to search for weapons. His young daughter had run to them and begged them not to shoot her father. Later, however, a mob appeared, threatened the family, and forced them from their home. He credited a white man passing in an automobile for saving their own lives.

The pleading and conciliatory tone of the Penn speech, which was received as profound, inspired the ex-Confederate veteran and real estate man, Colonel A. J. McBride to stand up and vow that Atlanta would protect such "good" black men as Dr. Penn. Colonel McBride stated that he would even defend such men with his own rifle. Amid these warm feelings, exemplified by the words of Hopkins, Penn, and McBride, Hopkins proposed that the white people of the city express their deep regret for the riot and show their sympathy for the blacks who had suffered at the hands of the mob by raising money to assist them. A total of \$4,423



was pledged immediately and the city government later added an additional \$1,000.

The group then turned its attention to reconstruction and prevention of a recurrence of racial violence in the city. A committee consisting of some of the most influential men in the city was appointed to work with public officials in restoring order and confidence. Among them were Charles Hopkins and Sam Jones; L. Z. Rossen, president of the board of education; J. W. English, a bank president; Forrest Adair, a leading realtor; W. D. Ellis, an attorney; A. B. Steele, a wealthy lumberman; M. L. Collier, a railroad executive; and H. Y. McCord, a wholesale grocer. Shortly after its formation, this group sent for several of the most prominent black leaders in the city, including Reverend Hugh Proctor, Benjamin Davis, and the Reverends E. P. Johnson, E. R. Carter, J. A. Rush, and Lucius Holsey.

The meeting of the representatives of the two races, the first important occasion in the South on which an attempt was made to get blacks and whites together for any serious consideration of their differences, began with the whites asking the blacks: "What shall we do to relieve the irritation?" Blacks replied that they thought that they were treated with unnecessary roughness on the streetcars by the police. The whites admitted that the claim was justified and promised to take the matter up immediately with the streetcar company and the police department.

From this beginning, Hopkins invited 2,000 additional, influential local whites to join the efforts of racial peace; 1,500 accepted immediately, only two refused outright, and those "anonymously." Five hundred more men, who were not initially invited, asked to join and were accepted. The enlarged group became formally known as the Atlanta Civic League. At the same time, Reverend Proctor and the committee of blacks recruited 1,500 for the "Coloured Co-operative Civic League." Small subcommittees from each group were then appointed to meet together to further the cause of racial goodwill and law and order.

There was some fear, however, that the merriment of the Christmas season might lead to a renewal of racial violence. With the encouragement of the leagues, strenuous preventive efforts were instituted. New policemen were hired and municipal judges Broylee and Roan warned against lawlessness. The leagues secured promises from the local press that it would not publish "sensational news," and they asked that saloons be closed at 4 P.M. on Christmas Eve. Black league members made a special effort to keep members of their

race off the streets. The success of the leagues influenced and inspired other movements for improved race relations. Several white ministers promoted the effort in letters to the *Atlanta Constitution*. The newspaper's editor and former gubernatorial candidate, Clark Howell, responded with a conciliatory editorial entitled, "Shall We Blaze the Trail?" Ex-Governor W. J. Northern called a prayer meeting, attended by 20 whites and 20 blacks, at the black Butler Street YMCA and traveled throughout the state speaking in favor of law and order. He condemned mob violence, including lynching, and predicted that racial problems would not be resolved until African Americans had full justice. The belief that saloons, dives, and other places of vice had contributed to the riot helped to inspire the antisaloon campaign, which took place throughout the state in 1907. The success of this movement led to the temporary closing of every saloon in the state of Georgia on the first of January, 1908.

It is clear, then, that the short-range effects of the riot were generally positive, in the sense that white leaders throughout the state, but especially in Atlanta, seemed to cast aside old prejudices to work for racial harmony and for civil peace. Not all segments of white Atlanta and white Georgia were repentant, but the attitudes and actions of Governor Northern, Governor-Elect Hoke Smith, Editor Clark Howell, Charles Hopkins, and Colonel McBride seemed more representative of white opinion than that of the *Atlanta Evening News*. This newspaper, which had helped ferment the riot, declared in an end-of-the-year editorial that black men who attacked white women will know the vengeance of whites—a not so subtle threat to lynch black men.

As to the lasting consequences of the riot and the reconstruction, it can be said that Atlanta never again witnessed such a distinctive occurrence, even during the racial turmoil of the 1960s. It can also be said, however, that the problems of racial segregation, racial equality, and political rights were barely touched by either the white or black reformers. Most of the whites seemed content with the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which upheld segregated public facilities for the races; and among the blacks, there were serious divisions among the leaders as to the wisdom of mounting assaults, vocal or otherwise, against Jim Crow.

See also: Disfranchisement; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Jim Crow; White, Walter; White Mob Violence

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## Baker, Ella

Ella Baker (1903–1986) was one of the most influential African Americans in the Civil Rights movement of the 20th century. Born in Norfolk, Virginia, on December 13, 1903, Baker worked throughout her 83 years of life to advance the position of African Americans. An African American herself, Baker worked as both an organizer and an activist in well-known civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).

Baker moved to North Carolina in 1911. Seven years later, she entered Shaw University in Raleigh. In 1927, she graduated valedictorian of her class. Although Baker wanted to enter graduate school, her financial situation would not allow it. She instead moved to Harlem, New York. While there, Baker became actively involved in organizing and promoting the advancement of African Americans. From 1929 to 1932, she was a member of the editorial staffs of the *American West Indian News* and the *Negro National News*. During the Great Depression she accepted a position with the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

In 1938, Baker began working with one of the most renowned civil rights organizations in the country—the NAACP. By 1942, she was named national director of all the NAACP branches. It was in this position that Baker greatly expanded her contacts within the African American community. In 1946, however, she left the national office over a conflict of interests. Baker felt that the NAACP was overly concerned with the opinions and recognition of whites and middle-class blacks. She, on the other hand, thought more attention needed to be given to the lower class black masses.

Although Baker removed herself from the national office, she remained involved on the local level. In 1954, she became president of the New York City branch of the NAACP. As president she aimed to bring the movement back to the masses.

In the mid-1950s, Baker, along with A. Phillip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Stanley Levinson, formed In Friendship, a New York-based organization that provided economic assistance for disadvantaged blacks in the South. After the eruption of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, following Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus, In Friendship worked to raise funds for the Montgomery efforts. When the boycott ended with the Supreme Court's decision to desegregate transportation, In Friendship united with several other newly created civil rights organizations to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Baker became the first full-time executive director of the SCLC. Her involvement in the organization, however, was short lived. As with the NAACP, Baker did not feel she fit in with the SCLC. The organization was primarily composed of clergy. Baker, as a woman, and an older woman at that, knew she had little place within the organization for leadership roles. Furthermore, Baker disliked the leadership style of the SCLC. Baker believed that civil rights organizations should be group centered. The SCLC, like the NAACP, was more individual centered.

Baker's role with the SCLC allowed her to assist in the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In the late 1950s, the sit-in movement erupted among black college students throughout the South. Initially many of the sit-ins were disconnected; Baker used the numerous contacts she had made through the NAACP and SCLC to bring the detached demonstrations together. In 1960, Baker convinced the SCLC to sponsor a meeting of student activists at her alma mater, Shaw University. The NAACP, SCLC, and Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) all sent representatives to the meeting. The meeting culminated with the creation of SNCC, with Baker as its primary advisor. Other civil rights organizations, like the NAACP, SCLC, and CORE, all wanted in on the action, but Baker worked to keep the students in SNCC independent of other adult civil rights organizations. By 1961, SNCC had become the organization that Baker had been trying to create for several years. Unlike the SCLC, SNCC allowed for the active participation of women and young people. Unlike the NAACP, SNCC took civil rights back to the masses. Most



*Ella Baker, an active member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was one of the most important civil rights leaders of the 1960s. (Library of Congress)*

important, SNCC's leadership, unlike either the SCLC or NAACP, was group centered.

Baker remained actively involved with SNCC over the next few years. In 1964, she helped to organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). The MFDP sought to combat the disenfranchisement of African Americans in the South. The organization forced the Democratic Party to elect many black leaders in Mississippi. Baker remained involved in the Civil Rights movement until her death on December 13, 1986.

Ella Baker will forever be remembered for her contributions to the advancement of African Americans. More than anything else, she believed in the power of the masses to organize and demand change. Throughout her life, Baker was the organizational factor behind many of the civil rights organizations of the 1950s and 1960s. She never wanted to make a name for herself, but rather, wished to enlarge the

Civil Rights movement and bring freedom to her fellow African Americans. Baker's contributions to the advancement of African Americans are immeasurable. She worked with the NAACP in the 1940s, the SCLC in the 1950s, and SNCC and the MFDP in the 1960s. With each organization she enlarged the Civil Rights movement and advanced the African American struggle for freedom and equality.

*See also:* Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture); Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

*Mindy R. Weidman*

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## **Baldwin, James**

Once regarded as the heir to Richard Wright, the preeminent African American novelist, James Baldwin (1924–1987) did not sustain his early achievement. Today, he may be most remembered as an essayist, in particular for several collections of essays published in the 1950s and 1960s that made him one of the most important literary spokespersons for the Civil Rights movement.

Born in Harlem, Baldwin was adopted by his stepfather, a factory worker named David Baldwin, when he was still very young. Although Baldwin would be much influenced by his stepfather's avocation as a street-corner evangelist, they had a very troubled relationship that left scars on Baldwin's sense of self-esteem. His experiences in school had a more salutary effect. From an early age, he had escaped into the local library and into the books that he read voraciously. At Frederick Douglass Junior High School, one of Baldwin's teachers and early mentor's was the poet Countee Cullen, who encouraged the thoughtful reader to become a committed writer. At Frederick Douglass and at DeWitt Clinton High School, Baldwin would publish his first stories and essays in the school newspapers.

During his teens, Baldwin also became a popular preacher at the Fireside Pentecostal Assembly. The leader of

this storefront church in Harlem was Mother Horn, whose influence on Baldwin was profound. Whereas his stepfather had stressed the fear of divine retribution, Mother Horn emphasized the beneficent effects of divine love and Christian fellowship. In addition, Baldwin's experience as a preacher would show itself in the biblical cadences in much of his writing, especially his essays.

After high school, Baldwin moved to New Jersey, where he worked on a construction crew and, for the first time, was exposed for sustained periods to virulent racism. His stepfather's death in an asylum coincided with the outbreak of terrible rioting in Harlem, and this combination of family and public traumas compelled Baldwin to commit himself to his writing. He began living in Greenwich Village, where his exposure to the Bohemian lifestyle and radical activism awakened hedonistic and political impulses in him that would be every bit as intense as his earlier religious fervor.

Baldwin's literary career really began with his receiving the Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Trust Award, on the recommendation of Richard Wright. As his first essays and stories began to appear in magazines, he started to work on his first novel. His progress was slowed by personal issues, primarily his struggle to accept his homosexuality after his relationship with a woman had led to their formal engagement. In the wake of the end of that relationship, Baldwin followed Wright to France. There, as he established relationships with all sorts of writers and artists, his relationship with Wright soured, and for much of his subsequent career, Baldwin would be very conscious of trying to step out of Wright's shadow.

Baldwin's first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), was a pointedly autobiographical coming-of-age story. Powerfully immediate and intimate, this debut effort is considered by many critics to be Baldwin's most fully realized novel. Set on a single day that provides a microcosm of a family's life together, the novel focuses on the strained relationship between a preacher with a hard temperament and his teenage stepson.

As the Civil Rights movement gathered momentum, Baldwin was inspired to write some of the seminal essays on race in America collected in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (1961), and *The Fire Next Time* (1963). In these essays, Baldwin managed to combine eloquent and incisive insight with a deep sense of personal and communal rage

as he exposed the pernicious causes and effects of the continuing social, economic, political, and cultural oppression of African Americans. He warned white America that the extended quest for equality had very nearly exhausted the patience of African Americans and had pushed them to a revolutionary edge.

In his second novel, *Giovanni's Room* (1956), Baldwin created a sensation with his unsparing exploration of issues of identity related to both race and sexual orientation. After Knopf refused to publish it, the novel was published first in the United Kingdom and then picked up by Dial in the United States. The novel draws on Baldwin's own complicated personal relationships before he emigrated to France, but it is set among expatriates in France and Spain.

Baldwin's later novels include *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968), *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974), *Just above My Head* (1979), and *Harlem Quartet* (1987). His short stories are collected in *Going to Meet the Man* (1965), and his best-known plays are *The Amen Corner* (1955) and *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964).

Over the last two decades of his life, Baldwin continued to produce work in a variety of genres. But increasingly he seemed a prematurely anachronistic figure. In the course of the social revolution of the 1960s, the political and sexual radicalism that he had given voice to in the 1950s suddenly seemed quite dated, even tame. Having spent much of his career trying to step out of Richard Wright's shadow, Baldwin now found himself in the uncomfortable position of seeing his later work overshadowed by his earlier work

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Wright, Richard

Martin Kich

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## Baraka, Amiri

Amiri Baraka (1934–) is a writer who is perhaps best known as the founder of the black arts movement. Born as Leroy Jones on October 7, 1934, in a lower middle-class neighborhood of Newark, New Jersey, he attended predominately white public schools, then Rutgers University and Howard University, before beginning military service in the U.S. Air Force in 1954. After his release from the military in 1957, he attended graduate school and moved to New York's Greenwich Village, where he met and married a white woman, Hettie Cohen. The couple went on to have two daughters. Baraka lived in the Village from 1957 to 1965, working as an editor, poet, dramatist, and jazz critic. He befriended numerous beat writers, including Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara, and established a beat magazine called *Yugen*. As part of the Village's bohemian, avant-garde crowd, he published his first major collection of poetry, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* (1961). Throughout these poems, Baraka drew on the styles of the beat poets to combine stream of consciousness, projective free verse, and dialect.

By 1962, he was pulling away from Ginsberg and rejecting the otherworldly poetics of beat writers. In his early poetry, Baraka had meditated on the black man's loneliness. Excluded from white America, he was also disconnected from black Africa, and Baraka laid out that racial isolation. His focus on the existential isolation of African Americans would soon translate into the solution of black nationalism, a nation within a nation, and so a home for black people in white America. In 1964 and 1965, he shifted from introspective, semiautobiographical poetry to forge a collective voice in his work. No longer writing out of lyric self-consciousness, he produced poems of lyrical communism.

By 1965, Baraka was celebrating the African heritage of African Americans. Black Americans have African imaginations, are beautiful, and must embrace blackness as he put it in 1966. He offered a shift from dislocated black American to proud African American, declared a hatred for the black middle class (equating its values with

Euro-American values), and expressed one of the tenets of black nationalism: the assertion of black Americans' identity as a people of African ancestry.

Baraka began to seek out friendships with black nationalists including Stokely Carmichael. Moving to Harlem in the wake of Malcolm's death, he also married a black poet, Sylvia Robinson, in 1967, and the same year converted to Islam. To express this transformation, he changed his name from Leroy Jones to Imamu ("spiritual leader") Amiri ("warrior") Baraka ("sacrifice"). Becoming more and more engaged with black nationalist politics, Baraka assumed leadership of his own black Muslim organization, Kawaida. From 1968 to 1975, he also chaired the Committee for Unified Newark, a Black United Front organization, and he was a prominent figure in the National Black Political Convention of 1972.

The beat poet had become a black nationalist. Baraka believed that art could create this black "Nation" and he challenged black artists to create a "Black Poem" and a "Black World" in his 1966 poem "Black Art." Explaining that he wanted to go beyond mere poetry to achieve literature as action, he called for art that both described the situation of black people *and* showed how to change it. He also formulated a theory of the "theater of assault." Laying out his manifesto for a new kind of theater in 1965, Baraka explained that revolutionary theater should force change and be a political weapon. To its shocked audiences and dazzled critics, Baraka's play *Dutchman* (1964) perhaps seemed just that kind of revolutionary theater. The story of a deathly encounter between a white woman and a black college student, it depicted a seemingly unstoppable race war between black and white Americans. It went on to win an Obie Award, was proclaimed the best play in America by Norman Mailer, and in 2007 it was controversially revived in New York.

In July 1967, Amiri Baraka was arrested for unlawfully carrying a weapon during the Newark Rebellion. The trial judge read Baraka's poem "Black People" (1967) to the all-white jury. "I'm being sentenced for the poem. Is that what you are saying?" responded Baraka. Although not published until *after* the riots, "Black People" seemed a call to violence: "We must make our own World... and we cannot do this unless the white man is dead. Let's get together and kill him" (*The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, p. 224). The poem was admitted as evidence of a plot to ignite violence and on January 4, 1968, Baraka was sentenced to three



*Playwright, poet, and figure in the black arts and Black Power movements, Amiri Baraka leads a delegation of Newark public school students from the State House after the group disrupted a session of the State Senate by leaving the chamber chanting. The students were protesting the legislature's failure to enact a tax plan to fund New Jersey's public schools, May 27, 1975. (Bettmann/Corbis)*

years in New Jersey's state penitentiary and fined \$1,000 (although the conviction was overturned on appeal).

This incident illustrates the longstanding fusion of politics and art at the center of Baraka's work, a canon that encompasses 14 books of poetry, 24 plays, 5 books of essays, 4 anthologies, and a novel. As he explained in a recent interview, "all art is political" and no literature exists in a vacuum. Any suggestion to the contrary is meant "only to have us look away from the real world so that...all's well in the big house while the great majority—slaves, serfs, the generally exploited—suffer out of sight" (*American Protest Literature*, p. 375).

In part because of this insistence on the political nature of art, Baraka is a controversial figure in American literature. Even more controversial is his use of art to advocate violence. As with "Black People," his poems often call for violent action. Not only using art to advocate violence, he

also imagines art *as* violent: in numerous poems he demands that writers be warriors, describes language as a weapon, and fashions poems themselves as daggers, fists, and poison gas.

These calls to violence echo the rhetoric of the black militant leader Malcolm X, as do Baraka's repeated critiques of nonviolence as a continuing with the status quo. In fact, Malcolm's influence on Baraka was profound. Malcolm was killed while speaking in Harlem, on February 21, 1965. Responding to the assassination, Baraka wrote "A Poem for Black Hearts" (1965). Here he celebrates and mourns Malcolm X. Also in response to the assassination, Baraka left his white wife, moved uptown to Harlem from his Greenwich Village home, and embraced black nationalism.

Emphasizing his transformation still further, Baraka published a series of black nationalist poems. His hostility toward all white people appears in numerous other

poems from this period, and his rejection of any cross-racial collaboration was even more evident during an infamous encounter with a white woman. She stated her desire to help solve racial tensions, and Baraka replied that she can help by dying. As well, several of his poems discuss raping white women as a way to counterbalance the oppression of black men. Leading to further criticism of his gender politics, Baraka went on to demonstrate an apparent hostility to all women, black or white. For example, he controversially stated that the recovery of healthy African identities depended on distinct gender roles and a submissive femininity.

Another new aesthetic that Baraka explored was the jazz avant-garde. Musical freedom as social activism continued the work of Harlem Renaissance poets Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson, and, in a recent interview, Baraka observed that the black arts movement (BAM) was on a continuum with the Harlem Renaissance. But Baraka also noted in the same interview that BAM was a version of Mao's Cultural Revolution. Baraka's references to Mao are in fact representative of his worldview after a second major transformation: from a black nationalist to a third world Marxist, in 1974. A trip to Cuba in 1960 had begun to radicalize his thinking about oppression in the third world, and in the mid-1970s, he proclaimed a complete identification with the artists he had met on his trip. Dissatisfied with Kenneth Gibson's black bourgeois leadership of their Newark organization and newly impassioned by theories of African socialism, he reformed the Congress of African People as the Revolutionary Communist League.

This final transformation came with an unexpected shift to humor. His early work, from the late 1950s and early 1960s, had focused on the themes of death and despair, of moral and social corruption, and of self-hatred. His black nationalist poems of 1965–1975 are militant in tone. And his later poems frequently exhibit a comic sensibility. Baraka's life and art therefore falls into these three periods: beat generation, black nationalism, third world Marxism. But the thread that runs throughout is his stated belief that "ethics and aesthetics are one" (*American Protest Literature*, p. 375).

See also: Black Arts Movement; Black Nationalism; Black Power; Destination, Cuba; X, Malcolm

Zoe Trodd

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## Bass, Charlotta Amanda Spears

Charlotta Amanda Spears Bass (1879–1966) was a journalist and activist who fought vigorously to end racial discrimination and injustice for African Americans and other groups in the United States. During her 40-year career, she used her power as owner of the *California Eagle*, at the time the oldest black newspaper on the West Coast, and her affiliation with multiple community and national organizations as vehicles to advance a range of social justice causes. Her grassroots, community-based campaigns galvanized her readers and co-citizens to combat racism, to fight housing and employment discrimination, and to use their vote to empower themselves. In 1952, she made history by becoming the first African American woman to run for vice president of the United States. An independent thinker, her progressive ideas on social justice were sometimes out of step with the black press and African American leaders. Because of her militant activism, she endured character assassinations, lawsuits, a government investigation, and death threats, but she was undeterred in her career-long battle to end racial and social injustice.

Spears was born in Sumpter, South Carolina, in 1874. She was the sixth of 11 children born to Hiram and Kate Spears. After graduating from public schools, Charlotta Spears attended Pembroke College for one semester before moving to Providence, Rhode Island, around the turn of the century. She found employment with the *Providence Watchman*, a local newspaper, but would later migrate to Los Angeles, California because of a health ailment. In September 1910, she took a job selling subscriptions for a struggling African American newspaper, the *Advocate*, later renamed the *Eagle*. Before his death, the owner of the paper, John

Neimore, asked Spears to assume editorship of the *Eagle*. When Neimore died, a benefactor purchased the *Eagle* for \$50 and handed it over to Spears. In later years, Spears would reflect that her belief in the Constitution, in the Bill of Rights, and in the idea that all rights “must be defended” induced her to become a newspaper editor and owner. Spears’s mission of social justice put her in line with the majority of the black press. Because racial advocacy and uplift were more important than financial gain, Spears’s responsibilities at the *Eagle* included publisher, editor, reporter, business manager, distributor, printer, and janitor.

In 1913, Spears hired Joseph Blackburn “J. B.” Bass, a 50-year-old veteran journalist as a reporter. Spears became managing editor and the two married in 1914. As a team they tackled different forms of discrimination in Los Angeles, always placing the *Eagle* at the center of any battle. Among their first battles was the campaign to halt the production of D. W. Griffith’s 1915 motion picture *The Birth of a Nation*. The movie glorified the Ku Klux Klan and depicted black males as buffoons and racists. For weeks on the editorial pages of the *Eagle*, Bass excoriated the film and the Los Angeles mayor for permitting its production. At the same time she rallied other civic organizations, notably the Los Angeles branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to stage a “citizen’s protest” against making the film. The campaign met with some initial success when the Los Angeles City Council voted to halt production, but the decision was overturned in court. Nevertheless, this campaign established Bass and her husband as bold community activists.

In her zeal to oppose racism and discrimination in the 1920s, Bass aligned herself with two strong national black organizations that adopted divergent strategies for achieving civil rights for African Americans. In addition to joining her local chapter of the NAACP, which adopted integrationist goals and approaches to fighting black oppression, Bass, her husband, and several other prominent African Americans chartered a chapter of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Created by black nationalist Marcus Garvey, the UNIA promoted racial separatism. Despite their divergent approaches, these national organizations served as resources for Bass in the local battles she waged against discrimination and injustice.

One such battle in the 1920s was defending herself against a leader of the California Ku Klux Klan who sued Bass and the *Eagle* after she exposed a plan by white supremacists

to burn down a black family’s house. The paper also revealed that the Klan was distributing hate literature in a local neighborhood. The court ruled in favor of Bass and the victory magnified her reputation as a fearless opponent of any form of social injustice.

By the 1930s, Bass’s approach to fighting discrimination had crystallized into three main tactics: wage a rhetorical war against her opponents in the pages of her newspaper, enter into diplomatic negotiations with the opposition, and rally citizens to initiate direct action with boycotts or pickets. These tactics won several victories for causes she and her husband pursued in the 1920s and early 1930s. Bass’s husband died in 1934, but she continued to use the same tactics for the remainder of her career.

Among the most important and longest battles of Bass’s career was her effort to strike down racially restrictive housing covenants designed to bar African Americans and other minorities from living in many areas of Los Angeles. Her first involvement with this issue came early in her career in 1914 when a black woman sought help from the *Eagle* after being thrown out of her home in a predominantly white neighborhood and threatened with jail if she returned. After Bass mobilized dozens of women to form a picket in front of the woman’s house, the sheriff relented and she moved back into her home.

By the 1940s, the problem of racially and ethnically restrictive housing covenants, a prevalent and longstanding practice in Los Angeles, became more acute as droves of people of color came to the city looking for employment. Bass fought hard against restrictive covenants by denouncing them in her paper and by cofounding the Home Protective Association to support citizens in standing up against unfair housing practices. For example, in 1942, she fought the residents in the white suburb of Maywood over renewal of their racially restrictive covenant. Bass published an “Open Letter to the Citizens of Maywood” calling for an end to the policy, and she tried to galvanize opposition to the restrictions at public meetings. Bass lost this battle when the community voted to renew its restrictive policy.

Bass did not lose all such battles, however. In 1945, she encouraged wealthy black actors, lawyers, and doctors involved in the “Sugar Hill” case to fight the restrictive covenant their white neighbors passed to force them from their affluent neighborhood. On Bass’s advice and with the editorial support she lent through the *Eagle*, the group united, fought, and won the case. Bass also championed middle and



lower income citizens' fight against unfair housing practices. Her support of the Laws family in their seven-year battle to occupy the home they purchased in a white neighborhood demonstrated her commitment to the issue and to the victims of discrimination. Bass placed the rhetorical power of the *Eagle* behind them to keep their situation before the community throughout their struggle. Significantly, during this time she expanded her agenda on the housing issue by raising awareness among *Eagle* readers about the struggle of Mexican American families to pressure the city to alleviate slum conditions in their neighborhoods. At the end of World War II, Bass also pushed for desegregated housing for veterans. Bass and other leaders pushed the housing covenant issue through to the California Supreme Court. Finally, in 1948, the United States Supreme Court ruled such covenants to be unconstitutional.

Employment discrimination is another issue that saw the force of Bass's activism. In 1919, when Bass discovered that the Los Angeles County General Hospital refused to hire African Americans, she reported this policy to her readers in the *Eagle*, but also appealed directly to hospital supervisors, who finally agreed to hire blacks for selected positions. Bass waged a successful but longer campaign in 1933 to persuade the South California Telephone Company to hire blacks. In her typical fashion, she fought the company on the rhetorical front calling on her readers to boycott the utility company and engaged in more strategies through the activities of the Industrial Council, an organization she had created in 1930 to generate more employment and business opportunities for African Americans. The telephone company relented and hired blacks three years later.

Bass's uncompromising opposition to employment discrimination is also evident in her staunch support in the 1930s of the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work Campaign," a national effort among blacks to end unfair employment practices. On the pages of the *Eagle* during World War II, Bass exposed discriminatory practices of California's thriving defense industry that systematically kept African Americans out of the industry's well-paying jobs. One successful effort in this campaign compelled the United States Employment Service to change its practice of excluding black women from holding defense jobs. Bass used her affiliation with the Los Angeles Negro Victory Committee and the *Eagle* to call on African American women to march to the Employment Service in large numbers and

consistently insist they be given jobs. The tactic worked and black women were hired.

Although Bass initially represented the grievances only of African American workers like the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the mid 1920s, she gradually became a voice for the rights of all industrial workers. In the 1930s, she used her editorial powers to support the strike against the American Tobacco Company, the first interracial strike in American history; in her front-page column, "On the Sidewalk," she informed readers about union and labor movement news including longshoremen strikes and various local CIO campaigns for workers' rights.

Workers' rights and civil rights melded as Bass expanded her advocacy beyond her own racial community. This shift is evident in her board membership on the Civil Rights Congress, a group that advocated on behalf of Mexican Americans and other people of color. This group was largely dedicated to fighting the kind of police brutality witnessed in the "Sleepy Lagoon" case in which several Mexican American youths were beaten, jailed, and charged with murder. Bass and other supporters of the jailed youths charged that the evidence against the youths was based primarily in ethnocentric judgments about the "flamboyant" clothing called "zoot suits" the youths wore. For Bass, the case illuminated the vulnerability to racism all minorities in Los Angeles faced, and she broadened her concern for the rights of all oppressed groups.

Throughout her career, Bass was active in electoral politics. She reported political activities in her newspapers, but she was also a political operative; however, she identified less with parties than with candidates' stance on issues. Although she was a registered member of the Republican Party for most of her career, she would back a Democratic or independent candidate if she felt the candidate demonstrated a stronger commitment to racial justice. This position led her to support Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential elections, as did many African Americans of this period.

Bass ran for public office twice in her career. In 1945, she ran as an independent candidate for the Los Angeles City Council but lost her bid in a run-off election. Frustrated by the failure of both the Democratic and Republican parties to advocate a strong civil rights program, she abandoned them in 1947 for the leftwing Progressive Party and became a vocal critic of U.S. foreign policy. She made her second bid for political office in 1950 when she ran for Congress on the Progressive Party ticket. She lost the election.

Toward the end of the 1940s, Bass's positions on domestic issues and foreign policy were out of step with mainstream local and national African American leadership. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and some members of the black press leveled charges of communism and subversion against her and, consequently, she lost credibility and readers. Although she publicly denied her support of communism, the financial losses that resulted from the accusations forced her to sell the paper in 1951. After she sold the paper she advanced her social justice agenda by working full-time with the Independent Progressive Party. In 1952, she became the party's vice presidential candidate. She and her white running mate, civil rights attorney, Vincent Hallinan, received less than 1 percent of the vote, but her campaign slogan bespeaks her perspective of the importance the Progressive Party's campaign held for public debate, "Win or Lose, We Win by Raising the Issues," and the issues for her were racism, civil rights, workers' rights, the Korean War, and U.S. imperialism.

After the election, Bass retired to a small community in Los Angeles but continued to support the movement for civil rights that gained momentum in the mid 1950s and extended into the 1960s. She transformed the garage of her home into a community reading room that served as a voter registration site for African Americans. She died of a stroke in 1966.

*See also:* Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Cold War and Civil Rights; Garvey, Marcus; Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Republican Party; *The Birth of a Nation*; Universal Negro Improvement Association; White Supremacy

Cynthia King

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## Bates, Daisy

Daisy Bates (1914–1999) was an African American civil rights activist, journalist, author, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader during the Little Rock School crisis of 1957. Bates was president of the Arkansas State NAACP and a publisher of the *Arkansas State Press* during the crisis. She helped direct negotiations between the Little Rock School Board, state, and federal authorities, while focusing primarily on the nine students' well-being.

Born Daisy Lee Gatson in tiny Huttig of southern Arkansas, she grew up with friends of her original parents after her mother was killed by whites and her father fled town. This pushed Daisy to fight for racial equality throughout her life. At 15, she and L. C. Bates began dating and married three years later. Although L. C. Bates was an insurance salesman when he first met Daisy, he received an education in journalism and worked for several black-owned newspapers.

They leased a struggling church-owned press and began printing the *Arkansas State Press*. The Little Rock newspaper focused on civil rights issues. Besides journalism, the Bateses spent time working for the NAACP. Daisy was not a member of Little Rock's black upper crust. She never completed college, did not have a significant role in the African American church, or was not wealthy. Yet she still managed to rise in the organization, eventually becoming president of the state's confluence of local NAACP branches in 1952.

After the *Brown v. Board* case, school desegregation became the Arkansas NAACP's primary focus. Bates and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund brought a lawsuit against the Little Rock School Board in 1956. In *Aaron v. Cooper*, the Supreme Court established that Central High School would desegregate in the fall of 1957. Thereafter, more students and schools would be integrated. On September 2, the day before school was scheduled to begin, Orville Faubus, Arkansas's segregationist governor, ordered the Arkansas National Guard to surround Central High School in order to keep

the peace. Desegregation did not begin on September 3 as scheduled.

After more judicial activity, Faubus removed the National Guard and city police took over on September 20. On September 23, the nine students entered Central High through a side door. With the mob growing larger and more unruly, police removed the students from school. The next day President Eisenhower sent the 101st airborne division to keep peace in Little Rock. The next day, soldiers escorted the students to school.

Throughout this period and during the school year, Daisy would serve as a liaison between the students, NAACP lawyers, public officials, and the media. The NAACP's local lawyer, Wiley Branton, relied on Bates to communicate with the students and their families who did not have legal representation of their own. Likewise, the Bates home became an unofficial meeting place for members of the northern media who descended on Little Rock and had also been attacked by segregationist protesters.

Bates continued to be harassed on a nightly basis, becoming a lightning rod for attack from white supremacists. Several crosses were burned on her lawn, her windows were shot out repeatedly, and threatening phone calls offered her little rest at night from 1956 until she moved to New York in 1960 to work on her memoir of the Little Rock crisis. *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* was published in 1962 with a foreword by Eleanor Roosevelt. The enduring work won much acclaim and the American Book Award for a version republished by the University of Arkansas Press in 1982.

Bates lived in Washington, D.C. and worked with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty initiative until she had a stroke in 1965. She moved back to Arkansas in 1968, but continued working on local poverty issues in Mitchellville. After the death of L. C., she focused on restarting the *State Press*. The newspaper reappeared in 1984, with Ernest Green (one of the Little Rock Nine) working as its national marketing director. In 1984, she also received an honorary law degree from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, where her papers were later deposited.

Daisy Bates will be known for her unwavering devotion to attacking discrimination against African Americans. Her presence also challenged the domination by black male clergyman in the NAACP's leadership roles. She broke the mold of most female civil rights supporters and did not have the deep religious background of other women working in the movement. Unlike Ella Baker, Bates worked in



*A civil rights activist since the 1940s, Daisy Bates became famous as the protector of the Little Rock Nine during their successful integration of Central High School in 1957. (Library of Congress)*

the foreground, becoming a public face of activism. Finally, Daisy and L. C. did not believe in the nonviolent tactics of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference and kept their home heavily armed. Most important, Daisy Bates did not permit the Little Rock Nine to become sacrificial lambs for the Civil Rights movement. The actions by Bates and President Eisenhower's federal intervention ensured that massive resistance never became an accepted practice and pushed the Civil Rights movement in new directions.

*See also:* *Brown v. Board of Education*; Little Rock Nine; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Peter Carr Jones

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## Belafonte, Harry

Harold (Harry) George Belafonte Jr. (1927–) was born to West Indian parents in Harlem, New York, on March 1, 1927. After his graduation from high school, he joined the Navy. After his military discharge, he worked at various jobs in New York City. Because of his interest in the performing arts, he studied acting at Stanley Kubrick's Dramatic School. He also studied at the New York School for Social Research. Two of his most recognized classmates were Walter Matthau and Marlon Brando. Neither Brando nor Belafonte recognized, at this time, how their professional careers and involvement in political and social issues would intertwine.

Harry Belafonte became successful in the early 1950s when he gained a great amount of recognition as a folk singer. His performance style was appealing and attracted a large following from across the United States. His signature calypso song was titled "Banana Boat Song." Other calypso songs he made popular include "Jamaica Farewell," "Matilda," "Brown Skin Girl," "Come Back Lisa," "Coconut Woman," and "Hold 'Em Joe."

Even though Harry Belafonte was a fan favorite, he experienced racism on several occasions. Such negative experiences played a significant role in his becoming a political activist. He participated with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the march from Selma to Montgomery in support of the bus boycott and later played a significant role in the march on Washington, D.C.

Belafonte was able to maintain a balance between his involvement in issues related to social injustices and his career throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. His production of the first integrated musical show on television gained him an Emmy in 1960. He was chastised by the network and corporate sponsors, however, because popular singer Petula Clark touched his arm. In fact, Belafonte was fired because of this particular incident. The firing clearly represented the racial divide in the United States.

There are many achievements and career highlights that establish Harry Belafonte as a significant player in the

world of entertainment. He earned a Tony Award in 1953 as a cast member in John Murray Anderson's *Almanac*. In 1954, he performed in the revised version of Bizet's Opera *Carmen Jones*. The costar for this production was Dorothy Dandridge. His other film appearances include *Bright Road*, 1953; David Boyer's *Island in the Sun*, 1957; *The Heart of Show Business*, 1957; *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, 1958; *Odds Against Tomorrow*, 1959; *Tonight with Belafonte*, 1960; *The Angel Levine*, 1969; *Buck and the Preacher*, 1972; *Uptown Saturday Night*, 1974; *Sometimes I Watch My Life*, 1982; *Say No—Documentary*, 1983; *Three Songs*, 1983; *We Shall Overcome—Documentary*, 1989; *The Payer*, 1992; *Ready to Wear*, 1994; Hank Aaron: *Chasing the Dream—Documentary*, 1995; *White Man's Burden*, 1995; *Jazz '34—Documentary*, 1996; *Kansas City*, 1996; *Scandalize My Name: Stories from the Blacklist—Documentary*, 1998; *Fidel—Documentary*, 2001; and *XXI Century—Documentary*, 2003.

The performing arts medium truly embraced Harry Belafonte for his artistry within the profession and his marketability. He is the recipient of the Donaldson Award, 1953–1954; U.S. Department of State Award, 1958; an Emmy Award for the 1960 TV Special, *Tonight with Harry Belafonte*; an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from Park College in Missouri; Martin Luther King Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize, 1982; Thurgood Marshall Lifetime Achievement Award, 1993; National Medal of Arts, 1994; and recipient of the Bishop John T. Walker Distinguished Humanitarian Service Award from Africa in 2002. He was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1976.

Belafonte became very active in addressing social issues across the globe in the 1980s. The concept behind the song, "We Are the World" was the brainchild of Belafonte. The performance and sale of recordings of this song generated millions of dollars to assist in fighting famine in Ethiopia (1985). In 1987, he was named UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and was selected to chair the welcome committee for Nelson Mandela's visit to the United States after his release from prison in South Africa. He also performed in Monte Carlo at the Princess Grace Red Cross Ball in 1987 and became the first entertainer to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Peace Corps in 1989.

The following represents a selective discography of Harry Belafonte's recordings: "Calypso" (RCA), 1956; "Mary's Boy Child," 1956; "Coconut Woman," 1957; "Love Is a Gentle Thing," 1959; "Mark Twain and other Folk Favorites," 1959;

and “We Shall Overcome” (video recordings) by Harry Belafonte, 1992.

In addition to his involvement as a social activist, filmmaker, and recording artist, he found time to appear on talk shows as a performer and/or engage in intellectual dialogue related to political and social events. Belafonte appeared on diverse television shows including the Dick Cavett Show, 1972; Mike Douglas Show, 1974; and Paul Robeson (*The People*), 1976.

Belafonte has also represented the United States on the world stage in speaking of the disenfranchised and those persons or societies whose quality of life does not meet expected standards.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Robeson, Paul; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

*Lemuel Berry Jr.*

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## Bensonhurst, New York, Incident of 1989

The Bensonhurst incident of 1989 was sparked by the racially motivated murder of Yusuf Hawkins. On the night of August 23, Hawkins, a 16-year-old African American, and three friends traveled from Bedford-Stuyvesant, their predominately black neighborhood, to Bensonhurst, an Italian-American enclave a few miles away. The four teenagers seldom left their neighborhood, but Claude Stanford was eager to inquire about a used 1983 Pontiac automobile that was for sale in Bensonhurst. As they entered the foreign neighborhood, they were surrounded by 20 to 30 white youths, who wielded baseball bats, golf clubs, and at least one gun. The white youths had been lying in wait to ambush a group of African Americans and Latinos whom they believed were involved with a white neighborhood girl, Gina Feliciano. Throughout the day, rumors had

spread that Feliciano arranged for some nonwhite friends to come to Bensonhurst to start trouble. The white youths were resolved to “break out the baseball bats,” and “teach the niggers a lesson.” Despite realizing that Hawkins and his friends were not the group they were looking for, the white mob challenged their right to be in Bensonhurst. Convinced that beating the four African American teenagers was not enough, Joey Fama pulled a gun and fired four shots. Two of the bullets fatally wounded Hawkins.

The murder of Hawkins was New York City’s third killing of a black man by a white mob during the 1980s. In 1982, Willie Turks was beaten to death, without provocation, by 15 to 20 white men in Brooklyn. In December 1986, Michael Griffith was murdered in Queens by a mob of white men armed with baseball bats, tree limbs, and golf clubs. Throughout the 1980s, Bensonhurst earned a reputation for intolerance toward nonwhite minorities; in 1983, three black men were beaten by a group of whites; in 1987, two black men were chased and beaten by a group of whites; also in 1987, anti-Asian fliers were disseminated throughout the neighborhood.

The aftermath of Hawkins’s murder brought to the fore the hatred and ignorance of many Bensonhurst residents. On August 26, Al Sharpton led a group of 400 marchers through Bensonhurst, denouncing the neighborhood’s racial hostility. This predominately black contingent was met by hundreds of counter-demonstrators who held watermelons above their heads and jeered, “niggers go home!” As demonstrations continued throughout the investigation and subsequent trials, the tone of marchers became more bellicose. On August 31, activist Sonny Carson led 7,500 demonstrators through the streets of Brooklyn. When the demonstrators reached the Brooklyn Bridge, they were met with a wall of police officers in riot gear and with batons ready. Frustrated and determined not to submit, the demonstrators picked up sticks and threw bottles. Forty police officers and unnumbered demonstrators were injured. Many in the African American community felt that the months after Hawkins’s murder were more like 1963 than 1989.

Seven Bensonhurst men were eventually charged with crimes related to the murder of Hawkins. All but one was convicted of murder. Joseph Fama, the triggerman, was sentenced to 32 and 2/3 years to life for murder. Keith Mondello, who admitted to rounding up the mob that attacked Hawkins, was acquitted of murder and manslaughter. He was later sentenced to 5 1/3 to 16 years in prison for

lesser felonies, including rioting, menacing, unlawful imprisonment, discrimination, and possession of a weapon. John Vento, who was also acquitted of murder, was convicted of unlawful imprisonment and sentenced to 2 to 8 years in prison. Joseph Serrano was convicted of possession of a weapon and sentenced to 300 hours of community service. Three other defendants were acquitted of all charges. The acquittals and light sentences ignited additional protests.

The Bensonhurst incident had profound implications for the upcoming Democratic mayoral primary. Ed Koch, the white incumbent, had long been criticized as being an apologist for racially motivated crimes toward African Americans. Koch was subsequently critical of the demonstrations led by Sharpton. His failure to express sympathy for the marchers compromised the city's stance on racial justice. Koch's opponent, David Dinkins, the only black democratic candidate, defended the demonstrations and chastised the racial hostility of Bensonhurst. Dinkins

contended that Koch created a racial climate that allowed such an attack to occur. He defeated Koch in the primary and was elected the first and, to date only black mayor of New York City.

Despite the election of Dinkins and the conviction of several of those involved, the wounds of the Bensonhurst incident never fully healed. When Mondello was paroled after serving only 8 years of his sentence, Sharpton and 200 marchers returned to Bensonhurst to protest his early release. Again, white bystanders shouted racist epithets. This response underscored that after a decade, many of the residents of Bensonhurst continued to harbor the bigotry and hatred that led to Hawkins's death. The response of African Americans evinced their continued frustration with the lack of justice in the city.

*See also:* Sharpton, Al; White Mob Violence; White Supremacy

*Rob Walsh*



*A crowd looks on as the coffin containing Yusuf Hawkins is carried out of Glover Memorial Church in Brooklyn, New York. Hawkins, 16, was shot to death in Bensonhurst on August 23, 1989. (AP Photo/Mario Cabrera)*

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**Berlin Conference, 1884–1885**

The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 regulated European colonization and trade in Africa. Its outcome, the General Act of the Berlin Conference, is often seen as the formalization of the scramble for Africa. In German it is referred to as *Kongokonferenz* ("Congo Conference"). Although by the end of the third quarter of the 19th century, France, Britain, Portugal, and Germany had acquired commercial interests and were exercising considerable influence in different parts of Africa, their direct political control there was extremely limited.

These European powers preferred informal control and influence in Africa. But this attitude began to change as a result of three major events that occurred between 1876 and 1880. The first was the new interest the Duke of Brabant, crowned a constitutional king (Leopold I) of the Belgians in 1865, proclaimed in Africa. In September 1876, King Leopold II of Belgium convened the Brussels Geographical Conference for the purpose of founding an international society that should promote the exploration of Central Africa. Forty representatives from Great Britain, Belgium, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia were present.

The conference resulted in the setting up of an organization called "L'Association Internationale pour l'exploration et la Civilisation de l'Afrique Centrale," better known as the International African Association. Its headquarters were at Brussels under the immediate direction of Leopold, and its national committees were spread in practically all the European countries and in the United States. Its aim was to arouse interest in the movement and to raise funds.

The association secured the employment of Henry Morton Stanley in 1879 to explore the Congo in the name of the association. In August of the same year, he had begun to explore the Congo, to make treaties with the native chiefs,

to establish stations along the river for the advancement of trade and the protection of the natives, and to try to end the interior slave trade.

In 1882, the association was transformed into a corporation called the International Association of the Congo, with King Leopold as president. An association flag was adopted and an energetic and systematic attempt was made to develop the trade of the Congo Basin. The International Association of the Congo had not been recognized by the powers and had therefore no assured territorial existence. These moves culminated in the creation of the Congo Free State, whose recognition by all the great European nations Leopold managed to obtain before the Berlin West African conference had ended its deliberations.

The second significant series of events was the activities of Portugal from 1876 onwards. For centuries Portugal had claimed the West Coast of Africa and an indefinite amount inland. No country had explicitly recognized the claim to the important northern strip, which included the mouth of the Congo. France, by the Convention of 1786, agreed not to occupy any of that territory herself. Great Britain, on her part, refused to recognize Portuguese jurisdiction. Portugal had never been able to enforce, with any regularity, her commercial monopoly on the Congo, and a complete freedom of trade had been confirmed to France by the Convention of 1786 and was equally enjoyed by other countries, with or without treaty rights.

The third and final factor that helped to set the partition in motion was the expansionist mood that characterized French colonial policy between 1879 and 1880. This was signified by her participation with Britain in the dual control of Egypt (1879), the dispatch of Savorgnan de Brazza into the Congo and the ratification of his treaties with Chief Makoko of the Bateke, and the revival of French colonial initiative in both Tunisia and Madagascar.

The rapid success of Stanley, the penetration of M. Savorgnan de Brazza to the Upper Congo, and the occurrence of several violent conflicts between natives and traders once more compelled Portugal to open negotiations for the recognition of her sovereignty. Accordingly, early in November 1882, Portugal approached both France and Great Britain. The French government was friendly, but apparently wished to postpone the delimitation until de Brazza had had time to consolidate their holdings along the Congo. In February 1883, he was given the powers of a colonial governor and authorized to make such treaties

with the native chiefs as were necessary to advance the French influence.

With Great Britain, Portugal was more successful. Great Britain proposed as bases for a treaty in December 1882 the recognition of the Portuguese boundaries; unrestricted commerce on the Congo and the Zambesi; low tariffs in all the African possessions of Portugal; and the equality of British and Portuguese subjects in matters of land, leases, religion, and taxes. A lively correspondence, lasting until February 1884, led to the signing of a treaty along the lines suggested, but with the rights of foreigners much more thoroughly safeguarded. The equality of treatment was carefully defined, elaborated, and extended to all foreigners; freedom of navigation on the Congo was guaranteed; the duties levied in the Congo territory might not for 10 years exceed those of the Mozambique tariff of 1877, and might then be revised only by consent of Great Britain; and Portuguese sovereignty on the Congo was recognized only to Noki. Almost instantly serious opposition arose to this treaty. France knew the treaty was directed against her, and in Germany a score of chambers of commerce appealed to Bismarck for aid. The Woermann Line had a monthly service to the Congo and, from January 1883 to March 1884, inclusive, had sold there 1,029,924 pounds of powder, 2452 tons of liquor, and 555 tons of weapons and rice. There were also many sailing vessels that visited these regions. Otto von Bismarck, German chancellor, imagined that this trade was threatened.

Great Britain had abandoned the treaty; however, negotiations were to be continued. Portugal proposed the calling of an international conference to sort out the territorial disputes arising from European activities in the Congo region. This idea was later taken up by Bismarck who, after sounding the opinions of the other powers, was encouraged to bring it about. The conference was held at Berlin between November 14, 1884 and February 26, 1885. Representatives to the conference were from the United States, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden-Norway, and Zanzibar.

Officially, the conference ignored the international association until its last session, at which the Independent State of the Congo, or the Congo Free State, was formally welcomed into the family of nations. Many members of the conference, in behalf of their respective governments, had been busy making treaties that established its position

as a state and defined its territory. Bismarck saw in this a means of preventing armed conflict over the Congo Basin, of restricting the Portuguese advance, and of preserving the region to free trade. The association agreed not to levy import duties on goods brought into its territory and to accord to German subjects all rights. On her part, Germany recognized the flag and the boundaries of the independent state to be formed by the association, as given in a map appended to the treaty.

The treaties signed by the other powers were similar, although much European pressure was required to compel Portugal to recognize the north bank of the Congo as belonging to the new state. The south bank as far as Noki was relinquished to Portugal, and the coast province of Kabiinda. The Congo territory on the north bank was only a narrow strip west of Manyanga; to the east of that point, France insisted on the Congo and the Ubangi as boundaries.

The association gave its adhesion to the Act of 1885, and proclaimed the neutralization of its territory. The Belgian legislature granted Leopold II permission to become sovereign of the new state. The transformation of the association into the Independent State of the Congo was officially proclaimed in the summer of 1885.

The primary purpose, both of the international association and of the promoters of the Berlin Conference, was to secure free navigation and free trade on the Congo and its tributaries, and to have the development of the region, as well as the protection of the natives, placed in the hands of some responsible but independent organization. To this end the Congo Independent State was created. The conference marked off for free trade all the territory drained by the Congo and its branches. Navigation of every foot of the Congo and its tributaries was to be free; and an international commission, composed of representatives of states signing the act, was to supervise the navigation of the river, the levying of river tolls and pilotage dues, the surveillance of quarantine stations, and all matters necessary for the upkeep of the river.

Conditions on the Congo were well known to many members of the conference, and Stanley was present to explain both the claims of the Association and the needs of the natives. It was therefore provided in the act that all the powers should cooperate to put an end to the slave trade, and it was understood that all were to support the independent state in its efforts to stop these atrocities and to care for the welfare of the natives. All the promoters of the conference,



including King Leopold, seem to have been largely actuated by motives of humanity.

The powers bound themselves to suppress the slave trade, but by far the greater portion of their discussions was devoted to the commercial and political questions involved. In the “General Act” itself, only 2 of 38 articles dealt with the humanitarian interests. In Article VI the powers agreed to protect the natives in their moral and material well-being, to cooperate in the suppression of slavery and the slave trade; to further the education and civilization of the natives; to protect missionaries, scientists, and explorers; and to preserve freedom of religion. Article IX reiterates the intention of the European states to abolish the slave trade.

To prevent conflicts among European states and to provide for the proper and regular extension of colonial possessions in Africa, it was agreed that the marking out of all new protectorates must be preceded by due notification to the powers; that to retain titles to lands the occupation must be effective; and that recourse would be had to arbitration in case of differences.

After the conference, the scramble for Africa sped up. Within a few years, Africa was at least nominally divided up south of the Sahara. By 1895, only the settlements in Liberia, Orange Free State, and Transvaal remained independent. The large part of the Sahara was French; after the quelling of the Mahdi rebellion and the ending of the Fashoda crisis, the Sudan remained under joint British-Egyptian rulership. The Boer states were conquered by Great Britain in the Boer wars from 1899 to 1902. Morocco was divided between the French and Spanish in 1911, and Libya was conquered by Italy in 1912. The official British annexation of Egypt in 1914 ended the colonial division of Africa. By this point, all of Africa, with the exceptions of Liberia and Ethiopia were under European rule.

See also: African Imperialism

Moshe Terdiman

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## BET

Black Entertainment Television (BET) began in 1980 by CEO Robert L. Johnson in Washington, D.C. At its inception, BET network proposed to target African American viewers as an untapped media niche—particularly those interested in shows starring black actors—that marketing executives previously ignored as a consumer base. In its earliest broadcast, BET aired a variety of programs including investigative news show *BET Nightly News with Jacque Reid*, teen-targeted *Teen Summit*, and syndicated comedy shows like *227*, *Amen*, and *Sanford & Son*. Although it also featured musical programming like *Rap City* and other genre-specific video countdown shows for jazz and R&B listeners, such programs did not yet dominate the network’s TV line-up until much later on. Instead, with a Sunday morning line-up of Gospel music and televised Christian church programming, BET set out to be a base for representations of blacks in various mediated context—movies, news, entertainment—and would simultaneously offer advertisers a primary location for reaching African American consumers through commercials.

Since then, during its 28-year history, BET has consistently enjoyed a mixed bag of supporters and detractors on the basis of its original commitments to its founding concepts, as they have shifted within the evolving media landscape. Those who have supported the network have done so primarily from a business perspective, hailing it as an entrepreneurial success, brilliant for its ability to make a black-targeted brand marketable to more mainstream audiences. Alternatively, much of the reception and critique of BET has also been derogatory. Critics of the network cite its subscription-based nature as evidence that capital is its primary motivation, not proper representation. Moreover, many argue that because BET is mostly interested in generating revenue, it does so at the expense of reaching more African American people because, as a cable network, BET fails to reach a larger swath of viewers interested in seeing more images of blacks on television.

Most commonly, BET is critiqued for the representations of African Americans propagated through its programming decisions. In general its content most drastically changed in 2000 when Robert Johnson sold the company to Viacom Incorporated for a reported \$3 billion to add to Viacom's media empire along with MTV, Nickelodeon, and Comedy Central. The bureaucratic changes that accompanied the acquisition drastically changed BET's program content, as well as the commercials featured in-between its new shows. The post-Viacom BET features a disproportionate number of ads for liquor and lower priced commodities compared to ads in other networks like ABC or NBC.

The most appreciable difference in BET as a network is manifested through its content, which shifted to solely focus on music programming. Producers developed new shows like *106 & Park* (a music video countdown show that also features live performances and interviews) for younger viewers and moved away from accommodating older audience members. Concomitantly, the additional programming also propagated a greater number of negative images of black men and women featured in music videos as violent and hypersexual. Thus through its change, BET became responsible for the mass dissemination of misogynist and damaging images of African Americans, rather than offering a remedy to the damning images of blackness found elsewhere on television. Of the more hellacious shows was "BET: Uncut" featuring pornographic-like videos reserved for mature audiences viewing television even after late-night viewing slots. As BET has become a bastion of negative portrayals, it has been subject to public outcries for change, ranging from protestors congregating at the homes of BET executives to the cartooned critiques of *Boondocks* creator Aaron McGruder. These opponents argue that the network offers too small a view of African Americans to others and in consequence creates social problems for blacks who do not identify with the images BET offers.

By changing its imagistic investments, BET fails to offer African American viewers any variety in representation and thus mimics (or enhances) the negativity found on other networks. As the power shifted out of the hands of African American executives at BET to instead offer more control and financial interests to media companies, BET's content has been more demeaning to black Americans and renders the network as a chief disseminator of damaging images. In an effort to mitigate these claims the (once) predominantly music channel MTV became a model for BET's

new content. In addition to music-centered shows, BET's new line-up mimics programs found on MTV by recreating them with exclusively black casts in order to achieve more socioeconomic variety in black representations. Thus whereas MTV airs *Laguna Beach*, a reality program about wealthy white teens living in California, BET now airs *Baldwin Hills*; showing wealthy black teen personal dramas through the same reality-TV show format. Similarly BET offers shows such as *College Hill* (a Black rendition of MTV's groundbreaking *The Real World*) and *How I'm Living* (a version of MTV's *Cribs*) in an attempt to quench complaints.

As BET's content has changed, it remains vibrant, reaching over 85 million households nationwide. It no longer dominates the network landscape for black representations with the emergence of network competitors like Radio One Inc.'s TVOne, which offers many of the syndicated shows previously found on BET; it also airs lost classics like *Roots* and the political *Sharp Talk with Al Sharpton*. BET, however, does remain a salient location for types of black images on television, and it has branched out to include other venues such as BETjazz network, which features less youth- and urban-oriented programming.

See also: *Ebony Magazine*; *Jet Magazine*

Jasmine Nichole Cobb

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## Bethune, Mary McLeod

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955), an educator, civil rights activist, and founder of an historically black college was one of the most important black leaders of the early 20th century. She played an important role in promoting education for blacks, led numerous African American

organizations, and also worked as a member of the “black cabinet” in Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s presidential administration. Although Bethune played such a significant role in high-level politics, she argued that she wanted to help ordinary African Americans. She fought for racial integration as a means for blacks to gain civil rights.

Mary McLeod was born in Maynesville, South Carolina in 1875, the 15th of 17 children of former slaves. She was born and grew up in the South during the era of Jim Crow segregation and violence. Mary McLeod distinguished herself by her academic ability at a young age and attended a local school run by black educator, Emma J. Wilson. In 1887, she won a scholarship to a boarding school—Scotia Seminary for Negro Girls—in Concord, North Carolina. Mary McLeod would go on to play a prominent role in black education, in large part owing to her early experiences with schools. She believed that education was the key to advancement of African Americans and spent much of her career promoting schools for blacks.

In 1898, Mary McLeod married Albertus Bethune, a clothing salesman. The couple gave birth to their son, Albert, the next year. The family moved to Florida shortly thereafter and opened a school. In 1904, Mary McLeod Bethune founded the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls. Like Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute, Bethune promoted industrial education. In 1907, Albertus left and went back to South Carolina. The couple never divorced, however, and Albertus died in 1918. Mary McLeod Bethune struggled to raise funds to keep the school afloat, and the student population increased tremendously over the next two decades. The school was later renamed the Daytona Normal and Industrial School and, in 1923, it merged with the Cookman Institute of Jacksonville, Florida. The school ultimately became a four-year college, Bethune-Cookman College. Mary McLeod Bethune served as the president of the college from 1923 to 1942 and again from 1946–1947.

Bethune also played a central role in women’s political activities in the early 20th century where she focused on her goal of improving the lives of black women. She served as the head of the Florida Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs from 1917 to 1925. In this capacity, she founded a home for delinquent black girls in Ocala, Florida. Bethune served as the president of the Southeastern Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs from 1920 to 1925 and headed up the National Association of Teachers in

Colored Schools from 1923 to 1924. Bethune was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) from 1924 to 1928 after defeating Ida B. Wells-Barnett for the position. She served as the NACW president for two terms.

Bethune was recognized nationally for her work promoting education and political upliftment of African Americans. In 1930, President Herbert Hoover invited her to a conference at the White House to reward her active work within the Republican Party. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president on the Democratic ticket in 1932, however, Bethune aligned herself with the Democrats. In 1935, Bethune wanted to promote a more radical political agenda, so she formed the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). Bethune sought to create an organization that would promote the interests of all black women and also make the entire nation recognize the struggles and triumphs of African American women.

Bethune moved to Washington, D.C. in 1936 when she joined the National Youth Administration (NYA), an agency within the Works Progress Administration. The NYA was



*Mary McLeod Bethune fought fiercely to achieve social, economic, and educational opportunities for African Americans, and particularly for African American women. (Library of Congress)*

founded to spread democratic ideas to American youth and to provide vocational training for youth struggling with the economic ramifications of the Great Depression. In 1939, Bethune's unit of the NYA was moved to the Division of Negro Affairs in the Federal Security Agency, making Bethune the highest ranking African American woman in the federal government. In her role, she promoted college education for black students, as well as training in skills necessary for the war effort.

In 1936, Bethune began to serve on the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, also known as the "black cabinet." The cabinet promoted civil rights for all blacks. In 1937, Bethune helped to organize the National Conference on the Problems of the Negro, a widely publicized conference. Attendees included Eleanor Roosevelt along with other important political figures. The conference promoted the goal of integration and publicized the struggles of African Americans.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the entrance of the United States into World War II, Bethune encouraged black Americans to support the war effort. She viewed the war as an opportunity for blacks to fight for their civil rights. She promoted war bonds and also worked to recruit black women to the army through the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAC). She also agitated for equal treatment of black soldiers and protested against unfair treatment for black women in the (WAC). As World War II drew to a close, Bethune assumed a role on the international stage. In 1945, the State Department reluctantly named her an associate consultant to the U.S. delegation to draft the UN Charter in San Francisco. She was the only black woman on the delegation. She also continued to play a prominent role in American politics. From 1936 to 1952, Bethune served as president of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, an organization founded by Carter G. Woodson.

Bethune left Washington, D.C. and returned to Florida in 1949, where she continued her work. In addition to taking trips to Haiti and Liberia, she also continued to promote equality for African Americans. She worked with black businessmen to develop beaches that blacks could use under the Bethune-Volusia Project. She also founded the McLeod Bethune Foundation, a charitable organization to house her papers and promote black education. In 1955, Bethune attended the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament (MRA) conference in Switzerland. The MRA promoted honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love, all traits that

appealed to Bethune and her political philosophy. Mary McLeod Bethune suffered a heart attack on May 18, 1955, and died at her home in Florida.

*See also:* Association for the Study of African American Life and History; Black Cabinet; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; National Association of Colored Women; World War II (Black participation in)

Jane E. Dabel

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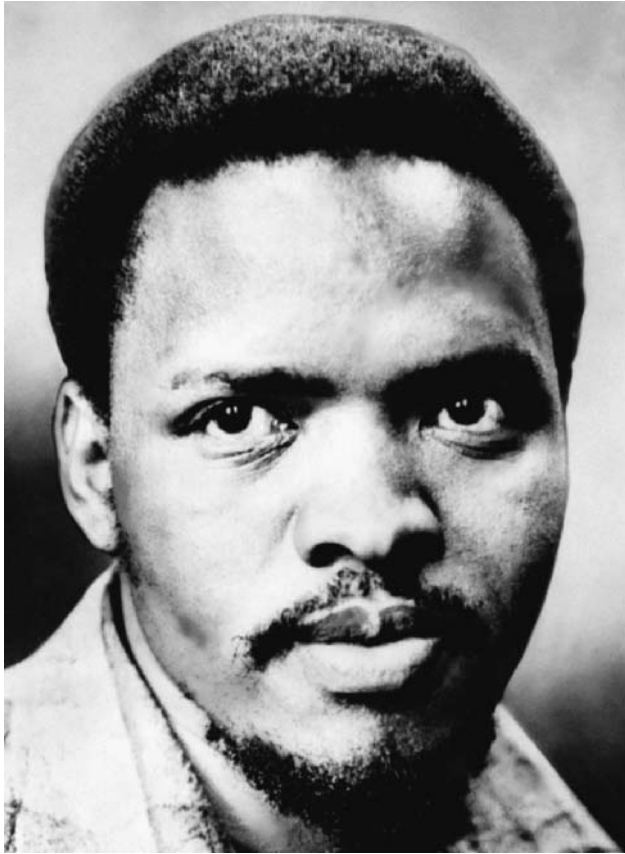
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## Biko, Steve

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Born on December 18, 1946, Steven Bantu Biko (1946–1977) would emerge as one of South Africa's most revered leaders. Biko grew up in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape. There, his father worked as a government-employed clerk while his mother performed domestic work in surrounding white homes. Early on Biko learned the value of education from his parents who ensured that their youngest child understood its significance. In 1952, at the age of six, Biko began his formal schooling. Later on in 1963, when he matriculated at Lovedale High School, Biko faced expulsion because of his political affiliation with the fledgling Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Biko became not only a major proponent of the BCM but also one of its chief theorists and practitioners. Despite the banning order that made it unlawful for Biko to speak with more than one person at a time, which was legislated in 1973, he managed to speak publicly and write proficiently. His *I Write What I Like*, for example, details his thoughts on apartheid, his adherence to "black is beautiful," and his ideas on the meaning of black. In Biko's opinion, any oppressed person, whether he represented Asian, European, or African persuasion, represented a black.

By adhering to this philosophy, Biko united disparate groups under a common theme. His public pronouncements against apartheid made Biko a government target. Biko died in September 1977 while in police custody



As a founder of the Black Consciousness movement, Steve Biko inspired blacks in South Africa to express their pride as a people and to confront the apartheid system as a group. (AP/Wide World Photos)

from massive head wounds, not from a self-imposed hunger strike as the state had proclaimed. Biko left behind a wife and four children; two of the children he had by Dr. Mamphela Ramphele. His death led to his martyrdom.

Before Biko met this fate, he attended medical school at the University of Natal in 1966. When Biko realized that his education would not help to bring about integration between black and white, he stopped his studies and began fervently participating in several political organizations to hone his skills as a thinker of repute. Biko was also influenced by other intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, and Leopold Senghor; Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. also impacted on Biko's intellectual development. In calling for the restoration of African consciousness, Biko argued that black South Africans had to undergo psychological liberation and physical liberation. With the first stage, Biko advocated that blacks gain a better appreciation of their beauty, intellect, and verve, rather

than adhering to inferiority. Blacks, Biko believed, lacked confidence as a result of the system of apartheid and its degrading impact on the black psyche. In order for blacks to evolve, Biko believed that they had to throw off the psychological shackles that imprisoned them. Once they attained this goal, then physical liberation would follow. In analyzing the psychological effects of apartheid, Biko chose to verbalize what everyday South Africans felt. This was seen as incendiary by the South African government, which instituted a banning order against the freedom fighter.

When Biko was banned, the government restricted his movements to the Eastern Cape. Although he lived under such orders, Biko refused to allow the banning order against his physical mobility to limit his freedom. He traveled to soccer games, and Biko even gave a speech during one of these athletic events, where he first hid from view and then appeared. His trip to Cape Town led to his detainment. On August 18, 1977, police arrested Biko at a roadblock. He had according to officials contravened the Terrorism Act No. 83 of 1967. During his prison tenure, Biko faced torture. For one day, police officials chained Biko to a window grille; they also transported him nude in a Land Rover and drove 1,200 kilometers to Pretoria. Shortly after his arrival in Pretoria, Biko died. The cause of death was massive head wounds, which white South African journalist Donald Woods captured on film. In 1997, the perpetrators who killed Biko, all five of them, admitted their crime before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for which they were exonerated. Finally, the family could receive some closure. Closure also came when the country and others around the world honored Biko. For example, the main student union building on the University of Manchester's Oxford campus carries his name. In 2004, in a poll conducted in South Africa by SABC3, Biko was named the 13th Greatest South African.

See also: Antiapartheid Movement

Dawne Y. Curry

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## Black Arts Movement

In 1965, the passage of the Voting Rights Bill ended one phase of the Civil Rights movement and, by October 1966, the emergent doctrine of Black Power had concrete political form in the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Black power also had an artistic extension in the form of the black arts movement (BAM). Positioning themselves as an alternative to the mainstream Civil Rights movement, BAM poets and black power activists replaced the ideal of integration with that of black cultural particularism.

BAM was led by Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins, Addison Gayle Jr., Hoyt Fuller, Larry Neal, Ishmael Reed, and James Stewart. It emerged out of Philadelphia, New York, and Oakland during the early 1960s, and by 1964 it had a literary center in the arts journal *Liberator*, founded by Neal and Askai Touré. In 1968, the publication of the *Black Fire* anthology, edited by Baraka and Neal, marked one of the major events in BAM's print culture. BAM reached the peak of its cultural influence in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Central to the movement was a belief that political action would come through artistic expression. Art had a social value and the artist had a role in political transformation. Black nationalist cultural politics would help answer problems like poverty, police brutality, and substandard education, because imaginative culture could alter the reality of oppressed peoples.

The movement also stressed cultural heritage, the beauty of blackness, and a black aesthetic. It asked that black people no longer see through white eyes, and BAM poets therefore subverted traditional forms and accepted values. If "white" and "black" were signifiers for "good" and "bad," then BAM poets would use the terms differently, celebrating what Baraka frequently termed "black magic." In 1968, Neal described BAM as a cultural revolution, adding that a whole new system of ideas was needed. Neal's poem "Black Boogaloo" (1969) went on to instruct black poets, painters, and musicians: "Take care of business. All get together.... Combine energy.... Calling all Black People" (42).

As part of this revolution, BAM artists embraced the jazz avant-garde. They believed that music articulated an authentic black expression: "Negro music alone, because it drew its strengths and beauties out of the depth of the black man's soul, and because to a large extent its traditions could be carried on by the lowest classes of Negroes, has

been able to survive the constant and wilful dilutions of the black middle class," wrote Baraka in 1966 (*Within the Circle*, p. 165). Musical freedom constituted another form of social activism, and BAM poets used the rhythms of black music in their verse. We were "drenched in black music and wanted our poetry to be black music... its rhythms, its language, its history and struggle," remembered Baraka of BAM. "It was meant to be a poetry we copped from the people and gave them right back, open and direct and moving" (*The Autobiography*, p. 237).

Alongside this interest in music as a language of the people, BAM poets stressed the orality of poetry, focused on vernacular speech as a communicative medium, and tried to make art accessible to the whole Harlem community. In 1965, Baraka founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BART/S) in Harlem to assist the creation of a black culture. Focused on community art, BART/S produced plays that questioned core American values and provided African Americans with new meanings to their lives. BAM saw the artist-audience relationship as localized and collaborative, and when BART/S closed in 1966, Baraka opened Spirit House in Newark, New Jersey, guided by the same founding principles as BART/S.

Yet for all their efforts, BAM writers failed to resonate beyond a limited group of black urbanites. Nearly all of the movement's theater groups and journals were short-lived, and Gayle began preserving BAM for posterity as early as 1971. In an anthology titled *The Black Aesthetic*, he juxtaposed BAM writers with other major 20th-century theorists of the black aesthetic (including W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes), as though to ensure BAM's place in the annals of literary history. Then in 1973, Bullins's book *The Theme is Blackness* offered a closing statement of BAM and also expressed admiration for the accomplishments of the mainstream Civil Rights movement. Increasingly criticized for its anti-Semitism and chauvinism, as well as its exclusion of liberal whites and its strident form of nationalism, BAM faded from public view by the mid-1970s.

See also: Baraka, Amiri; Black Power

Zoe Trodd

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## Black Athletes

Black athletes have contributed significantly to many sports—most notably basketball, baseball, football, track and field, and boxing—while facing many challenges, including formal segregation policies and/or personal prejudices that often denied them the opportunity to compete against nonblack athletes of their caliber and to make comparable wages. Countless black athletes have nevertheless found creative ways to participate in the sports in which they excelled, oftentimes redefining the game.

Perhaps the sport of basketball most effectively illustrates how black athletes have revolutionized a sport. Invented in 1891, basketball was almost entirely segregated by color, but the Renaissance Big Five—an all-black team formed in 1922 in Harlem, New York—consisted of premiere players who barnstormed across the country for about two decades, challenging teams of white players, thereby providing opportunities for quality racially integrated play.

Talented as the Renaissance team was, it was their contemporaries who founded a team that spread basketball around the world, adding elements of playfulness and showmanship to their athleticism. This all-black team formed in 1926 and first played on January 7, 1927 in Hinckley, Illinois; because of their traveling, originally in the Model T Ford of their promoter, they eventually became known as the Harlem Globetrotters.

They reached their 1,000-game mark in 1934, and played their first professional tournament in 1939. That same year, players began "clowning around" during the games to entertain their audiences and, although they continued to boast a talented roster, the Harlem Globetrotters became known for their skillfully orchestrated slapstick routines.

In 1950, the New York Knicks purchased Nathaniel "Sweetwater" Clifton from the Harlem Globetrotters; the Boston Celtics signed Chuck Cooper; and the Washington

Capitols signed Earl Lloyd. These three men were the first black players to cross the color line and play in the National Basketball League (NBA). Over the next two years, the players who remained with the Harlem Globetrotters—and there were many of quality—toured Portugal, Switzerland, England, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Algeria, and South America, spreading the game of basketball to those countries. They also traveled to Germany; track star Jesse Owens accompanied them.

In 1954, Meadowlark Lemon became one of the Globetrotters' star attractions; he participated on the team for 24 years. That same year, the NBA instituted many rule changes, including the 24-second clock and a revised policy on fouls, that favored the quick athleticism that many black athletes would bring to the game.

In 1959, the Globetrotters toured the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. "Curly" Neal joined the team in 1963, staying with them for 22 years and demonstrating intricate dribbling patterns to international audiences.

By 1966, the Globetrotters had played 8,945 games, with only 330 losses; they had also traveled to 82 countries. In 1985, they hired their first female player, Olympic gold medalist Lynette Woodard. In 2004, more than 1.3 million people watched Globetrotter games as the team toured Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Holland, France, and Spain.

Meanwhile, from 1967 until 1976, the American Basketball Association (ABA) challenged the NBA for basketball predominance. The ABA was known for its "outlaw" style of play, and players such as Julius "Dr J" Erving added a new level of excitement to the sport. When this league merged with the more traditional NBA, its players contributed to the level of showmanship and skill in modern professional basketball, and elements such as the sky hook, slam dunk, and extended hang time, owe much to the black players who brought this "showtime" to their fans.

Black basketball players have set many records. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar scored the most career points (38,387), and he blocked 3,189 shots, a record surpassed by Nigerian-born Hakeem Olajuwon, with 3,830; Abdul-Jabbar was also voted the Most Valuable Player a record-breaking six times. Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain started his career as a Harlem Globetrotter in 1958, and then switched to the NBA one year later. In the NBA, he set the record for career rebounds (23,924) and served as the leading scorer for seven consecutive seasons. Perhaps most astonishing is his performance

on March 2, 1962, when he scored 100 points in one game. Another record is Earvin “Magic” Johnson’s 11.2 assists per game.

Other athletes who deserve mention are Bill Russell, who was part of 11 championship NBA teams, and Karl “The Mailman” Malone, the second highest all-time scorer, with 36,374 points. Michael Jordan, perhaps the most successful basketball player in the history of the sport, won the NBA’s Most Valuable Player award five times, and he led the Chicago Bulls to six championships. Furthermore, he shares—with Wilt Chamberlain—the record for being the leading scorer during seven consecutive seasons.

Black athletes currently contributing much to the sport include Shaquille O’Neal and LeBron James. Women who have excelled in basketball include Cheryl Miller, Teresa Weatherspoon, Sheryl Swoopes, Lisa Leslie, and Cynthia Cooper.

In the sport of baseball, black athletes began forming their own teams shortly after the inception of the game, in the 1840s, but they had to wait a full century to join the ranks of the most prestigious professional leagues. On occasion during the 19th century, exceptionally determined men, such as John “Bud” Fowler and Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker, played on professional teams otherwise consisting of white players, but they were the exception; in 1887, after National League star Cap Anson refused to play against George Stovey, a black man, players of color were officially banned from participation in the professional leagues populated by white players.

The first all-black professional baseball team, the Cuban Giants, formed in 1885, and other teams of quality followed. These men played scheduled games and also barnstormed across the country in search of opportunities to play baseball. Team owners often lacked funding, so players’ wages were uncertain, and prejudices often prevented these men from participating against other players of their ability.

In 1920, Andrew “Rube” Foster created the National Negro League, the most stable all-black baseball league. It collapsed in 1930, however, four years after Foster’s death. Revived in 1932, the league lasted into the early 1950s. Men who played their entire careers in the Negro leagues, but who had the skill to play in the all-white major leagues, include “Smokey” Joe Williams, Josh Gibson, “Buck” O’Neil, “Mule” Settles, Oscar Charleston, “Bullet” Joe Rogan, and “Cool Papa” Bell.

Desegregation began in the sport in 1947 when John Roosevelt “Jackie” Robinson began playing for Branch Rickey’s Brooklyn Dodgers; that year, Robinson won the Rookie of the Year Award. Also in 1947, Bill Veeck of the Cleveland Indians signed Larry Doby, thereby breaking the color barrier in the American League. Doby participated in All-Star games from 1949–1954.

Other players who successfully transitioned from the Negro leagues into major league baseball include Leroy “Satchel” Paige who, after pitching for black teams for 22 years, joined the Cleveland Indians in 1948 and pitched well into his fifties. Another was catcher Roy Campanella, who also played for Branch Rickey’s Dodgers. Hank Aaron signed with the Milwaukee Braves in 1954 and went on to break Babe Ruth’s major league home run record (755) and the record for runs batted in (2,297).

Other black baseball players of note include Rickey Henderson, who is the all-time leader in walks, steals, and runs scored, and who successfully hit for the 3,000th time in 2001; Willie Mays, who hit 660 home runs during his 22-year career; and Reggie “Mr. October” Jackson, the first player to hit 100 or more home runs for three different teams. Tony Gwynn successfully hit 3,141 times in his baseball career. Also worthy of mention are Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders, who have succeeded in both professional baseball and football.

In the sport of football, segregation was total until 1946, when Kenny Washington and Woody Strode began playing for the Los Angeles Rams, and the Cleveland Browns’ All-America Football Conference team signed Marion Motley and Bill Willis, two future hall-of-fame players. Several black football players hold records of significance. Walter “Sweetness” Payton had the most yards rushing (16,726) until Emmitt Smith broke the record with 18,355; Payton also rushed 100 yards or more in 77 games. In 1997, Barry Sanders rushed for over 100 yards in 14 consecutive games for a total of 2,053 yards; in 1984, Eric Dickerson rushed over 100 yards 12 times for a total of 2,105, which is the most yards gained in a single season. Jerry Rice caught the most touchdown passes (197), with 22 of them in a single season, another record. Jim Marshall played in 282 consecutive games.

Other black athletes worthy of mention include Orenthal James (O. J.) Simpson, Roosevelt “Rosey” Grier, Franco Harris, Lawrence Taylor, “Mean” Joe Green, Gale Sayers, Donovan McNab, and Jim Brown who, at retirement, held



20 NFL records. Doug Williams, the first black quarterback to play in a Super Bowl, led the Washington Redskins to victory in 1988 and was awarded the MVP award.

Besides the skill, power, and speed that these athletes have brought to the game, several black players have been known to increase excitement by end zone celebrations and other sensational and attention-getting moves.

Seldom, however, has an athlete received the type of attention as did Jesse Owens. He was the first American track-and-field athlete to win four gold medals in one single Olympic competition and, in three events, he also set records. Yet, he is best remembered as the black athlete who triumphed in Berlin in 1936, while Nazi Chancellor Adolf Hitler, who believed in the superiority of the white race, watched.

Other black track-and-field athletes of note include Leroy Burrell (100 meters in 9.85 seconds), Butch Reynolds (400 meters in 43.29 seconds), Roger Kingdom (100 meter hurdles in 12.92 seconds), Edwin Moses (400 meter hurdles in 47.02 seconds), Bob Beamon (long jump of 29 feet, 2½ inches), and Willie Banks (triple jump span of 58 feet, 11½ inches). Charles Dumas was the first athlete to jump over seven feet, and Carl Lewis won four Olympic gold medals in 1984, in the same events that Jesse Owens won in 1936.

Female track stars of note include Alice Coachman, the first black woman to receive an Olympic gold medal for the high jump (1948); Wilma Rudolph, who won three Olympic gold medals in one single Olympiad (100- and 200-meter dash, and the 400-meter relay in 1960); and Florence Griffith Joyner who holds the world record for 100-meter dash (10.40 seconds) and for the 200-meter (21.34). Jackie Joyner-Kersey has held the heptathlon world record since 1986, besting her own point totals. Furthermore, Evelyn Ashford won four Olympic gold medals, and Gail Devers won Olympic gold medals in the 100-meter event in 1992 and 1996, besides other accomplishments.

In boxing, Jack Johnson—the first black American to hold the heavyweight title, which he won in 1908 and held until 1915—was a figure of controversy, in part because of his outspokenness, flashy lifestyle, and fondness for white women; and in part because of a bout he fought against Jim Jeffries—the “Great White Hope”—on July 4, 1910. Billed as the “Fight of the Century,” Johnson beat the former heavyweight champion, thereby cementing his reputation as a powerful fighter.

Fifty years later, another flamboyant boxer caught the attention of audiences. Muhammad Ali, who won an Olympic gold medal in 1960, combined speed and athletic prowess with a boastfully humorous persona that helped transform boxing into the popular sport that it is today. Other 20th-century black boxers of note include Joe Louis, George Foreman, Floyd Patterson, Evander Holyfield, Sugar Ray Leonard, Joe Frazier, Thomas Hearns, and Mike Tyson. Don King, another controversial figure, deserves credit for promoting the sport of boxing to the masses.

Although the five aforementioned sports—basketball, baseball, football, track and field, and boxing—are the ones in which black athletes have made the most contributions, there are also black athletes of note in soccer, hockey, tennis, golf, and skating, as well as other sports.

Skater Debi Thomas was the first black athlete to win a medal during the winter Olympics. In tennis, women of note include Althea Gibson; in 1957 and 1958, she won both the singles and doubles titles at Wimbledon. Other female tennis stars include Zina Garrison-Jackson, and Serena and Venus Williams. In men’s tennis, Arthur Ashe, the first black man to win at the U.S. Open and Wimbledon, deserves particular mention. Ashe once discussed the sports performances of whites, which he labeled “method acting,” lacking spontaneity, creativity, and innovation; it was his belief that black athletes brought those elements to various sports.

Edson Arantes Do Nascimento, known simply as Pelé, is perhaps one of the greatest soccer players ever, blessed with extraordinary ball-controlling ability, speed, and balance. Pelé played in four World Cups with Brazil’s National Team.

The first black to join the National Hockey League (NHL) was Willie O’Ree, who joined the Boston Bruins in 1958, despite being legally blind in his right eye. O’Ree recalls significant racial taunting, noting that it was worse in the United States than in Canada. It was not until 1974 that another black athlete—Mike Marson—joined the league.

Overall, only 18 players participated in the National Hockey League (NHL) in the years between 1958 and 1991; this was, in large part, because Canadians comprised more than 95 percent of the NHL in 1971, and only .02 percent of the Canadian population at that time was black; that figure is now 2 percent. Moreover, about 15 percent of the NHL players are now from the United States, whereas Canadians make up 60 percent. This partially explains why, in 2003 alone, the number of black hockey players had increased to 13.

Perhaps the most notable black hockey player so far has been goaltender Grant Fuhr, who played with Wayne Gretzky on the Edmonton Oilers team in the 1980s. Fuhr has the sixth most all-time wins for goalies. Another black hockey player of note is Anson Carter, who was the second-leading scorer for the Boston Bruins in the 1999–2000 season; other players include Fred Brathwaite of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Kevin Weekes of the Carolina Hurricanes.

Black golfers began participating in the sport in the late 19th century, and it was a black man, Dr. George F. Grant, who invented the golf tee in 1899. In 1896, John M. Shippen Jr., a laborer who helped build Shinnecock Hills, played in the second U.S. Open Championship at the golf course he helped construct. He placed fifth, seven strokes behind the winner.

That was an exception, though, in the then-segregated sport of golf. During the summer of 1925, a group of black men formed the Colored Golfers Association of America (or, as some report, the United States Colored Golfers Association), in which they sponsored their own tournaments and offered their own awards and prizes. They faced challenges; by 1939, fewer than 20 golf facilities, nationwide, were said to be available for black players. Black players were not admitted to the Professional Golf Association of America (PGA) until 1959, and that was in response to a lawsuit filed as far back as 1943.

Golfers of significance include Charlie Sifford, Calvin Peete, and Lee Elder; the most famous black golfer is unquestionably Eldrick “Tiger” Woods. Among other accomplishments, Woods won the Masters Tournament in 1997, 2001, and 2002; the PGA Championship in 1999 and 2000; the U.S. Open Championship in 2000 and 2002; and the British Open Championship in 2000. In 2001, Woods became the first golfer to hold all four major championships during the same year.

It would be impossible to mention all black athletes, or to list all of their accomplishments. It is fair to say, however, that this group of athletes has contributed much to the sports that they have played, combating racism and other challenges, and that they have made each of their sports richer by their presence.

Besides combating segregation, black athletes have had to contend with an evolving series of stereotypes. In the 19th century and much of the 20th century, a significant percentage of people believed that black athletes succeeded

because their relatively lower intelligence was compensated by a stronger physical ability. The race of the athlete was nearly always part of any media reporting; for example, Jesse Owens was labeled as “saddle colored” or a “streak of ebony.” When Joe Louis won a boxing match against a white man in 1935, it was suggested that someone “not quite human, came out of the jungle last night.”

Although fewer people today would say that black athletes succeed more often because of their lower intelligence but greater physical capacities, a more subtle stereotype is displayed whenever it is stated that blacks are more naturally athletic, implying that they do not possess the same intelligence or dedication that white athletes need to perform at the same capacity.

Black athletes who either broke the color line or were one of the first to participate in a particular professional sport faced a dual challenge: while their athletic efforts were under intense scrutiny, so were their personal lives and levels of conduct. Some, such as Jack Johnson, flaunted conventions, but most groundbreakers did not.

Because as many as three-fourths of current NBA and NFL players are black, and as many track-and-field events are dominated by black participants, it is therefore expected that the contributions of these athletes to the world of sports will only continue to increase.

*See also:* 1936 Summer Olympics, Berlin; 1968 Summer Olympics, Mexico City; Ali, Muhammad; Ashe, Arthur; Owens, Jesse; Robeson, Paul; Robinson, Jackie

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## Black Cabinet

Black cabinet, black brain trust, or Federal Council of Negro Affairs refers to the various men and women appointed to administrative positions in Washington as part of President

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal shift toward more equitable treatment of African Americans.

Despite its expansive uplift and improvement aims, initially the New Deal with all its promise and promises was marked by an overwhelming indifference and even enmity in regards to issues concerning African Americans. For example, The National Recovery Administration or NRA, which African Americans began to refer to by the negative soubriquet "Negro Run Around," was one of the associations that implemented inauspicious policies concerning African Americans. Under The National Recovery Administration, various codes forced African American workers to become displaced from entrepreneurial endeavors and higher wage jobs in favor of their white counterparts and larger modernized business ventures. The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), which employed racial exclusionary and discriminatory practices regarding African Americans in the organization's units and ultimately ill-effected their ability to advance, was another New Deal program that negatively affected blacks. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) allowed whites superior representation in county committees and disallowed approximately 400,000 African American sharecroppers and 300,000 black tenant farmers from receiving proportionate distributions of crop reduction payments to which they were entitled while simultaneously consenting to the widespread eviction of tenants whose labor was deemed no longer valuable.

Despite the inequitable treatment that was a mark of early New Deal implementations, after 1934 countervailing forces began to succeed in gradually shifting President Roosevelt in the direction of more just treatment for blacks. Dissatisfaction felt by blacks with the state of race relations throughout the nation at the time began to manifest itself in the form of fervent protests and an immense upsurge in voting registration among African Americans. The active response among African Americans to address the racial ills of the moment was supplemented by calls for policy reform both outside from southern liberals, leftists groups, labor movements, and within the Roosevelt Administration from various persons, including the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Will Alexander, Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, and Aubrey Williams, all of which helped to foment and expedite the creation and implementation of policy that was beneficial for African Americans.

As a loosely constituted, unofficial governmental organization, the daily happenings of the black cabinet varied

greatly, but it is an accepted fact that all of the cabinet's work was aimed at uplift of African American people. The black cabinet served both a material and a symbolic function in regard to improving the collective lot of African Americans. The mere existence of such a large constituency of blacks in influential political and governmental positions indicated to the wider African American community that perhaps a needed shift in terms of racial equality was taking place, while materially the presence of African Americans in government as racial advisors allowed the needed space to voice the myriad of concerns of the modal black population to the larger administration. Because of the Federal Council of Negro Affairs loose construction and some of the black cabinet's more logistical aspects, such as specific information about the everyday occurrences, as well as information regarding its members, remain unclear.

Despite a paucity of information regarding all of the inner workings as well as official information on the number of members exact members because of the dynamic influx and outflow of the black cabinet, some of the black brain trust's initiatives and endeavors are revealed through the work of some of its most prominent members such as Robert Weaver, William Hastie (who worked for the Department of Interior as an assistant solicitor), and Mary McCloud Bethune.

Mary McCloud Bethune was perhaps one of the black cabinet's foundational and most visible members, and certainly its most prominent female member. During her work in the club movement, she developed a close friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, a relationship that would eventually allow her to move into governmental positions. Regarding her role in the Federal Council of Negro Affairs, Bethune was involved in the development of the Fair Employment Practices Commission. Bethune also worked on the Civilian Pilot Training Program, which was focused on training black pilots, and the Women's Army Corp (WAC) and its admittance of black women. Mary McCloud Bethune's work is indicative of the type of projects for African American improvement that the black cabinet was created for and committed to carrying out.

In many ways the black cabinet reflected a material shift in things such as political party affiliation, as African Americans had previously been overwhelmingly Republican began to align themselves more with Democratic politics. The cabinet also indicated perhaps the nascent stage of a national collective ideological shift that would eventually

recognize not just inclusion and amelioration, but uplift and equality for African Americans.

*See also:* Bethune, Mary McLeod; Bunche, Ralph; Roosevelt, Eleanor

*Christina Bush*

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## Black Codes

Black Codes, laws enacted in Southern states during Reconstruction, discriminated against blacks and restricted their newly acquired freedom. The laws, which appeared to be neutral and fair to both whites and blacks, were not neutral. The codes became known as Jim Crow laws because they were as deceptive as the minstrel show character, Jim Crow, was deceptive. Crow, a white character, disguised himself with a painted black face and the Black Codes, like the minstrel character, were thought to be based on racial disguise.

Mississippi and South Carolina were the first states to enact Black Codes. South Carolina's newly adopted post-war constitution prohibited African Americans from voting and continued to impose racial qualifications on those who desired to become state legislators. Its legislative enactments prohibited black men from earning a living as artisans, mechanics, or shopkeepers unless they were licensed. Black laborers could be employed under yearly contracts of labor, but if they were terminated from employment, either voluntarily or by the employer, they were required to forfeit all wages earned within the year to any date of the termination.

Mississippi's Black Codes were the most stringent. Freedmen, free negroes, and mulattoes could only own land in cities, were limited in their ability to testify in court proceedings, were punished for leaving employment, and were defined as vagrants if they had no lawful employment or business, were found congregating together at any time

of the day of night, or failed to pay any tax levied upon them. Other Southern states had similar legislation and, although the language of the enactments varied from state to state, the Black Codes placed controls on blacks' property ownership, employment, sexual behavior, and voting rights. The laws also limited the rights of blacks to sit on juries, testify at trials, and to own or carry weapons. All states imposed poll taxes on blacks. Unemployment was considered a crime in most states, and most codes defined vagrants as freedmen who were unemployed. The Black Codes were supplemented by additional legislation in some states. States provided separate public transportation for blacks and denied them the use of public education funding.

Louisiana required all freed peoples to obtain comfortable housing and have visible means of support within 20 days of the passage of the legislation or be subject to arrest. Alabama's Black Codes required all Civil War officers to report to the county all the names of black minors whose parents were unable or unwilling to support them. Once the minors' names had been reported, they were subject to fines, arrest, and a sentence that included working for the highest bidder for their services in order to work off the fine. Florida laws prohibited negroes and mulattos from keeping any weapon, firearm, or ammunition without a license. Penalties for noncompliance included whipping the offender's bare back.

Effects of the Black Codes had wide ramifications beyond the everyday lives of the freed blacks. Northern Republicans were successful in getting Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1866 over President Andrew Johnson's veto, and the Fourteenth Amendment was added to the United States Constitution. The federal government also imposed military rule to ensure compliance with Reconstruction measures.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1866; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Johnson, Andrew; Radical Republicans; White Supremacy

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## Black Conservatives

All politics is involved with promoting the practical means of obtaining the good life. For black conservatives, this means an embracing of such values as hard work and individual responsibility. They reject the current liberal approach that argues for collective action and that states that the prime source for black failure is still institutionalized racism. They are a diverse group who are sometimes called neo-Washingtonians. The history of black conservatism begins in the 1800s, but like all political movements it has changed over the years and has found a resurgence beginning in the 1970s.

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, two opposing political philosophies—liberal and conservative—began to take shape for black Americans. After the Civil War, African Americans supported Republicans, the party of Lincoln and of emancipation. Even after Lincoln's assassination, Republicans continued to support civil rights for blacks. At this time, Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) shaped the conservative views of black Americans.

Washington, a former slave from Franklin County, Virginia, attended Hampton Institute and Wayland Seminary. He then helped to develop the Tuskegee Institute, recruiting its first students and raising money for its first buildings. Two important events happened in his life during these years. First, while he was a student at Wayland, he became convinced that black students who opted for a classical education forgot their roots and became estranged from the experience of black poverty. Second, as the head of the Tuskegee Institute, he encountered strong antipathy from Southern whites who feared that educated blacks would not be willing to enter the agricultural economy that dominated the South. To overcome this, Washington emphasized that the Tuskegee Institute would emphasize “industrial” education, meaning farming, carpentry, etc. These, he believed, would be the most likely avenues of employment for the majority of African Americans.

The basis of his political philosophy was that being productive was a more powerful antidiscrimination tool

than protesting or hoping for intervention from the federal government. He argued that no race will ever be marginalized if they can contribute to the economy of the world. In 1895 he gave his famous “Atlanta Compromise” speech in which he further argued against “artificial forcing” of rights and emphasized that white society needed African Americans and that any attempt to stifle the growth of blacks by white society would be counterproductive. His compromise was for there to be a symbiotic relationship between the two races. In 1900, he founded the National Negro Business League. He strongly believed in self-help and hard work as the keys to success.

One of the biggest critics of Washington's approach was W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). Du Bois's ideas have been influential in the shaping of modern-day black liberalism. He was brilliant, well educated, and talented. He was a writer, a teacher, a sociologist, an editor, and an activist. His major complaints against Washington were that Washington believed in a subordinate position for African Americans, that Washington denigrated higher education for blacks, and that he was too conciliatory toward the South. Du Bois was a socialist and believed that government had to become involved in order for equality to become a reality and that social protest and agitation were also necessary. As a socialist, he was skeptical of capitalism and toward the end of his life became a member of the Communist Party.

Both black conservatism and black liberalism have changed over time, and neither is an exact replica of the ideas of either Washington or Du Bois. But certain principles have survived. For modern black liberals, protest, agitation, and federal intervention in the lives of African Americans are still important. For modern black conservatives, self-help, entrepreneurship, and a dislike of the welfare state are still important.

This is best understood in the context of the changes in party affiliations of African Americans during the last century. Black Americans generally continued to support the Republican Party until the Great Depression, when Franklin Roosevelt's left-leaning administration undertook to intervene in the lives of poverty-stricken people, both black and white. As a result, Roosevelt's Democrats won the loyalty of many Americans who now saw the federal government as good and big business as evil.

The 1960s further strengthened black Americans' loyalty to the more liberal Democratic Party. This was the era

of active civil rights and school desegregation, and liberals were more clearly identified with this group approach than were conservatives. In addition, Democrat Lyndon Baines Johnson's Great Society legislation offered even more federal intervention in people's lives.

But beginning as early as the 1970s (even earlier, if George S. Schuyler, who lived between 1895 and 1977, is considered), conservative voices in the black community began to assert themselves. Early on, most black conservatives worked for the media. Soon they would create organizations and interest groups and eventually they would move into politics—one even to the U.S. Supreme Court. Taken together, they demonstrate the essence, as well as the diversity, of contemporary black conservative thought.

In the media, newspapers, like *The Chicago Independent Bulletin*, published by Hurley Green Sr., carried important black conservative columnists. Magazines, like *National Minority Politics*, published by Willie and Gwen Richardson; *Issues and Views*, edited by Elizabeth Wright; and *The Lincoln Review*, edited by J. A. Parker began to promote conservative thought. Important black columnists include men like Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, and Shelby Steele. In general, they argue that the key to success for African Americans is individual effort rather than government intervention.

Thomas Sowell, born in North Carolina but raised in Harlem, never finished high school. He joined the Marine Corp and eventually graduated (magna cum laude) with an economics degree from Harvard and a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. He is now a nationally syndicated columnist. He has argued against the idolization of ghetto culture by liberals, Hollywood, and the media. He believes that economic lags by African Americans are not entirely due to racial discrimination, and therefore fixable by government intervention, including the intervention of affirmative action. In short, he does not believe that the government—or judicial activism by judges—can solve racial problems. One of his major concerns is education for blacks, but he does not limit his ideas about education, as did Washington. For him, education, including higher education, is the key to success. He is also for education reforms like vouchers.

Walter Williams, also an economist, was born in Philadelphia. He has a PhD in economics from UCLA. He, too, is a believer that education is the key to success for all people.

He is also a believer in the power of such middle class values as stable families and hard work. He is not against the civil rights battles of the past that guaranteed constitutional guarantees, but he is against people forever thinking that they are victims and that the only way to not be a victim is for someone else to do something for them. And he dislikes the paternalistic attitude of white liberals that feeds this victim attitude.

Shelby Steele, with a PhD in English and a master's degree in sociology, was born in Chicago. In 1991, he won the National Book Critics Circle Award for his book *The Content of Our Character*. In this book, he calls for African Americans to work as individuals within the mainstream rather than attempt to reach their goals through collective action that attacks the mainstream. That, he argues, is the way to advance. In *A Dream Deferred: The Second Betrayal of Black Freedom in America*, he defines a black conservative as one who does not accept that victimization is the sole—or the major—reason for black failure.

Black conservatives have also made an impact on radio. A good example is Larry Elder who has a popular radio program in Los Angeles. Elder went to Brown University and received a law degree from the University of Michigan. He appears frequently on television. He is the author of several books, including the best-selling *The Ten Things You Can't Say in America*. He, too, thinks that the belief in victimization is crippling to black progress. He has even coined a word, "victicrat," to describe people who use victimization. He is a strong believer in personal responsibility.

Besides black conservative voices in the media, there are also organizations that promote conservative ideas in the African American community. The National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise is an example. It helps lower income blacks by promoting "self-sufficiency and financial independence." There is also The Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny that believes in self-help and focuses on the lives of young black men. There are others.

There are also a number of black organizations that promote conservative ideas through political means. One of the most influential is Project 21, located in Washington, D.C. This organization states on its Web site that it is promoting "entrepreneurial spirit, sense of family and commitment to individual responsibility." One of its leaders, Edmund Peterson, has said that Project 21 attempts to fulfill the ideals of the Civil Rights movement by promoting

basic middle class values, which he calls the “civil-behavior movement.” Petersen believes that the breakup of the family is a major contributor to individual failure, thus his belief in strong family values.

One of the most powerful men in the United States is a black conservative, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. He was born in Pin Point, Georgia, in 1948, and attended Conception Seminary for a year. He then received his undergraduate degree from Holy Cross College and his law degree from Yale. He practiced law in Missouri before working for the U.S. Department of Education as Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. He was the chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1982 until 1990. He was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in 1990. He became a United States Supreme Court Justice in 1991.

In 1980, Thomas, at the invitation of Thomas Sowell, attended a historically important conference, the Fairmont Conference in San Francisco. The sponsors titled it a Black Alternatives Conference and focused on conservative ideas. They discussed education and black priorities, the problems of government interference in the destiny of citizens, and legal barriers to economic success.

Thomas has written since then, in an article titled “No Room at the Inn: The Loneliness of the Black Conservative,” about the values that he considers conservative and about how the Fairmont Conference and its aftereffects helped him to clarify them. The values come from his family, especially his grandparents; they are his road map to success in this country. For him, the basis of conservatism lies in the principle of natural Law, which underpins the Constitution. First, there must be respect for each person’s freedom. Second, we should never be governed by anyone except with our consent. Third, the individual must take responsibility for his life. He saw this abstraction first in the concrete life of his grandparents who taught him that each person must fend for herself. They could give him values to make this work—God, education, discipline, and a belief in the efficacy of hard work—but it was up to him to make it happen. The government could never be a substitute for personal responsibility. Conservatives, he concluded, must actively protect the rights of individuals while at the same time demand individual responsibility.

Black conservatives may not always agree on every point, but they all share a belief in the American system. For them, the good life is possible, but no amount of

government intervention will bring it; only individual effort can do that.

See also: Thomas, Clarence; Washington, Booker T.

William P. Toth

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## Black Nadir

The black nadir traditionally references to the worst period in the African American experience, a period dating from 1877 to 1918. Historian Rayford Logan coined the term in his book *The Negro in American Life and Thought* (1954). This groundbreaking text was important for expanding the discourse of black history in that critical period between Reconstruction and World War I to include a narrative of how blacks were systematically oppressed and stereotyped, while also linking talented tenth activism to the modern civil rights movement.

In the nadir construct, Reconstruction was an era of hope for Southern blacks following centuries of enslavement. They had hoped for freedom and equality through land ownership, socioeconomic independence, re forging the ties within families and communities, and acquiring the ballot and first-class citizenship. This hope was systematically undermined by the reality that they were only quasi-free. Crucial to this narrative was that blacks represented a major threat in tipping the political-economic balance of power in the South to their own (and white liberal) favor. White conservatism curtailed these advances by forming white terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, restricting most freedmen to back-breaking manual labor and

domestic work, and restricting them from voting, racial intermingling, serving on juries, and land ownership. Finally, white liberal indifference led to the systematic collapse of the Radical Republican political structure in the South after the economic Panic of 1873. Reconstruction officially ended following the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877, which called for the withdrawal of Union troops from the South, depriving Southern blacks and white liberals of the protection of the federal government.

The failure of Reconstruction set a pattern of Southern white supremacy, which expanded nationwide until it was finally brought to a halt in large part by the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s. From 1877 to 1968, black freedom was opposed by customary and legal discrimination in the forms of Black Codes and states' rights, which nationally extended as Jim Crow (legal) segregation after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* U.S. Supreme Court verdict in 1896. During this period, African Americans were systematically beaten, lynched, raped, disenfranchised, and made to appear stereotypically pathological, immoral, and inferior to whites in entertainment (i.e., minstrel shows) and "science" (i.e., eugenics). Moreover, civil rights legislation established during Reconstruction as well as the Fourteenth Amendment (that guaranteed citizenship and due process) and the Fifteenth Amendment (that conferred the right to vote) were rarely used to protect people of color. Couple this with the federal government's obsession with promoting industry and territorial expansion, and the end result was the loss of hope through socially constructed oppression for people not considered to be U.S. citizens.

The nadir construct marginally addresses how blacks confronted white supremacy using a wide range of strategies that blossomed into a freedom movement after 1945. Central to black self-determination was the formation of black institutions such as churches and schools that fostered leadership, community, and literacy. Blacks also elected their own political leaders, served in the military, and infused politics into art. Moreover, blacks quested after freedom in search of promised lands in the West, North, and abroad such as Nicodemus (Kansas), Pittsburgh, and Liberia. In the early 20th century, freedom strategies increased in intensity over time from the work of Booker T. Washington, who found black salvation in agricultural and domestic industrial pursuits while accommodating the "color-line," to the articulate critique of W. E. B. Du Bois, who opposed racism through his political activism and intellect.

The black nadir reactively centers black oppression without balancing the discourse with a strong understanding of black agency and resistance. In addition, it should reflect the lowest point of the black experience by era, not year. For example, after World War I (1919), severe restrictions on black freedom nationally continued in race rioting, voting, public accommodations, employment, housing, education, and entertainment, which maintained unadulterated white supremacy from 1874 to at least the passing and enforcement of civil rights legislation in the 1960s.

*See also:* Disfranchisement; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Jim Crow; Lynching; *Plessy v. Ferguson*; Sharecropping; Washington, Booker T.

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## Black Nationalism

Black nationalism did not emerge as a coherent movement focused on racial solidarity until the early 20th century. But its origins lie in the philosophies of black abolitionists—namely Martin Delany, who advocated emigration to Africa. Explaining that black Americans were culturally and politically homeless, Delany proposed that they needed to build their own nation in Sierra Leone and Liberia. He also believed that this nation building would raise the social status of those who remained behind in America. Trying to move his plan forward, he led an emigration commission to West Africa in 1859 and explored potential sites for a black nation. While these ideas did not become a reality, later black nationalists, including Huey Newton, found inspiration and historical precedent in his work. They also looked back to Frederick Douglass's more radical speeches (such as his 1857 "West Indian Emancipation" speech) and the plans of the militant white abolitionist John Brown to build a slave-free nation in the Adirondacks.



By the 1920s, the Jamaican immigrant Marcus Garvey had developed radical abolitionist theories into a full-fledged black nationalist movement. In 1914, Garvey founded the Jamaica-based Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and, in 1917, he opened a first branch in the United States. Tapping into urban discontent after the Great Migration, the UNIA advocated black unity and self-improvement. It sponsored several educational institutions, convened international conventions, and opened more than 1,000 branches. It had 11 million members at its peak, mainly northern working class black people. Garvey's UNIA-affiliated newspaper, *Negro World*, first appeared in 1918 and fast became one of the country's most widely circulated black newspapers. Then, going beyond black self-improvement, Garvey echoed Delany's call for black national independence and emigration from the United States to Africa. In 1919, he established the Black Star Line, a transportation company focused on moving people and property to Africa. The venture failed and Garvey was deported after a mail fraud conviction in 1923. Nonetheless, he had turned the ideas of abolitionists into a movement and developed the first major strand of black nationalism: black separatism through a Back-to-Africa ideology.

His movement also inspired a new black nationalist effort: Farrad Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI). Founded and developed during the early 1930s, and with many former Garveyites among its early members, the NOI represented a second major strand in black nationalism: black separatism within the United States (rather a separate nation in Africa). To prepare for this separate black nation, the NOI preached black racial superiority and focused on developing economic self-sufficiency within black communities. Led by Elijah Muhammad after 1934, it entirely rejected white society and demanded several American states—a nation within a nation—as compensation for slavery.

By the late 1950s, Malcolm X had become its most prominent spokesperson. Born Malcolm Little, he had converted to the Black Muslim religion while in prison for armed robbery and changed his name to "X." He later explained that his parents were followers of Garvey and members of the UNIA, thereby giving him an early exposure to black nationalism. As a minister for the NOI, he defined land as the basis of freedom and equality, called for racial independence and a separate black identity, and advocated black self-defense. He also termed American history a *white* history, famously noting that blacks were no more than a

sack of potatoes to the Founding Fathers. He aimed these black nationalist philosophies at a primary audience of young, urban blacks, who were frustrated by what they saw as Martin Luther King Jr.'s embrace of white protest traditions (including civil disobedience) and futile gradualism.

In 1964, Malcolm declared independence from the NOI and formed Muslim Mosque, Inc. He soon expanded his vision of black nationalism to include Africans and made two trips to Africa in 1964 in an effort to solicit support from African leaders. On June 28, 1964, he called a press conference to announce his new project, the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Rather than promoting a Back-to-Africa movement, like Garvey's, this would be an organization that sought to achieve a global African community, promote the interests of black people worldwide, fight white supremacy, and link black Americans with Africa.

Malcolm was killed on February 21, 1965, before he could develop the OAAU program any further. But his ideas soon inspired a new black nationalist vision in the form of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). Bobby Seale and Huey Newton founded the BPP at a community center in North Oakland, California, in October 1966, and acknowledged it was a living testament to Malcolm's work. Long frustrated with mainstream civil rights efforts, they were also galvanized by the defeat of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964, the Watts uprising, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. They believed that King and his supporters paid scant attention to the situation of urban African Americans, including the ongoing problems of high unemployment, substandard housing, and poor education. Now they aimed their new group at a post Civil Rights era.

Adopting Malcolm X's model of armed self-defense, they quickly formed a system of police patrols, aimed at countering police brutality against Oakland's black community. Their new members began to monitor and confront law enforcement officials and to advise Oakland residents of their rights. They began to use the term "black power" as a theory to explain their practices. This represented a new spin on black nationalism. Richard Wright had first used this phrase in his 1954 book of the same title, but it was Stokely Carmichael, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) chairman and eventually the BPP's honorary prime minister, who first developed the idea into a full movement ideology. In 1966, he laid out a philosophy of black power that Newton and Seale adopted

for their newly formed organization: black people needed to achieve racial pride and reclaim a black history, as well as building separate black communities, developing economic self-sufficiency, and collectivizing their resources. Black nationalism now meant not only political and economic control but also psychic and historical control. Another part of this black power philosophy was to prohibit whites from joining the liberation movement. Carmichael explained that whites could not relate to the black experience and that an all-black project was needed in order for black people to achieve freedom. He rejected racial reconciliation, nonviolent civil disobedience, and any notion of the American dream as defined by white people.

Newton and Seale translated this philosophy of absolute self-determination into the formation of community programs, rather than attempts to achieve an independent black colony. The BPP therefore represented a third major strand in black nationalism: the development of black community control over political and economic resources, or community nationalism. The BPP “survival programs” tried to combat the institutional racism at the heart of substandard housing, bad diets, poor health care services, and poor education for African Americans. They eventually offered breakfasts for schoolchildren, medical care, pest control, busing to prisons for the families of inmates, sickle cell anemia testing, clothing and shoes, community political education classes, and “liberation schools.” In part because of this smaller-scale, practical application of black nationalist philosophy—improving existing black communities rather than reaching for a separate black nation—the BPP’s membership had grown to around 5,000 by the end of 1968, with chapters in India, Israel, Australia, and England, as well as 40 chapters in the United States.

But the organization was under attack. In August 1967, the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover had instructed its covert action program—COINTELPRO—to disrupt and neutralize “Black Nationalist Hate Groups,” and by July 1969 the Panthers were COINTELPRO’s primary focus (although it also targeted the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SNCC, the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the Nation of Islam). The program attempted to weaken BPP leaders, discredit the organization, and prevent the unification of black nationalist groups. They set other groups against the BPP and created rifts and factions within the BPP itself. A series of FBI raids and prosecutions, including the 1969 indictment and conviction of Seale for protesting

during the Democratic National Convention of August 1968, weakened the BPP’s national and regional leadership and diminished its local membership.

By the early 1970s, its leadership was also engaged in a series of internal conflicts over the primary focus of black nationalist activism. Newton wanted to emphasize community service, but another BPP leader, Eldridge Cleaver, believed armed confrontation was more important. Cleaver publicly criticized the BPP as “reformist” rather than “revolutionary,” and Seale countered that the survival programs *were* “revolutionary” (412). In early 1971, Newton expelled Cleaver from the Central Committee and stated that his focus on violence alienated the black community and inhibited his potential role in the black nationalist transformation of society.

Before long the BPP was entirely crippled. Internal disputes, infiltration by covert government operations, and the deaths of party members during violent clashes with the police had diminished its energy and support. In March 1978, the membership of the BPP had declined to around 20. But the party’s platform did offer a blueprint for other 1960s protest manifestos, including those by the Brown Berets, the Young Lords, the White Panther Party, the Red Guards, and the Gray Panthers.

The BPP represents the last truly influential black nationalist movement in the United States. But elements of black nationalism do persist. As late as 1995, the NOI attracted between 650,000 and 1.5 million people to its “Million Man March” in Washington, D.C. The black nationalism emphasis on racial pride and black history also influenced the emergence of hip-hop as a protest medium. For example, Tupac Shakur embraced the doctrines of black nationalism in songs like “Panther Power” (1989). As well, elements of the “Back to Africa” movement influenced the development of pan-Africanism. Several former Panthers, including Carmichael, shifted direction to embrace pan-African pride, explaining that the only way forward for black nationalism was a socialist pan-African revolution.

As for the strand of black nationalism focused on community development, this persists in two new groups. In the early 1990s, activists inspired by the BPP pointed to new and continuing crises in black America: poverty, AIDS, infant mortality, drugs, high unemployment, and institutionalized racism. They announced the return of black nationalism and in 1994 former members of the original BPP launched The Black Panther Collective. They began to document police brutality in New York and to raise public awareness

about political prisoners. The New African American Vanguard Movement was also founded in 1994, with B. Kwaku Duren as its chair. It became the New Panther Vanguard Movement in 1997. The group develops community-based social and cultural institutions, also demanding sentencing reviews and reductions for black prisoners.

But the separatist strand of black nationalism was also taken up by a more high-profile contemporary black nationalist group: the New Black Panther Party (NBPP), founded in 1991. The party's literature references Garvey's separatist movement and calls for independent African-centered schools, more trade with Africa, black tax exemption, and its own provisional government. The NBPP's ultimate aim is black national liberation and a black "liberated zone." But its strong anti-Zionist tendencies have led to accusations of anti-Semitism, and several members of the original BPP have condemned the NBPP, observing that the BPP had operated with love for blacks, not hatred of whites.

*See also:* A Negro Nation Within the Nation; Black Panther Party; Black Power; Delany, Martin R.; Five Percenters; Garvey, Marcus; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; Organization of Afro-American Unity; Universal Negro Improvement Association; X, Malcolm

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## Black Panther Party

Originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the Black Panther Party (BPP) was a radical African American political organization established in 1966 in Oakland,

California, by Huey P. Newton (1942–1989), minister of self-defense, and Bobby Seale (1936–), chairman. Although the group's organizational beginnings can be traced to October 1966, with the creation of the "Black Panther Party Platform and Program," a manifesto outlining the group's ideological and political perspectives and goals with respect to housing issues, educational and economic opportunities, police violence, and African American disenfranchisement, the BPP is a continuation of black freedom struggles that began with the first rebellions against slavery and captivity in the barracoons, holding cells for enslaved Africans, centuries ago. Black Panther Party members perceived themselves as a vanguard party who mobilized the black lumpenproletariat, those unemployed members of the black working classes without political consciousness, and gave voice to the needs and desires of poor, segregated, urban communities that had not benefited from the legal victories of the Civil Rights movement. Throughout their 16-year existence, from 1966–1982, the party's political perspective and activity marked by ideological flexibility, adaptability, and hybridization—a fusion of ideas from post-World War II black liberation struggles in the United States and anticolonial struggles throughout the third world. Their most ostensible influences were Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, Robert F. Williams, Kwame Nkrumah, Fidel Castro, V. I. Lenin, and Karl Marx.

Violent police brutality, hallmarks of many black, urban communities of the late 1960s, determined the party's initial black nationalist perspective and its political activity. Newton, as the party's theoretician, saw black urban neighborhoods as colonies occupied by the police force whose brutal surveillance were geared toward maintaining black exploitation. This approach led the small group of activists to focus on armed community patrols of the police. Equipped with pistols, shotguns, and law books, Newton, Seale, and Bobby Hutton, the first member and treasurer of the organization, traversed the streets of Oakland to ensure that police officers did not violate residents' rights. During patrols, Panthers, with weapons in plain sight, observed police officers carrying out their duty and questioned the detained resident to see if abuse had taken place. If the suspect was arrested, the patrol would pursue the arresting vehicle to the precinct station and post bail for the individual. Newton observed that patrols had a threefold effect: they taught the community how to protect themselves from the police, they decreased the incidents of police brutality, and

they increased the membership of the BPP. As the membership increased so did police patrols of other black neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay area including Berkeley, Richmond, and San Francisco.

In 1967, the party gained recognition among San Francisco Bay Area communities after it investigated and publicized the fatal police shooting of Denzil Dowell, a Richmond, California resident. During the same year, after providing protection for Betty Shabazz, the widow of the slain leader Malcolm X, the party attracted new members. Perhaps the most prominent person to join that year was Eldridge Cleaver, the renowned ex-convict and writer for the leftist magazine *Ramparts*, who became the organization's minister of information. His writing ability and connections with leftist activists were instrumental in attracting new members and helping the party create the Black Community News Service and *The Black Panther*, a weekly newspaper. The paper was indicative of the BPP's political dexterity in their attempts to empower black communities.

*The Black Panther* provided a medium through which party leadership and members could connect to the communities they served and raise reader consciousness. By 1970, the paper had a weekly circulation of over 100,000.

In the spring of 1967, the BPP gained national attention. On May 2, 1967, Bobby Seale and a contingent of 30 armed Black Panthers orchestrated a political demonstration when they delivered a public announcement called "Executive Mandate Number One" on the stairs of the Capitol Building in Sacramento, California. "Executive Mandate Number One" was a written response to the Mulford Gun Bill, legislation that would make carrying weapons illegal. As a result of their political demonstration, Bobby Seale and several other Panthers were arrested and accused of conspiracy. Despite its portrayal of the BPP as a black supremacist group and motley crew of thugs, the mainstream media coverage unknowingly acted as a recruiting mechanism for the organization. After the Sacramento incident, requests poured in from across the country for assistance



Members of the Black Panther Party (BPP) march in Manhattan on July 22, 1968, to protest the murder trial of leader and cofounder, Huey P. Newton. (Bettmann/Corbis)

in creating local chapters of the Black Panther Party. By the end of the decade, the BPP had grown to be a national organization with 40 chapters, more than 5,000 members, and tens of thousands of supporters. By 1969, the Black Panther Party comprised individual chapters unified under one central committee.

### The Party Goes National

By 1968, the BPP grew to be larger than its founders had imagined. To connect the work being done in the southern states by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) with BPP work in western and northern urban areas, the two organizations attempted a merger. SNCC's Stokely Carmichael was named BPP prime minister; James Forman, minister of foreign affairs; and H. Rap Brown, minister of justice. The merger was short-lived and the appointments were largely symbolic, as the union was destroyed by organizational mistrust, exacerbated by well-placed counter-intelligence by the FBI, and differing leadership styles. With Huey Newton as the BPP leader, authority was centralized. SNCC was best known for its decentralized structure and a belief in the leadership ability of all its members. Further, SNCC was moving closer to a black nationalist perspective and was unwilling to work with white groups. The BPP was moving away from its previous black nationalist perspective toward socialism and was willing to work with any organization that held the best interest of black communities to heart, especially the Peace and Freedom Party.

With the merger between the BPP and SNCC undermined, the BPP Central Committee set out to maintain a cohesive national unit. This proved difficult for the young revolutionaries. From 1967 to 1970, Huey P. Newton was imprisoned for allegedly shooting Patrolman John Frey, assaulting Patrolman Herbert Heanes, and kidnapping Dell Ross, a black motorist. Concurrently, Eldridge Cleaver and Bobby Seale were trying to gain popular support to "Free Huey" and were involved in their own court cases. But all chapters, from the most popular in Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles, to the more obscure in Wilmington, Delaware, Omaha, and Denver, were unified around the survival programs, a willingness to re-envision the party platform and revolutionary activity, and government repression.

Survival programs were instituted with the primary objective of transforming social and economic relations within the United States. The party's survival programs indicate

not a "deradicalization" of the BPP or the substitution of a radical approach for a reformist one, but rather a willingness to supplement ostensibly radical political activities (mainly armed protection of black communities, rallying for self-determination, running political candidates, building interracial coalitions, and critiquing the intersection of racism and capitalism) with radical work that ensured the survival of black communities nationwide. From 1967 to 1974, BPP chapters throughout the country instituted survival programs addressing the multifaceted needs of urban communities. Some of the most popular include the Free Breakfast for School Children, Free Busing to Prisons Program, Sickle Cell Anemia Research Program, Seniors Against Fearful Environment, Free School Program, Free Pest Control Program, Free Food Program, Free Ambulance Program, Free Plumbing and Maintenance Program, and Liberation Schools. The survival programs were also indicative of the ways BPP members were willing to consistently expand the boundaries of their work and the limits of their perspective.

The 16-year lifespan of the BPP, especially the first five years, was marked by ideological expansion for the central committee, as well as the chapters. From 1966 to 1968, the party line was one of black nationalism, in which the primary vehicle for black liberation was understood to be black community control of community resources and institutions. In time, black nationalism as an ideology was too limiting, as it did not consider class issues and was replaced by revolutionary socialism from 1969 to 1970. From this perspective, capitalism did not provide adequate opportunities for the practice of self-determination, even with black community control. Only socialism provided the political and economic spaces for black self-determination and the potential for eradicating racism. By 1970, the party began to understand its freedom struggle as part of a larger global movement against imperialism and exploitation. With internationalism the ascendant philosophy from 1970–1971, as Judson Jeffries purports in *Huey P. Newton: The Radical Theorist* (2002), "the Panthers saw their struggle in the United States as not only necessary for the liberation of blacks and other oppressed people in America but as a struggle whose success was critical for the liberation of nations worldwide (74)." Intercommunalism developed from Internationalism and was the BPP dominant line from 1971 until the party's demise in 1982 and posits the notion that the growth of transnational corporations and

economic globalization erased national borders, creating scattered communities loosely connected through commodity exchanges. The intellectual progression from black nationalism to intercommunalism represents the Black Panther Party's attempts to understand and explain forms of subordination and manipulation situated in political and economic realms. In fact, the BPP was one of the first organizations to openly criticize homophobic and sexist tendencies within black political movements.

### Repression and Decline of the Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party's zenith was short lived. As early as August 1967, it was targeted by the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) for neutralization. The BPP may have posed a political threat to the established mainstream arena by acting as a nucleus around which many New Left organizations could ally themselves, but it did not pose an offensive physical threat to the country. Despite this, in September 1969, J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), declared that the BPP was a major threat to the domestic security of the United States. The FBI's repression of BPP chapters was nationwide in scope and used a variety of tactics including, but not limited to, manipulating media coverage of the BPP, interrupting the circulation of the *Black Panther*, disrupting survival programs (especially the Free Breakfast for School Children program), obstructing the creation of political alliances, harassing BPP supporters, creating and intensifying internal BPP conflicts, exacerbating tensions with other political groups, infiltrating chapters, raiding chapter headquarters, preventing due process in the judicial system, and assassinating party members. Moreover, of the 295 counterintelligence operations in 1969, 233 were directed toward crippling the Black Panther Party.

The counterintelligence operations affected chapters throughout the country. In 1969, in San Francisco, California, the FBI office gave fraudulent articles to local Jewish organizations declaring David Hilliard, the National Committee chief of staff, an anti-Semite, causing the organizations to cancel his lecture. On December 4, 1969, using a floor plan created by William O'Neal, an FBI infiltrator and informant, the Chicago police raided Black Panther leader Fred Hampton's home. Although Hampton was unarmed, police killed him with two close range shots to the head.

Throughout the country, FBI operatives convinced grocery stores and supermarkets to stop supporting the Panther's breakfast program, informing managers and owners that the party used the program to disseminate antipolice propaganda to children. Also, parents were told that the party's breakfast food was contaminated and infected with diseases. Further, to create dissension among the chapters, the FBI office in Philadelphia sent a letter to Huey Newton, allegedly from the Philadelphia BPP chapter, questioning his leadership ability. In his published doctoral dissertation, *War Against the Panthers* (1996), Huey P. Newton noted that COINTELPRO programs "anonymously advised the national headquarters that food, clothing, and drugs collected for BPP community programs were being stolen by [Philadelphia] BPP members (58)." Consequently, the national office transferred and expelled members and considered closing the Philadelphia office.

Besides government-sponsored repression, the party's centralized leadership may have contributed to its demise. After his release from prison in 1970, Huey Newton became the sole authority in party matters from 1970 to 1974. Manipulated by government misinformation, Newton publicly censured and dismissed individuals key to the party's history and political activity including Eldridge Cleaver and the International Section of the Party, members of the Los Angeles chapter, and the entire New York chapter. In 1973, at the behest of Huey Newton, the Black Panther Party moved into the political arena with its attempt to get Bobby Seale elected mayor of Oakland. To ensure his victory, Newton proposed that all state offices close and move to Oakland. With members refusing to submit to his decision, chapters across the country closed in protest and individuals resigned from the party. Some, however, moved to Oakland in 1972 and 1973 to assist in Seale's campaign. When Seale lost the election, many of the transplants lost hope and resigned. With state chapters closed and a failed political election, the party's membership fell to 500. In the summer of 1974, after a vehement disagreement with Huey Newton, Bobby Seale resigned followed by other key members of the deteriorating organization, including Audrea Jones.

From 1974 to 1977 with Huey Newton in exile, Elaine Brown assumed the party's leadership, decentralized power, appointed more women to leadership positions, obtained government funding to operate a school—the Oakland Community School—and ran for public office. Upon Newton's return in 1977 with less than 200 members, Newton

again took the mantle of leadership until the party's demise in 1982. With Newton's behavior becoming more erratic, perhaps as a result of substance abuse, survival programs were discontinued, funds were mismanaged, and the party's relationship with the community deteriorated. In 1980, *The Black Panther* was discontinued and in 1982, the school was closed, marking the end of the exciting and often turbulent organization.

That the Black Panther Party existed demonstrates that the immediate post Civil Rights era was fraught with problems. Despite the passage of civil rights legislation and face-saving rhetoric of politicians, urban black neighborhoods in the late 1960s and early 1970s were facing the conundrum of being politically and economically ignored by policymakers. As young, black revolutionaries, party members and leaders organized to bring about change and provide services refused by city and state governments. Their militancy provided vivid examples for other communities of color and oppressed groups in the United States and throughout the world. From 1968 to 1987, groups inspired by the names, militancy, and program of the BPP were formed. In 1968 the Black Panther movement was organized in England. One year later, black Bermudans formed the Black Beret Cadre. The White Panther Party was organized in England in 1970, the Black Panther Party of Israel in 1971, the Black Panther Party of Australia in 1972, and the Dalit Panthers of India in 1987.

In the late 1990s, there was also an emergence of militant stylized-Panther groups in the United States. The opening decade of the 21st century finds several former Panthers in exile or imprisoned for the political beliefs. A host of biographies of former Panthers have appeared and historical research has been published about the Panthers, but more needs to be done. By studying the Black Panther Party and other New Left militant organizations, not only does one recover dimensions of working class, radical, and African American history that has been elided from historical texts, but one may also ascertain lessons to more effectively organize the growing impoverished masses who inhabit urban communities.

See also: Black Nationalism; Black Power; Brown, Elaine; Cleaver, Eldridge; COINTELPRO; Fanon, Frantz; Lowndes County Freedom Organization; Newton, Huey P.; Seale, Bobby; Shabazz, Betty X.; Williams, Robert F.; X, Malcolm

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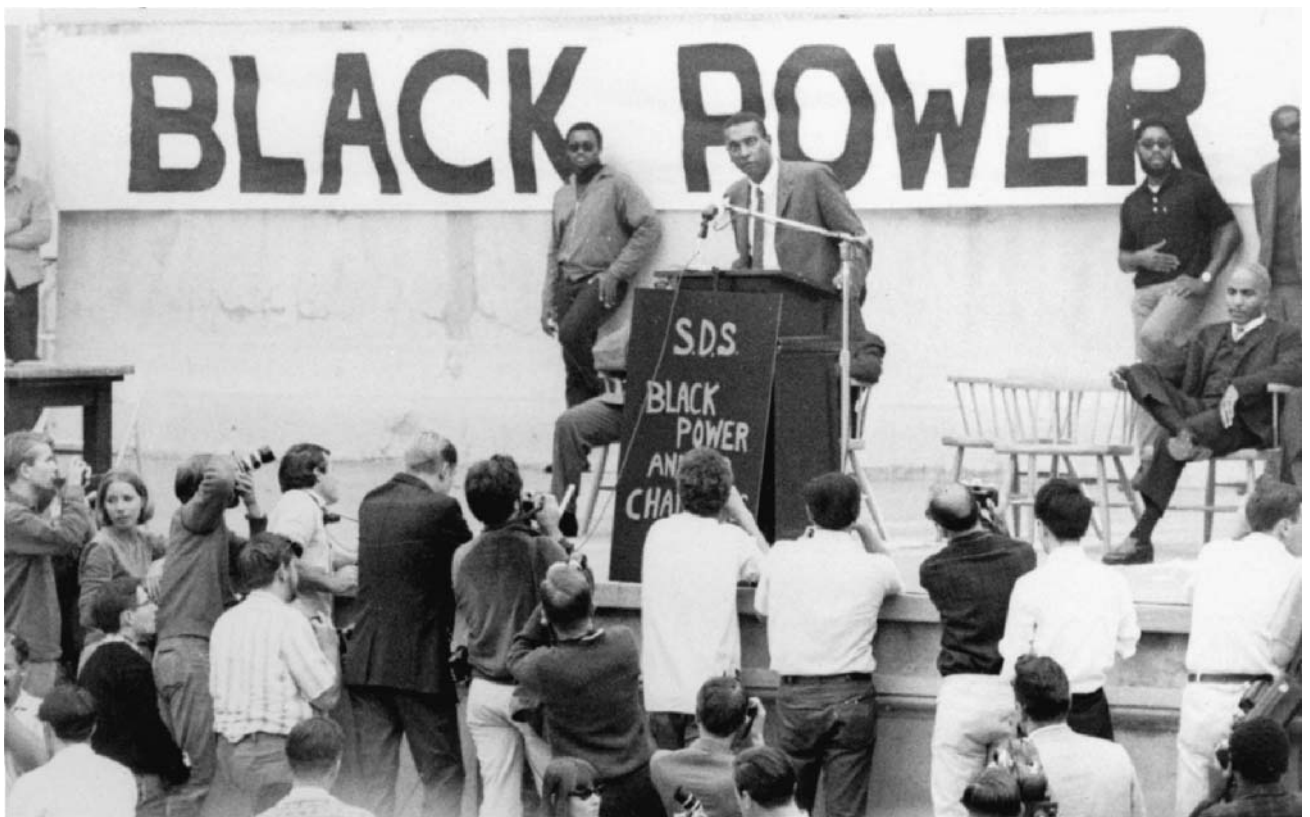
## Black Power

Black power refers to a phase or extension of the Civil Rights movement beginning in the period after 1966 when individual activists and organizations began to articulate the need for black political empowerment and self-defense as a means of achieving a variety of goals. In most historical accounts, black power began as a slogan during the

James Meredith March Against Fear in June 1966. After Meredith's shooting in Jackson, Mississippi, two activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Willie Ricks (Mukasa Dada), used the slogan as an alternative to "We Shall Overcome," which had been an unofficial anthem of the Civil Rights movement. Although this may have been the genesis of the slogan as it became associated with the Civil Rights movement, it was not the first time that African American leaders or activists articulated a need for black empowerment. On the eve of Ghanaian independence, Richard Wright penned his 1954 book entitled *Black Power* as a reflection on the possibilities of empowerment on the African continent. Both Paul Robeson and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. had articulated the specific need for black power, whereas others, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Robert F. Williams, epitomized its meaning and ultimate potential in earlier decades.

Pressed for a definition of black power, Kwame Ture, along with political scientist Charles V. Hamilton, published

*Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* in 1967 as an answer to the many critics of the concept. In essence, Ture defined black power as mobilizing African Americans to use their newfound political voice—as a result of the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act—to create semiautonomous communities in which black police officers patrolled black people, black businesses provided jobs, black elected officials and black-controlled political parties articulated the aspirations of African Americans, and African Americans used armed self-defense to protect their lives. Thus, black power can be seen as a "community-control" form of black nationalism. In many ways, this definition of black power was shaped largely by Ture's organizing activities in Lowndes County, Alabama in 1965 where he and other SNCC organizers had helped create the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO). In a region that was 97 percent African American, voter registration, the creation of an all-black political party (the LCFO), and mass mobilization could potentially lead to a complete take over of the county and, hence, real black empowerment. Using the Black Panther as the symbol of their political



Stokely Carmichael, head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), speaks against the draft at the University of California at Berkeley on October 29, 1966. (AP Photo)



party, the LCFO had several candidates vying for political office in the election season of November 1966. Hoping to elect candidates for sheriff, coroner, tax assessor, and in the board of education, all of the LCFO's candidates lost in the general election. Despite this defeat, the idea of community-control black nationalism and the symbol of the Black Panther spread to black communities across the United States.

The example and potential of Lowndes County spread and were articulated by an ever-widening group of individuals and organizations after 1966. Among the many organizations espousing black power that grew between 1967 and 1974 were the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, SNCC, CORE, the Republic of New Afrika, the Congress of African Peoples, the Deacons for Defense and Justice, and Us. Although these organizations and their leadership differed vastly in goals and tactics, practically all of them were heirs of Malcolm X. In this sense, armed self-defense, as opposed to the nonviolent tactics of Martin Luther King Jr., were generally embraced. Malcolm's life, his many speeches, and his 1965 posthumous autobiography became canonical "texts" for many black power advocates. In addition, Robert F. Williams's *Negroes with Guns* (1962) and Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) were quite influential in giving definition and shape to black power. Although the Black Power movement was eventually split between cultural nationalist and socialist factions, the goal of achieving some semblance of black empowerment and autonomy were concepts that all black power activists continued to embrace.

See also: Black Panther Party; COINTELPRO; Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee; US Organization

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## Black Radical Congress

Black Radical Congress (BRC, pronounced "brick") is a progressive grassroots organization that formed in June 1998 at the University of Illinois–Chicago. The BRC was established to revitalize the black freedom movement, which organizers felt had been compromised by liberal integrationists, elitist leaders, and conservative black nationalists. According to its mission statement, the BRC is resolved to build dialogue and alliances, "bringing diverse radical traditions to bear on contemporary realities." At a critical juncture in African American history, the BRC's organizers were determined to forge a liberation agenda for the new millennium. With deteriorating economic conditions, the erosion of civil rights legislation, and an increase in racial violence, the period between the mid-1970s and mid-1990s represented a "new nadir" for black Americans. Yet, although the BRC was a response to the conditions of a specific epoch, it was never intended to be a singular event. In its 11 years of existence, it has served as a national network of radical grassroots activists and organizations. From its inception, it represented a united front determined to construct a new humanity.

The BRC was not meant to replace existing organizations; it was formed to mobilize activists around common concerns. Drawing on the rich tradition of black Marxism, organizers were committed to the creation of an organization that represented the aspirations and interests of the masses. They did not seek to establish a vanguard party run by elites. Organizers also were not interested in creating another reactionary and polemic gathering such as the Million Man March. They did recognize, however, the need for black nationalists, socialists, communists, and feminists to work together to resuscitate the liberation movement. For the BRC's founders, this required the recognition of the interdependence of race-based, class-based, and gender-based oppression. The interconnectedness of these oppressive forces had been long ignored by those leading the liberation movement. This comprehensive approach to liberation was represented by the diverse backgrounds of the more than 100 individuals who endorsed the creation of the BRC. They included Larry Adams (Mailhandlers Local 300), General Baker (auto worker), Amina Baraka (Communist Party, USA), Adolph Reed (Labor Party, Chicago), Yicki Smith (Feminist Action Network), and Makungu

Akinyela and Efia Nwangaza (Malcolm X Grassroots Movement). These radical activists were joined by prominent black scholars including Angela Davis, Dwight Hopkins, Robin D. J. Kelly, Manning Marable, and Cornel West.

A year after the BRC convened, its national council ratified a 15-point "Freedom Agenda for the Twenty-First Century." This document stipulated:

- I. We will fight for the human rights of Black people and all people;
- II. We will fight for political democracy;
- III. We will fight to advance beyond capitalism, which has demonstrated its structural incapacity to address basic human needs worldwide and, in particular, the needs of black people;
- IV. We will fight to end the super-exploitation of southern workers;
- V. We will struggle to ensure that all people in society receive free public education;
- VI. We will struggle against state terrorism;
- VII. We will struggle for a clean and healthy environment;
- VIII. We will fight to abolish police brutality, unwarranted incarceration, and the death penalty;
- IX. We will fight for gender equality, for women's liberation, and for women's rights to be recognized as human rights in all areas of personal, social, economic, and political life;
- X. We recognize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people as full and equal members of society and of our communities;
- XI. We support affirmative action;
- XII. We will fight for reparations;
- XIII. We will struggle to build multicultural solidarity and alliances among all people of color;
- XIV. We will uphold the right of the African American people to self-determination;
- XV. We support the liberation struggles of all oppressed people.

In 2003, the BRC celebrated its fifth anniversary with a conference at Seton Hall University. The objectives of the conference were to build a movement for peace and justice and to resist repressive domestic policies such as the PATRIOT Act. Chaired by activist Bill Sales, this conference included presenters from Africa, the Middle East, the

Caribbean, and Latin America. In June 2008, the BRC convened a 10th Anniversary National Conference. Michael Eric Dyson opened the conference with a presentation on "Electoral Politics in the Struggle for Black Political Power." Continuing the commitment to a comprehensive approach to liberation, workshops included "Black People and the Iraq War," "In Search of a Black Gay Agenda," "Radicalizing the Hip-Hop Political Movement," "Gettin' the Vote Out: The Radical Approach," and "Black Liberation and Student Organizing." Plenary sessions assessed the BRC's past 10 years and developed a direction and strategy for the next 10 years. Despite changes in its programmatic structure and leadership, as outcomes of the plenary discussions, the BRC remains steadfast in its commitment to organizing a critical mass of black radicals to effect meaningful economic, political, and social change.

See also: Baraka, Amiri; Black Nationalism; Davis, Angela; Sanchez, Sonia

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## Black Self-Defense

Black self-defense against racist violence has played a significant role throughout the history of the African American freedom struggle. Those who attempted to protect themselves or their communities against white aggression, however, generally faced overwhelming odds. In the antebellum South, rigid Slave Codes forbade black bondsmen to carry weapons, and confronting white masters was mortally dangerous. The end of slavery in 1865 and subsequent Constitutional Amendments finally granted all African Americans the right to bear arms, and a large number of former slaves used their newly acquired guns to fight terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. But black self-defense,

which conjured up deep-seated fears of armed insurrection among white southerners, remained a dangerous venture. When armed blacks confronted exploitative employers, white lynch mobs, or abusive police officers in the 1880s and 1890s, their militancy tended to result in swift retaliation against individuals or entire black communities.

In the 1910s and 1920s, a number of militant black activists practiced and publicly advocated self-defense against racist terrorism. In the aftermath of World War I, for example, when numerous race riots rocked American cities, some black veterans used their army training to repel white invaders. Black nationalist leaders Marcus Garvey and Cecil Briggs applauded such examples of black militancy and urged their followers to confront white aggression. World War II further politicized and radicalized African American activists. Between 1942 and 1943, hundreds of racial clashes erupted in cities across the United States. Especially black veterans frequently resorted to armed actions when confronted with racist attackers upon their return to the United States. Still, armed resistance to white violence remained risky, especially in the Deep South, where white supremacy continued to reign supreme.

That changed during the civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s, when organized black self-defense sparked less brutal repercussions and frequently complemented civil rights campaigns in the region. NAACP activist Robert F. Williams emerged as an early proponent of "armed self-reliance." In 1957, the black military veteran founded a black self-defense organization in Monroe, North Carolina to protect the local freedom movement against the revived Ku Klux Klan. Around the same time, a group called the "The Civil Rights Guards" prevented dynamite attacks against the church of local civil rights leader Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth in Birmingham, Alabama, and armed men in Little Rock, Arkansas formed a "volunteer guard committee" to protect the home of NAACP officer Daisy Bates.

When civil rights activists launched massive nonviolent protest campaigns and voter registration drives in the Deep South in the 1960s, the federal government's reluctance to provide protection led to the formation of several black protection agencies. Their armed actions helped local freedom movements survive in the face of white violence, bolstered the morale of civil rights activists, instilled pride in black protectors, and sometimes served as an additional means of coercion in the fight against Jim Crow. In the summer of 1964, for example, black military veterans

in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, organized a highly sophisticated defense squad that guarded nonviolent activists and their white allies. During the Freedom Summer project of 1964, some black Mississippians formed similar groups to repel segregationist attacks on their communities.

That same year, blacks in Jonesboro, Louisiana formed the Deacons for Defense and Justice (DDJ). The armed unit patrolled black neighborhoods, provided armed escorts for white and black activists, and guarded the offices of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In 1965, African American activists formed another DDJ group in Bogalusa, Louisiana, achieving nationwide notoriety after shootouts with the Ku Klux Klan. Although such protective efforts generated frequent debates about their legitimacy among nonviolent activists, many civil rights organizers of CORE and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came to accept black self-defense as a matter of course.

Southern self-defense groups had disbanded by the end of the 1960s, but black self-defense remained a vital part of the Black Power movement, but it played a fundamentally different role and underwent a process of radical reinterpretation. In contrast to their southern peers, black power militants rarely engaged in armed confrontations with segregationist attackers. Rather black self-defense became a militant symbol of black defiance, which served primarily as a means to affirm and nurture black manhood. As early as 1961, black nationalist leader Malcolm X had denounced Martin Luther King's nonviolent philosophy as unmanly, urging African Americans to repel white attacks. In the aftermath of the James Meredith March of 1966, during which SNCC activist Stokely Carmichael first voiced the slogan black power, an increasing number of black activists heeded his advice.

The most prominent example of this new type of armed militancy was the Black Panther Party (BPP). Founded in Oakland, California in 1966, the BPP initially regarded its armed patrols in urban black communities as a way to confront police brutality. Ultimately, however, the Panthers and other black nationalist groups such as US or the Republic of New Africa reinterpreted traditional concepts of self-defense, arguing that race riots and revolutionary violence constituted a legitimate form of self-defense to confront white supremacy. Despite the largely symbolic nature of black power militancy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) considered black power militants a threat to the nation's

security, launching a massive counterintelligence program to disrupt their activities. By the mid-1970s, militant groups such as the Panthers had either succumbed to the FBI's destructive tactics or toned down their violent rhetoric.

See also: Black Panther Party; Black Power; Deacons for Defense and Justice; Republic of New Afrika; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; US Organization; Williams, Robert F; X, Malcolm

Simon Wendt

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## Black Star Line

Incorporated by Marcus Garvey in 1919, the Black Star Line of Delaware was a steamship company founded as an economic venture supported by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The company owned three ships at its height and was working on purchasing a fourth. Despite an enthusiastic response among people of color throughout several countries, the shipping line failed as a result of poor financial management, internal subversion, and the eventual arrest of Garvey on charges of mail fraud.

Garvey believed economic development among African Americans was critical for overcoming white oppression. He saw the Black Star line as an opportunity for African Americans to manage their own business venture, employ and serve persons of color, and offer financial investment opportunities. Shares of the company's stock originally sold for \$5 apiece and could not be purchased by whites. Garvey assured investors they would see near boundless returns.

In September 1919, the company purchased its first ship, the *Yarmouth*, for \$165,000. Garvey initially hired an African American as captain, although he would later be dismissed for dishonesty and replaced by a white captain. On its voyages the *Yarmouth*, unofficially dubbed the *Frederick Douglass*, was received with large displays of enthusiasm both in American ports and in places like Cuba, Jamaica, and Panama. It hauled several loads of cargo, including cement, fertilizer, logwood, a botched cargo of coconuts, and a hasty shipment of whisky before the enactment of Prohibition laws. In all the *Yarmouth* made three voyages to the West Indies before being sold by the U.S. government in November 1921 for \$1,625 to repay several of Garvey's creditors.

The second addition to the Black Star Line was a passenger excursion boat, planned for trips along the Hudson River, called the *Shadyside*. Garvey purchased the boat in April 1920 for \$35,000. After completing the summer excursion season, the *Shadyside* docked for the winter at which time it sprang a leak and sank during an ice storm.

In May 1920, the *Kanawha*, a converted yacht unofficially dubbed the *Antonio Maceo*, was purchased for \$65,000. When it set sail up the Hudson in June 1920, it blew a boiler, killing one employee. Because of continued mechanical problems, the ship would not leave for the West Indies until March 1921. This voyage was plagued by continual mechanical failures, some only hours apart. The crew, through either neglect, incompetence, or sabotage, had a hand in the continued breakdowns. The ship was abandoned in Antilla, Cuba, where it remained for many years, being stripped of anything of value and sinking into the ocean.

The Black Star Line entered negotiations to purchase a fourth ship, to be dubbed the *Phyllis Wheatley*, intended for passage and trade to Africa. Several ships were pursued to this end, but negotiations stalled out on each. A down payment was made on the *Hong Kheng*, but the ship was never delivered. Offers were also made to the U.S. Shipping Board for the *Porto Rico* and the *Orion*, the latter of which was to be sold to Garvey's company for \$200,000. Once the terms of purchase were arranged, Garvey proceeded to place advertisements for the ship's maiden voyage and collect \$8,900 in fares from prospective passengers. Unfortunately, the agent handling the purchase, as well as others, misappropriated the organization's funds and the down payment for the ship was not met in full. Ultimately, the shipping

board decided not to sell the ship to the Black Star Line based on its inability to pay, Garvey's arrest, and several financial claims against the company. The money offered as a partial down payment was tied up in court claims until March 1929 when the U.S. Senate ruled the court of claims could decide on creditor's claims against the company. The *Orion* was scrapped in 1930 for less than \$28,000.

In April 1922 the initial Black Star Line of Delaware was a financial catastrophe and was suspended. By March 1924, however, Garvey had announced a new Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company. Under new auspices, Garvey purchased the *General Goethals*, unofficially dubbed the *Booker T. Washington*, for \$100,000. This money was again raised by selling stock, and Garvey claimed that 90 percent of the investors were previous Black Star Line stockholders. The *General Goethals* made one voyage to Cuba, Panama, and Jamaica, which was plagued by many of the same problems of the Black Star Line's ships. In June 1925, the ship docked in New York where it would later be sold to help repay debts.

There is some debate as to who is responsible for the ultimate demise of the UNIA's steamship line ventures. Garvey purchased ships in seemingly poor repair for inflated amounts. He and his subordinates had little knowledge of the industry, and losses and delays were often related to poor contract negotiations or mishandling of business protocol. Outside sources of decline came from the company's explicit enemies, such as the *Chicago Defender* and other publications denouncing the shipping line. Government organizations, such as the FBI, may also have had a hand in the demise of the Black Star Line. Yet many believe that the most significant cause of the company's failure was the underhanded practices of its employees. The financial ruin exacted by theft, sabotage, and negligence was defeating.

In spite of commercial interest in the company, Garvey's Black Star Line was never able to achieve its goals of economic development among peoples of color owing to a number of undermining factors.

See also: Black Nationalism; Garvey, Marcus; Universal Negro Improvement Association

Shawntel Lyn Ensminger

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## Bloody Sunday

Bloody Sunday was a brutal attack by members of the Alabama state and local police (using tear gas, nightsticks, and bull whips) on 300 predominantly African American civil rights marchers that took place Sunday, March 7, 1965 in Selma, Alabama.

Bloody Sunday took place within the larger context of the African American freedom struggle that has been ongoing before, during, and since the 1960s. Although African Americans were guaranteed the right to vote long before the 1960s, through the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified March 30, 1870, southern states instituted a series of state and local restrictions abridging African American civil rights as bolstered by the Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The *Plessy* decision upheld the doctrine of "separate but equal," as well as the power of state and local agencies to maintain and regulate under the guise of their "police power" segregation policies also called "Jim Crow" laws. In keeping with a longstanding "organizing tradition," African Americans created self-help agencies and civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, the National Urban League (NUL) in 1911, and the Congress of Racial Equality in 1942 to combat restrictions placed on black civil rights. Voting rights were of a particular concern to African Americans because many southern municipalities adopted obstacles that prevented African Americans from voting, such as the grandfather clause, the poll tax, and the literacy test through the turn of the century.

Jim Crow laws were accompanied by regular acts of violence and brutality against African Americans. An estimated 82 percent of the lynchings that took place in the United States between 1890 and 1900 occurred in the American South, with an average of more than 150 lynchings per year. In the first decade of the 20th century (1900–1910), the percentage of lynchings taking place in the South increased by more than 10 percent. Although African Americans were not the only group made subject to lynching, they were certainly the chief victims in overwhelming numbers. In response to continuous violence, disenfranchisement, and segregation

in public facilities, African Americans challenged such measures through “sit-down” campaigns in the 1940s to boycotts and marching in the 1950s. The Civil Rights movement expanded and became a mass movement through the 1950s and 1960s to include such organizations as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference created in 1957 and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in (SNCC) established by black student activists in 1960. Representatives from the aforementioned civil rights organizations felt it necessary to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama in 1965 to secure voting rights for African Americans.

Although the collective activism of African Americans secured important gains between 1960 and 1965, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which guaranteed equal access to jobs and public facilities, 26 civil rights workers were killed during this time period, and there was no major voting rights legislation in place to guarantee black voting rights. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) declared that the first important civil right was the right to vote and actively incorporated voting rights as a central issue into his civil rights campaigns beginning in the period between 1963 and 1965. From 1960 to 1965, SNCC students organized several voter registration projects (including the Freedom Summer of 1964) in places such as Mississippi and Alabama in an effort to increase the number of African American registered voters across the South. Only 1 percent of the black population eligible to vote in Mississippi was registered to vote before 1965; about 2 percent of the black population eligible to vote in Alabama before 1965 was registered to vote. Thus, African American civil rights activists such as John Lewis of SNCC along with Hosea Williams and eventually Martin Luther King Jr. decided to surmount a voter’s rights demonstration in Selma, Alabama in the spring of 1965. These individuals sought to bring attention to the problems of disenfranchisement, segregation, and vigilantism (African American Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot on February 18, 1965 by an Alabama police officer) on the part of whites in Selma by organizing a 54-mile trek on U.S. highway 80 across the Edmund Pettus Bridge toward Montgomery, Alabama to demand redress for their grievances.

Bloody Sunday occurred as John Lewis and Hosea Williams led 300 marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965. The marchers were charged by 200 state and local police officers wielding clubs in the form of nightsticks. John Lewis was beaten bloody to the ground. Five women marchers were beaten unconscious. Ultimately, several marchers were attacked and bludgeoned

senseless. Seventeen marchers were hospitalized including civil rights organizer Amelia Boynton Robinson who was almost gassed to death. That this incident was televised and people around the United States were able to see scenes of defenseless marchers attacked by police officials brought national support to the movement. Martin Luther King Jr. called for a continuation of the march on March 9, but decided instead to hold a short ceremonial march to the Edmund Pettus Bridge then turn around until a court order was secured. A white Unitarian minister, James Reeb from Boston, who came to Alabama to join the second march, was attacked the same day by an angry mob and died on March 11. After Reeb’s death, a federal judge ruled in favor of Martin Luther King Jr. and SCLC. The number of marchers completing the journey on March 25, 1965 eventually increased to an estimated 25,000.

Bloody Sunday led to the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act invalidated any test or device to deny voting, including a poll tax, literacy test, and grandfather clause, and allowed federal examiners to enter states to ensure the registration of African Americans in any state with a history of discrimination. “And we shall overcome,” stated President Lyndon Baines Johnson in a speech supporting access to the franchise for African Americans following “Bloody Sunday.”

See also: Abernathy, Ralph David; Jim Crow; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Lewis, John; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Selma March; Voting Rights Act 1965; Williams, Hosea

Hettie V. Williams

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## Bombingham

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. referred to Birmingham, Alabama as the most segregated city in the United States. To the city’s African American residents, it was simply “Bombingham,” a place where they had suffered decades of

reactionary violence, police brutality, and political emasculation. The city had earned such a sobriquet because of its high frequency of racially motivated bombings—no less than 50 between 1947 and 1965—and because its elected officials did little to impede the carnage. Nearly everyone who lived in or visited Birmingham in the years before the Civil Rights movement noted its oppressive climate and its glaring lack of concern for basic human rights. And it was for these reasons that King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) targeted the city for their 1963 campaign, thus transforming Birmingham into the main battleground in the postwar struggle for civil rights.

Birmingham was founded in the 1870s, a scion of America's postwar industrial boom. By 1900, thousands of working class whites and blacks called the city home, daily plying their trade in the iron and steel mills that dotted the bleak urban landscape. Few of the business and industrial leaders who controlled the local economy actually resided in Birmingham. Rather, they managed its affairs from New York or Pennsylvania, or they settled in the "over the mountain" communities of Mountain Brook, Homewood, and Vestavia Hills. Hence, the city's political power structure was controlled by working and lower-middle class whites, who composed a majority of the population and who enjoyed all the economic advantages residing with their race. African Americans made up about 40 percent of the population by the late 1950s, yet fewer than 20 percent could cast a vote. A majority of the black populace lived at or below the poverty level, and only a handful worked in trades not classified as unskilled or menial. A strict system of segregation determined the parameters of social interaction between the two races. And if blacks ever endeavored to step beyond the narrow confines of Jim Crow, whites would often react with violence.

After World War II, racial tensions escalated to unprecedented levels in Birmingham. Because of a postwar housing shortage in the city, African American families began moving into residences that either bordered on, or rested in, historically white neighborhoods such as North Smithfield (an area later designated as Dynamite Hill). This not only violated segregated housing ordinances, it drew the ire of working class whites who wanted to maintain the racial integrity of their communities. As a result, there were a number of black residences bombed by night-riding vigilantes in the latter half of the 1940s. The Birmingham Police Department, headed by public safety commissioner Eugene

"Bull" Connor, failed to adequately investigate the attacks, much less arrest those responsible. Consequently, members of the African American community responded to the lack of police protection by posting armed guards in front of their homes and began conducting nightly neighborhood patrols. Their actions probably saved dozens of homes from destruction. But the conflict raged on.

After the 1954 *Brown* decision, racial animosities heightened all over the city. This time, vigilantes began targeting civil rights activists, like the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, who headed the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Twice, in 1956 and 1962, terrorists bombed Shuttlesworth's church, Bethel Baptist, coming close to killing the fearless minister. Similar bombings targeted the homes of Attorney Arthur Shores, A. G. Gaston, and A. D. King, the brother of Martin Luther King. In September 1957, Shuttlesworth and his wife were attacked by a mob when they attempted to integrate Phillips High School. Shuttlesworth was severely lashed with bicycle chains and brass knuckles in the melee, and his wife received a stab wound to the hip. In May 1961, Klansmen, with Bull Connor's full blessing, savagely assaulted a busload of Freedom Riders in the downtown Trailways station. Photographs of the attack ran in newspapers around the world, shocking the international community and convincing many Birmingham businessmen that the continued maintenance of white supremacy was both impractical and immoral.

In the spring of 1963, King and the SCLC conducted widespread demonstrations in Birmingham, hoping, among other things, to end discriminatory hiring practices in downtown businesses, desegregate public facilities, and integrate the local school system. The campaign was only marginally successful in Birmingham itself, but eventually influenced Congress and the White House to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The situation in Birmingham, however, seemed as volatile as ever. On September 15, 1963, days after area schools were desegregated, a bomb was detonated outside the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, resulting in the deaths of four black children. Withdrawing into their familiar roles, local and state police did little to nab those responsible for the blast. In fact, it was not until the late 1970s that one of the bombers, Robert Chambliss, was brought to justice. More than two decades after Chambliss's conviction, two of his accomplices, Bobby Frank Cherry and Thomas Blanton, were tried and found guilty for their roles in the attack.

Finally, and mercifully, Birmingham could begin the process of healing.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1964; Jim Crow; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Shuttlesworth, Fred; Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

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## BPP, Chicago Branch

Founded in late 1967, the Chicago Illinois Branch of the Black Panther Party (C-BPP) was organized by Bob Brown and Bobby Rush. The C-BPP propagated itself through community service projects, weekly political education classes, and rallies. In November 1968, the C-BPP welcomed Fred Hampton (1948–1969). Hampton, a native Chicagoan, quickly became the C-BPP most recognized member. Following Hampton's lead, the C-BPP became an undeniable regional force. In May 1969, Hampton coordinated a non-aggression pact among Chicago gangs. Hampton termed the multihued and politically diverse groups a "rainbow coalition." The teen-age BPP leader eventually assumed the BPP Illinois chapter chairman position. The chairman's position carried with it an ancillary spot as national-level deputy chairman on the BPP policymaking Central Committee. Hampton's ascension to the Central Committee made him a target of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) "Counter Intelligence Program" (COINTELPRO).

Hampton was clearly the most charismatic and intelligent of the BPP leadership cadre. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover acknowledged Hampton's voluminous abilities in bureau memoranda by vowing to prevent his development into a "Black Messiah" capable of politicizing and unifying divergent revolutionary and gang-affiliated blacks. Ongoing surveillance solidified FBI leaders' belief that drastic

measures—wiretaps, fraudulent letters, and agent provocateurs—were needed to subdue Hampton.

Indicative of the importance Hampton held within the late-1960s protest scene was the FBI's creation of a "Racial Matters" squad to coordinate attacks against the C-BPP. Plans began with the introduction of agent provocateurs. Central to bureau plans was William O'Neal. O'Neal came under FBI control as he sought to avoid incarceration for pending charges of interstate car theft and impersonation of a federal officer. Once inside the C-BPP, O'Neal swiftly rose through the ranks. O'Neal, who would become the Bureau's most active agent provocateur, became the C-BPP director of security.

Rationalizing that the C-BPP vulnerability would increase exponentially if it was isolated from its activist peers, FBI agents attacked the "Rainbow Coalition" via myriad activities. For example, "Racial Matters" agents dispensed bogus correspondence to Black Stone Ranger leader Jeff Fort detailing an imminent C-BPP assassination attempt. Agents hoped that Fort would take retaliatory action against the C-BPP; when Fort did not fall for such bait, Bureau agents ordered informant O'Neal to instigate the conflict. O'Neal accomplished this goal on April 2, 1969. As a result of FBI operations, Hampton's "Rainbow Coalition" was decimated.

Amazingly, the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) repression was more blatant than their FBI brethren. Indicative of such aggression was an attack on the C-BPP Monroe Street office. The Monroe Street attack was particularly egregious because of officers' deliberate destruction of C-BPP supplies earmarked for the needy. Incredibly, law enforcement officers set fire to areas storing food and medical supplies, brutally attacked and arrested those present, and as a final insult boarded up the C-BPP office. Toward resisting such blatant attempts of intimidation, Panther Chairman Bobby Seale ordered the office reopened. Impressively, black Chicagoans donated supplies and personnel to the cause. The C-BPP refusal to fold forced "Racial Matters" agents to increase their pursuit of Hampton.

Toward securing a permanent solution to their C-BPP problem, William O'Neal's FBI contacts stepped up communications. O'Neal was ordered to build a criminal case against the C-BPP leader. Despite his best attempts, Hampton was above all criminality. The C-BPP leader, however, did transgress the law on one occasion. Hampton offered opponents a proverbial sword when he stole \$72 worth of ice cream as a treat for neighborhood children. Officers



pounced on this transgression and arranged for Hampton to be given a two- to five-year prison sentence for the trivial transgression. Hampton, however, was released after several weeks on an appeal bond. Hampton's release solidified opponents' belief that a permanent solution was needed. Toward accomplishing said goals, FBI agents began making specific requests of Agent Provocateur William O'Neal. O'Neal was ordered to provide a detailed map of Hampton's dwelling and provide officers with a legitimate reason to raid the dwelling. O'Neal accomplished both goals with the desired map and information that Hampton's dwelling was used to store the C-BPP weapons caches. Armed with this information, a coalition of FBI agents, state, and local law enforcement officials created a plan to assassinate Hampton. The assassination was set for December 4, 1969, and included myriad elements such as C-BPP head of security William O'Neal who was set to play a critical role in the operation.

After teaching a political education class on the evening of December 3, Hampton retired to his West Monroe Street dwelling. Informant O'Neal had prepared a late dinner for the arriving Panthers. After serving dinner, O'Neal exited the residence. Hampton retired to his bedroom and telephoned his mother. Strangely, an unusually exhausted Hampton drifted into a slumber mid-sentence. At approximately 4:00 A.M. a platoon of 14 officers assembled outside of Hampton's apartment. At 4:45 A.M. officers stormed the building. A slumbering Mark Clark was discovered in a front room. Officer's killed the young Panther instantly; Clark, who was on security detail, had his shotgun discharge after it fell from his lifeless grip. Officers immediately directed their bullets toward the room that O'Neal's map had listed as Hampton's bedroom. Satisfied that no one could have survived their savage attack, officers ceased fire and began their search for what they hoped was Hampton's lifeless body. Hampton, who never stirred from his slumber, was struck in the shoulder. Subsequent coroner reports would indicate that Hampton was drugged with secobarbital, a powerful barbiturate; all indicators point toward William O'Neal as the source of the drugging. A frightened Deborah Johnson, Hampton's visibly pregnant fiancée, was ordered from the room by raiding officers. Johnson alleged overhearing a disturbing discussion among the raiders. He charged that one officer answered fellow officers' inquiries regarding Hampton's status with the comment that "he is barely alive." Moments later, two additional shots were discharged. Autopsy reports detail that Hampton had two

shots to the back of his head. Raiding officers cryptically mused that "he is good and dead now." After murdering Hampton, raiding officers sprayed the remaining rooms with bullets and beat surviving Panthers before arresting them for aggravated assault and attempted murder. The arrested Panthers would be held on \$100,000 bail.

CPD leaders and public officials initially praised officers for their restraint while simultaneously blaming the Panthers for the horrific incident. Only the rallying of progressive-minded Chicagoans, a congressional investigation, and inquisitive reporters would unearth irrefutable proof that Hampton and Clark had been executed. Ballistics experts proved that of the 100 shots fired, only one came from the C-BPP. That particular salvo was discharged from Mark Clark's shotgun. Despite their obvious culpability in the murders, the raiding officers were never prosecuted. The estates of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark would be given a monetary settlement a decade after the incident. Unfortunately, there was no one capable of replicating Fred Hampton's leadership, charisma, and intelligence within the C-BPP. Consequently, the C-BPP drifted into nonexistence. *See also:* Black Panther Party; COINTELPRO; Hampton, Fred

James Thomas Jones III

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## BPP, Los Angeles Branch

The Los Angeles branch of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party was founded in February 1968. Eager to expand Panther operations, Eldridge Cleaver

authorized Alprentice Bunchy Carter and Earl Anthony to launch a chapter in Los Angeles. Within a month, the two men (mainly Bunchy) had organized 20 men. Most of the recruits came from the Teen Post, an antipoverty program where Bunchy worked as a counselor. Before long the Panthers were the largest militant group in Los Angeles. Aside from Carter and Anthony, others who helped build the chapter were Raymond “Masai” Hewitt, Gwen Goodloe, Elaine Brown, John and Erika Huggins, and Elmer “Geronimo” Pratt. Pratt had been a member of the Army’s 82nd Airborne division and was a decorated Vietnam veteran instrumental in training members of the chapter in combat readiness. Goodloe, Brown, and Erika Huggins were instrumental in putting in place most of the Panthers’ survival programs. Masai Hewitt, the well-read street scholar set up the chapter’s weekly political education classes, an activity mandated by the national headquarters in Oakland.

The Los Angeles outpost had several offices, making it was one of the largest in the organization. Among the people the Panthers attracted were gang members, dropouts, ex-servicemen, runaways, men and women who lived on the streets, and black youth looking to get involved politically for the first time in their lives. The chapter was composed of three groups: the sociopolitical element, the military, and the underground. The sociopolitical element worked closely with the community. This group was primarily responsible for putting the survival programs in place; they did the day-to-day grunt work that was necessary to meet the needs of the people. The military sector consisted of the chapters’ foot soldiers. They acquired weaponry and trained members in warfare in preparation of the impending revolution. The underground, composed of small cell units, were hardened street types that would do whatever needed to be done for the organization in the name of the revolution. The underground consisted of only those men that Bunchy knew and could trust, men that he had seen fight in the mean streets of LA, men who had been tested—some of whom by him. The underground had its own ethics. For example, it did not rob individuals, it robbed institutions. Bunchy kept the identities of the underground members from the general body for obvious and strategic reasons. For instance, if authorities interrogated someone outside of the underground, he or she could only reveal limited information.

It took the Panthers almost two years to set up its community survival programs. The Panthers were able to serve free dinners from time to time, but not with any regularity

because they had no access to a proper facility and, more important, because much of their funds were being used for legal fees, medical treatment for those beaten when arrested, parking fines, and impounded vehicles. Although the Panthers were slow in setting up their survival programs, they were still active in the community. One of the Panthers’ more substantive efforts involved ridding the community of drugs. Indeed, the one thing that shop owners and other residents noticed shortly after the party opened its office on Central Avenue was that drug activity waned. Before the Panthers arrived, drug pushers peddled their wares openly. Determined to make the neighborhood safe, the Panthers set out to run the pushers out of the community. Those who ignored the Panthers’ appeals were either shaken down until they left on their own accord or were driven out by force.

By 1969, the Panthers were finally able to launch the first of three free breakfast programs. Garnering support for the program proved more difficult than the Panthers had expected. Hundreds of letters were sent to retail and wholesale stores, requesting supplies; the response was dismal. Undeterred, the Panthers came up with a plan. The convinced officials at UCLA’s dining halls to donate its left-over items instead of discarding them at the end of each day. The first breakfast program was established in early 1969 at the University Seventh Day Adventists Church, much to the chagrin of the congregation. Despite the parishioners’ uneasiness about the Panthers, the Panthers were allowed to use the facility with one stipulation—that no meat be served. Realizing that for many people breakfast is not a complete meal without meat, the Panthers discovered vegeburgers and passed them off as sausages. Dozens of children ranging in age from 3 to 14 were served daily. Among the other Panther offerings included a free clinic, a busing-to-prisons program that catered to black families that did not have the means to visit their loved ones who were often incarcerated in facilities that were hundreds of miles outside the city.

Because of the Panthers’ strong community ties, they were able to expand throughout the state. Over the course of a few years Panther offices were set up in Bakersfield, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Pomona, Pacoima, Pasadena, and San Diego. As the Panther operation grew, so did the attacks on them.

No chapter or branch suffered more casualties than did the LA Panthers. Bunchy and John Huggins were killed by members of a rival black organization. Tommy Lewis,

Steve Bartholomew, and Robert Lawrence were shot and killed by police officers at a local gas station in August 1968. Several other Panthers were murdered, the circumstances of which remain mysterious. Panther offices were frequently raided. Given the assault launched against the LA cohort, it is amazing that more Panthers were not killed. Although in a state of siege, Panthers were able to put in place a set of programs that were designed to increase poor people's lot. Although the chapter was obviously unable to uplift the entire black community, many lives were touched by the Panthers' efforts. Not only were people impacted by the breakfast programs, the free clothing giveaways, and the free tuberculosis testing, but both the black and white communities were affected by the example set by the Panthers. *See also:* Black Panther Party; Brown, Elaine; Cleaver, Eldridge; Pratt, Geronimo Ji-Jaga; US Organization

Judson L. Jeffries

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## BPP, New York Branch

The New York branch of the Black Panther Party (BPP) existed in Albany, Buffalo, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and New York City (Brooklyn—its birthplace—the Bronx, Corona, Harlem, Jamaica, and Washington Heights). They were involved in the community from its earliest stages. The New York branch called for a school boycott in Harlem if the educational institutions did not teach heritage and provide better education in addition to hiring black principals. They also supported Ocean Hill-Brownsville's quest for neighborhood-controlled schools. The Panthers outlined goals including becoming a political force by 1968, indicating that the BPP in New York existed earlier than that year. Breakfast programs for children and a health clinic operated in a Brooklyn community center, developed by Panthers.

By 1969, the New York branch was responsible for a third of the national weekly circulation of *The Black Panther* newspaper for a period of time, sending \$13,000 to headquarters at one point. The New York Panthers wanted (1) a larger portion of the newspaper profits to benefit the

local communities and (2) to continue advocating for better housing and schools. They embraced adopting African names, as many members worked with black nationalists or had backgrounds in such organizations. Their cultural orientation conflicted with the changing ideology of the BPP headquarters. These differences became more evident when headquarters sent reinforcements to the New York branch, after many of their leaders had been arrested. Larry Neal, education director for the New York branch, outlined numerous incidents of police harassment, so the arrests were only a matter of time.

Twenty-one Black Panther members were charged with conspiracy to bomb Penn Station, Morrisania police station, department stores, and the Bronx Botanical Gardens. Because many of the first 16 who were arrested on April 2, 1969 were leaders in the New York branch, this was the beginning of the end. Zayd-Malik Shakur (deputy minister of information), Joan Bird (a nursing student at Bronx Community College), Dr. Curtis Powell (a biochemist at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center), and Rose-land Bennett, among others, described their arrest in *The Black Panther* over the subsequent two years. Bail for most of them was set at \$100,000 and ads requesting bail money for those arrested ran in *The Black Panther* in April 1969. Donations were to be sent to Brooklyn. In later months, however, the ads requesting financial support for the Panther 21 included addresses in both Brooklyn and Berkeley, California.

The Panther 21 also included Afeni Shakur (a section leader and the mother of Tupac Shakur), Dhoruba Bin Wahad (section leader), and Sekou Odinga (Bronx section leader). Ms. Shakur had joined the Black Panther Party after hearing Bobby Seale speak. She noted that meeting Odinga and Lumumba Shakur was life-changing, as they were men who respected women. She was released in January 1970; Bin Wahad, Michael (Cetewayo) Tabor, and Joan Bird were released on bail a few months later. By 1971, there were 13 defendants of the original 21 on trial facing 156 charges. All were found not guilty and released in that year.

The New York branch had grown increasingly dispirited with the national headquarters. Not only had they struggled with losses related to the Panther 21, but also other resources such as arson of the Jamaica chapter's building in October 1970. By 1971, the Panther 21 were purged from the BPP, in addition to the New York branch. In February of that year, some East Coast chapters announced

in Harlem that Huey Newton and David Hilliard should be expelled from the BPP. They went further by attributing legitimate leadership to Eldridge Cleaver, Kathleen Cleaver, and Donald Cox (all of whom represented the International Section in Algeria), as well as Bobby Seale who was in prison at the time. The FBI forged a letter suggesting that the New York branch and Cleaver were orchestrating Newton's death.

The Newton/Cleaver rift escalated and was played out in New York City. The New York branch demanded accountability after Robert Webb's (former bodyguard for Newton) description of Newton's extravagances and drug use. Webb was killed in Harlem in March 1971; Donald Cox believed that the murder was Newton's revenge for Cox's support of Cleaver. The New York branch received another forged FBI letter intimating the same fate for others affiliated with Cleaver. The next month, *The Black Panther* office was burned and the body of Sam Napier, circulation manager of the newspaper, was found. Napier's tortured death was seen as retaliation for Webb's death. The New York branch began to publish *Right On* because *The Black Panther* was seen as Newton's outlet; publication of *Right On* ceased in 1974. When police began arresting Cleaver-affiliated Panthers en-masse, the New York branch suspected that Newton had been cooperating with law enforcement. The BPP on the East Coast began looking for other options by which to serve the community.

Many members of the New York branch became involved with the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and/or the Republic of New Africa. The BLA was considered the armed force of the BPP. In the late 1990s, former New York Panthers organized the Black Panther Collective, designed to carry out the mission and purpose of the New York branch of the Black Panther Party.

See also: Black Panther Party; Shakur, Assata

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## BPP, Oakland Branch

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was created October 15, 1966, in Oakland, California, by Merritt Junior College students Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The BPP offered a revolutionary alternative to traditional civil rights tactics, strategies, and goals. Inspired by the revolutionary nationalist theory of Malcolm X, the BPP spiritual and intellectual father, Newton and Seale intended to extend his legacy to its next logical step—revolution. Informing the BPP ideological underpinnings was an international base of political theoreticians and revolutionaries: Frantz Fanon, Mao Tse-Tung, Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara. Such theory enabled the BPP to avoid oversimplified nationalist doctrines in favor of a Marxist-Leninist politic.

Armed with a ten-point platform of largely reformist wants and goals—housing, full employment, relevant education—Newton and Seale attempted to recruit local collegians, but they were unconditionally rebuffed. Undaunted by such refusal, the Panther's turned toward the lumpen proletariat. To the BPP dismay, marginalized African Americans were equally resistant to their recruitment efforts.

The aforementioned failure forced the Panther's to embrace what many derisively term suicidal tactics. Toward reversing their recruiting problems, the BPP decided to implement point #7 (an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people) of the ten-point platform and program. Newton sought to exploit California's State Constitution, which allowed citizens to carry armaments via the Panther Patrols. The Panther Patrols were composed of BPP members carrying firearms (for protection), law books (to offer appropriate legal aid), and cameras (to preserve evidence) while following Oakland Police Department (OPD) officers as they performed routine patrols. The BPP could not have wished for better publicity.

Despite its relative popularity, the Panther Patrols failed to translate into a significant membership increase. Bay Area African Americans remained leery of affiliating with the BPP. Central to African-Americans' refusal to enlist in the BPP was the OPD record of unpunished abuse of Bay Area blacks. These police abuses led Bay Area African Americans to theorize that the BPP would be quickly destroyed by OPD officers. As predicted, local officers were determined to destroy the BPP "by any means necessary."

The initial campaign to curtail the BPP was a simplistic plan of harassment and intimidation. The petty harassment campaign proved to be little more than a nuisance to the BPP. Realizing the petty harassment campaign's futility, officers altered their strategy. OPD officials requested the assistance of State Legislator Donald Mulford in early 1967. Representative Mulford immediately drafted a bill removing Californians' Constitutional right to carry armaments.

In response, BPP leaders formulated a unique protest. On May 2, 1967, a cadre of 30 Panthers traveled to the state capitol to protest the pending Panther Bill. The capitol protest, which included the BPP carrying guns onto the legislative floor, was broadcast throughout the nation. The BPP gamble at receiving free publicity via reporters covering capitol proceedings was a phenomenal success. Such exposure led to their being inundated with calls regarding BPP expansion throughout the nation. Unfortunately, the BPP exposure via news snippets gave admirers little hint of their repudiation of parochial race-first politics. Ironically, BPP politics often contradicted would-be Panthers' personal political positions and motivations. Such issues intensified exponentially after Huey P. Newton was involved in an early morning shootout that left him wounded, one officer dead, and a second officer wounded.

Newton's arrest on October 28, 1967 for this offense not only moved the BPP to the center of the American protest scene, but also polarized the nation. One's position regarding Newton's guilt or innocence was usually determined by an individual's acceptance or repudiation of 1960s radicalism. With Newton confined, Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver assumed an influential leadership position. Cleaver, a public relations genius, mobilized progressives behind a catchy slogan of "Free Huey."

The "Free Huey" campaign created a loose coalition of radicals. Most notable of these groups was the Peace & Freedom Party (P&FP). It was the BPP relationship with the white P&FP that ostracized the Panthers from their racially chauvinistic nationalist peers. Compounding matters was the selection of Charles R. Garry, a white attorney, to represent Newton in his capital murder trial. With the Panthers isolated from fellow nationalists, Newton incarcerated, and the BPP in a general state of disarray, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) moved against the BPP in a substantive way.

The FBI's modus operandi was the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). COINTELPRO was a covert

operation aimed at usurping the powers and authority of national level black religious and political leaders. The BPP ascension was particularly troubling to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover because the BPP chose to align with white leftist groups and propagated revolution instead of parochial race-first reformist politics. Ironically, the COINTELPRO violated laws in its pursuit of African American leaders. Bureau agents attacked via an intricate campaign of wiretaps, fraudulent letters, informants, agent provocateurs, assassinations, murder, and the assistance of friendly jurists.

Unable to defend against such a blitzkrieg, the BPP countered with a flurry of ineffectual decisions, policies, and counterrevolutionary activities. Indicative of such realities was the BPP battling Ron Karenga's US organization, a 1960s cultural nationalist group, and turning in on itself. Although impossible to identify informants, BPP leaders executed an organizational purge. State and local chapters were summarily closed. Loyal Panthers were ordered to Oakland for an unprecedented attempt at capturing the city's burgeoning Pacific Rim economy. The plan was to elect Bobby Seale to the mayor's position via flooding municipal voting rolls. In the end Bobby Seale and former BPP head Elaine Brown were both unsuccessful in their bids for public office. Despite such failure, the BPP laid the foundation for subsequent electoral success in Oakland. In the wake of its electoral failure, the BPP declined into a former shell of itself. Although the BPP existed into the 1980s with various activities, the organization never reached earlier levels of importance and influence.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Brown, Elaine; Cleaver, Eldridge; COINTELPRO; Karenga, Maulana; Newton, Huey P.; Seale, Bobby; US Organization

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## Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was an African American labor union organized in 1925 by A. Philip Randolph. It was the first predominantly African American labor union in the United States to sign a collective bargaining agreement with a major U.S. company and gain charter recognition from the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

Historically, labor opportunities and labor protections for African Americans have been largely exploitative, beginning with slavery and indentured servitude and following with Reconstruction through the early 20th century. African Americans first responded to freedom with migration, moving from one part of the South to another with westward expansion. Those who remained in the South were left bound in a system of debt peonage called the crop lien system as buttressed by the rise of discriminatory laws sanctioned by a series of Supreme Court decisions sanctioning “separate but equal” practices in public facilities, education, and employment. In the mid-19th century and after the Civil War (1861–1865), the process of industrialization and the rise of “big business” dramatically changed the American landscape and the lives of African Americans. The transformation of the American economy from an agrarian to industrial economy redefined the nature of work and society overall as African Americans migrated to northern cities. The development and construction of the railroads (the transcontinental system was built primarily with Chinese immigrant labor) largely after the Civil War became America’s first “big business.” As Americans flocked to the cities for work, demands for worker protections became more prevalent with the rise of trade unions in the late 19th century.

Most of the major labor unions created amid worker unrest in the late 19th century, such as the Knights of Labor (1869), organized by Uriah Stephens under the guise of “universal brotherhood,” and the American Federation of

Labor (1886), created by Samuel Gompers (1850–1924), initially made overtures to black workers. The Knights of Labor made efforts to organize workers regardless of race, skill, or nationality. Between 1885 and 1886, the number of African American members swelled to 60,000. Unlike the AFL, the Knights placed less emphasis on worker skills. The AFL focused on coordinating the activities of skilled craft unions throughout the country yet made an overture in the form of a resolution to include African American workers within their ranks in 1893. As both a social and labor movement, the Knights of Columbus declined after the Haymarket Riot (massive rally in support of 8-hour workday that took place in Chicago, 1886) and bombings under the specter of radicalism. Although the AFL made public overtures of inclusion to African Americans, local affiliates customarily barred African Americans from joining; those chapters organized with black membership were segregated. Later attempts to develop unions such as the International Workers of the World (IWW) (1905) were not as successful in terms of numbers in gaining black participation. The IWW never had more than 10,000 members nationwide.

African Americans began to migrate to cities in the North between 1890 and 1930 in a “Great Migration,” in search of work and equality. Many times, such as the case with the Pullman Strike of 1894, without work African American served as “strikebreakers.” George M. Pullman (1831–1897), founder of Pullman Palace Car Company, began to hire African American workers after the Pullman Strike of 1894. This practice continued after Pullman’s death. In fact, African American workers were so pervasive, white passengers who rode in the luxury Pullman railcars often referred to African American male porters who worked the cars as “George.” African Americans working as porters and train personnel reached 20,224 by the 1920s; this was the largest category of black labor at the time.

Although the Pullman Company saw itself as “socially progressive” in the hiring of large numbers of African Americans, working conditions and wages remained substandard through the turn of the century. Porters worked long hours, were reliant on passenger tips for satisfactory pay, and spent time on duties such as setup and cleanup that was unpaid. The porters were also responsible for securing their own food, lodging, and uniforms. These costs often consumed significant portions of their pay. They were

also charged whenever items went missing from the rail car. Porters were required to work 400 hours per month or 11,000 miles to receive pay. Porters were also not allowed to be promoted to conductor (this job was customarily reserved for whites). These hardships prompted the porters to attempt several efforts to organize, and on August 25, 1925, they commandeered the support of civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph at a meeting in Harlem. Approximately 500 porters agreed to create a union called the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and adopted the motto "Fight or Be Slaves." A. Philip Randolph became the union's first president.

It was not until the New Deal under President Franklin D. Roosevelt that the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was formally recognized by the Pullman Company in 1937. This was as a result of the Wagner Act that was created to formally recognize labor unions in the workforce. The principles of collective work, community involvement, and the organizing tradition propelled the Brotherhood to become involved in civil rights activism. Major civil rights leaders such as E. D. Nixon, who was instrumental in developing the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956, were members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

See also: Great Migration; Randolph, A. Philip

Hettie V. Williams

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## Brown, Elaine

Elaine Brown (1943–), a former chairperson of the Black Panther Party, redefined leadership roles during the 1970s. In 1974, she became the first woman to hold the party's highest honor. She clarified her intent to maintain a unified organization after the departure of Huey P. Newton for Cuba. Brown was born to Dorothy Clark, a factory worker, in a predominately black, low-income area of North Philadelphia on March 2, 1943. Her father, Horace Scott, was a

prominent physician who cheated on his wife to conceive Brown with Clark. Scott refused to accept Brown as his daughter during her youth on York Street in North Philadelphia. As a child, Brown grew up singing in various choirs at the Jones Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church and eventually recorded the Black Panthers National Theme in 1969 called "The Meeting." Brown also recorded albums in the 1970s titled *Seize the Time* with Vanguard Records and *Until We're Free* with Black Forum Records, and she also appeared on a 2002 Black Panther record called *The Fugitives*.

During Brown's youth, Brown's mother often bought her pretty dresses and made her take ballet classes as a means to separate her from all things considered black. As a student at Philadelphia High School for Girls, Brown recalled when her mother stated that light skin and straight hair were better features than dark skin and tightly-curved hair. Brown eventually would internalize bourgeois concepts as a child, particularly during a visit with her Aunt Francine in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, she persevered and briefly attended Temple University as a prelaw student. After leaving in 1965, Brown went to Los Angeles and taught piano at the Jordan Downs housing project. While working at the Pink Pussycat Club in West Hollywood, Brown met Jay Kennedy, her eventual mentor and lover. Kennedy, a screenwriter and wealthy patron who is 30 years her elder, introduced her to critical aspects the Civil Rights movement. With the aid of Kennedy and other friends such as Beverlee and Tommy Jacqueline, Brown furthered her interest in sociopolitical activism. While in Los Angeles, Brown began a Black Student Union newsletter and organized the Southern California College Black Student Alliance while at the University of California at Los Angeles.

In 1967, Brown became acquainted with the Black Panther Party and by April of the next year, she joined the Southern California chapter. By 1969, Brown became the deputy minister of information and was elevated to the minister of information in 1971. As a result of heightened scrutiny by COINTELPRO of the FBI, many leaders in the Black Panther Party were jailed or killed by the early 1970s. Also in 1971, Brown gave birth to her only child Ericka, who she conceived with former party member Mesai Hewit. Similarly to her father, Horace Scott, Hewit left Brown during her fourth month of pregnancy and later remarried. Before Newton escaped murder charges for Cuba, Brown unsuccessfully campaigned for an Oakland City Council position

in 1973, and later would try for the same position in 1976. During Brown's tenure as chairperson, she continued the free medical care, expanded the free breakfast program, and created the renowned Oakland Community Learning Center in the city's poorest neighborhood.

Brown also registered nearly 100,000 new voters and endorsed Governor Jerry Brown and Lionel Wilson, who later would become Oakland's first black mayor. Also, Brown provided jobs to thousands of blacks during the Grove-Shafter freeway expansion that revitalized downtown Oakland. In 1976, Brown was chosen as a delegate to the Democratic Party's national convention, and she also was involved in many Oakland-based community and civic organizations. In 1977, Brown was viewed as a pawn and when Newton returned, neither his cocaine habit nor pressures from the majority male party could save Brown's leadership role. In fact, once Brown witnessed the beating of a female counterpart, she fled with her daughter to Los Angeles. Once there, Suzanne de Passe befriended Brown and allowed her to read scripts and write songs for Motown Records.

Through de Passe, Brown met French industrialist Pierre Elby and later moved to France to write her autobiography and first book, *A Taste of Power*, which she began in 1985 and completed in 1994. In 2002, Brown wrote her second book titled, *The Condemnation of Little B*, which examines the high incarceration rate for black men in the prison industrial complex. Brown currently maintains an active role in prisoner reform as seen by her work with the Mothers Advocating Juvenile Reform and the National Alliance for Radical Prisoner Reform. Brown also lectures throughout the United States, writes articles, and intends to coauthor a book on the life of Jamil Al-Amin. Also, *A Taste of Power* is being optioned for film. In November 2005, Brown ran for mayor of Brunswick, Georgia as a member of the Green Party.

See also: Black Panther Party; BPP, Los Angeles Branch; COINTELPRO; Newton, Huey P.; US Organization

*Jamal L. Ratchford*

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## Brown, Ron

Ronald Harmon Brown (1941–1996) was born in Washington, D.C. As a young boy, the Brown family moved along the eastern seaboard several times from Washington, D.C., to Boston, Massachusetts, to Harlem, New York. In 1947, Brown's father relocated to New York City as part of his job with the Federal Housing and Home Financing Administration (FHHFA). A short time later, he decided to switch from being a government employee to becoming a civilian employee when he took a job as the manager of the famous Hotel Theresa in Harlem. It was in that context that the younger Brown met several prominent African American hotel guests who had a profound influence on him. Among the notable celebrities he met at the hotel were Joe Louis, world champion boxing legend; Dinah Washington, blues/jazz singer great; and Josephine Baker, U.S.-born French entertainer.

After graduating from high school in New York, Brown attended Middlebury College (Vermont), majored in political science, and graduated in 1962. While at Middlebury, Brown pledged and became a member of a white fraternity. His entrance into the fraternity helped to abolish obstacles for membership in campus groups based on race. Brown's next stop after college was the U.S. Army, where he served from 1962 until 1967 in several leadership capacities commanding troops in the United States, Germany, and South Korea.

After his honorably discharge from the Army in 1967, Brown began studying law at St. John's University (New York) and in 1970, he received his law degree. One year later, he was admitted to the New York bar. While attending law school, Brown worked for the National Urban League as a job developer. Then, in 1973, after several promotions at the National Urban League, he was selected as the director of the organization's Washington, D.C. office. Three years later, in 1976, he was promoted to deputy executive director for programs and governmental affairs. Brown remained at the National Urban League until 1979, when he



resigned from his position to work as Massachusetts Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy's deputy campaign manager to secure the 1980 presidential nomination of the Democratic Party for Kennedy. In that role, Brown served as a political strategist to help secure the "black vote" for Kennedy's bid for the party's presidential nomination.

After his work on the Kennedy campaign ended, Brown decided to remain in Washington, D.C. In 1981, he was hired as an attorney and lobbyist for Patton, Boggs & Blow, one of the capital's most influential law firms. His new position there allowed him to extend his sphere of influence through political networking and to develop some close relationships with elite members of the Democratic Party. Brown was also the first African American to make partner at the powerful law firm.

From 1981 through 1985, Brown served as the deputy chairman of the Democratic Committee. In 1988, he was a convention campaign manager for the Rev. Jesse Jackson who was running for president of the United States. Brown also became a candidate for the position of chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). One year later, in 1989, Brown was elected chairman of the DNC and became the first African American to lead a major political party. From 1989 through 1992, as chairman of the DNC, he led the Democratic Party with distinction.

Brown has been credited with getting Bill Clinton elected as U.S. President in 1992. President Clinton nominated Brown as the United States Commerce Secretary, a cabinet level position, and on January 22, 1993, Brown was sworn in as the 319th commerce secretary. Brown, as secretary of commerce, led one of the largest, complex governmental agencies with a multibillion dollar budget. Like many previous appointments throughout his life, Brown was a trailblazer; not only was he the first African American to serve as a commerce secretary, but he also significantly changed the role of that cabinet position.

Unlike his predecessors, who viewed the position as a formal, ceremonial one, Brown took an active role in reshaping the position. He expanded global business and commerce between the United States and other major international players in economic markets through his worldwide travels with governmental officials and business executives. Brown made multiple visits to several Asian, South American, and Middle Eastern countries that were eager to conduct commercial activities with business in the

United States. He received high marks from a bipartisan business community for his efforts.

In office for slightly more than three years, Brown, along with a group of governmental officials and business executives, was killed when their Boeing T-43A military airplane crashed on April 3, 1996, in Dubrovnik, Croatia, during a tour of several countries in the Balkans to communicate his vision about developing possible investment opportunities in the region. Despite the speculation by some conspiracy theorists about the cause of his death, official sources state that Brown, as a result of pilot error resulting from poor weather conditions, was killed when his airplane crashed into the side of a mountain.

Brown's remains are buried at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington Virginia. He left a wife, Alma Arrington; a son, Michael Brown; and a daughter, Tracey Brown. In December 1996, as a testimony to his memory and life work, the CAP Charitable Foundation, a private philanthropic foundation, established the Ron Brown Scholar Program. The mission of the program is to provide financial scholarships for talented African American high school seniors who may be financially unable to pay for college. In addition to their academic aptitude and desire to attend an institution of higher education, Ron Brown scholars should possess leadership abilities and demonstrate a willingness to engage in various types of community activities. *See also:* Clinton, William Jefferson; Jackson, Jesse

*Joseph C. Santora*

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## ***Brown v. Board of Education***

*Brown v. Board of Education* in Topeka Kansas (1954, 1955) are the landmark Supreme Court decisions that declared segregated educational institutions illegal. Even before the Supreme Court upheld the separate but equal doctrine decree in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), individual parents challenged separate educational facilities via the courts, mostly because separate schools were rarely equal. Pursuant to

their goal of eliminating segregation in all public facilities, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began the process of challenging segregation by laying the groundwork for *Brown*. To do so, the NAACP tried cases dealing with desegregation in graduate and professional schools. Two of the most significant cases include *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), which found that segregated law schools deprived black students of certain intangible qualities, and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), which mandated that black graduate students be treated the same as white graduate students.

The Kansas segregation statute permitted cities with a population greater than 15,000 to maintain separate elementary schools despite the fact that high schools, except in Kansas City, were desegregated. The Topeka Board of Education decided to operate segregated elementary schools, which provided the NAACP an opportunity to take legal action. The District Court ruled that while segregated

schools did have a detrimental effect on African American children, the schools were substantially equal and therefore compliant with Plessy.

The NAACP lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall, Robert L. Carter, and Jack Greenberg, originally argued the case before the Supreme Court in 1952, but a decision was not reached because there were similar cases pending. As a result, the *Brown* case is actually an amalgam of four class action school segregation cases in Kansas, South Carolina (*Briggs v. Elliott*), Virginia (*Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*), and Delaware (*Gebhart v. Belton*) representing approximately 200 plaintiffs. The NAACP legal team argued that segregated schools violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Using evidence supplied by Kenneth Clark and Mamie Phipps's doll experiments, the legal team also argued that segregated schools deprived them of the opportunity to learn to adjust personally and socially in an integrated setting, lowered



Mrs. Nettie Hunt and daughter Nickie on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954. Hunt holds a paper announcing the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to ban segregation. (Library of Congress)

black children's level of aspiration, instilled feelings of insecurity and inferiority in them, and retarded their mental and educational development.

The unanimous Brown decision, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, declared that to separate children from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. Most important, the Court found that maintaining separate educational facilities violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and therefore declared that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

Although the 1954 Brown decision overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, it did not provide guidance as to how the schools should desegregate. The Court decided that because the situations were so diverse, the remedies were best decided at the local level. Brown II (1955) mandated that the district courts should oversee the desegregation process "with all deliberate speed." Without a specific timeline in place, desegregating public schools was a slow-moving process. Only two southern states, Texas and Arkansas, began desegregation in 1954. Some other school districts circumvented the ruling by closing all the public schools. The process was so sluggish that it was 1957 when children attempted to desegregate schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, only to be met by angry mobs and National Guard troops. In other areas of the country, it was more than a decade before schools and school districts began the arduous process of desegregation. The most immediate success of the Brown ruling was that it set the stage for civil rights groups to challenge segregation in other public arenas including public transportation.

See also: Fourteenth Amendment; Houston, Charles Hamilton; Little Rock Nine; Marshall, Thurgood; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; *Plessy v. Ferguson*

Lisa Doris Alexander

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## Bruce, Blanche K.

Blanche Kelso Bruce (1841–1898) was the first African American senator to serve a full term in the United States Senate. Born March 1, 1841, in Farmville, Virginia, Bruce was born into servitude. He spent his younger years in Virginia, Mississippi, and then Missouri. Although Bruce was a slave, he grew up similar to white Southern children. As a light-skinned biracial man, under a relatively benign master and mistress, Bruce's years in servitude were less harsh than those of other enslaved African Americans. He was both well educated and relatively well treated during his early years.

After the Civil War, Bruce moved to Mississippi where he became a wealthy landowner and heavily involved in the political scene. After just a few months in Mississippi, Bruce gained the attention of the Republican hierarchy. In his first few years in the state, Bruce held important positions including sergeant-at-arms in the state senate and tax assessor of Bolivar County. In 1871, when the first election following the adoption of Mississippi's Reconstruction constitution was held, Bruce was elected to the combined position of sheriff and tax collector. A few weeks later he was awarded the office of county superintendent of education. In 1872, Bruce was awarded a position on the board of levee commissioners. In these various positions Bruce gained popularity and notoriety throughout the state.

There were other notable African American politicians in Mississippi, but Bruce was especially appealing because he had not aligned himself with either faction of the Republican Party. Instead, he had chosen to stay on the good side of both the radicals and moderate factions of the party. In doing so, he furthered his popularity in the organization on both the state and national level. Furthermore, his actions in the various offices he held in the state had pleased many whites. Thus, Bruce was favorable to both whites and blacks in the state.

In 1874, Bruce's popularity awarded him a place in the United States Senate where he served from 1875 to 1881. During this period he strongly advocated for the education and equality for African Americans. In 1881, Bruce was unseated when the Democrats took control of the Mississippi legislature. He was replaced by Democrat James Z. George.

After Bruce left the Senate, President Garfield offered him the position of minister to Brazil or postmaster-general. Bruce turned both positions down and instead asked to be appointed minister of the treasury. Garfield agreed and the Senate, filled with Bruce's former colleagues, confirmed Garfield's selection. In the position of the minister of treasury, Bruce was awarded the highest appointed position that an African American had ever received. Bruce's term ended in 1885 when the Republican Garfield was replaced by newly elected Democrat Grover Cleveland. For the next few years, Bruce lectured and campaigned for the Republicans. In 1888, when the Republicans successfully regained the presidency with Benjamin Harrison, Bruce was again awarded a position of respect, this time as recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia. When Cleveland reclaimed

the presidency in 1892, Bruce was again out of office. In 1896, Bruce finally regained his position as minister of the treasury under newly elected President McKinley. Bruce held this position until his death on March 17, 1898.

Blanche Kelso Bruce was an influential African American. He held numerous positions on the local, state, and national level. In these positions he advocated and fought for black equality. While fighting for his African American brothers and sisters, Bruce stayed on the good side of whites as well. This helped to make Bruce the first African American to serve a full term in the United States Senate and forever a part of the history books.

*See also:* Radical Republicans; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Republican Party

Mindy R. Weidman

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Blanche K. Bruce was the second African American ever to serve in the U.S. Senate. (Library of Congress)

## Buffalo Soldiers

After the Civil War, when the massive Union army of about 1 million was disbanded, Congress could not ignore the contributions of the large number of black volunteers to the Union victory. So when the army was reduced and reorganized in 1866, blacks had a place in the regular army for the first time. Congress designated six post-Civil War regiments for black enlisted men in the Reorganization Act of July 28, 1866—the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantry regiments (consolidated in 1869 into two infantry regiments, the 24th and 25th). The act marked the first inclusion of black men in the regular army. Soldiers who served in these regiments during the period of the frontier wars and the overseas wars at the turn of the 20th century have come to be called "Buffalo Soldiers." Since 1866, African Americans have remained a continuous presence in the armed forces, and their inclusion in the regular force has been considered a positive step toward equal opportunity. The creation of this segregated place

for black soldiers, however, anticipated by a generation the spread of segregation as the mode of race relations imposed by whites in the South—usually called “Jim Crow”—and foreshadowed by two generations the formal segregation of civilian employment in the federal government by President Woodrow Wilson.

The officers of the black regiments were white. In the 50 years between the Civil War and World War I, only five African Americans received commissions in the regular army and served with the black regiments. Three were West Point graduates: Henry Flipper was the first in 1877, followed by John Alexander in 1887 and Charles Young in 1889. The other two were former enlisted men, Benjamin O. Davis and John E. Green, commissioned at the turn of the 20th century. Davis ultimately became the first black general officer.

The law of 1866 required that a chaplain be assigned to each new black regiment. This departed from the normal army practice of appointing chaplains to specific posts rather than units. Their responsibilities included the common school education of the men, many of whom were illiterate former slaves who had been denied access to education, as well as their spiritual needs. The first chaplains were white. Henry Vinton Plummer, a Baptist minister who

had served in the Navy during the Civil War, became the first black chaplain and served 10 years (1884–1894) before he was dismissed from the service on spurious charges of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. By 1898, all four regiments had black chaplains: George Prioleau (9th Cavalry), William T. Anderson (10th Cavalry), Allen Allensworth (24th Infantry), and Theophilus Gould Steward (25th Infantry). They were a distinguished group of clergymen and scholars.

Like the white soldiers of their time, Buffalo Soldiers participated in central episodes of the American experience. They made many essential contributions to western settlement, making maps, blazing trails, and improving roads; guarding settlements, roads, and stage stations; and providing the reassuring military presence that helped encourage development. They also fought in some major wars against Indians, from the conflicts against the Cheyenne in Kansas just after the Civil War to the last big campaign on the Pine Ridge against the Sioux in South Dakota during 1890–1891. Most notably they were at the center of the arduous campaign against the Apaches Victorio and Nana in a wide belt of the Southwest covering western Texas, much of New Mexico, and eastern Arizona during 1879–1881.

During the period of the frontier wars, the black regiments made up about 12 percent of the very small Indian fighting army, which sometimes included a mere 25,000 or so soldiers, and participated in about 13 percent of the combat engagements against Indians. The 9th Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Edward Hatch from 1866 to 1887, was organized at New Orleans, Louisiana. It served in Texas through the mid-1870s, then moved west to New Mexico. In the 1880s, the regiment moved first to Kansas, then farther north to stations in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah. The 10th Cavalry started at Forts Riley and Leavenworth, Kansas. Colonel Benjamin Grierson, who, like Hatch, had distinguished himself as a leader of mounted troops during the Civil War, remained in command until 1889. His regiment served in Kansas and what later became Oklahoma into the 1870s, then moved to Texas and later to Arizona, where it participated in the campaign against Geronimo in 1886 and remained until 1892. It spent the rest of the 1890s at Montana stations. The 24th Infantry, the product of the merger of the 38th and 41st in 1869, spent many years at remote Texas posts before the war with Spain. The unit's arrival at Fort Douglas, Utah, outside Salt Lake City, in 1896 marked a rare instance of the stationing of a black regiment



*Soldiers with the 9th Cavalry, about 1898. The 9th Cavalry was one of six regiments for black enlisted men organized after the Civil War. In time, these regiments became known collectively as the Buffalo Soldiers. (Library of Congress)*

near a center of population. The 25th Infantry, consolidated from the 39th and 40th, also spent its first decade in isolated parts of Texas before moving to equally remote posts on the northern plains in Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Montana. A total of 37 of the 61 Buffalo Soldiers killed in Indian fighting during the period 1867 to 1890 fell against the Apaches during 1877–1881. Eight of the 18 who received the Medal of Honor during the period of frontier warfare earned recognition for conspicuous bravery in this bitterest of American frontier wars. Sergeant Emanuel Stance of the 9th Cavalry was the first Buffalo Soldier to receive the medal for leadership and bravery in 1870.

All four regiments fought in the two foreign wars of the turn of the 20th century. They achieved prominence in the war against Spain in the summer of 1898, participating in the attack on San Juan Hill Cuba, alongside Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders. They also served in the harsh guerilla struggle in the Philippines against a native independence movement during 1899–1902; 29 were killed in Cuba, 23 in the Philippines. Later, they participated in General John Pershing's 1916 punitive expedition into Mexico. Five black soldiers received the Medal of Honor for valor in Cuba.

Although Buffalo Soldiers and white soldiers carried out the same duties, they did so under different circumstances. Black soldiers often faced discrimination and hostility from the people they were assigned to protect. Through the entire period from the creation of the regiments to World War I, Texas represented the most dangerous racially charged environment, but soldiers lost their lives to racist attacks in a number of places including Fort Concho, Texas (1881), Sturgis, South Dakota (1885), and Suggs, Wyoming (1892). The two most serious racial incidents took place in Texas. A shooting incident at Brownsville, Texas, in 1906 resulted in the dishonorable discharge of an entire battalion of the 25th Infantry, and a riot in Houston, Texas, in 1917 led to the hanging of 14 soldiers of the 24th. Despite the difficulties, black soldiers rarely deserted and were much more likely than white soldiers to reenlist, reflecting the paucity of viable options in an era of increased segregation and lack of respectable mainstream employment. Moreover, black civilians considered the Buffalo Soldiers important and followed their activities avidly in weekly newspapers.

Black regulars from the period of the frontier wars are now widely known as Buffalo Soldiers. It is generally supposed that the Indians, either the Comanche or Cheyenne,

first called the troopers “buffalo soldiers,” and the best guesses are that the name reflected a perceived resemblance between the brown skins and nappy hair of some of the men and the color and texture of the fur of the bison. The earliest known user of the phrase was Frances Roe, the wife of an officer who served at a post with the 10th Cavalry in Indian Territory during 1872–1873. Her letters were dated 1872 but not published until 1909. Some historians, including William Leckie in his path-breaking book *The Buffalo Soldiers: a Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West*, claimed that, because the buffalo was so important to these tribes, the term was probably a sign of respect and that the soldiers so comprehended it. The assumption that the term Buffalo Soldier was somehow honorific and that the Indians considered the black troopers to be exceptional has sometimes led to another, that the Buffalo Soldiers and the Indians viewed each other with empathy and respect. This cannot be proved, and the origins, significance, and prevalence of the phrase are not clear. Moreover, evidence that the soldiers themselves used or even referred to this title—in pension affidavits, black newspapers, or other venues—has not turned up, so claims concerning their views of the usage remain unproved suppositions. The 10th Cavalry adopted the buffalo as a central element of its unit crest, but not until 1911.

The improbability of any special bond between Indians and Buffalo Soldiers is underscored by the soldiers' use of the same dismissive epithets—“hostile tribes,” “naked savages,” and “redskins”—used by whites. Overall, the quest of Buffalo Soldiers for recognition as citizens in a racist country and the struggle of Native Americans for cultural and physical survival were not compatible. The strongest modern challenge to the emerging myth came from Indians, who were especially angered over the publicity that attended the issue of a buffalo-soldier postage stamp in 1994 and resented suggestions regarding some special bond between their warrior ancestors and the soldiers.

General awareness of the participation of black soldiers in the westward movement dates from the 1960s, the period of the civil rights revolution. The process started in 1960, with the release of John Ford's “Sergeant Rutledge,” a subtle and insightful film featuring Woody Strode as a black cavalry sergeant accused of rape and murder. The Civil War centennial joined with the Civil Rights movement to provoke reconsideration of the Civil War and a new focus on black soldiers as well as expanded general interest in black history. Leckie's book appeared in 1967. General Colin

Powell, a black four-star army general who, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, served as the military advisor to the President of the United States between 1989 and 1993, was instrumental in promoting this knowledge, dedicating a larger-than-life statue of a mounted Buffalo Soldier by sculptor Eddie Dixon at Fort Leavenworth Kansas on July 25, 1992. The well-publicized ceremony, the declarations by both houses of Congress that July 28, 1992 was "Buffalo Soldiers Day," and the imposing permanent presence of the statue (the first of at least five at western forts), triggered a flood of commemorations, displays, and publications; stimulated formation of reenactment societies; and created a market for souvenirs and memorabilia. Between 1960 and 1992, the Buffalo Soldier emerged from obscurity in the United States. By the end of the 1990s, he was a well-known, widely recognized cultural icon.

See also: Jim Crow; Union Army

Frank N. Schubert

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## Bunche, Ralph

Ralph (Johnson) Bunche (1904–1971) was born in Detroit, Michigan, the son of a barber. He moved from Detroit to Toledo, Ohio with his parents as his father searched for work. He attended elementary school in Ohio. In 1917, when his mother died, Bunche, then 13 years old, and his sister became orphans. His maternal grandmother, Lucy Taylor Johnson, took charge of the children who went to live with her in Los Angeles, California.

After graduating from a Los Angeles, California, high school with honors in 1922 where he excelled in academics

and sports, Bunche attended UCLA. He continued to be an outstanding student. He was both a Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude graduate at UCLA. In 1927, he received an undergraduate degree in political science. Based on his academic prowess, he was awarded a fellowship to attend Harvard University to study political science in the department of government.

In 1928, Bunche graduated from Harvard University with a master's degree in political science. He then took a position as an instructor at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he founded and became chair of its political science department. At Howard, Bunche played a major role as an academic and quasi-university administrator when he served as assistant to the university president. Bunche's work at Howard was rewarding, but he wanted to pursue his terminal degree. He enrolled in a PhD program in political science at Harvard and began working on his doctoral studies during summers from 1929 through 1934. While at Harvard, Bunche met Ruth Harris, whom he married in 1930. One year later, Ruth gave birth to Joan, the first of his three children. The Bunche family would include two additional children: Jane and Ralph Jr. In 1934, five years after he began his formal doctoral studies, Bunche fulfilled all the requirements for his PhD degree in the department of government, when the faculty accepted his dissertation "French Administration in Togoland and Dahomey." He had the unique distinction of receiving the William Toppan Prize, an annual award bestowed on doctoral students who submitted the best dissertation in political science. Bunche was also the first African American to receive a PhD from Harvard, or from any institution of higher education in political science. With his newly minted PhD, Bunche was identified as a rising star in the academic community. He was considered someone who could make a major contribution to the field. But Bunche opted to publish a few short articles from his research instead of turning his dissertation into a major book.

Bunche held some interesting views about poverty and political powerlessness. At the outset of his career, he believed that capitalism was the root of poor political and economic conditions for blacks. He advocated the position that blacks and whites should work together for "economic and political justice," which would ultimately result in the creation of a new, more equal, society. In 1939, Bunche had the unique opportunity to work part-time with Gunnar Myrdal, the noted Swedish economist and sociologist, on the issue of race in the United States. This field of research

culminated in the 1944 landmark publication *The American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*.

Bunche left academic life to embark on a new career. In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Office of Coordination of Information, later renamed the Office of Strategic Service or OSS. Needing a specialist on Africa, Roosevelt reached out to his alma mater Harvard University for a recommendation for the position; Bunche was recommended and Roosevelt accepted him.

Over the next three decades, Bunche would play a significant role in shaping government and international affairs. In 1942, Bunche moved from OSS to the U.S. State Department. In addition, he participated in preparing those chapters of the United Nations Charter that dealt with colonial territories. In 1946, Bunche became the director of the UN Trustee Division to help monitor the progress of autonomy in the UN Trust Territories and thus began his illustrious career at the UN.

In 1948, UN Secretary General Trygve Lie appointed Bunche his representative in Palestine, but he soon became acting mediator for the crisis. His diplomatic skills were instrumental in hammering out an armistice agreement on Palestine between Israel and several Arab countries. For his efforts in defusing the conflict and in brokering a deal in the Middle East, on December 10, 1950, Bunche became the first African American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the 1950s, the economic plight of African Americans was still very much on his mind. At this time, Bunche changed his political philosophy about capitalism, as he no longer blamed capitalism for economic disparity. He now believed that economic inequities were based on racism. In 1953, UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld appointed Bunche the undersecretary general for Special Political Affairs. For more than a decade, Bunche participated in peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and Africa.

In the 1960s, Bunche believed strongly in civil rights and sought integration and equality for African Americans. He supported Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and participated in the March on Washington in 1963 and the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery (Alabama). In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented Bunche with the Medal of Freedom. The urban unrest of the 1960s, starting with the 1965 Watts riots in particular, solidified his views on the need for integration; as a result, black radicals of the time called him an “Uncle Tom.” Bunche was also vehemently against the Vietnam War. He saw irony in the fact that African American soldiers were fighting for the rights of the

South Vietnamese, yet they had limited rights in their own country.

In the later part of the 1960s, Bunche suffered a number of personal tragedies. In October 1966, one of his two daughters committed suicide. In addition to this devastating event, his personal health began to fail. He was diagnosed with diabetes, which had an impact on his eyesight. In early 1967, Bunche wanted to resign from his UN position, but then Secretary General U Thant refused to accept his resignation. His career and his family obligations were at odds: his wife accused him of deserting his family for his career. He resigned from the UN on October 1, 1971 because of ill health.

Slightly two months later, on December 9, 1971, Bunche died in New York Hospital from complications connected with diabetes. As a lasting tribute to Bunche, in 1980, a park facing the United Nations building in New York City was named “The Ralph Bunche Park for Peace” in his honor. *See also:* Black Cabinet; Vietnam War (Black Participation in)

Joseph C. Santora

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## Busing

Busing, the act of moving students outside of their school district to end de facto segregation of public schools, became a controversial integration strategy ordered by the Supreme Court during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1954, the Court determined in *Brown v. Board of Education* that de jure segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Despite the Court’s ruling to end segregation, whites resisted desegregation in the North and in the South.



In 1968, the Supreme Court, unsatisfied with the slow pace of desegregation, ruled in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* that open enrollment desegregation programs did not comply with the *Brown* decision. School districts were required to take affirmative steps to achieve racial balance. Three years later, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg*, the Court ordered busing as a valid means to reach racial integration.

The public responded in protest. In June 1974, U.S. District Judge W. Arthur Garrity ordered the Boston Public School System to begin busing several thousand students between predominantly white South Boston, Hyde Park, and Dorchester and mostly black Roxbury. White opponents of busing demonstrated to prevent black children from entering white schools and withheld their own children from being bused into black schools. For weeks violence and hostilities ensued.

Integration efforts were damaged further when white parents moved their families to the suburbs, leaving behind overwhelmingly black urban enclaves. A month after Garrity's decision, the Court assessed the consequences of "white flight" on urban schools and overturned a Detroit busing plan in *Milliken v. Bradley*. In the 1990s, the Supreme Court redefined school desegregation, prohibiting racial discrimination, but relieved school districts of integration requirements.

See also: *Brown v. Board of Education*

John Matthew Smith

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## Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture)

Stokely Carmichael (1941–1998) was a charismatic and controversial leader of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. He is best known as an activist and

chairman of SNCC and a leader in the Black Power movement, which marked a turning away from the nonviolent tactics of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. in favor of a more militant brand of activism.

Carmichael was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad on July 29, 1941 to Mabel and Adolphus Carmichael. Carmichael's parents moved to New York City when he was three years old, and in 1952, he and his three sisters joined them there. The family first settled in Harlem, a predominantly black part of the city, before relocating to the Bronx, where Adolphus worked as a cab driver and carpenter and Mabel worked as a maid. Carmichael attended the Bronx High School of Science, one of the most prestigious schools in New York City, where he was one of only two black students, and graduated in 1960.

Before graduating from high school, Stokely experimented with political activism by participating in a sit-in sponsored by the New York chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He was beaten up during the sit-in, which only fueled his desire to further participate in the Civil Rights movement. Through CORE, he participated in boycotts of Woolworth stores in New York, which the organization targeted because of the company's policy of segregating their southern locations. Although Carmichael received scholarship offers from a number of universities, including Harvard, he chose to attend Howard University, an all-black institution in Washington, D.C. Because he did not receive a scholarship, Carmichael's parents had to pay his tuition.

While at Howard, he continued to work closely with CORE, as well as the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), a local organization that planned demonstrations and sit-ins in the Washington, D.C. area. In 1961, Carmichael expanded his involvement in the Civil Rights movement by joining the Freedom Riders, a group of protesters who traveled to southern cities via bus (with whites riding in the back and African Americans in front), challenging segregation and attempting to integrate public places that upheld the practice. He and his fellow riders were arrested for these actions in Mississippi and spent 53 days in Parchman Penitentiary, a notoriously brutal state prison. During this period of incarceration, the prison guards subjected the prisoners to terrible food, dirty mattresses, and constant harassment. The prisoners sang protest songs as a way of keeping up morale, but their songs only brought more harsh punishment from the guards.



*Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture), an effective leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), became an advocate of black power by 1965. He eventually joined the Black Panthers in 1967 and, while in exile, founded the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) in Guinea. (Library of Congress)*

Carmichael was released from prison in time for his second year at Howard, where he changed his major from pre-med to philosophy. He continued his education while also constantly participating in civil rights demonstrations. Carmichael finally finished his degree in the spring of 1964, and, although he received a scholarship offer from Harvard for graduate school, he passed in favor of joining the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project (MFSP), which aimed to increase black voter registration, organize a legal Democratic party that included blacks, establish schools for teaching basic literacy skills to black children, and open community centers where poor families could receive legal and medical assistance. He headed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the organization sponsoring the project, for one of the voting districts in Mississippi. His responsibilities included finding and training staff members, registering people to vote, distributing funds, and holding community meetings. The job was dangerous, and a number of students were injured

and even killed because of their involvement with the project.

Stokely left the MFSP at the end of the summer in search of a new project that would allow him to work solely with other African Americans. He did not like that the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project encouraged alliances with whites and felt there needed to be an all-black political party in order to achieve real political power. Carmichael also believed that leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., who advocated peaceful resistance, were too focused on integration and were getting in the way of establishing strong and independent black communities. Carmichael preferred more militant leaders such as Malcolm X, who encouraged African Americans to defend themselves, through violence if necessary, and to learn about and embrace their African heritage. In 1965, Carmichael went to Lowndes County, Alabama, in the hopes creating a strong, all-black resistance movement there. The number of blacks in Lowndes County outnumbered the whites, yet whites held all the positions of power, and the intense racial oppression there left black citizens living in fear. Carmichael felt that this town provided the ideal setting for incubating a black rights movement. Dressed in overalls so that he fit in with his surroundings, the charismatic Carmichael convinced black citizens in the county that they should vote, despite violent resistance from local whites, and managed to register nearly 300 black voters. Once registered, however, these black voters did not know who to vote for. There were no black members of either the Republican or Democratic Parties in Lowndes County, and black voters did not trust any white politicians to protect their interests. Carmichael decided to create a new party, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, which soon became known as the Black Panthers because of its mascot. Several members of the Black Panthers ran for office in the next election, and although none of them won, the black community in Lowndes felt they had more power and were better organized to protect their rights in the future.

After his success in organizing Lowndes County, Carmichael ran for and won the chairmanship of SNCC in 1966. His election marked the beginning of a new, more militant chapter of the organization's history. Like Carmichael, many members of the SNCC felt that nonviolent protest had not achieved any results and that stronger action was necessary. Shortly after his election, Carmichael found a national platform for his ideas. In June 1966, James Meredith was shot

during his solitary “March Against Fear.” While Meredith recuperated from his wounds, Carmichael joined Martin Luther King Jr., NAACP president Roy Wilkins, and other civil rights activists to finish the march. At the end of the march, Carmichael gave a rousing speech in which he invited African Americans to embrace “black power,” meaning that they should be prideful of their race while also striving to achieve socioeconomic independence from the white community. The term became a rallying cry for young blacks across the country, with the most public example being the 1968 Olympics, when two African American track-and-field medalists raised their fists in the black power salute while standing on the award podium. SNCC, which valued a group ethic over individual merit, became displeased with Carmichael’s growing celebrity, and, in response, he stepped down from his position of leadership in 1967. He traveled the country, becoming more closely identified with the Black Panthers and writing a book entitled *Black Power* (1967).

In 1968, Carmichael married South African singer Miriam Makeba, and the following year, the two moved to Guinea, where he became an aide to Prime Minister Ahmed Sekou Toure and a student of exiled Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah. Shortly after his arrival in Guinea, Carmichael published a formal rejection of the Black Panthers, citing their increasing willingness to form alliances with whites. In 1970, he returned to the United States in order to appear before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws. The subcommittee asked him to provide information on organizations and people that might be trying to overthrow the U.S. government, including the Black Panther Party and SNCC. They also asked Carmichael to provide details of his activities while outside the United States. He pleaded the Fifth Amendment throughout the hearing.

In 1971, Carmichael published another book entitled *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism*, which contained many of his speeches during his years with the SNCC and the Black Panthers. In 1978, he divorced his wife and changed his name to Kwame Ture in honor of his two new patrons, although many people continued to refer to him by his birth name. He then married Marlyatou Barry, a doctor whom he divorced several years later. He became a member of the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party (AAPRP), a group that advocated Pan-Africanism, or the uniting of all African peoples inside and outside of Africa

to form a single political entity. Ture traveled the world organizing new chapters of AAPRP for nearly a decade.

After the death of Ahmed Sekou Toure in 1984, the military regime that took his place arrested Ture several times on suspicion of trying to overthrow the government, although the reasons behind these allegations remain a mystery. He was jailed for several days for these charges, marking his final encounter with the law. By the mid-1980s, Ture grew disillusioned with the Civil Rights movement. Although there were 255 African American mayors in the United States by 1984, he felt that blacks had never truly organized effectively enough to gain real political power. Even so, he continued to visit the United States several times a year in efforts to promote Pan-Africanism. After receiving treatments for prostate cancer over a period of two years, Kwame Ture died in 1998 in Conakry, Guinea, at the age of 57.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Panther Party; Black Power; CORE; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Lowndes County Freedom Organization; MFDP; Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; Nkrumah, Kwame; Pan-Africanism; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Sara K. Eskridge

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## Castro, Fidel

Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz (1926–) was the leader of the Cuban Revolution, the prime minister of Cuba from February 1959 to December 1976, and the president of the Council of State of Cuba until February 2008 when power was transferred to his brother Raúl Castro. During his 50 years as the head of state of Cuba, Castro worked diligently

to support, and gain the support of, civil rights activist in the United States and anticolonial revolutionaries in Africa. As a result, Castro has met with a large number of political activist spanning the African Diaspora and, as such, both Cuba and Castro have become iconic figures in the various struggles led by people of African descent. Castro's role in this regard began in 1960, just a year after the successful coup against the U.S.-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista, when he invited a group of African American intellectuals including John Henrik Clarke, Julian Mayfield, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), and Harold Cruse to see, first hand, Revolutionary Cuba and its progress.

In October 1961, Castro and a delegation of Cuban government representatives came to New York to address the United Nations. When the delegation balked at staying in a plush mid-Manhattan hotel, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee arranged for Castro and his delegation to be moved to the black-owned Hotel Theresa in Harlem. During his stay in Harlem, Castro had a 30-minute conversation with Malcolm X and the picture taken during their meeting may have been the genesis of the positive association between Castro and African American leaders. Between 1960 and 1961, militant civil rights activist Robert F. Williams visited Cuba three times to the dismay of the NAACP. Williams's visits to Cuba and, along with Malcolm X, his October 1960 meeting with Castro in Harlem forged the first links between militant black activists and Cuban revolutionaries. As Cuba spiraled further away from the orbit of the United States, it became even more attractive to a number of radical organizations. Cuba alone stood against the combined might of the most powerful military in the world; Castro successfully repulsed an invasion, avoided several assassination attempts, and effectively became the unmovable object to the unstoppable force of U.S. domination in the Western Hemisphere.

This positive affiliation between African American radicals and Cuban revolutionaries, solidified even further by Castro's efforts in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa, explains why Cuba became a haven for African American activists during the era of political persecution and COINTELPRO operations in the United States. Beginning with Robert F. Williams in August 1961, a long secession of African American activist escaped to Cuba to seek political asylum, including Assata Shakur, Huey Newton, and Nehanda Abiodun (Cheri Dalton), William Lee Brent, and Charlie Hill among many others. While he and

his family lived in Cuba, Williams joined the staff of join the staff of Radio Progreso in July 1962, and was given access to a 50,000-watt radio station with enough power to reach Saskatchewan, Canada. Airing three days a week, listeners heard "Radio Free Dixie" broadcasts in Monroe, Harlem, and Detroit. Williams's continued publication of his monthly newsletter, *The Crusader-in-Exile*, and his "Radio Free Dixie" broadcasts between 1962 and 1965 solidified the notion that Castro was a friend to African Americans in the minds of millions throughout the United States.

In 1995, Castro made a return visit to Harlem during the UN's 50th anniversary celebration, delivering a speech to 1,300 people at Abyssinian Baptist Church. Citing the achievements of the Cuban Revolution, he noted that in terms of infant mortality, access to health care, and literacy, Cuba has quantifiably better statistics than New York City, despite decades of the U.S.-imposed trade embargo. He also reminded the audience of Cuba's longstanding fight against imperialism and neocolonialism in Latin America and Africa and that, specifically, Cuban soldiers had shed blood on behalf of Angola in repulsing the CIA- and apartheid-backed effort led by Jonas Savimbi and the Republic of South Africa to invade and control the former Portuguese colony. More recently, Castro visited the United States again in September 2000 to deliver a four-hour speech at Harlem's Riverside Church. Finally, six members of the Congressional Black Caucus made a trip to Cuba in April 2009 to meet with the Castro brothers, a signal that relations between the United States and Cuba may be thawing under President Barack Obama after a half-century of tension and distrust. Perhaps it is fitting that African American political leaders are playing principal roles in creating new diplomatic relations with Cuba.

*See also:* Destination, Cuba; Williams, Robert F.; X, Malcolm

Walter C. Rucker

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## Chicago Defender

Characterized as the "world's greatest weekly" by founder Robert S. Abbott, the *Chicago Defender* emerged as a leading newspaper advocate for black rights in the 20th century. Throughout its—100-year history, the *Defender* spurred on the Great Migration, fought Jim Crow and lynching, campaigned for equal opportunity, and believed that American racism must be eliminated.

Founded on May 5, 1905 by Robert Sengstacke Abbott, a black entrepreneur and millionaire who was born to former slaves, the *Defender* began with a budget of 25 cents and was only four pages long. Abbott originally could not afford to hire a staff and therefore managed the entire news reporting, editing, and distribution processes. He would not be dismayed and sold more than 200 copies at two cents a paper in 1905. Unfortunately, times were not always easy and the *Defender* nearly folded owing to economic hardship. The *Defender* endured, however, because of the sincerity of patrons such as Henrietta Plummer Lee. It was Lee, Abbott's landlady, who allowed him to use her dining room in her home at 3159 State Street in Chicago, Illinois; and so, the first headquarters of the *Defender* commenced on June 5, 1905. In fact, Lee, who was moved by Abbott's initiative to champion black-related issues, accepted token payments for rent and food. Later, Abbott would honor her patronage with an eight-room brick house that he bought in 1918. Despite early economic challenges, Abbott instilled confidence into a people whom he referred to as the "Race" rather than "Negro," "Afro-American," or "Black." With World War I looming and thus need of coverage in addition to the aid of people such as J. Hockley Smiley, the managerial editor who used captivating headlines, and Jesse Binga, founder of Binga State Bank and a financial consultant who

also helped Abbott manage his bills, the *Defender* was able to mobilize toward success.

Robert Abbott was born on November 24, 1868, in Frederica, on St. Simons Island, Georgia, to Thomas and Flora Butler Abbott. While Thomas was a butler on the Charles Stevens' plantation, Flora Butler was a hairdresser in the Savannah Theater. When Thomas Abbott died of tuberculosis in 1869, Flora later moved back to Savannah and eventually met John Herman Henry Sengstacke. In 1874, Sengstacke married Flora Butler and they had seven children together. Sengstacke became a key mentor to young Abbott and subsequently paid for his education at Beach Institute, an American missionary school in Savannah, Claflin University, and later Hampton Institute. In fact, Robert Abbott would change his name to Robert Sengstacke and would change it once more by adding Abbott to the end in 1897 before enrolling in the Kent College of Law. Abbott learned that law was not his passion and thus decided to remain in Chicago to begin a newspaper. Nevertheless, Abbott noted that his adopted father, Rev. John H. H. Sengstacke, who indoctrinated him to the craft of printing, told him that to be a newspaperman, he must study not only his own needs, but the needs of those about him.

By 1910, Abbott noted that 25,350 people had read Chicago's only weekly paper. These numbers would steadily rise as a result of the horrors of lynching and Jim Crow, after which southern blacks sought information about the Great Migration to the North. In 1913, the *Defender* was sold to Daw's Steamship agency in London, England, marking the emergence of an international market. Also, in 1919, the *American Newspaper Annual and Directory* reported the *Defender's* circulation as 120,000. The overall readership may have been higher, as a particular family and surrounding community might share a newspaper for financial reasons. Thus, an estimated circulation of the *Defender* during the early 1920s went as high as 600,000, as Abbott's dream of an influential paper took shape. In 1921, the *Defender* moved into its 3435 Indiana Avenue address that featured a \$100,000 Goss straight-line sextuple press that could turn out 72,000 papers per hour. Nevertheless, all was not well in Chicago during 1919; in that year the infamous riots swept the city. During this tumultuous period, Abbott urged blacks to stay off the streets and allow the police to conduct order. The riot came about as a result of racial and class tensions between southern migrants and immigrants for labor

and housing space in Chicago. Although Abbott noted the presence of tension between Irish and blacks in addition to northern racism that transcended the city, he halted attempts to settle the race question so that order could be restored.

Abbott promoted the *Defender* as a race-pride advocate, of which readers would recognize a black-owned business rooted in professionalism. In 1910, the *Defender* claimed to be the only weekly that telegraphed Jack Johnson at Reno during his defeat of Jim Jeffries. When Booker T. Washington died in 1915, the *Defender* claimed that its extra-last Sunday beat the newspaper world by 24 hours in announcing his death. Similarly, on October 2, 1920, the *Defender* and its headline, "Expose Reign of Terror in Haiti," claimed to beat the daily press by 12 full days. Abbott's articles, headlines, and even cartoons depicted the *Defender's* role as the guiding light for blacks. While a 1916 cartoon titled "Backbone" depicts a *Defender*-sponsored doctor injecting a black man with a shot of backbone, Oscar De Priest's nomination for Congress was seen as the race being put back into Congress. During the Progressive Era, the *Defender* continued its promotion of honesty, persistence, education, and morality so that blacks could equally participate and rise in American society.

Abbott spurred the *Defender's* Great Migration Northern Drive in order to end the tyranny of lynching and peonage for southern blacks. Although tens of thousands of blacks departed for Chicago, the *Defender* met challenges from various southern cities that prohibited distribution of the paper. Particularly, as the United States was engaged in World War I and sought complete allegiance to patriotism, the *Defender's* stances against disfranchisement, segregation, mob violence, and now migration were viewed as threats to national security. Surveillance from the Bureau of Investigation began as early as 1916; national laws such as the Espionage Act of 1917, the Trading with the Enemy Act also of 1917, and the Sedition Act of 1918 allowed government officials to regularly monitor the *Defender*. Also, the government received complaints from as far west as San Antonio, Texas, Tucson, Arizona, and Columbus, New Mexico, for local whites believed that the *Defender* made blacks antagonistic toward them. Similar accusations were made in the South, as seen by petitions from residents of Madison County, Mississippi. With an endorsement from their senator, John Sharp Williams, the *Defender* was charged with instigating lies and causing race trouble. The *Defender* also was accused of being antipatriotic by Colonel Ralph

Van Deman, head of the Military Intelligence Branch. Thus, Major Joel E. Spingarn, a white chairman of the NAACP board of directors led a cooperative meeting of negotiation among 41 black leaders, of which it was agreed to tone down all race arguments during the war with the exception of lynching. Ironically, governmental suppression of the *Defender* would once again challenge its existence during World War II, under the leadership of John H. Sengstacke Jr.

Abbott and the *Defender* also promoted Bronzeville, the center of the Chicago Renaissance during the 1920s, in addition to the Bud Billiken Club for city youth, the *Defender's* 1930 massed chorus as examples of cordiality that southern blacks could find in Chicago. Also, the *Defender* promoted religious institutions such as the Olivet and Pilgrim Baptist Churches, as well as the many jazz clubs and labor opportunities, all of which provided alternatives to Southern Jim Crow and lynching. Abbott also donated thousands of Christmas baskets to needy families as an extension of his *Chicago Defender* Goodfellow club. Most Southern blacks thus could depart for Chicago on an Illinois Central Railroad line.

After Robert Sengstacke Abbott died on February 29, 1940 from tuberculosis and Bright's disease, his nephew John H. Sengstacke Jr. took the helm as editor of the *Defender*. In fact, Sengstacke Jr. remained editor for 43 years until he retired in 1983 and later died in 1987. The *Defender* would remain in the Sengstacke family under the leadership of Frederick Sengstacke until 2000. Under Sengstacke Jr., the *Defender* continued to prosper, as he kicked off their 50-year anniversary by awarding President Dwight D. Eisenhower with the ninth annual Robert S. Abbott award. Sengstacke Jr. continued Abbott's legacy and expanded the *Defender* during his reign by creating a seven-paper consortium titled the *Defender* publications. Sengstacke Jr. also made the *Defender* a daily paper in 1956. Although the *Defender* did not officially recognize its 50-year anniversary until the August 13, 1955 issue, Sengstacke Jr. spared no expense and published a detailed commemorative edition of the *Defender* that included articles from distinguished guests such as A. Philip Randolph, Charles Johnson, Langston Hughes, W. C. Handy, and Adlai Stevenson, former governor of Illinois.

Langston Hughes, commonly known as the poet laureate of the black race, joined a distinguished list of past contributors to the *Defender* including Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, and S. I. Hayakawa. For Hughes, who served from 1942 to 1962, the *Defender* was

the “journalistic voice of a largely voiceless people,” as he sought to eradicate racism and examine citizenship in the United States. In addition to outspoken articles and poems related to race, Hughes dedicated one-fourth of his columns to Jesse B. Semple, a fictional character who represented the joy and pain of being African American.

By 1980, during the week of the *Defender's* 75th anniversary, the State of Illinois Governor James P. Thompson declared May 5 through May 11 as the *Chicago Daily Defender* Week in hopes that all people of Illinois would honor its journalistic persistence and achievements. Mayor Richard Daley and Governor Rod Blagojevich also honored the *Defender* in 2005 during its centennial by declaring May 5 as “*Chicago Defender* Day” in the city and state. While fourth editor of the *Defender*, Colonel Eugene Scott, continued the tradition and cited the need for increased labor among black men and women in 2000, current leaders Roland Martin, executive editor, and Thomas Picou, CEO of Real Times Inc., noted the *Defender's* futuristic goals of becoming a versatile multimedia company that will be the leading source for black news.

See also: Destination, Chicago, Illinois; Great Migration; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; White, Walter

Jamal L. Ratchford

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## Chicago Race Riot of 1919

During the first two decades of the 20th century, thousands of African Americans migrated from the cotton fields of South to the cities of the North. This trend accelerated during World War I as African Americans took industrial jobs they had previously been excluded from. The African American population of Chicago doubled between 1910 and 1919. African Americans escaping the racial system of the South sadly discovered segregation existed in Chicago. Residentially, African Americans were confined to a small area of the city referred to as the black belt. Other facilities, such as beaches, were also de facto segregated by color. Conditions inside the black belt steadily deteriorated as more and more people moved in.

Postwar competition for housing and jobs further exacerbated tensions. African American veterans felt they had earned their place as equal citizens and had proven their loyalty to their country. Instead of equality, they met discrimination when they returned. They challenged the confines of the black belt by moving to other areas of Chicago. White resistance led to almost two dozen instances of violence against African Americans and their homes. Competition for jobs was equally as rough. The transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy caused significant dislocation. In the factories, African Americans were let go to make place for returning white veterans. When the unions in the meat packing industry struck, the packers employed desperate African Americans as strikebreakers.

In the summer of 1919, Chicago's racial tensions became enmeshed in the waves of hysteria that swept through the United States in the wake of strikes and fears of Communist terrorists. This volatile powder keg required only a spark to ignite. On June 21, 1919, two African Americans were killed in separate incidents. Failure by the police to make any arrests led to a feeling among African Americans that an injustice had been committed against their community. City and neighborhood leaders worked to keep the peace, but the ratcheting up of racial tensions could not be overcome.

On Sunday July 27, 1919, a group of black teenagers were swimming at a Lake Michigan beach on a hot summer day. They drifted from the black beach to the white side. White youths who had only minutes before chased away other African Americans from the 29th Street Beach



*White children cheer outside an African American residence that they have set on fire in Chicago during the summer of 1919. The police arrived soon after. (Bettmann/Corbis)*

responded by throwing rocks at the blacks in the water. They struck Eugene Williams in the head, causing him to drown. The police failed to arrest any of the perpetrators and riots broke out in Chicago. That night, 27 African Americans were assaulted. Among those, seven were stabbed and four were shot. Monday morning was quiet and it appeared that the worst might be over, but violence resumed in the afternoon. A transit strike on Tuesday left many with no quick route home. They had to pass through hostile territory. Rain on Wednesday and Thursday dampened the rioting. Friday passed without significant incident. The final flurry of activity was an arson wave on Saturday that burned down 49 homes, leaving more than 900 Polish and Lithuanian immigrants homeless.

Throughout the five days, local authorities struggled to regain control of the city. Inflammatory newspaper

headlines and outrageous rumors further exacerbated animosity. For reinforcements, the overwhelmed city police force belatedly called in the state militia. Most of the violence was perpetrated by gangs who roamed the street committing assault, battery, arson, home invasions, vandalism, and murder. They pulled African Americans off trolley cars and beat them in the middle of the street. Whites sped through black areas shooting from moving cars, and African Americans stationed armed men to ambush the cars. The violence was not continuous or sustained; it was, instead, episodic and often random. The police made almost 400 arrests during the riots, with African Americans being disproportionately among the ranks of the arrested.

In all, 38 people were killed, 25 African Americans and 13 whites, and more than 500 were injured. Chicago had



been fortunate to avoid the wave of race riots that struck in 1917, but its racial tensions were not unique. Chicago was the site of one of more than 20 race riots in 1919 in the United States. Significant race riots broke out in Europe and Africa as well.

After the riot, Chicago struggled to understand what had happened. The coroner compiled a report and Illinois Governor Frank Lowden created the Chicago Commission on Race Relations. To ease racial tensions, the commission recommended that the city eliminate segregation and improve services inside the black belt. Throughout the 1920s, however, the situation only got worse. The Chicago Real Estate Board established a system of restrictive covenants in deeds that prevented a homeowner from selling property to an African American. Almost no housing was built inside the black belt over the course of the decade following the riot of 1919 and conditions worsened.

*See also:* Destination, Chicago, Illinois; Great Migration; “If We Must Die”; Jim Crow; Red Summer Race Riots; White Mob Violence

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## Chisholm, Shirley

Best known as the first African American woman to run for President of the United States, Shirley Chisholm (1924–2005) was also the first African American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress. She served seven terms as a representative from New York’s 12th district, from 1969 until her retirement in 1982.

Originally named Shirley Anita St. Hill, she was born on November 30, 1924 in Brooklyn, New York, in

the notoriously impoverished neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Her parents were both immigrants to the United States; her father, Charles Christopher St. Hill, was born in British Guiana and arrived in New York in 1923 in New York City; her mother, Ruby Seale, was born in Barbados and arrived in New York City in 1921. Although young Shirley lived her early life in Brooklyn, she was sent, at age three, to live with her maternal grandmother in Barbados. Her parents, who were struggling to save money for their children’s education, sent Shirley and her three sisters to live in Barbados for nearly eight years. At the age of 11, however, she returned to New York City and was enrolled in an all-girls highschool in Brooklyn.

After graduating from highschool, she won tuition scholarships to Oberlin, Vassar, and Brooklyn College; she ultimately decided to remain at home and attend Brooklyn College, where she pursued a degree in sociology. Young Shirley had been exposed to politics throughout her life, especially since her father was a reputed follower of activist Marcus Garvey, who advocated black pride and unity among blacks to achieve economic and political power. As a result, during her years in college, she became active in many black organizations including the Harriet Tubman Society, the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. As her participation in the black community expanded, she began to attend city meetings, which eventually prompted her to raise questions about the conditions plaguing her predominately black neighborhood. Even so, Shirley did not immediately consider becoming a politician.

Instead, in 1946, she graduated cum laude from Brooklyn College and began working as a teacher. For the next few years, she worked in a nursery school and pursued a graduate degree in elementary education at Columbia University. In 1949, she married Conrad Chisholm, and two years later she earned her master’s degree. Upon graduating from Columbia, Chisholm continued to work in the educational sector; she served as the director of the Friends Day Nursery in Brownsville, New York, and, from 1953 to 1959, as the director of the Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center, in Lower Manhattan. For the next several years, from 1959 to 1964, she worked as an educational consultant in New York City’s Bureau of Child Welfare.

Yet despite her important work in the field of education, Shirley Chisholm never lost her interest in community



*Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm announces her candidacy as the first African American woman to run for a presidential nomination on January 25, 1972. (Library of Congress)*

and political matters. She served on the board of directors of the Brooklyn Home for Aged Colored People and became a prominent member of the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP. She likewise volunteered for various political organizations including the Democratic Women's Workshop, the League of Women Voters, and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Political League, an organization formed to support black candidates.

By 1964, Chisholm had earned a name in Brooklyn's political scene, which inspired her to consider a run for the New York State Assembly. To the surprise of many in the Democratic political machine, Chisholm won the election and served as an assemblywoman from 1964 to 1968. During her time in office, Chisholm sponsored 50 bills, most of which reflected her interest in the cause of blacks and the poor, women's rights, and educational opportunities. Although most of the bills failed to gain sufficient support, at least eight of them became law and made significant changes in her community. One of the

successful bills provided an opportunity for poor students, particularly students of color, to gain financial support to pursue higher education. Another provided employment insurance coverage for personal and domestic employees. Still another reversed a law that caused female teachers in New York to lose their tenure while they were out on maternity leave.

In 1968, Chisholm made the bold decision to campaign for a seat in Congress. Ironically, she ran against seasoned civil rights leader James Farmer, but she easily won the election and became the first African American woman to earn a seat in the U.S. Congress. Ultimately, she spent 13 years in the halls of Congress; she was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from the 91st through the 97th Congress (1969–1982). As she had in the New York State Assembly, Chisholm fought persistently to represent the needs of her community. Perhaps the most famous demonstration of her commitment came when she was assigned to the Forestry Committee, an appointment she strongly opposed on the grounds that she would rather serve on a committee that would allow her to grapple with issues of racism, social justice, and poverty. During her years in Congress, Chisholm served on several House committees including Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs, Rules and Education, and Labor. More specifically, she supported bills that sought to address tangible issues such as housing, education, discrimination, and abortion. She became a particularly outspoken advocate of women's rights, and, in 1971, she joined other feminists such as Gloria Steinem to establish the National Women's Political Caucus.

Perhaps Chisholm's most bold political decision came on January 25, 1972, when she announced her candidacy and became the first African American woman to run for President of the United States. Her platform encompassed a wide variety of issues including civil rights, prison reform, economic justice, gun control, and opposition to police brutality and drug abuse. Even so, the primary issue that drove her campaign was her vehement opposition to the Vietnam War and President Richard M. Nixon's policies nationally and abroad. As a result, Chisholm gained only limited support. Many black leaders were hesitant to endorse her, and although she got significant encouragement from women and young people, Chisholm struggled from insufficient funding. In the end, George McGovern won the presidential nomination at the Democratic National Convention, but Chisholm managed to capture 10 percent of

the delegates' votes, particularly after Hubert H. Humphrey released his black delegates to vote for her.

Although Chisholm lost her bid for the presidency, she was reelected to her position in the House of Representatives in 1972 and faithfully served in that role for the next 10 years. In the early 1980s, however, the political climate in the United States changed dramatically. With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, liberals and the Democratic Party steadily lost their foothold in Congress. Thus, when Chisholm announced her retirement in February 10, 1982, she openly expressed her frustration with the rise of the Reagan era and President Reagan's domestic and international policies and lamented the decline of progressive politicians. Chisholm's decision to retire, however, was also motivated by personal considerations. After divorcing her first husband in 1977, she married Arthur Hardwick, a businessman from Buffalo, New York. After Hardwick was seriously injured in a car accident, Chisholm wanted to spend more time assisting with his recovery; Hardwick died several years later in 1986.

Even after her retirement from Congress, Chisholm remained publicly active. She joined the faculty at Mount Holyoke College, the oldest women's college in the United States, where she taught courses in political science and women's studies until 1987. She also spent a year as a visiting scholar at Spelman College in 1985 and, in that same year, she became the first president of the newly formed National Political Congress of Black Women. She also campaigned for Jesse Jackson when he sought Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

Even after Chisholm moved to Florida in 1991, she remained outspoken on political matters, particularly her strong opposition to the Persian Gulf War. In 1993, President Bill Clinton nominated Chisholm as Ambassador to Jamaica, but because of declining health, she withdrew her name from further consideration. After suffering many strokes, Chisholm died on January 1, 2005, at the age of 80.

*See also:* Clinton, William Jefferson; Jackson, Jesse; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

*Leslie M. Alexander*

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## Civil Rights Act of 1866

Despite two presidential vetoes from Andrew Johnson, on April 19, 1866, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was designed to protect the rights of newly freed slaves. When Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, Southern states, such as Mississippi and South Carolina, responded by passing a series of local Black Codes, which restricted the rights of freedmen. Unhappy with such local legislation and President Andrew Johnson's conservative reconstruction policies, Congress drafted a bill designed to protect the freedmen's natural rights, among which included citizenship, the right to secure employment, and the right to receive compensation. Congress drafted two bills designed to give meaning to the Thirteenth Amendment and crush the Black Codes.

In February 1866, Congress passed the Freedman's Bureau Bill and in March it passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 stipulated that all native-born persons (except Native Americans), regardless of race, color, or previous condition (slavery), were U.S. citizens. As citizens, they could enter into contracts, sue and be sued, give evidence in court, and own, as well as sell, private property. If anyone denied such rights to U.S. citizens, then they would be subject to federal prosecution, and if they were found guilty, they faced a fine up to \$1,000 and a year in prison.

President Johnson gave the bill's author, Illinois Republican Senator Lyman Trumbull, every indication that he would sign it; however, on February 19, 1866, Johnson issued a presidential veto. Three days later, the president spoke to a group outside the White House and outlined his reasons for issuing the veto. First, because the bill aimed to protect the rights of African Americans, he claimed that it unfairly discriminated against whites. Second, he argued

that the bill was unconstitutional because Congress had passed it without consulting the still unseated representatives from Southern states. Third, the federal government, at the expense of individual states, was presuming too much power. Democrats held mass meetings and celebrated the president's veto, while the Republicans chided the president and revised the bill.

The revised version of the Civil Rights bill resembled the previous version. It granted citizenship to African Americans, as well as to all native-born persons (still Native Americans were excluded). It granted property ownership, as well as the right to sue and be sued in court, to African Americans and, most important, it nullified the Black Codes. The bill stopped short of allowing all citizens to vote, however; nor did it allow all citizens to sit on juries. Similarly, the bill did not desegregate schools or public facilities. On March 13, 1866, the bill overwhelmingly passed both Republican-controlled houses of Congress and was submitted to the president.

On March 27, 1866, Johnson again vetoed the bill. Like the first veto, Johnson cited his reasons. The president repeated his previous criticisms, but added that the Civil Rights Act was not fair to immigrants because it granted immediate citizenship to newly born freedmen, but newly arrived immigrants had to wait five years to become citizens.

Johnson's veto carried significant consequences. First, Republicans vowed to pass the bill despite the president's veto. They worked through the spring and on April 9, 1866, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 with a two-thirds majority, successfully overriding the presidential veto. Second, Senator Trumbull never forgave Johnson for his actions concerning the Civil Rights bill. Because he was the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Trumbull was certainly not a good enemy to have. Trumbull and the Republicans took the lead in Reconstruction from 1867 onward and, by 1868, they impeached the president, who survived removal by only one vote. Third, in June 1867, Congress incorporated many of the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 into the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which was designed to protect the rights of freedmen from state legislatures, federal courts, and future presidential vetoes. By June, Congress passed the amendment and submitted it to the president. When the Fourteenth Amendment became law, the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was upheld, and it was reenacted

in 1870. Fourth, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 marked the beginning of a trend in American constitutional history. Congress strengthened the power of the federal government at the expense of traditionally powerful state governments by granting national citizenship to the very people whose rights the state governments were trying to limit via the Black Codes.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 was revolutionary because it gave meaning to the Thirteenth Amendment, it worked against the Black Codes, it expanded the power of the federal government at the expense of the state governments, and it provided the basis for the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Yet conservative Southern governments found ways around it. Because it protected against public, rather than private abuses, it was difficult to enforce, and organizations like the Ku Klux Klan successfully intimidated not only African Americans but also local officials. As a result, Congress passed a series of Civil Rights Acts throughout the 1870s and into the 19th century that reinforced and built on the successes of the Civil Rights Act of 1866.

*See also:* Black Codes; Disfranchisement; *Dred Scott v. Sandford*; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Johnson, Andrew; Ku Klux Klan; Radical Republicans; Thirteenth Amendment

*Samuel Paul Wheeler*

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## **Civil Rights Act of 1875**

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was adopted by the 43rd Congress in February 1875 and signed into law the following month by Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president and commanding general of Union armies. The chief legislative sponsors were the Senate's staunchest abolitionist, Charles Sumner (R-MA), and Representative Benjamin F. Butler (R-MA), a controversial major general of the Civil War.

The act represented a final effort by Reconstruction Republicans to reinforce civil rights legislation (1866, 1870, and 1871) that asserted Congress' statutory authority to enforce provisions of the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments. These constitutional and statutory expansions of federal authority secured the civil and political rights of African Americans and challenged efforts by defeated Southern states to reinstitute white supremacy through racial violence and Black Codes.

The law's most controversial feature was the provision for criminal and civil penalties for denying, or abetting the denial of, access to public accommodations (including inns, public transportation, and entertainment venues) on the basis of race. Violators could be imprisoned for 30–365 days and fined \$550–\$1,000 for each offense.

The act's significance was undermined by Congress's failure to enact prohibitions against racial segregation in public education, weak federal enforcement, and the difficulty of pursuing private litigation in federal courts. In an 1883 landmark decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's prohibition against race-based discrimination by state governments does not authorize Congress to statutorily regulate similar action by private individuals.

*See also:* Disfranchisement; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow

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## **Civil Rights Act of 1957**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's signature of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 marked the first time since the end of Reconstruction that Congress successfully enacted, albeit in limited form, federal protections for the voting rights of African Americans. As originally formulated, the act also prohibited discrimination and segregation in education and public accommodations on the basis of race, nationality, or religion. Segregationist Democrats in Congress, however,

successfully pressured the act's proponents, including major civil rights organizations, to endorse a version of the legislation that eliminated these prohibitions and substantially limited the federal government's authority to enforce voting rights. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson successfully maintained a fragile coalition to ensure passage of the act and thereby enhanced his national profile for the 1960 presidential election.

The act's three main features are the creation of the Commission on Civil Rights to investigate voting rights violations in federal elections (Part I), the establishment of an Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and the formation of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (Part II), and the provision for injunctive relief and contempt proceedings against violators of federal voting rights (Part IV & V). Notwithstanding concerns that the Civil Rights Act of 1957 lacked substantive enforcement authority, it represented an important departure from the decades-long intransigence of southern Democrats to accept even symbolic civil rights legislation for African Americans. The act laid the groundwork for significant civil rights legislation throughout the 1960s.

*See also:* Disfranchisement; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Johnson, Lyndon Baines

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## **Civil Rights Act of 1960**

The Civil Rights Act of 1960 advanced the struggle for African American freedom by responding, albeit in limited form, to the "massive resistance" of southern segregationists. The legislation criminalized the obstruction of federal [desegregation] court orders (Title I) and the crossing of state lines to engage in racially motivated violence against religious and civic institutions (Title II). For the children of military personnel living on federal property, the act provided for their education if public schools closed to avoid

racial integration (Title V). The legislation also mandated the preservation of registration and voting records in federal elections (Title III), the judicial appointment of “voting referees” to compile evidence of voting rights violations (Title VI), and the authority for the Commission on Civil Rights to take sworn testimony.

The legislation had symbolic and strategic implications for subsequent, landmark legislation (the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965). President Dwight Eisenhower’s enactment of the legislation symbolized a critical juncture in American federalism. Henceforth, the national government’s authority would be deployed against efforts by states to deny citizenship rights to racial minorities.

The strategic acumen developed by (congressional) civil rights proponents during the act’s passage neutralized southern obstructionism in subsequent civil rights legislation. Congress also invoked its authority to regulate interstate commerce as the constitutional basis for prohibiting racial violence by private individuals (Title II), thereby insulating the act from the sort of constitutional challenge that invalidated the Civil Rights Act of 1875. The legislation therefore prefigured a significant broadening of Congress’s authority to ban racial discrimination in public accommodations in 1964.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1875; Disfranchisement; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Voting Rights Act of 1965

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## **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

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The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ushered in a relatively brief period (1964–1968) of progressive legislation that rectified the post-Reconstruction evisceration of statutory and constitutional protections for African Americans. The act (and subsequent amendments), the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 established the statutory and bureaucratic enforcement mechanisms that substantially expanded the national

government’s authority to protect the civil rights of African Americans and other groups who endured historical patterns of discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, language, religion, disability, age, or sex. This era of landmark legislation is often characterized as the Second Reconstruction because it dismantled the (Jim Crow) system of racial hierarchy and privilege and produced unprecedented levels of federal intervention into areas of social relations traditionally within the jurisdiction of state governments.

President Lyndon B. Johnson demonstrated extraordinary political courage and prescience for understanding that his signature on the act (July 2, 1964) would exacerbate the fracturing of the New Deal coalition. The act also marked the nadir of legislative obstructionism by southern Democrats on proposed civil rights legislation. For the first time in the Senate’s history, a successful cloture vote by a coalition of northern Democrats and Republicans defeated a civil rights filibuster by southern Democrats. In the subsequent presidential elections of 1968 and 1972, the Democratic nominee won the electoral votes of only one of the former states of the Confederacy (Texas in 1968).

Although President Johnson demonstrated exceptional leadership and moral conviction in championing the act (and voting rights legislation a year later), the Johnson Administration was also responding to an emerging national consensus that meaningful civil rights legislation was an urgent national priority. A “window of opportunity” for a major breakthrough in civil rights legislation was precipitated by several factors: the paroxysms of racial violence against African American churches, civic organizations, and civil rights activists; the moral urgency President John F. Kennedy attached to civil rights legislation before his assassination; urban unrest in northern cities often triggered by incidents of police brutality; and the increasing unease in the national security establishment that the international status of the United States was severely undermined by government repression of nonviolent civil rights protesters.

The act also indirectly corrected a longstanding Supreme Court precedent that invalidated congressional authority to prohibit racial discrimination in public accommodations. In the Civil Rights Cases (1883), the Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment was limited to prohibitions against racial discrimination by state governments (the state action doctrine). Congress anticipated similar challenges and instead anchored the act’s constitutional authority on the

Interstate Commerce Clause. That approach was affirmed by the Supreme Court in two companion cases decided just five months after the passage of the act (on December 14, 1964). In a concurring opinion for both cases, Justice William O' Douglas signaled a potential willingness by the Court to revisit Congress's 14th Amendment authority to protect civil rights through enabling legislation.

In its initial formulation, and subsequent amendments, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 constituted a substantial expansion of federal authority in protecting civil rights by prohibiting differential standards for voter eligibility in federal elections (Title I); prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations (Title II); empowering the attorney general to bring lawsuits against states that maintained racially segregated public school systems (Title III); outlawing discrimination in federally funded programs (Title VI); prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, language, religion, age, sex, and disability (Title VII); establishing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate employment discrimination and mandate the collection of workforce demographic data (also Title VII); and ban gender-based discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funding (Title IX).

Enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 contained several far-reaching implications for the development of civil rights policy in American society. The act underscored the necessity for congressional legislation and executive branch action (enforcement mechanisms) to fully implement landmark judicial opinions such as *Brown v. Board of Education*. It established the legislative and bureaucratic framework for the subsequent promulgation of Affirmative Action policies and programs in federal contracting, public sector employment, and higher education. The act's inclusion of prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex, age, language, and disability suggests that the national government's responsiveness to civil rights claims is not exclusively predicated on mass mobilization by historically marginalized groups. For instance, key policy entrepreneurs within government contributed significantly to the adoption of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act, two major achievements of the disability rights movement. Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the act is the proposition that the full legislative, administrative, and judicial authority of the national government can be deployed to dismantle

longstanding patterns and practices of discrimination in civil society and state and local governments.

*See also:* Affirmative Action; *Brown v. Board of Education*; Civil Rights Act of 1968; Disfranchisement; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; March on Washington, 1963; Voting Rights Act of 1965

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## Civil Rights Act of 1968

The Civil Rights Act of 1968, often referred to as the Fair Housing Act, was designed to prohibit discrimination in the sale, rental, advertising, and financing of housing. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on April 11, 1968, but the bill was delayed for several years before it was eventually passed in Congress. The original legislation was intended to extend federal government protection to civil rights workers, many of whom had been injured or killed in the struggle to obtain basic civil rights, but it was later amended to provide for fair housing throughout the United States regardless of one's race, color, religion, or national origin. It stands as one of the last major civil rights statutes passed in America during the 1960s.

The act came in the wake of other key civil rights legislation, the most widely known of which is the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Of its many provisions, this act created an equal employment commission, required businesses that wanted federal business to have a procivil rights charter, enforced the constitutional right to vote, and barred discrimination in federally assisted programs. It was evident, however, that housing was an issue that had otherwise been insufficiently addressed by prior legislation, despite provisions outlawing discrimination in public places and venues. The segregation existing in many parts of the country, the failure of banks to provide loans to African Americans, and the refusal of

landlords to rent to individuals and families on the basis of race helped create a hostile housing climate that severely limited most African Americans' fair access to housing.

It is argued that the Civil Rights Act of 1968 had its roots in President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 11063, which he set out in 1962. This order directed all departments and agencies of the U.S. government to take necessary action to prevent discrimination on the basis of one's race, creed, or national origin in the sale, rental, or leasing of federally owned or operated residential property. It also prohibited racial discrimination in public housing built with federal funds and in new housing built with loans from federal agencies. Kennedy's order notwithstanding, it remained clear that the legislation needed to be strengthened and broadened in its chief aims if it was to substantially alter the lack of parity African Americans faced when trying to purchase real estate and secure housing.

Clarence Mitchell Jr., the Washington director of the NAACP, is credited with spearheading the effort to secure the 1968 bill. Mitchell, dubbed by some as the "101st

Senator," was a leading force in the battle to obtain civil rights legislation, and his efforts to ensure that this particular bill would become law were critical. A conservative legislative branch used several procedural tactics to delay the passage of the bill for a number of years, but it gained increasing support when Senate Republican minority leader Everett Dirksen strongly backed its enactment. Senator Dirksen generally had a conservative position on domestic legislation and held weekly broadcast news conferences to voice Republican opposition to Kennedy's administration. Yet he had previously been a designer and supporter of civil rights bills and firmly backed the 1968 fair housing bill. After Dirksen announced his support, the Senate voted to pass the bill by a tight 65 to 32 margin on March 4, 1968, but it was thought to be impassable in the House unless it was amended, and likely weakened, in committee.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, just one month after the bill was voted on in the Senate, contributed to mounting pressure to pass the bill in its entirety. The riots, burnings, and looting occurring in



*Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act on April 11, 1968. Thurgood Marshall stands to Johnson's right. (Library of Congress)*



the wake of his assassination in more than 100 cities across the United States marked 1968 as a particularly tumultuous year and served as a powerful indication that advocates of racial justice would continue to resist social, judicial, economic, and political inequalities under the law. The House Rules Committee voted to send the fair housing bill straight to the House floor, permitted only one hour of debate without any further amendments, and the bill went on to pass swiftly the day after Dr. King's funeral. President Johnson signed it into law the next day as the nation continued to mourn the loss of a renowned civil rights leader.

The act was amended in 1974 to include sex as a protected class in fair housing, and, in 1988, disability and familial status were added to make it more comprehensive in its aims and scope. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, state and local governmental agencies, and nonprofit fair housing advocacy organizations now exist throughout the country to assist those who feel they have been subjected to housing discrimination. This network of agencies and organizations also exists to help ensure that housing does in fact remain fair to African Americans and all those who seek to establish a residence. *See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1964; Disfranchisement; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## Clark, Septima

Septima Poinsette Clark (1898–1987), educator and civil rights activist, was born in 1898 in Charleston, South

Carolina. Her father, Peter Porcher Poinsette, was a caterer, and her mother, Victoria Warren Anderson, was a washer-woman. In 1920, she married Nerie Clark, a sailor from Hickory, North Carolina, with whom she had one surviving son, Nerie Clark Jr. Her husband died as a result of kidney failure five years later, and her son spent much of his youth living with her in-laws in Hickory while she worked in South Carolina.

Septima Poinsette attended private and public schools for African Americans in Charleston, including Avery Normal Institute. She claimed that she always wanted to be a teacher, a desire nurtured by her parents' strong emphasis on education. After graduation from 12th grade with a teaching certificate in 1916, Poinsette took her first job teaching on St. John's Island, near Charleston. There she earned \$30 monthly teaching 132 children with only one other teacher, while in comparison, white teachers on the island averaged \$85 for teaching approximately 10 students. Clark then taught at various schools in North and South Carolina, eventually moving to Columbia, where she taught for 18 years.

Clark first contributed to organized civil rights activism when she participated in a movement demanding that black teachers be allowed to teach in black public schools in Charleston. Clark argued that the white teachers assigned to black schools were of poor quality and were not interested in African American achievement. She helped gather more than 10,000 signatures for the victorious NAACP petition drive. In Columbia, she continued her activism by participating in a successful legal challenge to force the school system to equalize salaries between similarly qualified black and white teachers. Clark also resumed her education, earning her BA from Benedict College in Columbia and her MA from Hampton Institute in Virginia. She returned to Charleston to teach from 1947 to 1956, when her teaching contract in the public schools was not renewed because of her membership in the NAACP.

Through the encouragement of Anna Kelly, executive secretary of the Charleston African American YWCA, Septima Clark attended a workshop on desegregation at the Highlander School, in Monteagle, Tennessee, in 1954. Highlander School, founded by Miles Horton in the 1930s, initially trained southern labor organizers and then turned its attention to civil rights, holding a series of workshops in 1953 and 1954 on strategies for peaceful school desegregation. Clark then took Esau Jenkins and other community

members from St. Johns Island to Highlander, ultimately resulting in the establishment of the first citizenship school on the island in January, 1957. Clark and the first citizenship school teacher, Bernice Robinson, designed the curriculum and materials based on what participants asked to learn on the first day. They taught students how to sign their names, fill out money orders, and how to read and write using lessons on citizenship and democracy. This model for citizenship schools quickly expanded, and Clark assisted other communities in designing their own citizenship schools.

When Septima Clark's teaching contract was not renewed, Horton asked her to become director of education at Highlander school, where, in addition to her work establishing citizenship schools, she ran workshops designed to help community leaders address illiteracy, desegregation, and other issues. When the Tennessee General Assembly tried to revoke the schools tax-free charter on trumped-up charges of alcohol possession, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the civil rights organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., took over the citizenship school program, and Clark moved to Atlanta. As supervisor of teacher training, Clark traveled around the South recruiting teachers to attend a five-day workshop at the Dorchester Cooperative Community Center in McInstosh, Georgia, 300 miles outside Atlanta. Clark also spent time in various communities assisting local volunteers setting up citizenship schools, forming 897 schools between 1957 and 1970. In 1962, SCLC joined with the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Urban League to form the Voter Education Project. Between 1962 and 1965, this project trained about 10,000 teachers for citizenship schools, resulting in about 700,000 black voters registering in the South. After passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, more than 1 million black voters registered before 1970. Andrew Young credited the citizenship schools as being the base on which the entire Civil Rights movement was built.

Septima Clark's activism was driven by her belief that one had to empower local leaders to organize their own communities. She wrote to Dr. King, suggesting that he allow more local activists to lead marches in order to facilitate grassroots leadership. Clark later recalled that the executive staff laughed at her suggestion because it came from a woman. As the first woman on the executive staff of SCLC, she and Ella Baker faced opposition from the mostly male

ministers who dominated SCLC and did not respect the contributions of women according to Clark. In 1958, at the invitation of white civil rights activist Virginia Foster Durr, she attended the organizational meeting of the National Organization for Women. Clark argued that both black and white southern women were constrained by the authority of their husbands. Notwithstanding her differences with Dr. King regarding women's roles, Clark respected and admired him deeply and strongly believed in his philosophy of nonviolence. Despite the dangers of arrest, violence, harassment, and threats to her ability to earn a living, Clark always insisted that she was not afraid because she understood the importance of the work she did.

In addition to her work in the NAACP and SCLC, Clark was also involved in the South Carolina Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the Charleston Tuberculosis Association, the YWCA, and her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, with whom she worked on a health campaign for St. Johns Island. After retiring from SCLC in 1970, she volunteered for the American Field Service, helped organize day care facilities, and was elected a member of the Charleston school board, the same board that had fired her for her political beliefs years earlier. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter presented her with a Living the Legacy Award for her dedication to civil rights and to the nation. She died on December 15, 1987.

*See also:* Baker, Ella; Du Bois, W. E. B.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Parks, Rosa; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Joan Marie Johnson

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## Cleaver, Eldridge

Leroy Eldridge Cleaver (1935–1998) was a writer, an advocate of black power, and a member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, serving in the capacity of minister of information in the organization for several years. Cleaver, the son of a nightclub piano player, was born on August 31, 1935, in Wabbaseka, Arkansas and moved with his family to Phoenix and, by 1946, Los Angeles. While in California, Cleaver began to have early encounters with law enforcement as a teenager with arrests for stealing a bicycle and selling marijuana. After a brief stint in a reform school, he was arrested again for selling marijuana and was sentenced to 30 months in Soledad Prison. After his release in 1957, Cleaver again turned to a life of crime, committing a series of rapes, and, by 1958, he was convicted of



*Eldridge Cleaver led a life of transformations: early years of crime and imprisonment; a decade as a radical African American activist and writer; a period of exile; and his later years as an outspoken Republican and conservative Christian. (Library of Congress)*

assault and attempted murder and was sentenced to serve an indeterminate sentence of 2 to 14 years in San Quentin Prison. Before leaving prison in 1966, Cleaver read a number of books on African American history and the civil rights struggle. He became an ardent supporter of the late Malcolm X, and he wrote a series of articles for *Ramparts* magazine.

Upon his release from San Quentin, Cleaver did a number of things in rapid succession. He published his *Ramparts* magazine articles as a book entitled *Soul on Ice*; he married Kathleen Neal in December 1967; he joined the newly formed Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and was appointed as the minister of information; and, in 1968, Cleaver was a presidential candidate for the Peace and Freedom Party. He is most famous for his actions after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. On April 6, 1968, Cleaver, along with Bobby Hutton and David Hilliard, were involved in an altercation with Oakland, California police that left Hutton dead and Cleaver injured. Apparently, Cleaver led this small group in a purposeful attempt to initiate a violent altercation with police. He was subsequently arrested and charged with attempted murder. Fearing a lengthy stay in prison, Cleaver skipped bail and fled the country. His escape route took him through Mexico to Cuba, although he also spent time in exile in Algeria and France.

While in exile, Cleaver continued to write for *Ramparts*, *The Black Scholar*, and other publications. Because of a series of disagreements between him and Huey P. Newton, Cleaver was expelled from the Black Panther Party in 1971. After seven years in exile, he returned to the United States, immediately renouncing the Black Panther Party and experiencing a profound religious and political transformation. Not only did Cleaver renounce the Panthers and their philosophy, he rejected socialism, communism, and radicalism. He became an evangelical Christian, and later a Mormon, and even endorsed Ronald Reagan, a former arch enemy of the Panthers, as president in 1980 and 1984. In 1986, Cleaver even made an unsuccessful run for the Republican Party Senate seat in California. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Cleaver was an ardent and dedicated conservative Republican and evangelical Christian, in diametric opposition to his prior activities as a Black Panther. He was also addicted to crack cocaine during this period and was arrested on at least two occasions for burglary and cocaine possession. At the time of his death in 1998, Cleaver

was a diversity consultant for the University of La Verne in southern California.

See also: Black Panther Party; Cleaver, Kathleen Neal; Newton, Huey P.; Seale, Bobby

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## Cleaver, Kathleen Neal

Kathleen Neal Cleaver (1945–) was born May 13, 1945, in Dallas, Texas, and in 1967 became the first woman member of the Black Panther Party's Central Committee. As the party's communication secretary, Kathleen Cleaver was a central figure in the early development of the Black Panther Party and a significant figure in the black liberation struggle since the mid-1960s.

Cleaver's father, Ernest Neal, was a professor of sociology at Wuley College in Marshall, Texas, when Kathleen was born. In 1948, the Neals moved to Tuskegee, Alabama, where Cleaver's father taught sociology and served as director of the Rural Life Council at Tuskegee Institute. In 1954, Cleaver's father joined the Foreign Service, which took the family to India, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Philippines. In 1958, Kathleen began attending high school in the United States. After high school, she attended Oberlin College, transferred to Barnard College, and in 1966 left Barnard to join the New York office of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In January 1967, Cleaver began working at the SNCC headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

While organizing a student conference at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in April 1967, Kathleen met Eldridge Cleaver, minister of information for the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party was cofounded in Oakland, California in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby

Seale. The party advocated a comprehensive agenda for black liberation detailed in their ten point program, "What We Want, What We Believe." Eldridge Cleaver had just recently been paroled from Soledad Prison where he had written the bestselling book *Soul on Ice*. In November 1967, Kathleen left SNCC and moved to California to join the Black Panther Party. In December 1967, Eldridge and Kathleen were married.

Kathleen Cleaver was the first woman member of the Black Panther Party's Central Committee where she served as the Party's communication secretary. Serving in this position from 1967 to 1971, Cleaver provided press releases, delivered public speeches, wrote articles about the party, and was the assistant editor of the party newspaper, *The Black Panther*. With the imprisonment of the party's minister of defense, Huey Newton, in 1968, on charges of killing an Oakland police officer, Kathleen Cleaver crusaded for Newton's release through the "Free Huey Campaign." In late 1967, the Black Panther Party formed a coalition with the Peace and Freedom Party to run alternative candidates to the Democrats and Republicans in California. In 1968, Cleaver ran for the 18th District seat in the California State Assembly as a Peace and Freedom Party candidate on a ticket that included other prominent Black Panther Party members and peace activists.

In 1968, Eldridge Cleaver was wounded by San Francisco police, was arrested and charged with parole violation, and was to subsequently return to prison. In November 1968, however, Eldridge Cleaver fled to Cuba and then Algeria. In the summer of 1969, Kathleen Cleaver and Black Panther Party Minister of Culture Emory Douglas joined Eldridge Cleaver in Algeria, where they organized and led the International Section of the Black Panther Party. In July 1969, Kathleen Cleaver gave birth to her son, Maceo, in Algeria; in 1970 her daughter Joju was born in North Korea while Kathleen and Eldridge Cleaver served on the American Peoples Anti-Imperialism Delegation to the International Conference of Revolutionary Journalists.

In 1971, as a result of a dispute between Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, the International Section of the Black Panther Party was expelled from the Party. Following their expulsion from the Party, the International Section members reorganized to form the Revolutionary Peoples Communications Network (RPCN). In 1971, Kathleen Cleaver established the organization's headquarters in New York

and traveled throughout the United States building support for the RPCN.

In January 1973, the Cleavers left Algeria and moved to Paris. From Paris, Kathleen Cleaver returned to the United States to arrange for the safe return of her husband and to coordinate his legal defense. In November 1975, Eldridge Cleaver returned to the United States, surrendered to authorities, and served eight months in prison before being released on bail.

In 1981, Kathleen Cleaver separated from her husband and moved with her children to New Haven, Connecticut, where she attended Yale University. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude with a degree in history in 1984 and entered Yale Law School. In 1987, the Cleavers were divorced; the next year Kathleen Cleaver earned her law degree.

Kathleen Cleaver became an associate at the law firm Cravath, Swaine, and Moore in New York City and, in 1991, was a law clerk in the United States Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. Cleaver also served on the Georgia Supreme Court Commission on Racial and Ethnic Bias in the Courts and as a board member of the Southern Center for Human Rights. She has taught at several universities including Emory University and Yale University and has received numerous fellowships at leading institutions including the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute of Harvard University, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York. In addition to teaching, Cleaver continues her activism for human rights and justice, and for the release of political prisoners.

*See also:* Abu Jamal, Mumia; Black Nationalism; Black Panther Party; Black Power; BPP, Chicago Branch; BPP, Los Angeles; BPP, New York Branch; BPP, Oakland Branch; Cleaver, Eldridge; Pratt, Geronimo Ji Jaga; Newton, Huey P.; Shakur, Assata

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## Clinton, William Jefferson

William Jefferson Clinton (1946–), the 42nd President of the United States from 1993 to 2001, was born in 1946 in Hope, Arkansas. Before his presidency, Clinton served five terms as the governor of Arkansas. As a young man, he attended University of Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship and later attended Yale Law School. Clinton taught constitutional law at the University of Arkansas and served as the attorney general of Arkansas before becoming governor. Clinton already had a wonderful relationship with the African American community in Arkansas when he served as governor. Clinton had more African Americans working for him in his cabinet and state boards than any other governor in Arkansas history.

Bill Clinton has had a relationship with the African American community that has never been experienced by any other president in U.S. history until the recent election of President Barack Obama—so much so that writer Toni Morrison and others have said that Clinton was “the first black president.” Their reasoning partially lies in the fact that his humble beginnings are likened to the experiences felt by many African Americans. In August 1998, an African American owned survey group found that Clinton’s approval rating among African Americans was 93 percent while his approval rating with whites was only 70. In January 2001, Clinton left office with a 93 percent approval rating among African Americans and a 62 percent approval rating with whites.

Clinton’s policies as president also reflect sensitivity to African American causes. Clinton appointed more African Americans to the federal bench than any other president in history. Taken as a whole, his cabinet, agencies, and staff contained more African Americans than any other presidential administration in the history of the United States. Clinton promoted peace in international relations. Many African Americans have indicated their admiration for Clinton’s increased concern and several visits to the continent of Africa. Clinton attended more celebrations for leading African American figures and addressed the needs of minorities and race relations more than any other president in the history of the United States.

Clinton’s administration saw one of the longest periods of economic growth and expansion in history. During his tenure as president, Clinton’s domestic triumphs included policies to upgrade education, a restriction of handgun

accessibility, stricter environmental laws, and protection of the jobs of parents who must care for sick children. Characteristics of his presidency include lower interest rates, lower inflation, lower unemployment, and high rates of economic growth. Clinton pushed for additional funds to be allocated for public education and allocated more money for young adults to go to college, all of which benefited the vast majority of African Americans. Clinton continued to promote and defend affirmative action programs while he was attorney general, governor, and president.

Clinton made improving race relations a major theme of his presidency. As president, Clinton was characterized as being a much more “hands on” president than most of the previous presidents. His management style allowed him to get in touch with many African Americans where previous Presidents failed to make the connections. This benefited Clinton in two ways. First, it projected the image to African Americans that he was sensitive to their concerns and needs. Second, it gave him real life experience and perhaps more sensitivity to the needs of the African American community. Bush and Reagan had management styles more suited for bureaucracy. Internationally, his priorities included opening up trade and world peace. Clinton sought to bring peace to various regions and especially Africa, which a great deal of African Americans regard as important.

Clinton’s presidency is characterized by most scholars as open and perhaps a little more sensitive to working cooperatively with foreign governments than previous or later administrations. Several prominent African Americans have indicated their approval and admiration for Clinton’s focus and philosophy in foreign relations. At times his approval rating was very low, setting a record low in his first year, but on leaving office, it was the highest for a retiring president in modern U.S. history. Paradoxically, the majority of Americans were happy he was leaving office, and even less thought he was trustworthy and honest. Ironically, many African Americans felt the opposite and were very sad by his departure. It retrospect, the African American community was better off when Clinton left office than they had been when he took office. African Americans had better access to health care, employment rates were up, additional educational opportunities were provided, and even more important, crime rates were down. Clinton was most instrumental in reducing racial profiling and relieved some of the discriminatory policies of previous administrations that

were disadvantageous to African Americans. Throughout the 1980s, many more black men and women were placed behind bars in greater percentages than whites. Clinton pushed to have the laws changed that would administer the same amount of punishment for the possession of an ounce of cocaine or crack. He was elected twice with the highest percentage of the popular vote among his opponents, but never more than 50 percent.

Clinton made several appearances on *The Tonight Show* before, during, and after leaving the White House. This measure enabled him to be more in touch with common people including African Americans. His relationship with African Americans continued to grow after he left office and opened his office in Harlem. Clinton assisted his wife Hillary Clinton in her campaign for the U.S. Senate where concerns of the African American community were continued to be addressed. It is still somewhat too early to place Clinton’s presidency in historical perspective. Some believe it is a half-century or more before a president may be viewed in their true historical context.

*See also:* Brown, Ron; Obama, Barack

Steven Napier

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## COINTELPRO

Between 1956 and 1971, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted a series of domestic covert action programs, COINTELPROs, which discredited, disrupted, and neutralized leaders, members, and supporters of social

movements that threatened the social, political, and economic status quo. Launched in 1961, COINTELPRO-Socialist Worker's Party (SWP) singled out black SWP political campaigns for disruption and attempted to block a developing political alliance with Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity. Launched on August 25, 1967, the COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist Hate Group operation formally institutionalized previously ad hoc covert operations that had targeted groups such as the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). These operations had aggravated factionalism in the NOI, exposed "links" between SCLC activists and the Communist Party, and attempted to expose Martin Luther King Jr.'s sexual affairs to induce him to commit suicide. Consisting of 360 documented operations, COINTELPRO-BNHG targeted groups that engaged in civil disobedience, picketing, or antiwar activity; advocated separatism, self-defense, or revolution; or associated with other COINTELPRO targets. This included the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Junta of Militant Organizations, the Black Liberators, the Invaders, Black Student Unions, and the US Organization; 79 percent of all operations targeted the Black Panther Party (BPP).

FBI agents used surreptitious entry, electronic surveillance, and informants to acquire and covertly distribute material to police, Congress, the media, elected officials, landlords, college presidents and the Internal Revenue Service. By covertly distributing intelligence information and mailing derogatory and scurrilous communications, agents prevented activists from gaining respectability among white liberals, moderate blacks, and other movement people. To discredit activists and organizations, agents alerted local police forces to targets' plans and activities so that they could arrest activists on pretext. To disrupt personal lives, agents sent anonymous communications to spouses alleging infidelity with traveling companions and co-workers. These operations thwarted fund raising, recruiting, organizing, and favorable publicity; prevented coalition building; and harassed movement leaders.

To capitalize on ideological, organizational, and personal conflicts; create factionalism; and provoke conflict between organizations, FBI agents made anonymous telephone calls and created counterfeit movement literature, cartoons, and other notional communications. Alleging misconduct, provoking ridicule, snitch-jacketing activists

as informants, and alleging the existence of assassination plots, such communications framed effective movement leaders as embezzlers, charlatans, informants, and provocateurs. Such tactics exacerbated divisions among white leftists and black revolutionaries, between moderates and radicals, and between advocates of public positions on non-violence versus self-defense. COINTELPRO operations also exacerbated and provoked violent conflicts such as those between the Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver factions of the BPP, and between the BPP and Jeff Fort's Chicago-based Blackstone Rangers. Similar operations provoked interethnic violence in the streets of New York and San Diego. COINTELPRO operations even helped to provoke members of Ron Karenga's Los Angeles-based US organization to kill four Panthers.

FBI informants raised controversial issues, led factional fights, embezzled funds, provoked violence, and supplied information to justify police raids. A provocateur set up a black man named Larry Ward, offering him money to commit a bombing, and Seattle police killed him in an ambush. William O'Neal facilitated the police killings of Chicago Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, and George Sams engineered the torture-murder of Alex Rackley by labeling him an informant. FBI and police operations are to blame for perhaps 25 other killings. Informants also committed perjury, even as the FBI suppressed exculpatory evidence, enabling convictions and incarcerations on trumped-up charges. Some black activists fled overseas or went underground; BPP members Dhoruba bin Wahad and Geronimo Pratt were incarcerated for decades before their lawyers exposed the police and FBI misconduct that underlay their convictions. COINTELPRO's legacy includes the devolution of some black power organizations into terrorist cells in the 1970s, as well as a sense of political disempowerment, personal disillusionment, antisocial behavior, and nihilistic violence that has plagued America's urban ghettos ever since. *See also:* Black Panther Party; Black Power; Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture); Hoover, J. Edgar; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Muhammad, Elijah; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; US Organization; X, Malcolm

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## Cold War and Civil Rights

The Cold War greatly influenced American race politics and the African American quest for civil rights. On one hand, the struggle with the Soviet Union brought questions of racial equality to the forefront and improved the government's civil rights record. It provided the Civil Rights movement with leverage with the government. On the other hand, it restrained the Civil Rights movement in its activities. The Cold War made civil rights an international issue.

With the victory in World War II, the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union ended and developed into a stalemate between the two new superpowers. They both longed to fill the new power vacuum. Europe was weakened. The colonial empires of Europe in Asia and Africa disintegrated and new nations evolved. The Soviet Union and the United States struggled for zones of influence throughout the world. Their views of and plans for the world and its future were seemingly irreconcilable. The Soviet Union aspired to expand communism and combat capitalism. The United States feared this expansion and sought instead to spread democratic capitalism in the world. Within the contest for allegiance against communism, the question for civil rights and racial equality became of great importance to the U.S. government. During the Cold War, the world audience became a great factor in shaping American domestic race relations and politics.

The war and the disclosure of the horrors of the Holocaust had discredited ideas of racial superiority. Racism in any form grew to be less acceptable around the world. The assurance of equal human rights for all that was included in the United Nations charter turned into a major principle of world and domestic politics. In the escalating struggle for world leadership and allegiance in the destabilized or

newly evolving nations, propaganda and image played an ever-growing role.

To influence emerging nations in Asia and Africa, the Soviet Union attempted to spread distrust of the United States and its claim of world leadership of freedom and democracy. Because of their colonial past, these contested nations were already distrustful of the West. The Soviet Union disseminated America's persistent human rights violations. According to the State Department, in the early 1950s, half of the Soviet propaganda pieces were on racist practices in the United States. The spread of racial violence and the mounting numbers of lynchings after the war were living proof of the American disregard for people of color within and outside the United States.

Not only did the Soviet Union tout the appalling position of African Americans, but newspapers all over the world reported on racial violence in the United States. Foreign countries were appalled by the cruelty and the American government's reluctance to intervene. American racist practices became a worldwide embarrassment for the United States and called into question its legitimacy as a world leader. In late 1947, the report "To Secure These Rights" by the President's Committee on Civil Rights pinpointed the negative influence of American racial inequality on American diplomatic endeavors and image in foreign countries. It underscored the international significance of ending domestic segregation and racism. The Cold War and growing international interest in American domestic policy pressured the United States to adapt its aspired image as the paradigm and bearer of democracy and equality.

As a result of these developments, the White House, the State Department and the Justice Department turned to pro-civil rights and desegregation policy reform to improve its standing in the world and prove its superiority to the Soviet Union. From President Truman through President Johnson's term, the link between the Cold War and international interest in American equal rights and civil rights is most visible. With the Vietnam War, the attention shifted away from the image of domestic racial equality. Although not downplaying the essential importance of the Civil Rights movement and the black vote, foreign policy considerations also undeniably influenced the government's civil rights agenda during the Cold War. Despite the protest of southern whites, the United States began to advance its record on civil rights regulations and launched an image campaign in an effort to counter Soviet propaganda.



The White House, pressed for governmental action on civil rights. The State Department, in particular, was aware of the importance of international opinion in the success of American Cold War foreign policy. Its officials all over the world in their meetings with international audiences, especially at the United Nations, called increased attention to the precarious standing of the United States in the world with respect to race relations. They sought to change the record. The responsible forces, however, also knew that a majority in Congress would not be willing to embrace these plans. Southern Congressmen, who had enormous power in Congress, used the Cold War as a reason for opposing equal rights for minorities. Explaining their opposition to civil rights reform, Southerners primarily argued that a change of race relations was a threat to national security and a hindrance to the aims of American foreign policy. Civil rights reform had to be accomplished mainly without the help of Congress.

Beginning with President Harry S Truman, the civil rights record of the federal government improved. Truman issued executive orders restricting segregation in America. The integration of the American military, accelerated by the Korean War, was internationally one of his most visible civil rights reforms. Truman began to increase the number of African Americans in the State Department and foreign service, a development continued by all subsequent presidents. The State Department also regularly financed trips of African American activists to spread a positive outlook on American race relations and politics.

During Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency, the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* officially ended school desegregation. *Brown* and the following Little Rock crisis were international issues and stories that highly affected the American image of race relations. Before *Brown*, the Justice Department had already decided in some cases that racial segregation violated the United Nations Charter and seriously hurt American foreign policy. Its *amicus curiae* briefs displayed concern for the global implications of the American race problem. The racial integration of Washington, D.C., as representative of the nation, took on a special role and would soon be implemented.

The civil rights reforms undertaken during the Cold War, especially early on, contained a considerable amount of tokenism and window dressing. Although the civil rights reforms were issued and celebrated as a proof of change, their implementation lagged. The government claimed their success in improving civil rights and used it as proof

of continuous racial progress, but did not force implementation. Political civil rights advocacy and activism was often designed more for impressing the international audience than for revolutionizing domestic race relations.

Propaganda and communication were key elements in the international endeavor to gain supporters for the United States in the Cold War struggle. The propaganda was intended to influence the world audience. It was to counter Soviet propaganda that constantly played on the chasm between the American claim of freedom and the situation of African Americans. American propaganda constructed a story of constant racial progress. The government argued that only in a democracy could these changes come about. The newly founded United States Information Agency (USIA) had primary responsibility for spreading information of American racial progress internationally. Civil rights progress was also examined for its propaganda value. The continued existence of segregation and the recurring protest and violence against African American civil rights, particularly in the South, created problems with the constructed image of racial change and progress. These incidents, however, were incorporated into the image of America's constant change to the better. It was argued that these were individual cases in restricted areas that proved racial progress was only possible in a democracy.

Although the world audience was the main aim of American propaganda, the domestic audience was also to be convinced of the necessity of civil rights reforms and improvements with the Cold War discourse. Civil rights advocates argued that civil rights were essential to a successful fight against communism, although individual states and people were often not too interested in the claim that civil rights advocacy could support the anticommunist struggle.

As much as segregationists used the Cold War as a tool to protest civil rights reform, the African American Civil Rights movement also attempted to use the Cold War and the international attention as leverage for racial progress. Many African Americans believed that supporting the American anticommunist foreign policy would result in the government fighting domestic discrimination. In their civil rights activism, the African American community felt connected to the emerging third world nations' struggle against colonialism that simultaneously took place. The African American Civil Rights movement was well aware of the international interest in and importance of American race relations. The creation of the United Nations was of

service to the African American Civil Rights movements. Although the United Nations would not interfere in U.S. domestic affairs, and the U.S. government did not intend to justify its domestic race relations in front of the UN, the Civil Rights movement used it as a multiplier of information on the African American situation. Petitions on American segregation and racial discrimination to the UN furthered the internationalization of racial issues in the United States. The documents were widely published and discussed in the world press, augmenting the pressure on the American government to improve its standing on racial issues.

In its activism, the Civil Rights movement attempted to make use of the Cold War discourse to pressure for civil rights actions of the government. From Walter White and the NAACP to Martin Luther King, major civil rights leaders made use of the Cold War discourse to influence the domestic audience on issues of civil rights. They argued for the necessity of racial reform if the United States wanted to win the support of the international community, the newly emerging nations of Asia and Africa in particular, and effectively contain the international and national spread of communism.

As much as the Cold War might have informed the Civil Rights movement and its goals, it also seriously restricted it. Anticommunist hysteria, fear of Communist conspiracy, and McCarthyism constrained the leeway for civil rights activism. The infringement of constitutional rights during the Cold War seriously affected the African American Civil Rights movement in particular. Suspecting a Communist threat, the Federal Bureau of Investigation put all civil rights organizations under close scrutiny. As a result of these political and societal pressures, the successful use of mass movement activism and any cooperation with left-leaning organizations were suspicious and nearly impossible. The Civil Rights movement had to spend considerable effort and money to fight any public association with communism assigned to them, a serious allegation that slowed down, seriously weakened, and divided the Civil Rights movements. Only with the decline of the Cold War in the late 1960s could the Civil Rights movement radicalize and step up its activism.

See also: *Brown v. Board of Education*; Bunche, Ralph; Du Bois, W. E. B.; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Little Rock Nine; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Robeson, Paul; White, Walter; Wright, Richard

Christine Knauer

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## Coleman, Bessie

Elizabeth “Bessie” Coleman (1896–1926) was the first African American licensed pilot. Her early life prepared her for the struggle she would face with race. When she was two, the family moved to the cotton capital of the West, Waxahachie, Texas. Her father built a three-room house in the black area of town, Mustang Creek, where family life revolved around school, the Baptist Church, and the cotton fields. The racial barriers in this city led to her father’s move in 1901 to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) seeking better opportunities as a man and as a provider. Susan Coleman remained behind finding work as a cook and housekeeper for a white family. To ease the burden on their mother, Bessie’s older brothers moved away, leaving Bessie and her sisters at home.

Her intelligence and tenacity appeared early. At age six, she walked four miles to a one-room segregated schoolhouse. Her abilities in math led to her becoming the family’s bookkeeper. Nightly Bible reading sharpened her reading

skills. At age 12, Bessie was baptized into the Missionary Baptist Church. By age 14, she used her savings to attend the Colored Agricultural and Normal University in the black town of Langston, Oklahoma. She was unable to continue her education because of lack of money so she returned to her mother's home the next year and worked as a laundress.

World War I opened opportunities and employment in the cities of the North, leading to the Great Migration. Coleman left for Chicago in 1915 to join her brother, Walter. She found employment as a manager of a chili parlor and as a manicurist in a barbershop, where she heard soldiers relate stories of their exploits flying in Europe. Despite taunts from her brother about superior French women who flew airplanes, she continued to save money for flight training.

Coleman proceeded to find aviation schools. Only a few wealthy, white women held a license to fly in 1918. Race was another barrier. As one after another flying school rejected her applications, she turned to Robert Abbott, owner/editor of the *Chicago Defender*. Impressed with her tenacity and opposed to barriers of race, gender, and class, Abbott and his friend, Jesse Binga, founder/president of Binga State Bank, helped finance her dream of going to France for her training. She studied French at Chicago's Berlitz School, withdrew her savings, and left the United States on November 20, 1920 for Paris. For seven months, she trained at the Federation Aeronautique Internationale on a 27-foot biplane. On June 15, 1921, she received her international pilot's license, making her the first of her race to be licensed.

When she returned to the United States in September, she was a curiosity to the media. Reporters met her plane in New York City. The black press told the tale of her undaunted quest to fly. The *Air Service News* reported that she had achieved the first license for her race. Black leaders celebrated her achievement. As the guest of honor at the all-black musical, *Shuffle Along*, Bessie Coleman received a standing ovation from both blacks and whites in attendance.

Coleman started her career as a barnstormer, performing aerial stunts in the Midwest and North. Film of her performances regularly appeared in the black theaters of the North and South. In the South, she performed on the Theatre Owners and Booking Association (TOBA) at circuses, carnivals, and fairs. To change segregation practices, she

refused to perform until her audiences were desegregated. This refusal led to desegregated audiences in her hometown and at a major event in Orlando, Florida.

Bessie Coleman encouraged others to pursue flying. She lectured at churches, schools, and clubs to encourage young people to follow her lead and to raise money for her aviation school. The Negro Welfare League invited her to perform at their Field Day on May 1, 1926. Plane owners in Jacksonville, Florida refused to rent, sell, or loan her an airplane, so she had a mechanic fly in her Jenny biplane for the performance. She and the mechanic took a test flight. Aloft, the plane malfunctioned, throwing her out of the plane to her death on April 30, 1926. The mechanic also died in the crash.

Her death brought a tremendous amount of recognition. Her funeral in Chicago drew 10,000 mourners and Ida B. Wells-Barnett led the service. In 1929, an aviation school for blacks opened when William J. Powell established the Bessie Coleman Aero Club in Los Angeles. In



*Bessie Coleman, the world's first licensed black aviator (in 1921) tragically died on April 30, 1926, after a plane malfunction. (AP Photo)*

1931, Chicago's black Challenger Pilots' Association started the annual tradition of flying over her grave at Lincoln Cemetery. African American female pilots honored her in 1977 by establishing the Bessie Coleman Aviators Club. The United States Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in her honor in 1995.

See also: *Chicago Defender*; Destination, Chicago, Illinois; Great Migration; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.

Dorothy Salem

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## Colored Farmers Alliance

The Colored Farmers Alliance was an organization of African American farmers that promoted agrarian economic advancement through cooperative ventures, agricultural wage scales, and electoral political action across the U.S. South in the late 19th century. First organized in 1886 in Houston County, Texas, the Colored Farmers National Alliance and Cooperative Union was the strongest of three rival organizations that emerged around this time in eastern Texas. Officially chartered in 1888, the alliance elected J. J. Schufer as its first president, although R. M. Humphrey, a white preacher and landowner, served as the order's national spokesman. The alliance had deep roots in black agrarian movements that developed in the early 1880s in Texas, Arkansas, and North Carolina. These earlier organizations, such as the Arkansas-based Sons of the Agricultural Star, relied on ties to the benevolent, church, and political associations that shaped rural black life in the postemancipation South.

The Colored Farmers Alliance shared the concerns and ideas of its organizational ally, the white Farmers Alliance. Members of the order advocated cooperative exchanges

where independent agricultural producers could buy goods and market their crops without becoming indebted by crop liens, furnishing merchants, and railroads. In 1890, the Alliance endorsed Henry George's Single Tax, as well as the subtreasury plan put forward by the Farmers Alliance that called for federal intervention to protect the independence of small farm producers. The Colored Alliance differed with its white counterpart on many issues, particularly over the public role of blacks and the wages paid to seasonal cotton workers.

Organizers for the Colored Alliance, most of whom were African American, gathered support from thousands of farmers throughout the Southeast soon after the formation of the order. Racial hostility forced these organizers to work covertly. Instead of holding public meetings, black organizers introduced the idea of the Alliance to community leaders, such as preachers, and then used their trusted networks to build grassroots support. Many women joined the order and in some areas assumed leadership positions in local meetings. By 1890, the alliance claimed more than 250,000 members in 16 states, including 90,000 in Texas, 55,000 in North Carolina, 50,000 in Alabama, 50,000 in Louisiana, 30,000 in South Carolina, and 20,000 in Arkansas, although these figures may be exaggerated. Farmers from plantation belts, small farming areas, and near small towns joined. In the Carolinas and the Mississippi Valley, many Alliance members also belonged to the Knight of Labor. The alliance formed cooperative exchanges in New Orleans, Mobile, Charleston, Norfolk, and Houston. White members of the Farmers Alliance controlled the exchanges, at least publicly.

The rise of Jim Crow in the 1890s complicated the activities of the Colored Alliance and its relationship with the Farmers Alliance. In Mississippi and Arkansas, white elites directed violent attacks on Colored Alliance members who had made public attempts to exert their collective strength. These assaults killed more than 40 African Americans. Pessimistic about mainstream politics, the Colored Alliance, along with the Knights of Labor, led the call for a third-party political challenge in 1891. Where and when the Farmers Alliance decided to support reform candidates, Colored Alliance members voted to support them, despite the opposition of many black Republicans and white Democrats. Little is known about what happened to the Colored Alliance after 1892, although disfranchisement and rising white violence hastened its demise.

See also: Black Nationalism; Jim Crow; Populist Party; Sharecroppers Union

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## Compromise of 1877

The Compromise of 1877 was a behind-the-scenes deal made between Republicans and Democrats following the disputed presidential election of 1876. This deal allowed the Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes, to win the election over his Democratic rival, Samuel J. Tilden, in exchange for numerous concessions to Tilden's main backers, white Democrats from the South. This compromise is traditionally viewed as the end of Reconstruction in the South. As such, it meant the completion of the return of "home rule" to native white Southerners and the abandonment, by most northerners and the federal government, of a policy of defending African American rights in the region.

After the South's defeat in the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865), Republicans, especially Radical Republicans in Congress, pushed for full rights of citizenship to be given to the newly freed slaves. Republicans in Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery, in 1865. Within another five years, there were two more monumental amendments to the Constitution: the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 gave full citizenship rights and equal protection under the law to freedmen, and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 gave black males the right to vote. Beginning in 1867, Radical Republicans in Congress took charge of the postwar South and a 10-year period of Congressional Reconstruction of the Southern states began. Federal troops were stationed in the defeated states and Republicans, mostly white Northerners and black Southerners, headed Southern state governments. Southern states were given a list of requirements for their readmittance to the Union,

and several Southern states were in fact readmitted to the Union by the early 1870s.

Being ruled by their former slaves and their former enemies was anathema to most white Southerners. After native whites regained control of the state government in Mississippi in 1875 through the use of force, only three Southern states remained under Republican rule: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. By 1876, the year of the nation's centennial, an important presidential election would occur, as for the first time since the Civil War it seemed that a Democrat might be elected to the White House.

The election of 1876 hinged on the issue of reform. Democrats painted Republicans, especially the scandal-prone Ulysses Grant administration, as corrupt and connected this image of national corruption to their image of corrupt "Negro rule" in Republican-run state governments in the South during Reconstruction. For Republicans in the North, the Democratic Party was still the party of traitors, as memories of secession and the Civil War still lingered; many Republicans believed it was also the party that would roll back the work of Reconstruction by ignoring black civil rights.

Both major parties chose "safe" candidates for the election. Republicans chose Rutherford B. Hayes, a Cincinnati lawyer, Ohio governor, and a Union general during the Civil War. Democrats chose Samuel J. Tilden, the New York governor who had been instrumental in bringing in many reforms in his home state. Both candidates promised reforms, including more honest government. Tilden publicly called for an end to Reconstruction and the return of "home rule" in the South. Although he did not say so publicly, privately Hayes also believed that "bayonet rule" was a failing policy and that federal troops should no longer prop up Republican governments in the South.

In November 1876, as the election returns came in, it seemed clear to most observers that Tilden had won the election. In order to do so, he needed the "solid South" to remain solidly in the Democratic camp and to win a few northern states as well. After winning New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Indiana, and apparently all of the former slave states, it seemed that Tilden would be the nation's next president, the first Democrat in the White House since the Civil War. But Hayes's Republican backers contested the election results in the three Southern states still under Republican rule: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. In all other Southern states Democrats controlled the election

machinery, but in those three states, Republicans still had some power and, at least in Louisiana and South Carolina, were backed by federal troops at the statehouse. Republicans claimed that white Southerners intimidated blacks at the polls or coerced them into staying away in voting districts in the three contested states. Without counting the three contested states, Tilden led in the Electoral College 184 to 165; he needed only one more electoral vote to win the election. Hayes needed to win all 19 electoral votes from the three contested Southern states (as well as the one contested electoral vote from Oregon) in order to win.

After a couple of months of bickering, Congress took charge in January 1877 by establishing an electoral commission made up of five U.S. senators, five U.S. representatives, and five justices from the U.S. Supreme Court. There were supposed to be seven Republicans, seven Democrats, and one independent on the commission, but the independent voted with the Republicans and Hayes was handed the presidency. Both houses of Congress were then supposed to certify the election results, but the Democratic-controlled House stalled until about a week before the inauguration, scheduled for March 4, 1877. Hayes's Republican backers met secretly with Democratic leaders from the South to broker a deal that would lead to Hayes's ascension to the presidency. In exchange for accepting Hayes as president, Southern Democrats were promised, among other things, more federal money for economic development in the region, a cabinet post for a Southerner, and most important "home rule" in all of the former Confederate states. The last would have the most far-reaching consequences, especially for African Americans in the South. In return for accepting Hayes's election, white supremacist governments run by native Southern "redeemers" became a reality in all former Confederate states.

See also: Black Nadir; Confederate States of America; Hayes, Rutherford B.; Republican Party; Union Army; White Supremacy

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## Congressional Black Caucus

Founded in January 1969, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is a nonpartisan organization of black Congressional representatives. Although it is ostensibly nonpartisan, the CBC has, in reality, functioned as part of the left wing of the Democratic Party since its inception. Initially formed as a "Democratic Select Committee" in January 1969, the organization was renamed the Congressional Black Caucus in February 1971. Among the founders of the CBC were Representatives John Conyers and Charles Diggs of Michigan, Ron Dellums and Gus Hawkins of California, Charlie Rangel and Shirley Chisholm of New York, Louis Stokes of Ohio, Ralph Metcalf and George Collins of Illinois, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, Robert Nix of Pennsylvania, William Clay of Missouri, and Walter Fauntroy, the delegate from Washington, D.C. Since 1969, only African American members of Congress have been part of the CBC.

From its beginning in 1969 through 1994, the CBC was considered an official office of Congress and had its own offices, staff, and budget. When Republicans became the majority party in the House of Representatives in 1994, these privileges were ended and, since that time, the CBC claims as its official address the office of the member serving as chair. The principal goals of the CBC are to close achievement and opportunity gaps in education, to help provide quality and universal health care, to achieve equity for African Americans in all areas of American life, to establish retirement security and welfare funding, and to create foreign policy equity, particularly as it relates to the African Diaspora. In addition to these goals, members of the caucus have endorsed and taken part in the antiapartheid movement, the 1995 Million Man March in Washington, D.C., and the 2009 "Fast for Life" campaign to bring attention to the Darfur crisis.

Most recently, in April 2009, seven members of the CBC traveled to Cuba to meet with former Cuban president Fidel Castro as part of an effort to facilitate more positive and normalized relationships with the new Cuban government. Praising Castro as a courteous and hospitable host,



Illinois state representative Bobby Rush speaks during a news conference in Havana on April 7, 2009. Cuba's president Raul Castro met with six visiting members of the Congressional Black Caucus, his first face-to-face discussions with U.S. leaders since he became Cuba's president in 2008. (AP Photo/Javier Galeano)

this delegation called for an end to the travel ban and the longstanding trade embargo imposed on Cuba during the visit and upon their return to the United States. The CBC delegation also noted that Castro was seemingly receptive to the current president—and former CBC member—Barack Obama's overtures to the people and government of Cuba, as well as to Cuban Americans. These moves toward reconciliation may have been a factor in the June 3, 2009 decision by the Organization of American States to lift its suspension of Cuba, which barred the Communist nation from sending representatives for the last 47 years.

Currently, the CBC has 44 members—1 senator and 43 representatives—including two nonvoting members of the House representing Washington, D.C. (Eleanor Holmes Norton) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Donna Christian-Chistensen). In the 111th Congress, Representative Barbara Lee of California serves as its chair. On a host of issues, the CBC joins with the Progressive Caucus (with whom it shares many members), the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

See also: Antiapartheid Movement; Castro, Fidel; Chisholm, Shirley; Million Man March; Norton, Eleanor Holmes; Obama, Barack

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## Congressional Reconstruction

Congressional or Radical Reconstruction refers to the period beginning in 1867 when Radical Republicans successfully gained control over Reconstruction from President

Andrew Johnson. In the aftermath of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Johnson, Lincoln's vice president and a slave-owning Southerner, initially directed Reconstruction efforts without sufficient checks and balances. This was due to the fact that Congress was in recess from April to December 1865. In the Presidential Reconstruction plan, Johnson offered amnesty to any ex-Confederate who took an oath of loyalty; he did not support African American suffrage; and he insisted that each Confederate state accept the Thirteenth Amendment. His plan did not punish Confederates. In issuing 7,000 pardons by January 1866, Johnson allowed high-ranking Confederate officials to reassume their previous political and economic domination over the South. In turn, these officials helped erect the so-called Black Codes, which were blanket denials of civil rights and citizenship for African Americans in the South. In sum, those who were in power before the Civil War were back in power under Johnson's plan for Reconstruction. Likewise, those who were enslaved before the war were still to be oppressed and denied the basic rights of citizenship guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

When Congress reconvened in December 1865, they moved to immediately address Johnson's conciliatory policies. The Republican sweep during the 1866 congressional elections, in which they won two-thirds majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, granted them ability to override any of Johnson's presidential vetoes. With this immense power and driven by the zeal of the Radical Republicans, Congress passed the first of three Reconstruction Acts in March 1867. Under the terms of this act, all of the Confederate states, with the exception of Tennessee, were to be divided into five military districts and placed under the authority of a Union general. Martial law would be strictly enforced in these districts and military personnel would protect African Americans and others. In addition, each state had to draft new constitutions and submit them to voters for approval. In the process of electing delegates to draft new constitutions and having each state vote to approve them, the Reconstruction Act granted universal male suffrage. For the first time in Southern history, African American men were granted the right to vote and participate in politics. Finally, every Southern state had to accept the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted African Americans citizenship rights and stripped away the right to vote and hold political office from high-ranking Confederates.

As a result of Congressional Reconstruction, the South experienced some semblance of democracy for the first time in its history. Despite the claims of "Negro domination" and "black supremacy," the work of the biracial delegations that rewrote Southern constitutions resulted in state governments that created and passed progressive legislation throughout the South. For example, these state governments created the first public schools in Southern history; expanded the political franchise by eliminating property qualifications for voting; and rebuilt railroads, bridges, and roads destroyed throughout the South during the Civil War. Unfortunately, Radical Reconstruction lasted for only a decade. With the Election of 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes ended Reconstruction by withdrawing federal troops from the South. With the return of home rule, much of the gains African Americans witnessed during Reconstruction were reversed. After 1877, Southern states moved aggressively to undercut the rights African Americans had enjoyed for just over a decade. By the 1890s, Jim Crow segregation, political disfranchisement, lynching, race riots, and general lawlessness characterized white redemption and white Democratic control of the South.

*See also:* Black Codes; Compromise of 1877; Fourteenth Amendment; Johnson, Andrew; Lincoln, Abraham; Radical Republicans; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Thirteenth Amendment

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## Cooper, Anna Julia

Anna Julia Cooper's (1858-1964) life spanned the antebellum period to the Civil Rights movement, and from her early childhood to her death she was committed to the causes of women's and racial equality. She was a teacher, principal,



feminist, clubwoman, community activist, scholar, social theorist, and mother. Anna Julia Cooper was born Anna Julia Haywood, the daughter of an enslaved woman, Hannah Stanley Haywood, and her white master, George Washington Haywood, in Raleigh, North Carolina, on August 10, 1858. She was raised by her mother and later credited many of her successes to her mother's devotion. Like most antebellum mulatto children, Cooper had very little contact with her father. Growing up during the era of Reconstruction, however, meant that Cooper was among the first generation of educated freed black children. The schoolhouse and the church were the two primary institutions Cooper interacted with throughout her life. In 1865, just after the Civil War's conclusion, and at the age of nine, she was admitted on scholarship to St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute, an Episcopalian institution for freedpersons. Cooper remembered St. Augustine's as embodying the perfect balance between intellectual rigor and spiritual guidance. Like many of her free and newly freed contemporaries, Cooper was raised to believe that education was essential to racial progress. Just three years after enrolling in St. Augustine's College, she was already tutoring older students. From 1871 to 1881, she also taught Latin, Greek, and mathematics.

At St. Augustine's College, Anna Julia Haywood met an aspiring young Protestant Episcopal minister George Cooper. In 1877, at nineteen years of age, she married him and became Anna Julia Cooper. But just two years later, she was widowed, and it was this misfortune that enabled her to seriously pursue a career in education—a field closed to most married women. While marriage and family were the major hallmarks of most 19th-century women's lives, for Cooper the former was buried with her husband and the latter did not arrive until mid-life, when she became the primary caregiver to two foster youth and five orphaned children.

Completing her education at St. Augustine's in 1881, she applied to Oberlin College. In her mid-twenties, she moved to Ohio to attend Oberlin where she received both a bachelor's degree in math (1884) and later a master's degree in college teaching (1887). Between receiving her degrees from Oberlin she taught first at Wilberforce, in Ohio, and again at St. Augustine's. Her distinction as one of Oberlin's few black graduates—only five black women earned degrees from Oberlin by 1899—in conjunction with her years of classroom experience, made her a particularly attractive

teaching candidate. The superintendent of Colored Schools in Washington, D.C., invited her to teach at the Colored Preparatory School in 1887. Cooper served her school in numerous capacities during her tenure, first, as a math and science teacher, eventually as principal, and later as a Latin teacher.

Her teaching responsibilities, however, did not stifle her scholarly instinct or prohibit her from examining and contesting the racial and gender constraints of Southern Jim Crow. Cooper was an active participant in the women's and Civil Rights movements of the late-19th century. She delivered numerous addresses and speeches before diverse audiences, ranging from the colored clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to educators, and feminists. At 34 she published *A Voice from the South* (1892), a series of lectures and essays delivered and written between 1886 and 1892. The first set of essays in *A Voice from the South*—"Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," "The Higher Education of Women," "Woman versus the Indian," and "The Status of Woman in America"—examining the historical status and contemporary significance of womanhood, have garnered the most scholarly attention. While emphasizing women's domestic responsibilities and the need for a womanly influence in a masculine world, Cooper simultaneously asserted men's and women's moral equality and advocated women's self-development and broad entrance and incorporation into society. While arguing that all racial progress lay on the shoulders of women, she appeared most comfortable with women shouldering that burden at home. Highly critical of southern white women and the women's movement on account of their racism, she pushed all women to embrace their public responsibilities as racial intermediaries and peacemakers. Higher education would be central to women's new role. In the same breath that she advocated higher education, however, she deflected the new public possibilities this education might offer women. Yet recalling and praising her feminist foremothers—Sojourner Truth, Sarah Woodson Early, Charlotte Forté Grimké, Hallie Quinn Brown, and Frances Watkins Harper—Cooper argued that the domestic realm was no longer women's only sphere; rather every area was open to women in the new era.

Although the 1890s witnessed southern black male disenfranchisement, rampant labor discrimination, and the proliferation of public and private segregation, Cooper and her black feminist contemporaries were hopeful that

the new spaces created by and for women would benefit all African Americans. Rather than seeing the nadir of African American civil rights as a separate phenomenon from what she and her contemporaries called the “woman’s era,” Cooper envisioned the woman’s era as opening the door to rapid racial progress for both sexes. Her conception of womanhood echoed the sentiments of a growing cadre of women who stood with her in the African American club women’s movement. These women reclaimed the word “womanly,” extending its meaning beyond the hollow platitudes of soft, fragile, shallow, and submissive to denote rationality, ambition, education, and leadership.

The second set of essays in *A Voice from the South*—“Has America a Race Problem? If so, How Can It Best Be Solved?,” “The Negro as Presented in American Literature,” “What Are We Worth?” and “The Gain from a Belief”—are directed less toward the woman question and more toward the race question, although Cooper clearly saw the two as interdependent and inextricably connected. In these essays, she asserted that racial diversity was not a weakness, but the nation’s greatest strength. She challenged negative literary portrayals of African Americans, arguing that cruel stereotypes revealed more about white racism than about African Americans. Contesting Henry Ward Beecher’s claim that the world would not be poorer if the African continent sank, she argued that African Americans had a heritage deserving of respect and that Christian manhood and womanhood, the true measures of one’s worth, were not limited by race or class.

As much as Cooper was a scholar, she was equally an activist. Her scholarship was nearly always in service to social activism and dedicated to the causes of women’s and racial equality. Shortly after the publication of *A Voice from the South*, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, and Mary Jane Patterson founded the Colored Women’s League of Washington, D.C. She was also active in the National Association of Colored Women when the Colored Women’s League became one of its first affiliates, in 1894. Black clubwomen, like Cooper, advocated a racial uplift philosophy premised on self-help; were active proponents and defenders of black womanhood and of women as racial redeemers; and offered critical appraisals of both Jim Crow and patriarchal policies. As much as Cooper’s essays can be read as scholarly articles, they were equally declarations of a black Christian feminist worldview and movement. Cooper was also an active participant in local and international

conferences such as the Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900. She was a YWCA Life Member, serving on their board of directors for a decade. She also worked with the Colored Social Settlement, 1901–1907, 1911–1918, and was a Guardian for the Camp Fire Girls.

In 1901, Cooper was appointed principal of M Street High School in Washington, D.C. A fervent advocate of both industrial and higher education, she encouraged her students to be true to themselves whether it was as craftsmen or professionals. Her students were very successful; several were granted admission to prestigious universities. Cooper’s efforts to have her school accredited, in a time when African American advances were being rolled back, proved to be her undoing. Racism, sexism, sexual innuendoes, and the hostile force of Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee machine contributed to her eventual dismissal. Around 1906, she was removed from her position as principal. That same year, she moved to Missouri and began teaching at Lincoln Institute. This painful setback, however, did not squelch Cooper’s fire or commitment to education. In 1911, she returned to Washington, D.C., taking a teaching position at the school she once presided over.

In her mid-fifties, Cooper embarked on several new and significant adventures. She began two doctoral programs, one at Columbia University, in 1914, and the other at the Sorbonne, in 1924. Between teaching and studying, she took on the added responsibility of becoming the legal guardian to five small children in 1915. Caring for five children, teaching at M Street School, and taking only one short and highly contested sabbatical leave, Cooper managed to defend her doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, in 1925 at 66 years of age. That same year, she received a doctoral degree from Howard University.

Five years later, in 1930, she retired from her M Street teaching position and began another career as president of Frelinghuysen University for adult education in Washington, D.C. She moved the school to her home and spent most of her seventies presiding over it. In her eighties, she resigned from the presidency, but continued to teach at the school, and published two works of great personal importance. First, around 1945, Cooper published *The Third Step*, an autobiographical essay. Then, in 1951, she published her *Personal Recollections of the Grimké Family*. Cooper lived not only to celebrate her 100th birthday, but to the age of 105. She died peacefully in her home and was buried in her birthplace, Raleigh, North Carolina on March 4, 1964.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B.; National Association of Colored Women; Terrell, Mary Church; Truth, Sojourner; Tuskegee Institute; Washington, Booker T.

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## CORE

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was an early pioneer of nonviolent direct-action campaigns that took place during the Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. The organization grew out of the Christian pacifist student organization, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which was started in 1942. At the outset, the group's goal was to foster improvement in race relations. CORE's nonviolent, direct-action ideology was used a number of times within urban African American communities during the era in their struggle against racial discrimination. These protests developed out of a long-established protest

tradition that ranged from the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns in Chicago and New York City during the 1930s, A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington movement of the 1940s, and the more militant mood among African Americans over the obvious contradictions between American's democratic war propaganda and its violation of democratic principles at home. Each of these campaigns came in response to inadequate housing opportunities, job segregation, and discrimination in public accommodations and public spaces that resulted from white resistance to the growing number of black migrants moving north in search of better economic and social opportunities in the World War II and postwar periods.

The first CORE chapter, the Chicago Committee of Racial Equality, was formed in 1942 at the University of Chicago. The leaders of this new, interracial organization, which included future national directors James Farmer and James A. Robinson, were skeptical and critical of conservative actions of older civil rights groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League, which often insisted on lengthy legal battles to fight Jim Crow. They instead embarked on campaigns that directly confronted discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. In March 1942, for instance, the group chose the White City Roller Rink as its first site to test Illinois's civil rights law. Here, 24 CORE members sought entry into the facility. When the African Americans in the group were denied entry, the group negotiated with the manager to end segregation at the location. Later that same year, the group targeted discrimination in housing at the University of Chicago Hospital and Medical School and at the university barbershop.

After changing its name to the Congress of Racial Equality in 1943, CORE expanded its operations and affiliated with other civil rights groups across the country. This proved difficult because CORE affiliates resisted centralized leadership out of the belief that a central structure would deprive local chapters of valuable, and often limited, financial resources. Moreover, problems in northern urbanized areas transcended mere segregation and encompassed a myriad of other issues, in particular, residential and employment discrimination. Many chapter leaders believed that creating a bureaucracy unfamiliar with local issues would severely limit the type of activism that could be used.

Despite this resistance, throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, local CORE groups managed some substantial



*James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), leads a demonstration at New York's World Fair. (Library of Congress)*

victories. In 1949, St. Louis CORE, operating in a locale whose African American populace had increased during wartime migration, launched a successful campaign to desegregate Woolworth lunch counters through sit-ins and picketing. In another example, CORE operations in Omaha, Nebraska, successfully pressured a local Coca-Cola plant to agree to more equitable hiring practices. Unfortunately, the successes of these campaigns were not enough to maintain morale and activism among CORE affiliates across the nation. By 1954, while the NAACP was enjoying success as a result of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and 1955, when Martin Luther King Jr., and the Montgomery bus boycott gained national attention, CORE suffered from organizational disarray and growing anti-Communist investigations.

In 1961, CORE reached an important point in its organizational history when James Farmer, after a brief

time working for the NAACP, became its national director. Farmer's influence on CORE's activism developed after he attended Howard University's Divinity School. Farmer refused ordination as a Methodist minister, citing that he could not preach in a church that practiced discrimination. Subsequently he began work for a number of pacifist and socialist groups, applied for conscientious objector status, and was deferred from the draft during World War II because of his divinity degree. During his early career as an activist, Farmer worked for two Chicago organizations, a pacifist group, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), in 1941, and later CORE from 1942 to 1945. With FOR, Farmer helped draft responses to such social ills as war, violence, bigotry, and poverty. With CORE, where he served as the group's first chair, Farmer proposed a new strategy based less on religious pacifism and more on the principle of nonviolent direct action that was used in northern urban

areas during the Great Migration and World War II eras as African Americans increasingly questioned the contradictions between American racism and the nation's war for democracy.

Before Farmer, whose charisma proved invaluable in strengthening CORE's ability to increase its profile within the African American community, CORE had begun to develop a reputation as being a predominately white organization. With Farmer as its leader, the group moved into a more influential position among African American protest organizations because of its willingness to directly confront racial inequality.

On May 4, 1961, CORE brought its confrontational style to the Deep South when 13 CORE members departed via bus from Washington, D.C., in two interracial groups as part of the Freedom Rides. The endeavor was modeled after the 1946 Journey of Reconciliation, which tested the limits of a Supreme Court ruling banning discrimination in interstate travel sponsored by CORE and FOR. The Freedom Rides, a demonstration that Farmer had long pushed the NAACP to undertake, was aimed at challenging southern segregation in interstate travel and testing a recent Supreme Court ruling, *Boydton v. Virginia*, that extended nondiscrimination in interstate travel to bus terminal accommodations. On May 13, outside Birmingham, Alabama, an armed mob attacked the buses carrying a group of Freedom Riders and firebombed one of the buses. These incidents prompted CORE activists to abandon the remainder of their trip, and the riders were transported to New Orleans under the protection of the Justice Department. These actions, although initially disappointing, stimulated other freedom rides throughout the South and demonstrated how a protest strategy, tested and proven in northern states, could be implemented in the South. In the end, the Freedom Rides and voter registration drives in the South succeeded in moving CORE into a better position to fight racism throughout the North and South.

The visceral hatred demonstrated by southern whites and the extreme racial violence aimed against the Freedom Riders made national news and thrust CORE into the national spotlight. The events surrounding the Freedom Rides transformed the national profile of the group in civil rights circles. During Farmer's tenure, CORE soon developed a reputation of being one of the "Big Four" in the Civil Rights movement, along with Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Whitney

Young, of the National Urban League, and Martin Luther King Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and was considered by most to be the spiritual leader of the movement.

In 1962, CORE, the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the NAACP organized its Freedom Summer campaign. The primary objective was to attempt to end the political disenfranchisement of African Americans in the Deep South. Volunteers from these three groups concentrated efforts in Mississippi where, in 1962, only 6.7 percent of African Americans in the state were registered to vote, the lowest percentage in the country. This activism included the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). CORE, along with SNCC and NAACP, also established 30 Freedom Schools in towns throughout Mississippi. Volunteers taught in the schools and the curriculum now included black history and the philosophy of the Civil Rights movement. During the summer of 1964, more than 3,000 students attended these schools and the experiment provided a model for future educational programs such as Head Start.

White mobs frequently targeted the Freedom Schools but also attacked the homes of local African Americans involved in the campaign. During the summer months 30 black homes and 37 black churches were bombed, and more than 80 volunteers were beaten by white mobs or racist police officers. Also, there was the murder of three men, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner by the Ku Klux Klan on June 21, 1964. These deaths created nationwide publicity for the campaign.

The year 1963 ushered in a new philosophy in the Civil Rights movement—"Freedom Now!" For many activists within CORE, the achievements won between 1960 and 1963 brought only token success. This new philosophy brought organizations like CORE into more substantial debates with the NAACP and Urban League, which were devoting much of their resources to ending segregation in the public space and less attention to economic freedom. Nowhere was this more important than in the 1963 March on Washington. In the initial planning of the 1963 march, CORE was approached by A. Philip Randolph to cosponsor the event. As the event grew and more organizations agreed to participate, however, the original impetus of the march—jobs—became a secondary focus behind the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Moreover, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference (SLC) openly argued against militant direct action or sit-ins in exchange for CORE's participation. This conflict accentuated an already contentious relationship between CORE and these other groups over such issues as membership, funding, and prestige.

By 1964, civil rights activists found it increasingly difficult to coordinate activities with other groups. For CORE, this cooperation was made more difficult, as the organization developed a more militant critique of the Vietnam War and American society began to publicly distance itself from an integrationist platform and membership such as those in more moderate organizations like the NAACP and SCLC. This conflict gained growing momentum within CORE when Floyd McKissack succeeded James Farmer in 1966. McKissack's ascension marked a shift from an adherence to Gandhian principles of nonviolent direct action to a philosophy of black nationalism.

This nationalist shift of CORE modeled that of other groups of the period, particularly, SNCC. For CORE this position was not only a marked departure from the group's origins but also alienated white members and financial support. Although during McKissack's tenure whites were not expelled from the organization, during the 1967 CORE convention, McKissack's opponents within the group demanded the dismissal of all white members from the organization. In 1968, Roy Innis became national director, and the transition of CORE into a black nationalist body was complete. White financial support virtually disappeared, and CORE found itself at the brink of bankruptcy.

After 1968, political developments within the organization caused CORE to create a more politically conservative platform. For example, CORE supported the presidential candidacy of Richard Nixon in 1968 and 1972. More recently, CORE commented on same sex marriage and black health, calling the issue not something that is a civil right but a human one. Moreover, COREcares, an HIV/AIDS advocacy, education, and prevention program for black women, was dismantled; and Innis is on the board of Project 21, a conservative public policy group that provides broadcasters and the print media with prominent African American conservative commentators as columnists and guests. The organization refers to itself as "The National Leadership Network of Black Conservatives."

See also: Black Conservatives; Black Nationalism; Black Power; *Brown v. Board of Education*; Freedom Rides; Jim Crow; March on Washington Movement, 1941; March on

Washington, 1963; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Lionel Kimble Jr.

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## Cosby, Bill

William Henry Cosby Jr. (1937–), comic, actor, and social commentator, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His mother, Annie "Anna" Pearl Cosby, worked as a housekeeper. His father, William Cosby Sr., worked as a welder and then became a mess steward in the U.S. Navy. Cosby shined at Channing Wister Elementary School and became captain of the baseball and track teams and class president. He continued his dedication to sports at Fitz-Simmons Junior High and Central High School. While in high school, Cosby also helped his family financially by shining shoes and delivering groceries. With so many pursuits, his grades suffered and Cosby transferred to Germantown High School in 1956. After failing the 10th grade, Cosby left school and joined the Navy. While in the Navy, Cosby ran track and completed high school. He was honorably discharged in 1960 and went to Temple University on an athletic scholarship.

To have supplemental money in college, Cosby worked as a bartender in a café called The Underground. When the local comedian failed to perform his acts at the café, Cosby stood in and gained a quick following. Using material from the popular comedians Nipsey Russell and Flip Wilson, Cosby also added his amusing tales of life experiences. His first major performance quickly followed in 1962 at the Gaslight Café, a popular coffeehouse. Cosby left Temple to pursue comedy full time and performed throughout

the United States. He was later awarded his bachelor's degree by Temple in 1971 and received his master's degree in 1972 and doctorate degree in 1977 from the University of Massachusetts.

While performing in a local club in Maryland in 1963, he met Camille Olivia Hanks. Hanks and Cosby soon dated and were married on January 25, 1964, in Olney, Maryland. Soon after the wedding, Cosby completed his first comedy album called *Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow... Right!* The album won a Grammy Award and was followed by a host of other Grammy Award-winning albums: *I Started Out as a Child*, 1965; *Why Is There Air?*, 1966; *Wonderfulness*, 1967; *Revenge*, 1967; and *Russell, My Brother, Whom I Slept With*, 1969.

Cosby parlayed his stage and recording success into acting. In 1965, he accepted a role on the television show *I Spy* and was the first African American in a national prime-time drama. Because of his talent in the series, Cosby garnered Emmy Awards in 1966, 1967, and 1968. He left *I Spy* to work on *The Bill Cosby Show*, which ran from 1969 to 1971. Cosby then turned to animation and used his childhood experiences to create the successful children's series named *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*. Critics praised the show's promotion of morals and ethics. After airing from 1972 to 1979, the show was renamed *The New Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*. Cosby won another Emmy Award in 1981 for outstanding achievement in children's programming.

In 1984, Cosby started his next television series *The Cosby Show*, which boosted his appeal worldwide. He also demonstrated his talent as the lead actor, co-producer, and executive consultant of the show. The show's positive images of African Americans, encouragement of attending black colleges, and universal life scenarios generated millions of viewers. The series won three Emmy Awards, and Cosby won a NAACP Spingarn Medal in 1985. After *The Cosby Show* ended in 1992, Cosby starred in *You Bet Your Life* (1992–1993) and *The Cosby Mysteries* (1994). In 1996, he returned to a comedic sitcom called *Cosby* and teamed again with Phylicia Rashad from *The Cosby Show*. The show ran until 2000.

In addition to television, Cosby also earned some prestige in movies. He co-starred with Sidney Poitier in *Uptown Saturday Night* in 1974 and *A Piece of Action* in 1977. His later works, though, were not so well received. Critics had mixed reviews of his work in *California Suite* (1978), *The Devil and Max Devlin* (1981), *Leonard Part VI* (1987), *Ghost Dad* (1990), *The Meteor Man* (1993), and *Jack* (1996).

Cosby returned to the spotlight with his 1994 induction into the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame and lifetime achievement award at the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors in 1998. A year later, he created a children's book series called "Little Bill." Cosby dedicated the books to his son Ennis, who was killed in 1997. The book series was soon turned into a television program on Nickelodeon. Cosby also wrote the humorous guide for college graduates titled *Congratulations! Now What?: A Book For Graduates* in 1999. As they did with his previous successful texts *Fatherhood* (1986), *Time Flies* (1987), *Love and Marriage* (1989), and *Childhood* (1991), readers enjoyed Cosby's entertaining stories and amusing insights. His next text *Cosbyology* (2001) featured his comical opinions about life. Cosby also shared his thoughts about healthy eating in *I Am What I Ate... And I'm Frightened* in 2003.

Cosby continues to be recognized for his contributions to the arts. He received the notable Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2002 and the Lifetime Achievement Emmy Award in 2003. He is also active in the film industry and oversaw the movie production of *Fat Albert* in 2004. Cosby also speaks at college graduation ceremonies and donates money to several African American colleges.

See also: BET; Black Athletes; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Poitier, Sidney

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## Cotton States Exposition

In 1894, civic leaders in Atlanta, Georgia, inspired by the 1893 Chicago Worlds Fair, decided to highlight the progress made in the South in a grand affair called the Cotton States Exposition. Two previous expositions were held in 1881 and 1887. The 1895 event is the most well known.

Realizing they needed additional funding for this event, white leaders took a contingent of black leaders to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress for funds. The three

black men, Bishop W. J. Gaines, Bishop Abram L. Grant, and Booker T. Washington, explained the benefits such a fair would be to black Americans. The group mentioned that blacks were unable to participate fully in the Chicago Worlds Fair. In contrast, they said, the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States Exposition would allow blacks to prove their worth to the world. The exposition would be the first to feature blacks prominently in displays, thus proving to Congress that the event could help improve southern race relations.

Booker T. Washington, the founder and head of the Tuskegee Institution in Alabama, soon found himself thrust into the national spotlight. White leaders decided to have Washington offer a speech during the inaugural ceremony of the Atlanta Exposition. Washington had delivered speeches to audiences of blacks, northern whites, and southern whites before. In fact, southern conservative whites chose him to speak at the exposition partly because they had heard him speak on two previous occasions. In Atlanta, he would have to speak to all of these groups simultaneously.

In what scholars have labeled the “Atlanta Compromise Speech,” Washington addressed the issues facing the South entering the 20th century. He called for blacks to forego politics, traditionally the domain of white males, in favor of economic advancement. But as his critics would mention, for a people with little resources, doing so would entail working for others with the mere hope of one day accumulating enough money to open a business. Washington, however, perceived of the South as home and thought blacks needed to stay put in the region they knew best.

The “Atlanta Compromise Speech” also addressed white Southerners. Conjuring up images of friendly race relations during slavery and black loyalty during the Civil War, Washington implied that the extra-legal violence against blacks advocated by some southern whites was unprovoked. Instead, he thought blacks and southern whites knew each other intimately and should be the best of friends. To rich, conservative whites, those who owned the businesses that employed blacks, Washington promised blacks would continue to be nonparticipants in strikes and labor disputes. Given the rising number of European immigrants who would compete with blacks for jobs, it is clear Washington meant to compare blacks favorably against the perception of these immigrants as labor radicals. This five-minute speech met widespread approval among most Americans.

After the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition, Booker T. Washington became the unquestioned “leader” of black America. Fredrick Douglass had died earlier in the year, and there seemed to be no black American poised to speak for the race in an era of increasing racial discrimination. Washington served as the nonthreatening spokesperson for blacks, whom whites in the North and the South could accept. Since 1877, the apparent end of Reconstruction, the North had allowed southern whites to decide how best to handle the race situation. As a result, southern blacks gradually lost most of the social and political gains made since emancipation. It was with this reality in mind that Washington delivered this speech.

Within the black community, Washington gained enemies among those who thought his public acceptance of the status quo in race relations further harmed African American attempts to end discrimination; W. E. B. Du Bois and William Monroe Trotter were the most focal this group. Washington possessed the power to dispense political appointments and award financial backing for projects via his friendship with rich, industrial philanthropists. To enemies, Washington was a charlatan who traded black political rights for personal gain. To friends, Washington was a sensible leader in a time of racial discord.

It has become clear that despite the rhetoric of the Atlanta Compromise Speech, Washington secretly funded court cases aimed at challenging Jim Crow segregation laws in the South. Southern civic leaders proposed the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition as a means to highlight their perception of progress in the New South. Part of this progress was the continued racial subjugation of African Americans. The Atlanta Compromise Speech by Booker T. Washington acknowledged this attempt by elite whites to include African Americans in the southern social system, albeit in a subordinate position. Perceiving the continued disfranchising of black citizens in the South, Washington chose to accept the system in his public speeches while privately working to some extent to eradicate racial segregation. *See also:* Accommodationism; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Trotter, William Monroe; Washington, Booker T.

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## Daddy Grace

Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy” Grace (1881–1960) was the founder of the United House of Prayer for all People of the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith (shortened as United House of Prayer or UHOP), an ecumenical and racially integrated Christian group with deep roots in Pentecostalism. Daddy Grace was born Marceline Manuel DaGraca in the Portuguese territory of Brava, Cape Verde. His family immigrated to America when he was 22 and settled in Bedford, Massachusetts, where Marceline DaGraca changed his name to Charles Grace. In Massachusetts, Grace was drawn to Protestantism (although he was baptized Catholic in Brava) and quickly became conscious of racial divisions in the churches he attended. In the face of this religious crisis, Grace called for a revival that would erase all divisions within Christianity, specifically divisions among the denominations and races. By 1919, Grace had gathered a number of followers and opened the first United House of Prayer in Wareham, Massachusetts. In 1926, the United House of Prayer for all People of the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith was incorporated in Washington, D.C. with the mission of maintaining places of worship open to all people regardless of denominational affiliation or race.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the United House of Prayer grew dramatically under Grace’s charismatic leadership. Grace regularly preached to integrated congregations, and his message was especially well received in urban areas. As an evangelical Christian, Grace believed that human beings were living in the end times and taught that miracles and other supernatural events occurred regularly. Grace performed healings and encouraged his followers to heal themselves by faith. Worship in the United House of Prayer was, and still is, charismatic, characterized by tongues speaking, ecstatic praise, shouting, dancing, and lively music performed by choirs, bands, and congregants. Members were encouraged to invest their time in church activities and attend daily religious services.

Under Grace, UHOP facilities operated as community centers and offered congregants access to economic opportunities. One of the greatest successes and attractions of the United House of Prayer was its economic stability. Grace invested money from his congregants in a diversity of businesses and real estate ventures. Members bought and sold community manufactured products like Daddy Grace toothpaste, Daddy Grace cold cream, and Daddy Grace hair straightener. The ministry also published *Grace Magazine*. The wealth generated from these projects allowed the church to offer pension plans and insurance to its preachers and the elderly. During the Great Depression, United House of Prayer churches helped to stabilize black communities and provided jobs, food, and resources.

A flamboyant and extravagant personality, Grace portrayed himself as a man of means, traveling with an extensive entourage of assistants, bodyguards, and a chauffeur. With a thin mustache, long hair, and nails painted red, white, and blue, Daddy Grace was always seen wearing new bright suits and expensive jewelry. Frequent UHOP celebrations, baptisms, festivals, and parades thrust the group further into the public eye. Grace’s persona both attracted and repulsed onlookers. Skeptics viewed Grace as a cult leader and portrayed his followers as naive victims of economic and religious exploitation. Others saw Grace’s displays of wealth and power as evidence of divine blessing from God. For many people, especially African Americans, Grace’s success attracted attention and offered hope that social mobility and economic prosperity were possible. Moreover, Grace’s community was a social utopia where people of all backgrounds could worship together freely and equitably. In a world where outside forces limited individual freedoms and prohibited equal access to resources, Grace’s interpretation of Christianity challenged the social order through supernatural and real-world activities.

Like his contemporary, Father Divine, Daddy Grace offered believers structure, community, and economic support during uncertain times. During the Great Depression, Divine and Grace were able to provide for their members and secure wealth, an accomplishment that particularly incensed struggling whites. During their lives, Grace and Divine faced public controversy and legal challenges that were, at least in part, instigated by white fear. Paving the way for the Civil Rights movement, both Grace and Divine

disrupted the status quo and carved out religious and cultural space for challenging racial stratification.

At the time of Daddy Grace's death in 1960, there were nearly 100 United Houses of Prayer in America. Having built UHOP through his charismatic leadership, Grace's death resulted in a religious crisis. Concerns over who would take over leadership led to a small schism. Eventually the community recognized Walter McCollough as its new leader, and under his direction, UHOP turned its financial and community efforts toward civil rights and social justice. Church funds were invested in social assistance programs, subsidized housing, and scholarships. Without the drama that surrounded Grace and his controversial public persona, the United House of Prayer became more accepted as a part of mainstream Christianity. At his death in 1991, McCollough was replaced by S. C. Madison and, in 2008, Madison was succeeded by Bishop C. M. Bailey. Today UHOP boasts 131 American churches with approximately 1.5 million members. The church continues to invest in progressive social programs, providing homes for the elderly, scholarship funds, and community shelters.

*See also:* Black Churches; Evangelism

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## Davis, Angela

Angela Yvonne Davis (1944–) is a well-known lecturer and writer, a member of the central committee of the American Communist Party, a philosophy professor who was appointed to a presidential chair, and a political activist who consistently advocates the elimination of the whole panoply of oppressions that damage people in the prison systems. In the late 1960s, Davis became entangled in controversy as a result of her political affiliations and commitment to prison

reform. This controversy was reminiscent of the second red scare of the McCarthy era during the mid-to late 1950s after World War II.

The lessons of the McCarthy era indicate that the guarantees of the Bill of Rights are highly context dependent. Under the guise of preventing communist subversion, U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy (R, Wisconsin) and other politicians encroached on the freedoms of speech, assembly, and self-incrimination with little or no evidence. These endeavors ultimately cost an estimated 10,000 American citizens their jobs. During Chief Justice Earl Warren's tenure, the Supreme Court eventually made a distinction between mere advocacy and incitement, ruling that citizens can be punished for inflammatory rhetoric only if it urges immediate action to violate any laws.

Davis was indicted for crimes she did not commit and consequently became the third woman to be placed on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted List." She emerged from this controversy as an international symbol of courage and political repression. A jury of 1 Mexican-American and 11 whites acquitted her in 1972. Throughout the whole tragedy, the media did not succinctly explain that Davis was influenced by a history of "uplifting the race." Her political development was a product of the social and political reality in which she lived.

She was born on January 26, 1944 to her proud parents B. Frank and Sallye E. Davis, in Birmingham, the oldest of four children. Her parents were schools teachers. Because of his meager salary, her father left the teaching profession, became an automobile mechanic, and bought his own gas station. His actions empowered him to provide a financially comfortable lifestyle for his family in a middle-income neighborhood, initially zoned for whites, and eventually referred to as Dynamite Hill because the Ku Klux Klan frequently bombed it.

Angela's mother taught her to read, write, and do arithmetic before she started the first grade. She was regarded highly in her Girl Scout troop and was able to have dance, piano, and clarinet lessons. While she was a child, she became conscious of racism and social differences between the poor and rich. Her maternal grandmother instilled in her a sense of outrage over the peculiar institution of slavery. Davis had ample opportunity to observe the interplay and impact of classism, sexism, and racism in Birmingham, Alabama. Therefore she developed a lift-up-the-race mentality because her parents were activists well before she was

born; they instilled in her an appreciation for human beings and a desire for a more humane society.

During their college days, Angela's parents were members of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, which was concerned with public issues and addressing unjust activity. In 1931, they participated in the campaign to free the Scottsboro boys who were wrongly sentenced to the electric chair for the rape of two white girls. In elementary school, she attended civil rights demonstrations with her mother. In high school, Angela helped to organize interracial study groups that were disbanded by the police.

Davis often spent summers in Manhattan with her mother while she worked toward a master's degree at New York University. When Davis was 15, she earned a scholarship from the American Friends Service Committee to attend the Elizabeth Irwin High School, a progressive private

school in Greenwich Village. Many of this school's teachers were banned from working in the public schools because of their radical political ideology. During this time, Davis was introduced to socialist ideology and joined the Marxist-Leninist group, Advance.

This school was more challenging than Parker High School in Birmingham where Davis made straight "As." She had to struggle at Elizabeth Irwin High School to achieve the same grade point average. During this time, she lived with the family of William Howard Melish, a winner of the 1956 Stockholm Peace Prize and an Episcopalian minister. In 1961, she graduated and enrolled in Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts on a scholarship.

Davis was an excellent student, majoring in French literature at Brandeis. Her junior year was spent at the Sorbonne where she met and talked with students from Algeria, who were involved in the struggle against French colonialism. Their interpretations of discrimination in their homeland and the 1963 Birmingham church bombing killing of four girls Davis knew personally enhanced her commitment to social change.

In her senior year, she studied under the philosopher Herbert Marcuse. She was impressed with his analysis of modern industrial society of the West and with his suggestion that it was the individual's responsibility to resist and rebel against the oppression of capitalism. Davis wrote in her autobiography that she was particularly impressed with the idea that emancipation of the proletariat would set the foundation for the freedom of all oppressed groups in society.

The next year, 1965, Davis graduated magna cum laude from Brandeis with Phi Beta Kappa membership. From 1965 to 1967, she attended graduate school at the Institute for Social Research at the Johan Wolfgang von Goethe University in Frankfurt, West Germany. This graduate school was the most prestigious center in the world for the study of Marxism and German idealism. Professors Oskar Negt and Theodore Adorno were impressed with her scholarship. At this point, Davis spoke both French and German. In Frankfurt, she became a member of a socialist student group, which was opposed to the Vietnam War.

In 1967, Davis returned to the United States of America to complete the requirements for her master's degree and study again under Marcuse who was now at the University of California at San Diego. She joined several organizations, among them Dr. Maulana Karenga's group "US,"



*Civil rights activist Angela Davis addresses the press in 1969, in response to regents at the University of California, Los Angeles, who had banned her employment as a faculty member due to her political views. (AP Photo/David F. Smith)*

the Black Panthers, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and resumed her participation in the Civil Rights movement. That same year, she attended an "Economics and the Community" workshop sponsored by SNCC. At the work she met Franklin Alexander and his wife Kendra who were active in SNCC, the Black Panthers, and the Communist Party.

Franklin's sister Charlene was the leader of the Che-Lumumba All Black Collective of the Communist Party of Southern California. This organization was focused on the third world and away from the Soviet Union. In 1969, Davis moved to Los Angeles and joined Che-Lumumba because she was disappointed with the sexism in SNCC, the Black Panthers, and US.

Davis earned her masters degree, made her pilgrimage to Cuba in 1969, and completed her PhD comprehensive exams in 1970. She was hired by the University of California at Los Angeles as an assistant professor of philosophy in 1969. Davis taught courses in literature, philosophy, and political theory. William Tulio Divale, a graduate student in anthropology and a paid FBI informer, published a letter in the *UCLA Daily Bruin* announcing that there was a communist on the faculty. Eight days later, on July 9, 1969, Ed Montgomery published an article in the *San Francisco Examiner* naming Angela Davis as the person Divale alleged was a communist in the *Bruin*. At the insistence of Governor Ronald Reagan, the university regents dismissed Angela Davis from her post. This firing was done in spite of the fact that the students, faculty, President of the University Charles Hitch, and the UCLA Chancellor Charles Young supported her and academic freedom.

She challenged the dismissal in court and was reinstated because the dismissal violated her constitutional right to teach regardless of political affiliation. The UCLA administration continued to monitor her courses; students rated the instruction as excellent and unbiased. When the 1969–1970 academic year came to an end, the board refused to renew her contract because of her inflammatory speeches in the community and the fact that she had not completed the requirements for her doctorate.

Davis had become actively involved in the cause of the Soledad Brothers, George Jackson, John Clutchette, and Fleeta Drumgo, who had been treated harshly because they organized a Marxist group among the prisoners. She delivered speeches and led demonstrations calling for their parole.

On January 13, 1970, a mixture of 15 militant black and racist white inmates started fighting on the exercise yard at the Soledad Prison in Salinas, California. Prison guard O. G. Miller killed one white and three black convicts in order to stop the fight. The district attorney of Monterey County ruled Miller's action justifiable homicide and the grand jury confirmed this verdict. On that same day, prison guard John Mills was beaten and thrown over the jail's third tier railing, falling to his death. All 137 convicts in Y Wing where the murder occurred were confined to their cells. The prison authorities assumed that only the militants could have organized the revenge and blamed the Soledad Brothers.

Davis's public comments in defense of the Soledad Brothers drew anonymous threats on her life by mail and telephone. Therefore, she purchased several weapons and secured them in the Che-Lumumba Club headquarters. George's teenage brother Jonathan Jackson decided to be her bodyguard.

On August 7, 1970, Jonathan used these weapons to rescue James McClain who was on trial for assaulting a San Quentin guard from California's Marian County Courthouse. Jackson, McClain, two inmate witnesses (Russell Moore and William Christmas) took hostages: three jurors, Assistant District Attorney Gary Thomas, and Judge Harold Harley. Jonathan intended to trade the hostages for the Soledad Brothers. The effort was stymied by a barrage of shooting by the San Quentin guards, in defiance of the sheriff and his instructions not to shoot, which killed the judge, two prisoners, and Jonathan. A federal warrant was issued for Davis, because the weapons were registered in her name. She fled into hiding rather than surrender to the authorities.

The State of California charged her with kidnapping, conspiracy, and murder; the FBI placed her on the 10 most wanted fugitive list and undertook a massive two-month search for her. She was arrested in New York, extradited to California, and placed in jail without bail. An international "Free Angela" movement ensued. On February 23, 1972, a judge released Davis on \$102,000 bail, which was paid by singer Aretha Franklin. This position of separating Davis from her politics was taken by many middle- to upper-income African Americans. The subsequent trial received worldwide attention; Davis was acquitted of all charges.

Acting as co-counsel, Angela explained that she had been involved in the liberation struggle of minority groups, in the opposition to the Vietnam War, in the fight to raise

the status of women, and in the defense of academic freedom. She went underground because of fear. Her chief counsel Howard Moore, an Atlantan who defended the black power leaders Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael, argued that there was insufficient evidence to prove Angela Davis was part of the murder plans, as she was not at the scene of the murders.

Her defense committee was renamed the National Alliance against Racism and Political Repression. It has provided help in the defense of political cases, the majority of which have involved blacks and Hispanics. Davis has remained politically active. She has delivered speeches on behalf of the organization and led demonstration on numerous issues since 1972. In 1980 and 1984, she ran for vice president of the United States on the Communist Party ticket. Ronald Reagan and the California State Board of Regents voted in 1972 that she would never teach at a state-supported university because of her militant activities. The American Association of University Professor censured UCLA for lack of due process when it failed to renew her contract. Davis has taught at a number of California universities including UCLA, despite Ronald Reagan's admonitions. Today, Davis continues to write, give speeches and lectures, and is still an advocate of penal reform and an opponent of racism and classism in the criminal justice system. She is currently a professor of historical consciousness at UC Santa Cruz.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Soledad Brothers

*Marva Strickland-Hill*

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## **Deacons for Defense and Justice**

Founded in 1964 in Louisiana, the Deacons for Defense and Justice (DDJ) was an African American self-defense organization that protected civil rights activists against racist

terrorism. The history of the Deacons began in the small town of Jonesboro, Louisiana. In June 1964, organizers of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and local black activists launched nonviolent protest campaigns and voter registration drives to challenge the town's tradition of white supremacy. When white residents and the area's Ku Klux Klan responded with a wave of violence and intimidation, a group of armed black men began to guard the CORE office against white attacks. Although Jonesboro's police department deputized five black men, ostensibly to provide more security, the new police officers could do little to stop white violence. When Klansmen staged a nightly parade through Jonesboro's black neighborhood in late July 1964, members of the informal protective squad decided to establish an official defense unit to halt the Klan's reign of terror. This organization came to be known as the DDJ.

In the following months, the DDJ evolved into a highly sophisticated and disciplined protection agency. The Deacons consisted mostly of working-class military veterans who had to conform to strict membership criteria. The organization's president, a stockroom worker named Percy Lee Bradford, and co-founder Earnest Thomas, a mill worker and handyman, accepted only American citizens who were at least 21 years old. They preferred married men and registered voters. Applicants who had a reputation for being hot-tempered were quickly rejected. In this strictly defensive spirit, the new organization continued to guard the CORE headquarters and began to patrol the black neighborhood with rifles and shotguns. Armed men also guarded civil rights meetings and provided escorts for white and black activists who were canvassing in the dangerous areas of the surrounding Jackson parish. Walkie-talkies facilitated the coordination of guard duties. When Jonesboro's police department disbanded the group of black deputies in October 1964, the Deacons remained the only protection against white violence. Ultimately, the DDJ's activities put an end to Klan intimidation in Jonesboro and effectively stemmed the tide of white harassment.

The formation of another Deacons chapter in Bogalusa, Louisiana marked the beginning of the defense unit's rise to national fame and notoriety. Located 60 miles north of New Orleans, the city was a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan. As in Jonesboro, segregationists resorted to violent terror when, in January 1965, local blacks sought the assistance of CORE to challenge Jim Crow. In February, the necessity of protecting the black community and CORE's

field workers from the Klan's wrath prompted several men to organize a DDJ branch in Bogalusa. The Jonesboro Deacons assisted in the formation and, after receiving a charter from the state of Louisiana in March 1965, granted the new branch an official certificate of affiliation. Although protection was the key rationale behind its activities, the defense group also became an enormous source of pride among black activists. Defying the Southern myth of the submissive and contented Negro, the Deacons powerfully asserted blacks' dignity and their legitimate claim to the rights of American citizenship. Its members considered their armed actions an important affirmation of black manhood.

In April 1965, when a new round of nonviolent demonstrations exacerbated racial tensions in Bogalusa, a shootout between Klansmen and a group of Deacons catapulted the defense squad into the national spotlight. By that time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had launched a large-scale investigation into the activities of the defense squad. Although FBI agents and white journalists tended to regard the militant group as the harbinger of racial warfare, the Bogalusa Deacons worked side by side with CORE, complementing its nonviolent protest campaigns and ultimately enhancing its effectiveness in Bogalusa. In part, white concerns stemmed from the defense unit's strategy to exaggerate its actual strength to deter white terrorists. Media accounts put the Deacons' membership at several thousand in 59 chapters across the South, but the real number of members was never larger than several hundred, and the Deacons established only three official chapters in Louisiana. Despite its hyperbole, the Deacons did have expansionist ambitions and inspired the formation of loosely affiliated groups in 14 southern and 4 northern cities. Amidst the media frenzy about the defense unit, CORE was hard pressed to justify its alliance with the Deacons. CORE's leadership accepted self-defense but reassured the concerned media of the organization's unwavering commitment to nonviolence.

By 1968, however, as segregation and disfranchisement were on the wane and state and local authorities in the South finally appeared to take seriously their responsibility to protect civil rights protest, black self-defense groups such as the Deacons had outlived their usefulness. Until the summer of 1967, the Bogalusa Deacons continued to patrol the city's black neighborhood and guarded a last round of nonviolent demonstrations. By November 1967, the Bogalusa Deacons

no longer held official meetings. Four months later, the FBI ascertained that the Deacons and affiliated chapters had ceased their activities.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; CORE; Ku Klux Klan

Simon Wendt

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## Destination, Chicago, Illinois

Chicago, Illinois, has played a central role in attracting African American migrants from the South. In 1910, before the onset of the first wave of the Great Migration, fewer than 50,000 blacks lived in Chicago, roughly 2 percent of the city's population. Sixty years later a million blacks, the majority born in the South, resided there, nearly one-third of the total population. By 1970, more blacks called Chicago home than the state of Mississippi, a fact that dramatically illustrates its importance to the southern exodus.

In the late-19th and early-20th century, Chicago was a transportation, commercial, and manufacturing giant. As a result, heavy factories and other industries had an insatiable need for a cheap and reliable labor force. When World War I began in 1914 and halted the influx of immigrant laborers, Chicago's industrialists actively recruited southern black workers. This employment draw made the city a primary destination for black migrants racial repression and declining prospects in agriculture in the Jim Crow South. During World War I, an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 black migrants lived in Chicago. Of this total, the majority came from Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, and, above all, Mississippi. The Illinois Central Railroad Line ran directly from Chicago to New Orleans, helping connect the city to the South, and the *Chicago Defender*, a vigorous advocate of the southern exodus and widely circulated in the South,

helped link the image of Chicago with “the land of hope” in the psyche of many black southerners.

Life in Chicago was far from ideal. Newcomers were generally restricted to the least desirable work in processing and manufacturing jobs. Moreover, because of housing discrimination, they were concentrated in areas not located near the city’s plants and factories. They faced high rents and overcrowding, as apartments and tenements were subdivided into smaller units, many of which were known as kitchenettes. Established black residents could not ignore the changing composition of their community. Some were alarmed by the appearance and manners of the southern migrants, and they did not keep their opinions to themselves. Most black Chicagoans, however, followed the lead of the *Chicago Defender* and lent a supportive hand to the newcomers.

The migration triggered more competition between blacks and whites for housing, jobs, and access to public accommodations. Whites in neighborhoods adjacent to the growing Black Belt sought to stymie neighborhood integration through restrictive covenants and intimidation. At work, whites viewed blacks as rivals for jobs and as enemies of unions. These tensions culminated in July 1919 with the Chicago race riot when a black teenager drowned in Lake Michigan after whites had thrown rocks at him and four friends while their raft drifted near a beach claimed by whites. For five days, blacks and whites battled one another leaving 23 blacks and 15 whites dead and millions of dollars in property damage.

The downturn in Chicago’s economy in the post-World War I era slowed, but did not stop, the influx of black southerners. By 1921, the migration had resumed with great velocity. Nearly 100,000 newcomers arrived in Chicago over the next decade, and, by 1930, more than 225,000 African Americans lived in the city. Even as northern factories shed jobs and long lines formed at soup kitchens during the Great Depression, the population of black Chicago grew slightly. Between 1940 and 1970, growing mechanization of cotton production displaced hundreds of thousands of black workers in the South. Moreover, World War II labor shortages brought roughly 60,000 black migrants to the city. These newcomers had the advantage of established kinship networks in the city.

Many newcomers settled on the South Side; others moved into the growing West Side ghetto. The West Side had been home to roughly 25,000 blacks until 1940, but

as Jews and other ethnic groups left settlements for better housing elsewhere, black migrants packed into the available housing in East Garfield Park, North Lawndale, and Near West Side. By 1960, the West Side was home to more than 200,000 African Americans.

Chicago turned into an intensely segregated city in the early 20th century as ghettos maintained by white racism and local, state, and federal policies. Black newcomers as well as native black Chicagoans were excluded from the proliferating postwar suburban housing, and many found themselves living in high-rise public housing projects stacked within the confines of the ghetto. If blacks sought to live in white neighborhoods in the city or suburbs, they often faced white violence. By the early 1960s, big public housing projects like the Robert Taylor Homes, hailed by its first residents, had become increasingly warehouses of human misery. The low-skill and semiskilled manufacturing jobs that had done much to lure migrants and raise their standards of living were no longer available.

*See also:* Chicago Race Riot of 1919; Great Migration; Red Summer Race Riots; Urbanization

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## Destination, Cuba

The Republic of Cuba is an archipelago of islands in the Caribbean Sea, located approximately 90 miles south of the U.S. state of Florida. The only socialist republic in the Americas since the success of the 1959 revolution, Cuba also has the largest population of any Caribbean nation.

The history of Cuba cannot be separated from the development of the sugar plantation industry in the Americas. On October 7, 1886, Cuba became one of the last nations to formally abolish slavery. The late termination of the importation of slaves to the island is considered to be a key determinant of the strong African legacy in the country's cultural and national development. Prized by generations of U.S. leaders as "the Pearl of the Antilles" for both strategic and ideological reasons, Cuba has faced a long and complicated history of American overinvolvement in its national affairs.

The entangled issues of slavery and colonialism for centuries overshadowed all aspects of Cuban life. The island was quickly occupied and settled by Spaniards in 1511; it was used as a base for military conquest of the American mainland. It was only when Cuba developed from a naval way station and small-scale coffee producer into a sugar plantation colony, that the importation of African slaves in great number commenced, after the brutal decimation of the indigenous Indians. Furthermore, with the shipment of African slaves to Cuba continuing until long after slavery had been abolished in British and French colonies, cultural links between Cuba and Africa were maintained to a degree unparalleled in the region.

The Spanish system of slavery was heavily influenced by metropolitan norms and culture. Inasmuch as provenance was celebrated by the colonizers within associations known as *cabildos*, African slaves were given leave to form similar groups according to social custom and ancestral ties. This practice allowed the flourishing of African religious cult activity (such as *santería*, *palo*, and *lucumí*) that continues to enjoy widespread popularity to this day. Ties to individual ethnic and tribal origins were likewise conserved by the white slaveowners' custom of identifying and characterizing their captives according to place-of origin.

When Cuban-born Spaniards, known as Creoles, began to press for independence from Spain, their efforts at times intersected with slaves' struggles against bondage. Some Creoles saw independence and the abolition of slavery as desirable, but the authorities kept many of them loyal by warning of the "Africanization" of Cuba that would result.

The outstanding military career of Antonio Maceo, a Cuban of mixed race, known as *El Bronce Titan* (the Bronze Titan), began with the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1868. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes emancipated the slave population, and soon black soldiers outnumbered

white troops in the revolutionary armies. Before long, the real objectives of Maceo, then second-in command of the independence army, became the subject of suspicion. He was charged with harboring designs for black rule, rumors that persisted until his death in battle in 1896. In fact, Maceo refused to recognize the Pact of Zanjón, which ended the first revolutionary war, also called the Ten Years War. He and other *mambi* (independence) officers vowed to continue fighting until complete independence for Cuba and the universal abolition of slavery had been achieved. The pact meanwhile offered liberty only for slaves who had fought in the independence armies. This event is known as *La Protesta de Baraguá* (the Protest of Baraguá).

During the era of the independence struggles against Spain, the concept of "racelessness" was constructed by Cuban intellectuals who sought to transmute the inherent violence of a socially stratified plantation society into the all-embracing concept of Cubanness (*cubanidad*). White and nonwhite intellectual elites asserted that the struggle against Spain had produced a new kind of individual and a new kind of collectivity. The experience of war, it was claimed, had united black and white into nothing more or less than Cuban. Jose Martí, often described as the "Apostle" of Cuban independence, went even further by denying the existence of races. Popular nationalist readings of Martí's ideals of racial fraternity and social unity have inspired all Cuban independence struggles since this time. Accordingly, independent black Cuban mobilization has without exception been strongly condemned, beginning with the brutal crushing of the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC) rebellion in 1912.

After independence from Spain, U.S. dominance was predicated on the belief that racial inferiority rendered Cubans incapable of self-government. Americans considered Cuba to be a black nation not only because of the skin color of a large percentage of its population, but also because of the strong African influence in its culture, and the island's history as a colonial possession. Thus, beginning in the 1890s, the movement to form a new Cuban identity simultaneously responded to the need to challenge U.S. racist stereotypes that associated blackness with debasement.

By 1930, this new national paradigm celebrated black Cubans' cultural contributions and claimed *mestizaje* (racial mixing) as the very essence of Cubanness. In the image of similar movements in the United States (the Harlem Renaissance) and France (*Négritude*), black culture in



Cuba was celebrated by artists and intellectuals responding to the rallying call of “Afrocubanismo.” Nicolas Guillen first made mention of “Cuban color” in the prologue to his 1931 collection of poems *Sóngoro Cosongo*. Later, in a speech given at the University of Havana on November 28, 1939, white Cuban anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz, one of the guiding lights of Afrocubanismo, elucidated the distinct quality of Cubanness, which he likened to the national dish—*el ajíaco*—a simmering stew that reduces separate ingredients until each becomes indistinguishable from the other.

As the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado collapsed in September 1933, a wave of mass protests took hold across the island. In the countryside of the eastern provinces, one sugar mill after another was seized by laborers demanding an improvement to appalling working conditions. Many were migrants from Jamaica and Haiti, often employed by American-owned companies. These African-Caribbean workers would soon become the first victims of the newly installed anti-imperialist government of Dr. Ramón Grau San Martín. As one of a series of nationalization measures, the short-lived revolutionary administration made it illegal for a business to employ more foreign nationals than Cubans; at least 50 percent of the workforce had to be native-born. Soon tens of thousands of Haitians were cruelly deported, while Jamaicans, enjoying a slightly higher social status and more vigorous diplomatic representation, more successfully withstood the tide of discrimination and economic adversity.

Until this period, the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) had no prior experience with the rural populations and very little contact with black labor. The strikes that threatened to cripple the sugar industry between 1930 and 1933, however, focused the class struggle in the countryside, and soon the PCC were striving to organize and unite the plantation workforce. Most of the success the communists enjoyed was among skilled workers in the *ingenios* (mills), where blacks and whites were organized across racial and ethnic lines. In December 1932, the organization of labor in the rural districts culminated in the formation of the National Union of Sugar Workers (SNOIA), initiating the link in Cuban politics between the struggle for racial equality and proletarian ideology. Alone among Cuba’s political parties the PCC fought against segregation and racial discrimination. Cuban communists also mounted campaigns against racism in the United States, including raising awareness of

the Scottsboro Boys case. The party also offered black Cubans their first experience of political leadership.

On January 1, 1959 Fidel Castro’s July 26th Movement triumphantly heralded a new chapter in Cuban history, a day after the harsh reign of General Fulgencio Batista concluded with his hasty flight from the island. The revolution was ushered in on a nationalistic wave of hope for an end to the ills of hegemonic domination: corruption, poverty, illiteracy, bad housing, and discrimination.

Before the revolution black and *mestizo* (mixed-race) Cubans were among the most economically-disadvantaged, typically receiving lower wages than whites. The first and second Agrarian Reform Laws improved the lot of black farmers and agricultural workers, and the Urban Reform Law guaranteed the right to decent housing for black Cubans who lived in the cities. However, a twin assault from the literacy campaign and educational reform policies dealt the most deadly blows to the institutionalized racism that had impoverished so many. Antiracism was instrumental in strengthening the revolutionary government and discrediting the opposition. As early as September 1959, a U.S. State Department report considered support from black Cubans crucial to the survival of the revolutionary government.

From the early days of the revolution Fidel Castro reached out to black America for support against the common enemy of U.S. imperialism. If Cuba had succeeded in liberating itself from U.S. hegemonic control then it could obviously serve as a powerful role model for black emancipation in the North. Joe Louis was engaged to spearhead a public relations campaign to encourage black tourism to ‘racism-free’ Cuba, which was met with mild interest. Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jr., an ardent early supporter of the revolution, remained loyal until signs of the revolution’s commitment to socialism proved hard to ignore. Poet Amiri Baraka (at the time Leroi Jones) credits his 1960 visit to Cuba for an increased racial and third-world consciousness.

Indeed, African American support for the Cuban Revolution has a long and intricate history. For if it is true that in North America blacks comprise the only group consistently to identify with the revolution’s anti-imperialist goals, some of the most scathing denunciations of Cuba’s racial policies came from black nationalists such as Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver. Harlem residents may still in some quarters cherish the memory of Fidel Castro and the

Cuban delegation to the United Nations during their week-long stay at the Hotel Theresa in September 1960, when Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, Egyptian president Gamal Nasser, and Russia's Nikita Khrushchev paid court to the revolutionaries. While Assata Shakur and other members of the Black Panther Party found refuge from U.S. judicial persecution on the island. However African Americans have at times been challenged to reconcile their own socially-alienated experience of race, with the culturally integrated racial attitudes of black and white Cubans.

Links between black Cubans and African Americans are of long-standing, and have particularly flourished in the areas of music and sport. Cuban teams competed against the segregated teams of the American Black baseball league, and fans were well informed about Cuban players through the sports columns of black newspapers. Poets, musicians and other artists routinely collaborated, and mutually supported each others' work. The Afro-Cuban style of jazz grew out of the musical partnership of Mario Bauzá and Dizzy Gillespie, which, under the influence of Charlie Parker, branched out into the Cubop movement.

Despite the austerities imposed by the continuing U.S. blockade, and the absence of Soviet support since 1990, Havana continues to pursue an active internationalist foreign policy. The revolutionary government's early interest in Africa was spearheaded by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who made an extended tour of the continent between December 1964 and March 1965. Guevara made contact with potential allies in, among other nations, Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Congo-Brazzaville. Fidel Castro embarked upon his own African tour in the early 1970s, and in April 1976 he declared Cuba a "Latin-African" nation.

From the 1960s Cuba sent military advisers to support African revolutionary movements and governments in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mozambique and South Yemen. In the 1970s Cuban troops served in Angola and in the Horn of Africa.

After the Organisation of American States (OAS) lifted its ban on member states' interaction with Cuba in 1975, Cuba established diplomatic relations with several newly independent countries in the Caribbean, and developed close relations with Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. In recent times Cuba has forged closer ties with CARICOM countries. Cuban doctors, educators and engineers have served in the Caribbean and Africa.

*See also:* Baraka, Amiri; Black Nationalism; Black Panther Party; Castro, Fidel; Harlem Renaissance; Negritude; Shakur, Assata; Williams, Robert F.; X, Malcolm

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## Destination, Detroit, Michigan

During the phase of African American history, typically referred to as the Great Migration, the black population of Detroit, Michigan increased from less than 6,000 in 1910 to more than 40,000 a decade later in 1920, a percentage increase of 600 percent. During World War I and the decades that followed, Detroit was an extremely popular destination for refugees from the South. Beginning in 1915, approximately 1,000 African Americans arrived monthly from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and other Southern states. The influx in 1915 was largely due to the decision by Henry Ford to pay employees, including African Americans, of Ford Motor Company in Detroit the unprecedented amount of \$5 per day. By 1916, the rapidly expanding defense industries created more demand

for labor and served as additional inducement for African Americans looking for better lives in the North.

A brief recession in 1920–1921 served as a slight discouragement to the numerous migrants in the city as some struggled to find gainful employment. With a reduction in the amount of foreign immigration, however, the need for African American migrants from the South grew even during the recession. In 1923 alone, about 14,000 African Americans arrived in Detroit. By 1930, at the onset of the Great Depression, Detroit had a black population of 120,066, an astounding increase from the 1910 total of less than 6,000.

In addition to the “pull” factors of jobs in the automobile and defense industries, the Great Migration was also a product of a number of forces that actively pushed African Americans from the South. The suffocating combination of sharecropping, Jim Crow, disfranchisement, and lynching—the various dimensions of the Black Nadir—provided more than enough incentive for millions of African Americans to relocate to the North in the period between 1910 and 1940. Far from the “Promised Land” of their collective hopes and dreams, however, the North was rife with significant problems as epitomized by the 1919 Chicago race riot. Although Detroit did not witness a large-scale race riot until 1943, the massive influx of African Americans led to occasional violent interactions with other emigrant and native-born groups vying for jobs.

Segregated living patterns was the principal problem faced by early African American migrants. Like practically all northern cities, Detroit had a long tradition of segregated housing. Restrictive covenants, redlining, and other mechanisms were used to maintain segregated communities. During the World War I era, only 20 percent of all African Americans purchased homes in Detroit. The majority of the migrants were limited to dilapidated tenements in areas customarily set aside for African Americans. Despite poor housing, high unemployment, and social marginalization, many African Americans originating from the South would still view Detroit and other northern cities as far superior to the daily hostilities they faced in southern states. In this instance, African Americans voted with their feet and the influx of southerners into Detroit continued throughout much of the 20th century. In the aftermath of the 1967 Detroit riot, whites fled to the suburbs in large numbers, leaving behind a black numerical majority in Detroit and making it one of many so-called Chocolate Cities.

*See also:* Black Nadir; Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1943; Great Migration; Muhammad, Elijah

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## Destination, Harlem, New York

Located in Upper Manhattan, Harlem has been a destination for non-native Americans since 1658. Named Nieuw Haarlem by the Dutch in honor of the Dutch city of Haarlem, Harlem has been variously a magnet for farmers, aristocrats, immigrants, and African Americans. During the 1920s, it was the site of a great blossoming of African American culture—the Harlem Renaissance. It has been the home to many African American luminaries such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Walter White, Roy Wilkins, Thurgood Marshall, and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as many other artists, musicians, and writers.

The Dutch, the English, and post-Revolutionary Americans farmed the land on the eastern side of Harlem and built country estates. Then around 1830, when the rich farmland became depleted, the area became a haven for those seeking cheap housing, including immigrants who built shantytowns. But as transportation to Harlem improved (an elevated railroad was built between 1878 and 1881; the subway was soon to come), developers began to meet the growing demand for housing in Manhattan by building row houses, tenements, and luxury apartments in Harlem. In fact, many of the buildings in Harlem today were built between 1870 and 1910.

Development led to speculation and by 1904, prices became seriously inflated. Owners were finding it difficult to find tenants able to pay the high rent required to make a profit. As a result, banks were foreclosing on property

owners. In the midst of this situation, black real estate manager Philip Payton Jr. saw an opportunity. He was able to lease buildings from white owners and then rent them at 10 percent above the deflated price to African Americans. Experiencing immediate success, he soon created the African-American Realty Company. Other black entrepreneurs, such as John E. Nail and Henry C. Parker, as well as black churches (like St. Philip's Church), were also able to capitalize on property in Harlem, and in doing so they met a growing demand by African Americans for decent housing.

Initially, this demand for new housing came from African Americans living in other parts of Manhattan. In 1900, most of the black population in Manhattan was located in the midtown neighborhoods known as Hell's Kitchen, the Tenderloin, and San Juan Hill. But many of the residents in these areas were displaced by the building of Pennsylvania Station and by the expansion of commercial enterprises in the area. Beginning in about 1904, Harlem offered even better housing than they had had. Soon, though, this demand came from outside Manhattan as well.

Of prime importance was the black migration from the South. Usually associated with World War I, this migration had, in fact, already begun before the war, as blacks moved to the North to avoid violence, oppression, and lack of opportunity. By 1910, 61 percent of blacks in Manhattan were from the South. Added to this were migrations from the British West Indies, Latin America, French West Indies, and the American Virgin Islands (in 1925, the foreign-born blacks in Harlem were estimated to number 35,000).

This was a cultural migration as well. Many black churches from other parts of Manhattan, such as the Abyssinian Baptist Church, moved there as well as the local offices of the NAACP and the Urban League. In addition, black writers, intellectuals, musicians, painters, sculptors, poets, and novelists were drawn to Harlem, especially during the 1920s. Writers like James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay, as well as painters like Aaron Douglass and sculptors like Sargent Johnson made Harlem their home. And jazz flourished in Harlem at such clubs as the Savoy, where Duke Ellington played and Ella Fitzgerald sang, and Minton's Playhouse, which is often considered the birthplace of Bebop and the meeting place for musicians like Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie Parker. It was from Harlem that the Silent March of 1917—in protest for the murders of African

Americans during the East St. Louis race riot—emanated. Social activist W. E. B. Du Bois, who helped to found the NAACP and who founded and edited *Crisis* magazine—the official magazine of the NAACP—lived and wrote in Harlem.

Writing in 1925, James Weldon Johnson called Harlem the “greatest Negro city in the world.” It has had its ups and downs since then (it has been a famous black neighborhood for nearly a century), and the hopes of many were not always realized. The Great Depression had its effect on Harlem as it did on other parts of the country. And Alain Locke, a professor of philosophy at Howard University, also writing in 1925, prematurely called Harlem “another statue of liberty.” In truth, there were many more social battles yet to be fought in the Civil Rights movement before liberty could be considered. Nevertheless, Harlem famously exemplifies the shift from a rural to an urban way of life, and it remains a historic symbol of cultural excellence.

*See also:* Du Bois; W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Great Migration; Harlem Renaissance; Urbanization

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## Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1943

The Detroit Riot of 1943 was one of the biggest and bloodiest race riots in the history of the United States. It was a culminating event in the early Civil Rights movement, as it raised the American consciousness about the explosive nature of growing racial tensions fueled by racial inequalities in this thriving northern metropolis. In the 1940s Detroit

experienced a growth spurge burgeoned by the need for workers in the defense industry. The growing economic base attracted both black and white workers, leading to a rapid increase in the population and putting a strain on housing, transportation, education, recreation facilities, and most portentously, race relations.

By 1943, the number of blacks in Detroit had doubled, and racial tensions in the city increased accordingly. On June 20, more than 1,000 Detroiters gathered on Belle Isle, one of Detroit's largest parks. Two young black men who had become angry as a result of their expulsion from Eastwood Park five days previously, traveled to Belle Isle to try to even the score. Their anger grew as police conducted searches of the cars of blacks crossing to Belle Isle but did not search cars driven by whites. In *Harper's Magazine*, a record of the riot states that Leo Tipton, a black man, announced in a nightclub that whites had thrown a black woman and her baby off the Belle Isle Park Bridge. Tipton urged the nightclub customers to assist in the fighting.

A number of sources report that another rumor simultaneously circulated in the white community that blacks

had murdered and raped a white woman on the Belle Isle Park Bridge. Fights broke out between blacks and whites and some erupted on the bridge connecting Belle Isle to Southeast Detroit. Rumors of a race war roused whites and blacks, who both took to the streets near Belle Isle and in the downtown area. The mixed race mob attacked passersby, streetcars, and property. Blacks in Paradise Valley, also known as the Black Bottom, looted white-owned shops; whites overturned and burned cars of black drivers on Woodward Avenue. Breaking and entering occurred involving both black and white merchants. Differing opinions arose regarding the Detroit police and their handling of the rioters. Blacks saw it as police brutality and racist attacks, whereas whites characterized it as justifiable.

The riot came to an end once Mayor Edward Jeffries Jr. and Governor Harry Kelly asked President Roosevelt for help. In response, federal troops in armored cars and jeeps with automatic weapons drove down Woodward Avenue. The appearance of the troops with their overwhelming firepower succeeded in dispersing the mobs. The aftermath of the Detroit Riots that lasted for three days included the



*A female passenger climbs out of the rear window of a tram in Detroit, Michigan, on June 21, 1943, after a mob halted the car in an effort to assault the black passengers on board during the race riots. (Library of Congress)*

following statistics: 34 persons were killed (25 blacks and 9 whites), 765 suffered injuries that required hospital treatment, 1,893 persons were arrested, an estimated \$2 million in property damage was due to vandalism, looting, and fire; a million hours of labor was lost totaling \$115,000 a day for federal and state troops.

Depending on the vantage point, a number of theories emerged regarding those who held the greatest responsibility for the riots. The media espoused the belief, through photos, nightly news reports, and news articles, that those most responsible were angry black males. Many of the locals blamed southern newcomers, ethnic groups, communists, and hate groups. The federal government endorsed a fact-finding committee that produced an 8,500-word, fact-finding committee appraisal, known as the *Dowling Report*. The *Dowling Report* placed the blame on black hoodlums and identified whites as victims who reacted with violence only as a reaction to black bloodshed.

In reality those who rioted included the following groups:

1. Black men: The majority were married, stable, older, and acted out during the riots to protect themselves and their families. They acted as individuals rather than groups within the ghetto. Most were not Detroit natives but had lived there for five years or more before the riot and worked in the unskilled positions of industrial labor.
2. Black women: Many were single, unemployed or holding low-paying servile jobs. The offense they were most often convicted of was looting.
3. Black youth: They were mainly male, younger than white juveniles, and engaged more in felonies involving theft, breaking and entering, looting, carrying concealed weapons, assaulting someone, or destroying property inside their own neighborhoods.
4. White men: These men held skilled and semiskilled jobs in the factories, traveled far from home to riot, were younger than their black counterparts, were from Michigan, rioted in groups rather than as individuals, represented various class, ethnic, and religious communities, and battled for white dominance in the city.
5. White youth: They were older than their black counterparts and, along with black youth, were largely responsible for igniting the riot on Belle Isle and spreading it through Paradise Valley and beyond.

*See also:* Destination, Detroit, Michigan; Great Migration

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## Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1967

In what became the deadliest urban disturbance during the 1960s, the Detroit riot of July 23–27, 1967, resulted in 43 deaths, 1,200 injuries, more than 7,000 arrests, and in excess of \$300 million in damaged property. Ongoing violence, looting, arson, and gun battles convulsed the city and, for the first time in a quarter-century, the U.S. Army had to be used to contain civil strife.

The precipitating event leading to the violence occurred before 4 A.M. on July 23 when Detroit police raided an after-hours and illegal drinking club, referred to locally as a "blind pig," on 12th Street. A blind pig operated in open violation of city ordinances, which prohibited the sale of alcohol at bars after midnight. When the police arrived, they expected to encounter a small crowd. To their surprise, this particular blind pig had close to 80 people who were attending the celebration of two returning African American soldiers from the Vietnam War. Typically in raids on blind pigs, Detroit police would have simply arrested the proprietors and a handful of customers caught with illicit drugs. In this instance, they arrested all 73 African American patrons and the bartender. Rumors quickly spread that some of those arrested had been beaten by police officers. Given the number of individuals arrested, it took about a half-hour before police vans arrived and, in the interim, a small crowd of local residents began to gather outside the blind pig.

Rumors of police brutality, coupled with the political volatility of the times and the depressed local economy, explains, in part, the events that followed. As the police vans departed with the arrested partygoers, the crowd that formed outside the bar began throwing rocks and bricks into store windows, and about 50 people began looting

a clothing store. With no police in sight, the looting spread to other nearby stores and, within an hour, dozens of stores in a 16-block radius were looted and set on fire. Within the next 24 hours, African Americans and whites in the thousands were roaming the streets, moving from Detroit's West Side to the East Side neighborhoods and into downtown. The rioters moved quickly along large sections of Grand River and Woodward Avenues and 12th Street in the downtown area of Detroit and ranged as far as seven miles toward the outer edge of the city.

In an attempt to prevent the riot from spreading further, Governor Hugh Romney and Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh acted quickly to call up 600 Detroit police, 800 state troopers, and 1,200 National Guardsmen to seal off large areas of the city and to disperse the rioters. These actions were not sufficient and the violence of the riot intensified. By Monday, July 24, the first three fatalities of the riot occurred. All three were white. One was beaten to death by a group of African American youths while protecting his store. Another was killed by a stray bullet. The third was a rioter killed by a storeowner. Ironically, the vast majority of those killed during the five full days of rioting were African American, and many of their deaths are attributed to the police and National Guard.

When it became clear that local and state law enforcement resources were insufficient, Governor Romney requested federal assistance from U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Clark informed Romney that before federal troops could be sent, the governor had to declare that a civil insurrection was taking place. Romney balked at this, fearing that insurance companies would not compensate residents of Detroit for their property losses if the cause was insurrection. When the situation in the city became progressively worse, President Lyndon Baines Johnson stepped in and sent Army paratroopers from the 101st Airborne.

While the paratroopers assisted in restoring order to the city, a number of disturbing incidents occurred that further enraged African American residents in Detroit. In one incident, National Guardsmen fired .50-caliber machine gun rounds into an apartment building, killing a four-year-old girl. In a more publicized case, three unarmed African American teenagers—Aubrey Pollard, Fred Temple, and Carl Cooper—were shot and killed at Algiers Motel by three Detroit police officers. The three officers were later exonerated by an all-white jury, and two of them returned to the police force by 1971.

By Thursday, July 27, the riot was effectively over and federal paratroopers were withdrawn. President Johnson appointed a Special Advisor Commission on Civil Disorders on July 27, 1967 to help discern the origins of the Detroit riot and other civil disturbances occurring during the so-called long, hot summer of 1967. Pointing to economic disparities and despair in urban “ghettoes,” the commission headed by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner concluded that America was sharply divided into two societies—one white, one black—which were separate and increasingly unequal. In the aftermath of the riot, white flight to the suburbs of Detroit accelerated at an alarming rate to the point that the city had a majority African American population by the early 1970s. The removal of whites to Detroit's suburbs and the creation of an impoverished and black urban core provided additional proof of the Kerner Commission's assessments of the growing economic and even spatial divides in the United States. *See also:* Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kerner Commission Report; League of Revolutionary Black Workers; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Vietnam War (Black Participation in)

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## Diallo, Amadou

Amadou Bailo Diallo (1975–1999) was a 23-year-old immigrant from Guinea living in the Bronx. On the evening of February 4, 1999, on his way home from dinner, Diallo was shot and killed by four New York City police officers. The shooting took place at Diallo's apartment at 1157 Wheeler Avenue. Diallo was allegedly unarmed and innocent of committing any crime. Nonetheless, he was pursued by officers dressed in civilian clothing—Sean Carroll, Richard Murphy, Edward McMellon and Kenneth Boss—when they mistook him for a rapist who the police were looking for at

the time. Afraid of the men, Diallo ran to the door of his apartment and reached into his coat to grab his wallet. The officers, who believed him to be reaching for a gun, opened fire. A total of 41 rounds were fired by the four officers, 19 of which were lodged in Diallo's body.

Diallo's mother, Kadiatou Diallo, and his stepfather, Sankarella Diallo, filed a \$61,000,000 (\$20 million plus \$1 million for each shot fired) lawsuit against the City of New York and the four officers, claiming negligence, wrongful death, racial profiling, and myriad other violations of Amadou Diallo's civil rights. After years battling in court, they accepted a \$3,000,000 settlement. Kadiatou Diallo has since published a novel entitled: *My Heart Will Cross This Ocean: My Story, My Son, Amadou* with the collaboration of Craig Wolff.

Amadou Diallo was born in 1975 in Sinoe, Liberia. As a youth, Amadou traveled and lived with his family in many parts of the world, including Togo, Guinea, Bangkok, and Singapore. Diallo was a devout Muslim and a talented student. By the time he arrived in the United States in 1996, with the intention of studying computer science, he had already attended The French International School, London's Cambridge University, and The British Consulate College in Thailand. Trying to establish himself in New York, he worked as a delivery person and also sold videotapes, gloves, and socks on a street corner in Manhattan. After the shooting, Diallo's body was returned to Guinea where he was laid to rest in the village of Hollande Bourou, located in the Fouta Djallon region.

Diallo's death and subsequent trial caused a large amount of controversy throughout the nation. These events sparked discussions of racial profiling and discrimination, as well as a series of protests. Diallo's death also revealed the substantial presence of West African immigrants in New York City (in 1999, there were approximately 50,000). Shortly after Amadou's death in 1999, his father, Sakou A. Diallo, founded The Amadou Diallo Educational, Humanitarian & Charity Foundation. The foundation aims to memorialize Diallo's life by aiding educational and humanitarian organizations that meant a great deal to Amadou. The foundation also supports organizations dedicated to putting a stop to police beatings and racial profiling.

*See also:* Racial Profiling

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## Disfranchisement

The term “disfranchisement” may refer to any systematic removal and denial of the right to vote; here it refers to the aggressive movement by southern states to eliminate African American political participation accompanied the rise of segregation between the late 1880s and the beginning of the 20th century. Legislatures throughout the region enacted statutory measures and reformed state constitutions with provisions designed to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment guarantee of universal manhood suffrage. The sum of these measures, from poll taxes to literacy tests and property requirements, amounted to a near complete purge of African Americans and a substantial number of poor whites from voting rolls, inaugurating a new era in southern political history marked by one-party domination and social conservatism that lasted into the 1940s.

Early accounts have suggested that these restrictive laws and provisions merely legalized what had already been accomplished through fraud, intimidation, and coercion immediately after the end of Republican rule in 1877. But “legal disfranchisement” actually constituted a significant departure from an era of dynamic African American electoral participation after Reconstruction. Throughout the South, blacks had used a variety of strategies to win office and gain local influence. Ranging from fusion with local Democrats to continual support for Republican and aggressive third-party movements, this well-organized black political activity provoked concerns among southern whites over what the latter called “Negro domination.” The return to Republican control of the White House and Congress by 1888, along with the rise of the Populist movement of agrarian reformers—African American and white—against planter elites and industrialist classes, further incited fears that white Democratic leaders could no longer control the



black vote by either courting it or suppressing it through extralegal or statutory means. The only answer, they believed, was a constitutional reform movement that took blacks “out of politics” altogether.

Beginning in the 1880s, several southern states had passed laws that tightened registration regulations and/or reformed the ballot system. Justified as mainly “electoral reforms” to prevent fraud, such regulations disproportionately affected the poor, illiterate working classes that usually threatened Democratic dominance. The “secret ballot,” for instance, while cutting down on intimidation and corruption, also effectively disfranchised those unable to read the new ballots, which usually contained a lengthy list of candidates from all parties. Combined with regulations calling for greater accuracy in age, place of birth, and occupation on registration forms, such statutory measures in Tennessee, North Carolina, and other states effectively restricted the ballot to a shrinking number of “desirable” voters.

But in 1890, Mississippi set the standard of “legal disfranchisement” when it convened a new constitutional convention to remove this last vestige of Reconstruction. Although white support was far from unanimous, delegates ratified a new constitution that placed the power to enfranchise entirely in the hands of state-appointed officials. Such a move forestalled potential voters’ ability to seek registration through local or federal channels. In addition to property and educational requirements, the constitution also contained several supposedly “color blind” provisions. Potential voters had to live in the state for two years and the election district for one year. They also had to prove payment of a \$2 poll tax for the previous two years. To these regulations, the convention added a so-called “understanding clause,” in which a registrant had to either read a section of the state constitution or to understand what was read to him by offering a “reasonable interpretation thereof.”

Reducing the number of eligible black voters from 190,000 to 8,615 by 1892, the “Mississippi Plan” became the model for disfranchisement throughout the South. South Carolina followed suit in 1895 with a similar constitution. Other states, facing more substantial populist revolts that undermined white unity until the end of the decade, eventually passed their own measures once this agrarian challenge dissipated. Between 1898 and 1908, Louisiana, Alabama, and Virginia also rewrote constitutions while North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia amended existing ones. All southern states followed a general pattern, but

some variations did exist depending on the intended targets of disfranchisement. Louisiana, for instance, enacted a “grandfather clause” that maintained the franchise for anyone who was either an eligible voter or was the son or grandson of one on January 1, 1867. Like the “understanding clause” test that could be applied with varying degrees of rigor at the registrar’s discretion, such measures offered a loophole for poor, illiterate whites. Even if African Americans managed to meet these requirements, the white primary became a final obstacle. Since disfranchisement decimated support for Republican and third-party movements by the 1900s, local regulations limiting the Democratic primary to whites effectively excluded even registered voters from participating in what had become the only true election.

Despite such deliberate efforts to target the black vote, resistance to the movement was scarce. Northern Republicans, long since abandoning the “equal rights” ideals of Radical Reconstruction to embrace a gospel of economic prosperity and political efficiency, largely ignored the measures. Throughout the 1890s, Congress defeated attempts to establish federal control over elections and repealed existing regulations. Yet nothing seemed to demonstrate a rising national mistrust of government by “the masses” more than the 1898 *Williams v. Mississippi* decision, in which the Supreme Court upheld the state constitution’s franchise restrictions.

Poor white farmers, who had previously benefited from black support, also largely acquiesced to disfranchisement. White populist ties to African American agrarian activists were often tenuous, and, as some historians have argued, poor whites essentially bought into Democratic elites’ rhetoric of racial antagonism. As the latter—representing the Black Belt region of influential planters—and their allies moved to solidify their political power, they often targeted white farmers for disfranchisement as well. This would suggest that the movement was often a partisan endeavor rather than one motivated by race. Other historians, however, have suggested that poor whites themselves actually propelled the movement through their belief that the black vote bred the corruption that ensured elite Democrats’ dominance. Populist leaders like Tom Watson of Georgia, for instance, not only converted to the necessities of disfranchisement, but also became one of the most ardent propagators of “Negrophobia” by the 1900s. Thus, disfranchisement is often seen as part of a larger wave of

white supremacy, marked by the rise of Jim Crow and the increase of violence against African Americans, throughout the South in the 1890s.

Whatever the identity and motivation of the disfranchisers, response by the movement's victims also varied. Some African Americans sought to mobilize against ratification of the new constitutions. But, given the climate of intimidation in the late 19th century South, most hoped to simply mitigate the results of these provisions by calling for equal application of franchise restriction to blacks and whites alike. The most famous moment of accommodation to the new political order, however, came in 1895 when Booker T. Washington, in a speech to the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, argued that African Americans could trade their political aspirations and social integration for an equal share in the economic progress of the South. Although many black leaders excoriated what became known as the "Atlanta Compromise," the realities of disfranchisement and the rise of segregation effectively transformed the political and social world that southern blacks inhabited. It also gave rise to the emergence of new forms of political participation. For instance, African American women, through their rising participation in social agencies established during the Progressive Era, ensured that black protest would not fall silent in the early decades of the 20th century.

See also: Fifteenth Amendment; Grandfather Clause; Jim Crow; Voting Rights Act of 1965; Washington, Booker T.; White Primaries

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## Double V Campaign

In February 1942, the African American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* began the "Double V" campaign to promote victory against the Axis abroad and victory against racism and discrimination at home. In the months preceding the outbreak of war, and particularly after the United States entered World War II, the black press had been repeatedly criticized for its lack of sufficient patriotism—sometimes outright disloyalty—and African Americans had demonstrated a noticeable apathy toward the war effort. To counter this, the *Courier's* Double V campaign encouraged African Americans to support the war effort but not to abandon their struggle for greater civil rights. To this end, the Double V campaign succeeded: it rallied African American support for national defense, and it kept the idea of civil rights front and center. Yet the *Courier's* campaign, in the end, did not change the reality of the discrimination against, and exclusion of, blacks in American society.

The *Pittsburgh Courier* drew its inspiration for the Double V campaign from a letter by James G. Thompson of Wichita, Kansas, published in the issue of January 31, 1942. Thompson, in his letter titled "Should I Sacrifice to Live 'Half American?,'" advocated for a "double VV" for a dual victory over enemies to the country and enemies—opposed to equality, justice, and democracy—at home. In its next issue, on February 7, the *Courier* displayed Double V drawings emphasizing the theme "Democracy, At Home, Abroad." The paper announced the Double V campaign the next week, declaring its support for the defeat of totalitarianism abroad and inequality at home.

African Americans faced discrimination in every aspect of society, but their exclusion from the war effort, particularly from national defense industries, particularly stung, especially since the United States government promoted the war as being for the preservation of democracy. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's stated goals of the war, the Four Freedoms, did nothing to alleviate the racism and discrimination that African Americans faced. The disjunction

between the rhetoric and the practice of liberty and democracy in the United States only fostered black apathy toward the war effort. Indeed, only a couple of weeks before the Thompson letter appeared in print, the *Courier* reported on the lukewarm support for the war among African Americans. Although many African Americans, and certainly those in the black press, accepted the premise that the war should be vigorously prosecuted abroad, they also believed that the same should apply for the struggle for black civil rights. The *Courier*'s Double V campaign captured that belief in bold print.

Among all of the black weekly newspapers in the United States during World War II, the *Pittsburgh Courier* had the largest circulation at 350,000, far outpacing the *Chicago Defender* whose circulation reached 230,000. The influence and circulation of the black press reached greater proportions during the war than at anytime in its history, and other black newspapers across the United States—the *Chicago Defender* and *Amsterdam Star-News* among others—embraced the Double V, making the *Courier*'s campaign a national effort. The Double V became a ubiquitous symbol in the pages of many black newspapers, and Double V clubs formed across the nation. African American celebrities of the time, such as Marian Anderson, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., and the NAACP's Roy Wilkins all appeared in photographs supporting the campaign. The *Courier* also offered integrated images of whites along side African Americans, promoting at once racial unity and the idea that the struggle for democracy was not just a black concern. The Double V resonated with the African American public, and its popularity helped to increase the circulation of black newspapers.

Yet, not everyone viewed the Double V campaign as a unifying force. Many white newspapers, especially those in the South, characterized the *Courier*'s crusade as an attempt to foment revolution. Although southern whites had long condemned the black press as a radical, destabilizing force in race relations, the U.S. government viewed the Double V as actually causing disunity and harm to black morale. Governmental surveillance and pressure on the black press to cease the agitation for greater rights, at least during wartime, proved unsuccessful, as black editors stood their ground and maintained their demands for equality and civil rights.

The *Pittsburgh Courier* promoted the Double V campaign throughout 1942. By early 1943, the campaign had

died down significantly, as the paper gradually ceased emphasizing it. In its place, the *Courier* published numerous articles demonstrating the gains that African Americans had made because of the Double V campaign. There is no question that the Double V campaign energized many African Americans who sought greater rights and greater opportunities, but by war's end, the campaign had not achieved its desired goal: a double victory abroad and at home. The United States had won the war abroad, but racism and discrimination at home continued. In September 1945, the *Courier* removed the Double V from its masthead but left a single V to signify the war still to be waged. It was removed in 1946, the war at home still unfinished.

See also: Anderson, Marian; Powell, Adam Clayton Jr.; Randolph, A. Philip; Wilkins, Roy; World War II (Black Participation in)

Dan J. Puckett

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## Du Bois, W. E. B.

Dr. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963) was a scholar, civil rights activist, editor, and novelist. Born February 23, 1868 to Alfred Du Bois and Mary Silvina Burghardt, Du Bois grew up in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where less than 1 percent of the predominately Dutch and English population was of African descent. After graduating from high school, Du Bois earned an AB from Fisk University and a BA in philosophy and an MA in history from Harvard University. In 1892, he continued graduate studies at the University of Berlin, Germany,

as a Slater Fund Fellow. He returned to the United States in 1894 and taught classes at Wilberforce University. In 1895, Du Bois became the first African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard. During the next 65 years, he was a professor of history, economics, and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and Atlanta University, a leader of the NAACP, and an advocate of peace and civil rights. He also wrote two novels, edited several periodicals, and received numerous awards and honorary degrees. He died in 1963 as a citizen of Ghana.

Analyses of race and racism were prominent themes throughout Du Bois's career and were shaped by his education, worldwide travels, and experiences of the effects on African Americans of race riots, lynching, war, imperialism, and capitalism. His evolving racial consciousness impacted the scholarship he produced and the professional and political activities in which he participated. Du Bois made significant contributions to African American and American history, culture, politics, and scholarship. He developed ways to understand African Americans' racial identity, established the field of sociology, elucidated the historical significance of race, and fought internationally for freedom, equality, and peace.

Du Bois's most famous scholarly contributions were his interpretations of African American racial identity. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, Du Bois described African Americans' spirituality and history from 1861 to the early 20th century to explain the peculiar character of their identity as a race. He identified this race identity as "double consciousness," or the simultaneous presence in African Americans' minds of two conflicting "souls"—a longing to be a part of mainstream American society coupled with an equally strong feeling of kinship with African and African American culture. In this book, he discussed how double consciousness colored African Americans' contributions to American labor, music, economics, and religion. As a continuation of *The Souls of Black Folk*, *Darkwater*—a mixture of poetry, autobiography, and prose published in 1920—he described the effects of racism, imperialism, economic greed, sexism, and war on African Americans' racial identity.

Du Bois also contributed to academic research through pioneer sociological studies. In *The Philadelphia Negro*, he examined the economic and health statistics, education, and social experiences of black Americans in Philadelphia in the late 1890s. From 1897 to 1911, Du Bois directed the Atlanta University Studies of the Negro Problem, the only



W. E. B. Du Bois, considered the father of Pan-Africanism for his work to undermine European Imperialism in Africa, devoted his life to the struggle for equality for African Americans and all people of color. (Library of Congress)

scientific social studies of aspects of African American life and culture in the world during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the 1940s, he founded and edited *Phylon*, a journal published by Atlanta University that interpreted racial and cultural issues from the perspectives of the social sciences.

Du Bois made major contributions to historiography by interpreting American history through the lens of race relations, particularly as pertained to Africans and African Americans. Du Bois's historiography challenged historians' refusal to acknowledge facts regarding the significance of Africans' achievements and struggles in America and the world. *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade*, published in 1896, and *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880*, published in 1935, clarified and scrutinized two misconstrued and overlooked epochs in American history. *The World and Africa*, published in 1947, expanded the work of the aforementioned publications to a global scale, emphasizing Africans' crucial roles in the history of humankind from prehistoric times through modernity.

By editing mass-circulated publications, Du Bois extended his scholarship into African American communities. He created the NAACP's official monthly news magazine, *The Crisis*, and edited it from 1910 to 1934. In the early 1920s, Du Bois founded and edited *Brownie's Book*, a magazine for African American children containing visual images and literature.

Civil rights activism was integral to Du Bois's life. In 1905, he established the Niagara Movement to organize black intellectuals committed to black freedom. In 1909, he helped found the NAACP, a civil rights organization consisting of black and white liberals of various professions. On behalf of the NAACP, Du Bois investigated black American troops' experiences of racism in Europe during World War I and presented to the United Nations *An Appeal to the World* denouncing American segregation.

Ultimately, Du Bois epitomized his idea of the "talented tenth" and was one of the earliest practitioners of American Studies and Africana Studies. As a member of the talented tenth, or the top 10 percent of African Americans responsible for training and serving the masses of black communities, Du Bois devoted his professional career, scholarship, and political activism to the causes of racial uplift and equality. Decades before the establishment of an American Studies discipline, Du Bois conducted interdisciplinary research to illuminate various aspects of American culture. He incorporated physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, history, and philosophy into analyses of the significance of race in America. Du Bois's interpretations of the experiences of members of the African Diaspora created ways to understand black American identity and culture that remain among the premier scholarship of Africana Studies. *See also:* African Diaspora; Double Consciousness; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Niagara Movement; Pan-Africanism; Pan-African Congresses

Kimberly M. Curtis

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## East St. Louis, Illinois, Riot of 1917

From 1910 and the U.S. entry into World War I in April 1917, East St. Louis, Illinois, grew rapidly. It developed as an important center of food processing, as well as manufacturing. The population similarly expanded. It had only 59,000 residents according to the 1910 census; approximately 10 percent were African American. By the time of the 1920 census, there were 66,000, of whom 7,200 were African American.

The rapid increase in population led, naturally, to increased contact between African Americans, native-born whites, and immigrants. That conflict was exacerbated by the competition over jobs. Several of the leading manufacturing companies in East St. Louis were believed to be encouraging African American migration from the South as a way of driving down labor costs. There was widespread talk that companies like the American Ore Company had sent recruiters to Mississippi and Alabama promising employment to African Americans who would relocate to East St. Louis.

Violence first appeared on May 28 when a rumor circulated among white workers that an African American man had robbed a white man. Throughout the night, whites randomly attacked African Americans on the streets. Those tensions boiled over again on the evening of July 1, 1917, when a car road through the African American section of East St. Louis and indiscriminately fired into homes. The African American community quickly assembled. The next time a car was spotted with armed men inside, those community members fired on it. Unfortunately, the occupants were police officers and a newspaper reporter.

A congressional committee convened to investigate the riot reporting the extent of the damage; many black workers were killed, thousands driven from their homes, and dozens of railroad cars destroyed. The committee laid the blame on the bitter feelings between the races. The Aluminum Ore Company had used the new immigrants as strike-breakers, which led to particular animosity.

On the morning of July 2, as news of the deaths of the two police officers spread, riot swept East St. Louis. The bullet-riddled police car was left on display outside police headquarters, stirring anger. During the morning of July 2, there was confusion about what was happening. The congressional

committee implied that blacks instigated violence without provocation and, in response, white residents formed into mobs to retaliate. Yet, even the committee acknowledged that the violence turned on East St. Louis blacks, and with a vengeance. The city police stood by while helpless blacks were mobbed. Sometimes they joined in the terror.

The congressional committee saw the city government as corrupt. They took bribes to protect bars, prostitution businesses, and gambling businesses. The committee's report, which was based on volumes of testimony taken in East St. Louis, aimed to lay blame on business and to clean up the city. But even as the committee blamed industry, white rioters, and the local authorities, as well as some African Americans, the local prosecutor was placing much blame on African Americans. A number of community leaders were charged with conspiracy to arm themselves and attack any white men who came into the African American section of East St. Louis. The prosecution turned the community's self-defense into a crime.

East St. Louis stands as an important reminder that African Americans faced enormous hurdles in trying to obtain economic success. Even in places where they worked hard and began to succeed, their communities might be destroyed.

See also: Great Migration; White Mob Violence

Alfred L. Brophy

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## Ebony Magazine

*Ebony* first appeared on November 1, 1945, at a cost of 25 cents. That original issue sold 50,000 copies. The magazine served as a "black" counterpart to the largely "white" photographic magazines of *Life*, founded in 1936, and *Look*, founded in 1937, and originally retained the over-size format of those publications. From its inception, it depicted the accomplishments of African Americans in business and their celebrity in the entertainment industry,

demonstrating success stories that met the standards of the white middle class, a policy later criticized by some as creating false goals.

John Harold Johnson created *Ebony* in Chicago, Illinois, the second publication of his Johnson Publishing Company. Born in the small Mississippi delta community of Arkansas City, Arkansas on January 19, 1918, Johnson and his mother moved to Chicago in 1933 to experience the World's Fair and to give the teenager an opportunity to attend high school. While attending DuSable High School, Johnson met Harry Pace of the Supreme Life Insurance Company, who employed the graduate as he continued his education at the University of Chicago. Johnson excelled in his work with Supreme's company magazine and eventually became its editor. The small publication carried information about the African American populace in a style similar to that of *Reader's Digest*. Believing there was a commercial market for such a publication, Johnson gained a \$500 loan using his mother's furniture as collateral in November 1942. With that initial investment, Johnson created *Negro Digest* and the Johnson Publishing Company. *Negro Digest* began a consistent trend throughout the history of the company of mimicking successful periodical models of the mainstream "white" press and reformulating them with stories and photographs of interest to the black community. The new publishing company's first office was on the second floor of the Supreme Life Insurance Company building.

Within a year of *Negro Digest's* inception, its sales reached \$50,000. That success, coupled with Johnson's concern with the popular portrayal of African Americans, led him to believe that a new publication was in order. Johnson saw black achievement in business, and in entertainment in the returning African American veterans after the close of World War II. Perhaps more important, he saw such achievement underrepresented by mainstream "white" periodicals. The growth of photojournalism in the late 1930s and early 1940s prompted Johnson to create *Ebony*, a publication saturated with photographs to portray the successes of African Americans and their contributions to American culture.

Johnson announced that he would not seek advertising revenue until the magazine's circulation grew to 100,000 copies, which took seven months to accomplish. When he did reach his advertising threshold, he found that many black businesses were either unable to afford national advertising space or reluctant to devote such substantial

portions of their advertising budgets to *Ebony* full-page ads. Johnson responded by writing letters to the presidents of large corporations in an attempt to convince them of the benefits of advertising in the African American press. His argument swayed Eugene McDonald, president of the Zenith Corporation. McDonald was a former military commander and Arctic explorer who had known the African American polar explorer Matthew Henson. Johnson gave Zenith's president an autographed copy of a Henson biography, began a friendship of his own with the leader, and secured an advertising contract. The Zenith account stabilized *Ebony's* finances and gave entrée into the boardrooms of other "white" companies.

*Ebony* early avoided "the race question," choosing instead to present a portrait of black success that others in the community could strive toward. Hard work would breed success, argued the Johnson Publishing Company, and the success of some would breed the success of others. *Ebony* revived the Booker T. Washington model of social progress. To boost sales in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the magazine included sexier, more sensational photographs, but recession slowed sales and returned the publication to a more moderate position. By using a white middle class model for success, Johnson and *Ebony* alienated some, but the tone of the magazine changed as the Civil Rights movement's militancy increased. *Ebony* included news on the fight for integration, often praising the activism of African American college students. Along with its profiles of black celebrities, the periodical featured profiles of government officials, legislators, and visiting dignitaries. As the movement's issues changed, so did *Ebony's* coverage, moving in the 1960s to cover impoverished inner-city living conditions, the racial inequity in educational and hiring practices, and the misapplication of drug laws to entrap African Americans. From the first presidential election of the magazine's tenure, the 1948 Harry Truman victory over Thomas Dewey, *Ebony's* publisher used the magazine to endorse Democratic candidates. The moves did not exonerate the periodical from further criticism, however, as editorials denouncing militant violence and continued success-story profiles alienated the more radical among the black nationalist and black power communities.

Despite the criticism, *Ebony* featured the writing of many leading African Americans from the liberal intellectual community. Carl T. Rowan and Kenneth Clark contributed articles. Martin Luther King Jr., wrote a column for the

periodical called "Advice for Living By." Through the close of the Civil Rights movement proper, and its continuing reverberations in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, *Ebony* has maintained its attempt to represent the black middle class and the successes that lifestyle creates. *Negro Digest* came and went, but *Ebony* remained the backbone of the Johnson Publishing Company. John Johnson parlayed the success of the periodical into a publishing empire, adding magazines such as *Jet*, *Ebony Man*, *Ebony Jr!*, *Ebony International*, and others. Today, the magazine carries a readership of more than 6 million, with almost 2 million subscribers, and remains the pinnacle in its genre. In 1969, Moneta Sleet Jr., an *Ebony* photographer, became the first African American male to win the Pulitzer Prize. His photos and those that followed continue to demonstrate the great African American success story.

See also: BET; *Jet* Magazine

Thomas Aiello

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## Elaine, Arkansas, Riot of 1919

During and after World War I, a series of violent confrontations, known as "race riots," erupted across the country. Along with Houston, East St. Louis, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Omaha, Knoxville, Charleston, Indianapolis, and other cities, Elaine, Arkansas captured national headlines, as racial violence exploded in this rural Mississippi Delta community. More accurately termed a massacre than a riot, whites overwhelmingly perpetrated the violence against African Americans who died in far greater numbers and who, ironically, were the only ones charged with a crime.

On September 30, 1919, a secret meeting of local African Americans gathered late at a church in Hoop Spur, a rural area in Phillips County located three miles north of the small town of Elaine, Arkansas. Protected by armed guards, those attending were members of the Progressive

Farmers and Household Union. This secretly organized union of black farmers wanted a greater share of the profits for cotton tenant farmers and fairer, more open debt terms for sharecroppers. Although African Americans accounted for three-fourths of the population of this south-eastern Arkansas county, situated on the west bank of the Mississippi, the landowners were overwhelmingly whites who leased the land to the county's black majority under exploitive terms that greatly favored the landowners. Frustrated by their long-term economic oppression and emboldened by their recent participation in the war fought to make the world "safe for democracy," African Americans organized the Farmers Union to effect change and improve their lives. Yet their opponents' knowledge of these bold plans influenced law enforcement's intervention. Outside the church that night, a gun fight between union members and two law enforcement officers left one of the white officers dead and sparked the violent retaliation that ensued the next few days.

A law enforcement posse arrived in Hoop Spur from Helena, the county seat, to investigate the shooting. More deaths—white and black—occurred during this confrontation. Shocked that African Americans fought back, the sheriff issued before dawn a panic call for help to whites in surrounding Delta counties in Arkansas and Mississippi. By sunset October 1, 600 to 1,000 whites had arrived armed and ready to kill any African American who moved. For two days whites aggressively hunted and killed African Americans. They also captured, interrogated, and forced false confessions from terrified blacks. Meanwhile Governor Charles Brough requested troops from nearby Fort Pike to quell the violence. After some delay, the troops arrived by train early on October 2. Some accounts credit the soldiers with disarming rampaging whites and restoring order. Other witnesses reported that some soldiers, armed with machine guns, also engaged in indiscriminate killing before disarming white civilians.

Once the violence subsided, official reports acknowledged 25 black and 5 white deaths. Yet widely circulated, unofficial accounts reveal that white mobs killed many more blacks; frequently reported estimates range from scores to hundreds. Local whites and soldiers who perpetrated this retaliatory violence had no interest in securing an accurate death count that reflected large number of black victims. The white power structure immediately began constructing a narrative that blamed African Americans for the riots,

alleging that blacks were plotting to kill their white landowners. This explanation, they reasoned, justified whites' violence as a preemptive defense. Although no evidence ever emerged to support this alleged plot, when the killing stopped, the arrests began, but only for the alleged killers of white victims. Within weeks, 122 African Americans were charged with crimes associated with the riots. Arkansas never arrested or charged any whites with a crime, nor did the state seek justice for any of the black victims.

In all, 67 indicted blacks pled guilty to reduced charges and began their prison terms immediately. The grand jury indicted 12 blacks with first-degree murder on October 31, and the trials began on Monday, November 3, one month after the massacre. Court-appointed attorneys never met with defendants, questioned jurors, or called witnesses. Outside the court house a white mob gathered, threatening to lynch any defendants that jurors failed to convict. Each jury deliberated no more than eight minutes before delivering a guilty verdict. By week's end all 12 men had been found guilty and sentenced to death. The white power structure of Arkansas considered the matter closed, but a black attorney from Little Rock and the NAACP, independent of each others' actions, simultaneously challenged this gross injustice.

Scipio Africanus Jones, a successful black attorney from Little Rock, organized the local black community to support an appeal for the Elaine Twelve. Unknown to Jones, the NAACP was also preparing an appeal and had already hired a local white attorney, Colonel George Murphy. The NAACP's involvement began earlier when it sent Walter White to investigate the riot. White, the NAACP's executive secretary who could "pass" for white with his fair skin and blue eyes, posed as a Chicago *Daily News* reporter interested in a good story. White's investigation garnered candid information from whites that the NAACP used to counter the cover-up interpretation that the white power structure offered the local press. Murphy and Jones partnered their efforts on the appeal process until Murphy died two years later. Jones continued with Murphy's partner and later with Moorefield Storey, president of the NAACP.

After several years of determined effort, close calls, and frustrating results, the case eventually appeared before the United States Supreme Court as *Moore v. Dempsey*. Jones and Storey argued on appeal that mob intimidation at the trial denied the defendants a fair trial. In February 1923, Oliver Wendell Holmes, speaking for the majority, issued a landmark decision supporting their argument.



All 12 condemned men were released and all others imprisoned from the Elaine riots were set free.

See also: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Red Summer Race Riots; Wells-Barnett, Ida B.; White Mob Violence

Janet G. Hudson

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## Ellison, Ralph

Born in 1913 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Ralph Waldo Ellison (1913–1994) authored *Invisible Man*, one of the most read novels of the 20th century. Published in 1952 and hailed as one of the great "protest novels" of American history, *Invisible Man* depicted the saga of an unnamed protagonist on his journey from his boyhood home to college to New York City. The odyssey allows the protagonist to discover his identity, as a member of a caste and as a human.

*Invisible Man* opens with the protagonist (known as Invisible Man or IM) living in a garret in New York City, lighting his apartment with 1,369 light bulbs using stolen electricity. Yet, IM seems immune from liability for stealing the electricity and for assaulting a man he meets on the street. This was strange to modern readers, who were so used to seeing African Americans as the objects of intense scrutiny by police and prosecutors. But people visible for some reasons still may not be *seen*; their humanity may be completely ignored, as Ellison reminds us in his 1981 introduction. Lynching victims, for instance, can be "illuminated by flaming torches and flashbulbs," but they are mere objects, not humans. The Invisible Man understands that principle of remaining invisible to the police. At one point during the novel he is told, "The longer you remain unknown to the police, the longer you'll be effective." (*Invisible Man*, p. 284)

The novel then narrates how IM arrived in New York. It returns to his home in Greenwood. The name is an allusion

to the Greenwood section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, which witnessed a terrible riot in 1921. IM witnesses the last words of his grandfather. The grandfather—who is notorious in the community as an agreeable black man who is complicit with whites—changes temperament on his deathbed. The grandfather tells IM to agree the white man to death. All of that sets up a battle royale of blindfolded, adolescent black boys fighting against each other for the amusement of a white audience. Those who survive the contest of all against all are given the chance to scramble for worthless coins. In essence, there is no way to "win." Shortly after that, IM dreams that there is a letter inside his briefcase with instructions that say "keep this Nigger-boy running."

IM then goes to a black college (believed to be modeled on Tuskegee), where he serves as a chauffeur to a wealthy white donor on the board of trustees. He follows the instructions given him by the donor to show the poor neighborhoods. That angers the college president, who is surprised that IM would be honest with a white man. IM is then sent to New York City by the college president. He is given letters of reference that, in effect, say "keep this nigger boy running."

It is in New York that IM searches for his humanity and individuality. In one important scene, for instance, IM helps an elderly couple who are being evicted from their apartment. IM sees the evidence of their humanity strewn on the sidewalk—emancipation papers, a picture of Lincoln, a souvenir from the World's Fair, a breast pump, a card addressed to grandma—and realizes that the couple represents common humanity. What are they being evicted from, IM asks? For they have little. All they have is the "great constitutional dream book." And even that they could not read. The "laws" failed to protect the community. IM's refrain was "we're a law abiding people." But the elderly couple was being evicted and how could that be consistent with law? Well, it was what was demanded by the police officers:

[L]ook up there in the doorway at that law standing there with his forty-five. Look at him, standing with his blue steel pistol and his serge suit, or one forty-five, you see ten for every one of us, ten guns and ten warm suits and ten fat bellies and ten million laws. *Laws*, that's what we call them down South! *Laws!* (*Invisible Man*, p. 278)

The eviction scene juxtaposes "law" as imposed by white police officers, prosecutors, and judges with justice. It also juxtaposes law with religion. IM asked, "They don't want

the world, but only Jesus. They only want Jesus, just fifteen minutes of Jesus on the rug-bare floor . . . How about it, Mr. Law? Do we get our fifteen minutes worth of Jesus? You got the world, can we have our Jesus?" (*Invisible Man*, p. 279)

In another scene, IM is working in a paint factory, where he mixes a batch of "National Monument White" paint. He makes it whiter by dropping black paint into a vat of white paint. In an almost transparent way, Ellison alludes to the ways that black and white culture are mixed and how some parts of white culture originate (and draw from) black thought.

Another theme is that of insider versus outsider (or power versus individuality). In one scene, for instance, Brother Clifton, who is selling paper dolls on the street, is shot by a police officer. Brother Clifton died "resisting reality in the form of a .38 caliber revolver in the hands of the arresting officer, on Forty-second between the library and the subway" The shooting of Brother Clifton illustrates the conflict between myth and history. Although Ellison believed that Clifton was an innocent victim, others who were not there might not. "[I]t is only the known, the seen, the heard and only those events that the recorder regards

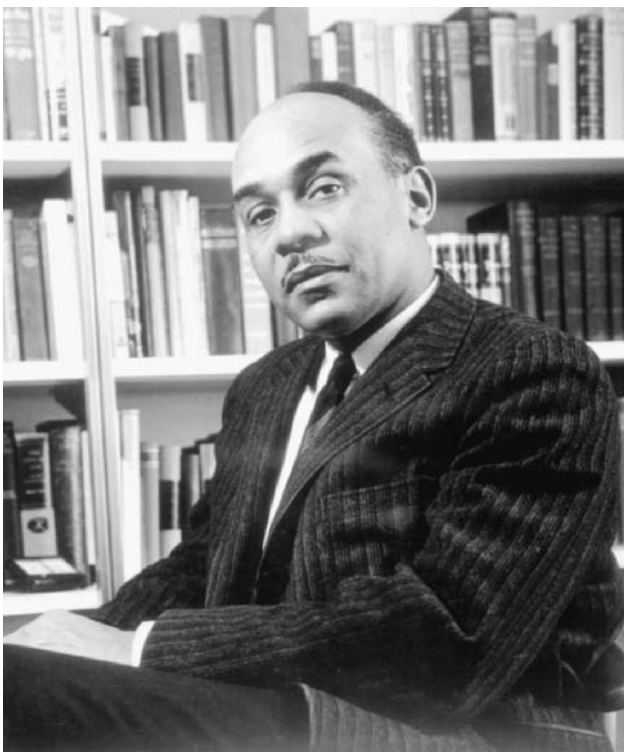
as important that are put down, those lies his keepers keep their power by. . . . Where were the historians today? And how would they put it down?" (*Invisible Man*, p. 439)

That problem of history as written and history as it happened, of myth versus reality, was a critical part of Ellison's thought. He spoke about it in a talk, "Going to the Territory," at Brown University in 1979. There he reminded listeners that myth controls our vision of ourselves and shapes how we behave, but that grim and complex reality of the past also affects us. It was from that interaction of myth and reality—of mixing and interdependence of black and white—that concerned Ellison.

Now that we have passed the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Invisible Man*, we are gaining the distance that is necessary to evaluate dispassionately the novel and the civil rights revolution that surrounds it. After the initial, warm embrace of the novel, Ralph Ellison was seen as a conservative in the 1960s and early 1970s and consequently, given the political double standard applied to African American intellectuals, was viewed with suspicion. In more recent times, we have been able to view his accomplishments more accurately.

Perhaps part of the explanation for the criticism of Ellison was his faith in the idea of law to overcome inequality. Many others, faced with laughably biased mechanisms of law enforcement, did not share Ellison's optimism in law. At times even Ellison could not share that optimism. As he tells in his meditation on law and literature, "The Perspective of Literature," as a young man he had little respect for law. He recalled of his youth in Oklahoma City that law meant the arbitrary dictates of law enforcement officers. Those men followed their own caprice and left the black community with unequal schools, little protection against violence, and little access to the rights of citizens to participate in democracy. They even participated in lynchings on occasion. Thus, there were two concepts about "law" in the Oklahoma of Ellison's youth: the rule of law as imposed by white society on African Americans and the rule of law as it ought to exist. In his notes on *Juneteenth*, Ellison further elaborated the distinction. The law defined African Americans in certain ways that were inconsistent with the facts and that was inconsistent with religion:

The law deals with facts, and down here the facts are that we are weak and inferior. But while it looks like we are what the law says we are, don't ever forget that we've been put in this



Ralph Ellison, whose novel *Invisible Man* has become a classic of modern American fiction, wrote compellingly of the experience of African Americans in a society that has tended to ignore their problems. (National Archives)

position by force, by power of numbers, and the readiness of those numbers to use brutality to keep us within the law. Ah, but the truth is something else. We are not what the law, yes and custom, says we are and to protect our truth we have to protect ourselves from the definitions of the law. Because the law's facts have made us outlaws. Yes, that's the truth, but only part of it; . . . we're outlaws in Christ and Christ is the higher truth. (*Juneteenth*, p. 354)

Ellison looked forward in *Invisible Man* to a new understanding of multiracial humanity. He wrote of a symbolic poster of a heroic figure:

An American Indian couple, representing the dispossessed past; a blond brother (in overalls) and a leading Irish sister, representing the dispossessed present; and Brother Tod Clifton and a young white couple (it had been felt unwise simply to show Clifton and the girl) surrounded by a group of children of mixed races, representing the future (*Invisible Man*, p. 385)

In Ellison's Oklahoma, there was segregation in housing and schools and extreme examples of racial violence, particularly the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. And yet somehow Ellison, like the Oklahoma black community more generally, found an optimism in the idea of justice. Perhaps that optimism came from Roscoe Dunjee, editor of the *Oklahoma City Black Dispatch*. Dunjee had a faith in the Constitution and the rule of law, if properly administered, to remake American society. Dunjee advanced the idea of equal treatment under law—that people should be able to vote regardless of their race, that everyone had the right to adequate schools, that the police should protect all communities.

We should avoid too much of a temptation to read subsequent history back onto the novel, but it seems that some of Ellison's optimism in the Constitution's possibilities appears in *Invisible Man*, particularly in its call for a recognition of humanity and individuality. Ellison was working on the novel at the same time that the decisions that brought us to *Brown v. Board of Education* (several of the most important of which arose in Oklahoma, largely through the efforts of Roscoe Dunjee) were being written. *Invisible Man* and the Supreme Court drew on the common reservoir of cultural opposition to group identity and racial caste. At long last, the Court awoke to the realities of segregation and allowed African Americans to have a legal status other than that of invisible people. Maybe Ellison's most important contribution comes in his shaping of a humanity that undermined the segregation mentality. Thus, a nonlegal

document, concerned about people who are left outside the law, has implications for law. And in that era of the early 1950s, Ellison's optimistic call for seeing through—seeing humanity—was fulfilled in some important ways in the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In Ellison's other work, we see similar themes. In his posthumously published novel, *Juneteenth*, Ellison explored the life of jazz musician-turned preacher, Alonzo Hickman. Hickman became a preacher after his brother was falsely accused of raping a white woman and then lynched. Hickman raised that woman's baby, Bliss, in the hopes that Bliss (a boy of ambiguous racial identity) might bring African American values to the white community. Bliss, however, grows into a race-baiting politician who is elected senator from a southern state. When Reverend Hickman gets wind of a plot to assassinate Bliss (now Senator Sunraider), he comes to warn the senator. But Hickman is prevented from seeing Senator Sunraider by a "law" (a law enforcement officer) who stands guard outside the Capitol building. And, thus, Sunraider is shot on the Senate floor by an assassin (who is also his black son)!

Through *Invisible Man*, we can see how African Americans created lives despite segregation, how elegant ideas like equality and humanity remade the law, and how that story is at the center of our continuing American struggle. *See also:* Wright, Richard

Alfred L. Brophy

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## Emancipation Proclamation

When Abraham Lincoln delivered his inaugural address on March 4, 1861, he struck fear into many abolitionists and free blacks when he stated he would not do anything to

interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it already existed; rather he would just prevent the expansion of slavery into the country's territories. Abolitionists were outraged at Lincoln's stance. After the inauguration, leading advocates of immediate emancipation, such as Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, tried to convince Lincoln that emancipation needed to be immediate and swift. Lincoln disagreed. He knew that any sudden change in slavery would have dramatic consequences. Initially, Lincoln favored gradual emancipation and financially compensating slave owners. Lincoln also preferred colonization of emancipated slaves—sending them beyond the borders of the United States to live out the rest of their lives.

After the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Lincoln's primary concern was the preservation of the Union. He did believe, however, that his actions of reuniting the country would ultimately lead to the abolition of slavery throughout the nation, as he recognized slavery to be the root cause of the conflict. Although Lincoln's view of how emancipation would occur was pragmatic, many abolitionists believed that the Civil War provided an opportunity for immediate emancipation. Emancipation, however, was a divisive issue and Lincoln did not want to do anything to alienate the border states—Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware—which still maintained slavery and allegiance to the United States.

Although Lincoln was careful in the war's first year to convey to slave owners that he would not abolish slavery where it existed, some abolitionist Union officers cared little. General John C. Fremont, commanding Union forces in Missouri in 1861, used the Confiscation Act, federal legislation stating that the property of anyone in rebellion could be seized by the United States government, to emancipate slaves. The next year, General David Hunter created more problems for the Lincoln administration on the South Carolina Sea Coast Islands when he armed former slaves and used them as contraband soldiers. Lincoln ordered both of these generals to return the slaves to their masters, fearing these actions might make the border states fearful of Lincoln's intentions to end slavery, thus driving them to secede.

Despite Lincoln's desire to emancipate slaves gradually, pressure for abolishing slavery increased by the end of his first year in office. In November 1861, Lincoln took the first steps toward emancipation when he drafted a plan of gradual, compensated emancipation for Delaware. Lincoln

proposed that Delaware free all of its slaves over the age of 35 and when other slaves reached that age, they, too, would be free. In return the federal government would pay Delaware more than \$700,000 spread out over a period of 31 years. Lincoln further promised Delaware that, if it would agree to eliminate slavery by 1872, the government would make payments in excess of \$70,000 each year for the next decade. Ultimately Lincoln wanted to use money to end slavery. He believed that if the government could compensate slave owners, slave owners would have two choices. They could either accept payment for their slaves or they could leave and go to another slave state. This, however, would drive the supply of slaves in each state up, and therefore the value of slaves as a commodity would decrease. Lincoln surmised that as the price of slaves plummeted, masters would look for a way to rid themselves of their slaves; therefore over the course of time slaves would be freed as an economic necessity.

Lincoln's plan of gradual and compensated emancipation, although in theory might have worked, did not comply with the emancipationist vision of abolitionists and free blacks who demanded immediate action. That swift action began in the summer of 1862 when Lincoln signed the Militia Act. This legislation not only gave the chief executive the authority to call 300,000 state militia troops for a period of nine months, but also gave the president the right to accept the service of African Americans. Even though Lincoln was not yet ready in the summer of 1862 to accept the widespread armed service of African Americans, he was prepared to accept them in limited numbers. Furthermore and most important, the Militia Act empowered the president to emancipate any slaves who enrolled into the service.

The giant step toward emancipation came on July 22, 1862, less than one week after the Militia Act passed both houses of Congress, when Lincoln informed his cabinet that he intended to issue a proclamation to end slavery. Reaction to Lincoln's proposed decree was mixed among his cabinet, but Lincoln explained to them that abolishing slavery was critical to the Union war effort. After all, hundreds of thousands of slaves throughout the Confederacy labored in war industries, built fortifications, and aided in running farms, freeing up a considerable amount of the white male population to enlist and fight for the Confederacy. If these slaves could be freed, it would have a dramatic impact on the Confederate labor supply and ability to support the

troops in the field. His cabinet now stood behind him, but his Secretary of State, William Seward, advised Lincoln to not issue the Emancipation Proclamation until the Union Army of the Potomac, operating in the east, won a battle. Despite Union victories in the west in 1861 and 1862, the central focus of the war was in Virginia. If Lincoln issued his proclamation amid Union defeat in Virginia, it would have little weight, as the success of the proclamation depended on whether or not the Union forces could win the war. Lincoln agreed and decided to wait for a Union victory in the East.

The long-awaited victory came on September 17, 1862, at the battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg) in Maryland. Although considered a victory by the Lincoln administration, Antietam was in reality a tactical draw—neither side won. It could be portrayed as a victory, however, because General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia retreated south across the Potomac River and into Virginia. On September 22, five days after the battle, Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

The preliminary proclamation announced that on January 1, 1863, Lincoln would declare slaves in areas in rebellion against the United States free; border states would not have their slaves emancipated. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation parted drastically with his earlier idea of gradual, compensated emancipation as well as colonization. Nothing in his proclamation said it would be gradual or compensated; rather it would be swift and decisive—if the Union army of course won the Civil War. He also included a provision in the document allowing for the enlistment of African Americans into the army and navy.

When Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was announced after Antietam, it met mixed reactions among soldiers in the Union Army. General George B. McClellan, who at the time commanded the Union Army of the Potomac that fought Lee at Antietam, condemned the proclamation and many soldiers were outraged as they claimed to have not enlisted in the Union army to fight for the freedom of the slaves. Internal rage among Union soldiers escalated into near scenes of mutiny in some regiments. Entire units



*The first reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before the cabinet on July 22, 1862, after a painting by F. B. Carpenter. Abraham Lincoln, seated next to table, is surrounded by members of his cabinet. (Library of Congress)*

condemned Lincoln's measure and signed petitions to be sent to President Lincoln stating that they refused to fight. Union soldiers vented their frustration in other ways as well. In December 1862, as the Union Army of the Potomac crossed the Rappahannock River and entered Fredericksburg, they destroyed much of the town. Some soldiers explained that one of the reasons they lashed out was that they did not approve of emancipation.

Soldiers aside, many politicians criticized Lincoln's measure. For example a former associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, Benjamin Robbins Curtis, argued in a pamphlet he published in late 1862, *Executive Power*, that the president did not have the power to issue an executive order eliminating slavery—something that was legally allowed in the states under the Constitution. Other prominent figures such as Joel Parker, a Republican judge from Massachusetts, and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Robert C. Winthrop, criticized the Emancipation Proclamation and stated that Lincoln had overstepped his powers as chief executive.

Many southern Unionists—those who lived in the Confederacy, but swore allegiance to the United States government—were also outraged at the Emancipation Proclamation. They believed that it contradicted Lincoln's first inaugural address and that the war should not be turned into a war of emancipation. Despite the disapproval of many Unionists, they eventually recognized the importance of slavery as a major resource for the Confederacy and viewed the abolition of slavery as a means to achieve Union victory in the Civil War.

A barrage of antiemancipation editorials appeared throughout the country. Even though these might have concerned Lincoln and served as a good indicator of what many felt about emancipation, Lincoln knew the real test would be the 1862 elections. Republicans who supported emancipation failed the test miserably. The Republicans lost seats in the United States House of Representatives when Democrats won the majority of seats for Pennsylvania and Ohio. In the New York and New Jersey gubernatorial elections, the citizens elected Democrats. In Lincoln's home state of Illinois, 11 of the 14 seats in the House of Representatives would be occupied by Democrats. The Democrats also won a 28-seat majority in the Illinois state legislature. In all, the interim election of 1862 was a dismal failure for Lincoln and the Republicans, as 31 Republican seats were lost in Congress. Many Northerners had sent a clear message

to Lincoln—they would not support an administration and party who made emancipation a war aim.

Even though Lincoln had early enemies of emancipation in the North, there were some who supported him and recognized the importance of emancipation as a way to bring the conflict to an end. General Henry Halleck, who at the time served as Lincoln's general-in-chief, believed emancipation was a great weapon in the Union arsenal. Halleck argued that every slave taken from the South and out of the Confederacy's labor supply was the equivalent of one Confederate soldier being taken from the battlefield. Lincoln had other supporters as well. Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* praised the Emancipation Proclamation and hailed it as the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.

Despite the criticism of both Republicans and Democrats, Lincoln proceeded with his Emancipation Proclamation and formally issued it on New Year's Day, 1863. On the date the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, African Americans, both slaves and free blacks, rejoiced. Crowds gathered around the White House and praised Lincoln. African Americans and abolitionists throughout Northern cities celebrated. African American troops already in service as a result of the Militia Act signed in 1862 celebrated as well. For example troops in the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry held a ceremony and celebration at Fort Scott Kansas in honor of the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the joy that many African Americans felt on January 1, 1863, many understood that the only way their freedom would be guaranteed was that if the Union army won the Civil War.

By the time Lincoln issued the formal declaration, he still had his detractors, but many of the soldiers, initially outraged at the prospect of fighting to free the slaves, had calmed their anger. Regardless of their feelings toward slavery and emancipation, many Union troops began to understand that emancipation was a great weapon to defeat the Confederacy, as it would strip away thousands of workers from the Confederate labor force. Although not all soldiers were eager to enforce emancipation, some of them were. Among those enthusiastic to implement emancipation were the large majority of troops commanded by Union General Robert H. Milroy. On January 1, 1863, Milroy marched his troops into Virginia's northern Shenandoah Valley. Milroy, an Indiana native with abolitionist leanings, established headquarters in Winchester, Virginia, on the date the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. General Milroy

issued his own proclamation on January 5—“Freedom to Slaves”—informing the citizens of the northern Shenandoah Valley that he would do everything in his power to enforce emancipation, and those who interfered would be arrested and sent beyond Union lines. Furthermore, and just as Lincoln had explained in his Emancipation Proclamation, Milroy informed the former slaves that he expected them to behave themselves and to occupy themselves with some task. The Indiana general took great pride in enforcing emancipation in a town that boasted as residents Senator James Mason, author of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, and Judge Richard Parker, who presided over John Brown’s trial in Charles Town, Virginia, in 1859. Milroy freed hundreds of slaves and put them to work for his command or put those who wanted to go north on trains.

News of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and the actions of generals such as Milroy, who took an active roll in seeing that emancipation was carried out, created fear among many Confederate officials. Virginia’s Governor John Letcher branded Lincoln and Milroy as war criminals attempting to incite a slave insurrection. It was even ordered that if Milroy were captured, he should be executed without any trial.

Even though Union generals such as Milroy spread the word about emancipation, there were many areas throughout the Confederacy that Union troops were unable to reach, and slave owners withheld news of the Emancipation Proclamation from the slaves. Fearing that slaves would not hear of their liberation, Lincoln called on Frederick Douglass in the summer of 1863 to organize a group of African American scouts to go throughout the South, spread the news of emancipation, and help the slaves to come into Union lines. Douglass thought the measure of carrying off large numbers of slaves, without proper military support, in Confederate territory was too risky. Instead, Douglass suggested that Lincoln use special agents who would go into the South and tell the slaves that the president had issued a proclamation declaring their freedom, but that the slaves should remain where they were and that they should plan their own escape. Lincoln agreed with Douglass’s plan.

Confederate officials became enraged further with Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation because it not only freed slaves, but it opened the door for the widespread recruitment of African Americans—many of whom were former slaves—into the Union army. Even though African American troops had been serving in the Union Army as a result

of the Militia Act, Confederate officials understood that the Emancipation Proclamation would dramatically swell the ranks of African Americans in the federal army. The thought of armed African Americans struck fear into many white Southerners. The Confederate government aimed to do something about it. To discourage African Americans from enlisting, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Congress ordered that captured African Americans would not be treated as prisoners of war; rather they would be regarded as slaves in armed rebellion in the state where they were captured and would be subject to the punishment of that state for being involved in a slave rebellion. The punishment was always death. Davis also encouraged the execution of captured white officers who commanded African American regiments. Furthermore, Davis recommended that African American sailors captured from the Potomac Flotilla be executed by hanging. These threats did little to deter African Americans from enlisting and fighting for their freedom. Nearly 200,000 African Americans volunteered for service in the U.S. Army and Navy.

As 1863 came to a close and the presidential election year of 1864 approached, Lincoln made every effort to pass the Thirteenth Amendment, formally abolishing slavery. Lincoln understood that the Emancipation Proclamation was a war measure and that to officially outlaw slavery, which was protected under the Constitution, the Constitution needed to be amended. After he won reelection, Lincoln pressured Congress to act. He believed that the passage of a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery would have a tremendously positive impact on the course of the Civil War. Furthermore, Lincoln surmised that if the border states, which still maintained slavery, ratified the amendment, it would break Confederate morale even further. The amendment passed Congress on January 31, 1865, and became law on December 6, 1865, when states ratified the amendment. Unfortunately, Lincoln, who had been assassinated in April 1865, would not live to see the ultimate achievement of his Emancipation Proclamation.

The Emancipation Proclamation marked a major turning point in American history and was perhaps the greatest legacy of the American Civil War. Abraham Lincoln was revered among African Americans as their great emancipator. Even years after the Civil War ended, January 1 held special meaning for African Americans and they celebrated emancipation day in both North and South well into the 20th century.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Douglass, Frederick; Lincoln, Abraham; Thirteenth Amendment

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## Ethiopian Peace Movement

The Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936) and the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1936–1941) sparked a support movement among African Americans for Ethiopia that led to variety of actions and reactions. Along with Liberia, Ethiopia was one of only two independent African nations by the early 20th century, and it was the only independent African nation run by indigenous Africans. As such, Ethiopia became a symbol for many in the African Diaspora, including African Americans in the United States. In the imperialist fervor of the 1890s, Italy had sought to conquer Ethiopia, but had lost badly in its attempt to do so, culminating in its loss at the Battle of Adowa (1896). Ethiopia thus remained independent throughout the first third of the 20th century.

When the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy in the 1920s, he promised a program of

nationalist glory, including a more vigorous foreign policy. By the early 1930s, Mussolini began to covet Ethiopia in order to expand the Italian empire in northeastern Africa and to seek revenge for the Italian setbacks of the 1890s. After a brief skirmish along the Ethiopian border with Italian Eritrea in November 1934, the Italian government demanded an apology and an indemnity from Emperor Haile Selassie and the Imperial Ethiopian government. Selassie refused and tensions mounted; the emperor pleaded for help from the League of Nations, of which Ethiopia was a member, but the League did very little to stop Italian aggression. The League was led by the British and French, who feared pushing Mussolini into Adolf Hitler's camp. Hitler, however, learned a lesson from this episode about the use of a policy of appeasement by the British and the French.

Unhampered by the League of Nations, Italy invaded Ethiopia on October 3, 1935, with an army of 120,000 men. The Italians quickly captured Adowa, the site of their humiliating loss in the 1890s. The Ethiopians held out as long as they could, but, unlike in the 1890s, this time Italy had a superior fighting force and superior technology. The Italians used modern weapons such as tanks, airplanes, and even used poison gas on Ethiopian combatants and civilians. In May 1936, Emperor Selassie went into exile, eventually settling in London. During World War II, Italian Ethiopia was invaded by an Allied force of mostly African colonial troops led by the British. In May 1941, Italy was ousted from Ethiopia, and the British reluctantly installed Haile Selassie on the throne of the independent nation of Ethiopia.

African Americans responded vigorously to the Ethiopian crisis of the mid-1930s. As Italy began threatening Ethiopia in 1934, Africans and people of African descent around the world spoke out in support of Ethiopia and against Italian aggression. The Italo-Ethiopian conflict thus led to an outpouring of black nationalism (in Africa and in the Diaspora), pan-Africanism, and a general philosophy of anti-imperialism. In the United States, the conflict led African Americans to organize in support of Ethiopia: sometimes for peace, sometimes for Ethiopian independence, and sometimes to support the Ethiopian military in its war against Italy.

A number of African American, women's, religious, and peace organizations attempted to influence U.S. policymakers, international organizations like the League of Nations,



and public opinion in favor of Ethiopian independence. The peak of organizational activity occurred between the opening of hostilities in 1934 and the Italian victory in 1936. For example, in March 1935, the NAACP sent a telegram to the League of Nations and the U.S. State Department outlining its opposition to an Italian takeover of Ethiopia. Between December 1934 and May 1935, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) sent three telegrams to the League of Nations calling for League action to ensure a peaceful resolution to the Italo-Ethiopian border dispute.

Besides already existing organizations like the NAACP and the WILPF, new organizations were created to support peace initiatives and give any support they could to Ethiopia. Among the many new organizations founded during the Ethiopian crisis of the mid-1930s were the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia (Harlem), the Friends of Ethiopia in America (New York), the Committee for Ethiopia (New York), the Joint Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia (Chicago), the Chicago Society for the Aid of Ethiopia, and many others around the country. These organizations were created to give support to Ethiopia, whether moral, monetary, or otherwise. These new organizations, along with the older ones like the NAACP, worked to raise funds to send to Ethiopia, usually for military or aid purposes. Sometimes in lieu of money, specific items were sent: an ambulance, medical supplies, or weapons. Besides fundraising, these organizations worked to raise awareness about Ethiopia as well. Numerous African American individuals contacted these organizations, the federal government, or members of the Ethiopian government to volunteer their services or give money to the Ethiopian cause.

Throughout the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the U.S. government remained officially neutral, although, like the League of Nations, the U.S. government enacted a partial embargo against the Italians. In 1934 and 1935, many African Americans worked to pressure policymakers in Washington and in Europe into seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Many pointed to the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928), of which the U.S. was a signatory, which had attempted to outlaw war. The pressure worked to an extent. In August 1935, Secretary of State Cordell Hull asked American diplomats in London and Paris to find out whether or not the United States could help in the peace process. On August 19, 1935, President Roosevelt got involved and sent a message to Italian Premier Benito Mussolini calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The U.S. government

gave only minimal rhetorical support to the Ethiopian cause, but support for Ethiopia among African Americans and others continued throughout the war, although it waned by the war's end in 1936. Many African Americans and peace activists continued to oppose the Italian takeover of Ethiopia throughout the late 1930s, and these diehards remained hopeful for the return of the Ethiopian empire, which came about in 1941.

*See also:* African Diaspora; Black Nationalism; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Pan-Africanism; Selassie, Haile

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## Evers, Medgar

Medgar Evers (1925–1963) was a prominent Mississippi civil rights leader who pushed for black equality without confrontation. Assassinated in June 1963, at the young age of 37, Evers became a national hero for African Americans across the United States.

Medgar Wiley Evers was born on July 2, 1925 in Decatur, Mississippi. He was born into a typical Southern farming family. His father James and his mother Jessie raised him and his six brothers and sisters to be self-sufficient, hard working, and proud. Throughout his younger years, Evers was taught the importance of education. Although most southern farming families took their children out of school during the harvesting season, the Everses did not. In 1942, Evers dropped out of Newton High School to join the army. After spending a few years in the service, he returned to Newton in 1947 to complete his high school degree. In the

same year, Evers successfully voted in the local county election. He had attempted to vote the year before, but was unsuccessful because of white opposition.

After completing high school, Evers enrolled in Alcorn State University, one of only two black universities in Mississippi. Although many African Americans chose a path in teaching, Evers decided to take a different and more radical route, as a business major. At Alcorn, Medgar met his future wife Myrlie Beasley. On Christmas Eve 1951 the two married. The next year Evers graduated from Alcorn. He was instantly hired by a newly created black business—Magnolia Mutual Insurance Company.

While employed by the insurance company, Evers spent most of his time visiting poor black sharecroppers and other southern black families in an attempt to sell them insurance. Medgar always defied the white power structure, but it was not until his experience with the poor blacks of Mississippi that Evers became more directly involved in the civil rights struggles of blacks in the South. Seeing the dreadful conditions of many of the poor southern blacks Evers immediately joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP, founded in 1909, was one of the most prominent civil rights organizations in the country. The NAACP, however, did not have a Mississippi branch. Evers's efforts changed this. By 1953 the NAACP had 21 branches in Mississippi.

Mississippi was a strongly segregated southern state. Even after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school segregation unconstitutional, segregation remained strong in Mississippi. To test the *Brown* decision, Evers applied to the University of Mississippi Law School but was denied admission on the basis of his race. Evers fought for admission but was unsuccessful, and the university remained segregated. Despite this setback, the NAACP, impressed with Evers's actions, awarded him the newly created position of field secretary for the state of Mississippi. In this position, Evers became the national NAACP's representative for the state of Mississippi.

With the NAACP, Evers worked emphatically to educate blacks and bring them the right to vote. When segregation continued to run rampant in Mississippi, Evers encouraged blacks to patronize only black-owned businesses. This angered many whites throughout the state. In 1962, James Meredith applied to the University of Mississippi Law School. Meredith was originally denied admittance, but he fought, with the support of Evers and the NAACP, and was

awarded admission in September,—a privilege denied to Evers eight years earlier.

Evers's high position with the NAACP and support of black equality decreased his standing within the white community. Increasingly whites in Mississippi were becoming more and more hostile to him. In May 1963, Evers's home was firebombed. Evers was at a nearby church when the firebombing occurred, but his wife Myrlie and their three children, Darrell, Rena, and Van, were at home. The firebombing was deemed an assassination attempt on Evers's life. Nevertheless, he continued in his civil rights battles. The next month, on June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was shot in front of his home after returning home from a civil rights rally. He died within an hour.

More than 4,000 people came to Evers's funeral both to honor and remember the civil rights activist who died for the battle he fought. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Eleven days after Evers's assassination, Byron de la Beckwith was arrested and charged with the murder of Medgar Evers. Beckwith was tried twice by all-white juries and both cases ended in mistrial. Despite strong evidence incriminating Beckwith, neither jury could unanimously decide Beckwith's guilt or innocence. The case was dropped and Beckwith was released. In 1989, evidence surfaced that the juries of the first two trials were tampered with. Consequently, in February 1994, a third trial was held with a biracial jury. This time Beckwith was found guilty of the murder of Medgar Evers.

Evers may not have lived to see the civil rights advances he had long fought for, but he played a large role in bringing them about. His untimely death increased the popularity of the Civil Rights movement. Furthermore, as one of the first martyrs of the cause, his death angered many blacks in the South. No longer would blacks be afraid to stand up against their white counterparts. Instead, the majority of blacks decided to stand up against their opposition and demand equality. On July 2, 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. Similarly, in August 1965, a Voting Rights Act was passed. With these two acts, Evers's battle had been won. Blacks in both Mississippi and across the nation were awarded the civil rights they had long fought for.

*See also:* Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; World War II (Black Participation in)

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## Exoduster Movement

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The push for southern blacks to move to Liberia or the mass migration of blacks to the northern United States, otherwise known as the Great Migration, are the most well-known attempts at mass relocation by blacks. Yet, in 1879–1881, approximately 20,000 blacks from southern states such as Mississippi, Louisiana, and primarily Tennessee, moved to Kansas seeking opportunities and hoping to escape the racial discrimination they experienced in the post-Civil War South. Today, little remains of the dozens of towns that these black migrants founded. These migrating blacks were known as “Exodusters.” This term drew parallels between the experiences of the Hebrews who left Egypt in search of freedom and the Promised Land with that of blacks who fled the South for their own “Promised Land” in Kansas.

Although the Exoduster movement officially began in 1879, it really began when Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which, in essence, freed the slaves. Although most slaves desperately wanted freedom, a vast majority of the former enslaved had no formal education, were illiterate, had no financial resources, and had nowhere to go. As a result, a number of former enslaved negotiated deals with their former masters that allowed them to stay on the land and share in the profits from the crops produced. These deals greatly benefited the southern landowners, many of who were left destitute after the war and were unable to afford to hire employees to work their land. This tenant farming system was also known as a land-tenant system or sharecropping.

It was nearly impossible for sharecroppers to make a profit in this system. Similarly, the option for them to own land and/or open their own business was a difficult venture, if not impossible in many areas. If they owned the land or had their own businesses, whites routinely harassed them. To secure freedom for southern blacks, a number of leaders emerged to ensure that black men were able to exercise their voting rights and not be tormented by whites.

A growing number of black leaders believed that leaving the South would provide blacks with opportunities and a true sense of freedom. Two key leaders that emerged were Henry Adams of Louisiana and Benjamin “Pap” Singleton of Tennessee.

Henry Adams was born a slave in 1843 in Georgia. His initial foray into politics occurred in 1870 when he voted Republican for the first time. At the time, a vast majority of black men voted Republican, as that was the party of Lincoln and the party that gave the most amount of aid to the poor. He did not think of himself as a political activist, yet Adams encouraged blacks not to vote for the Democratic Party, as they would have their rights slowly diminished and would eventually become slaves again.

In 1875, Adams attended a conference in New Orleans with a number of black ministers and leaders. Their goal was to come up with solutions for the increasing debt that black sharecroppers were accumulating, which prevented them from owning their own land. Blacks also faced staunch opposition when exercising their voting rights. This delegation, otherwise known as The Committee, decided that leaving the South for other parts of the United States, U.S. territories, or Liberia was their best option. Adams and other members of The Committee traveled throughout Louisiana, Texas, and other southern states and found a number of blacks who were willing to leave the South if their voices were not heard in the election of 1876.

The Republican defeat in the 1876 Louisiana state elections was the catalyst that encouraged The Committee to begin preparations to emigrate from the South. The Committee became known as The Colonization Council. Almost 100,000 blacks from Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana agreed to move to either Liberia or an American territory if President Hayes agreed to the petition to have the federal government pay for the relocation.

This was not the first time that blacks sought to emigrate from the United States. In 1817, the American Colonization Society was organized by whites to encourage freed blacks to move to Liberia. Adams began to solicit aid from the American Colonization Society in 1877 after his requests for aid from President Hayes and Congress went ignored. In 1878, The Colonization Council made attempts to travel to Liberia to inspect it; however, they could not raise enough funds to do so. When it became apparent that neither The Colonization Council nor the individuals emigrating would be able to afford the move to Liberia, their

travel options became limited to the United States. Henry Adams began to lose popularity and slowly began to fade from the limelight; however, he was able to encourage thousands of blacks to leave the South for more opportunity elsewhere and many moved to Kansas.

Tired of the treatment that blacks were experiencing, Benjamin “Pap” Singleton began encouraging them to leave their homelands. Unlike other black political leaders, such as Henry Adams, however, Singleton did not think that Liberia was a practical option, and he encouraged blacks to move to Kansas instead. Singleton realized that leaving the South was imperative for black liberation.

Pap Singleton, the central figure in the Exoduster movement, was born a slave in 1809 and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. Singleton eventually escaped slavery and fled to Ontario, Canada, and later to Detroit. While in Detroit, he regularly helped fugitive slaves escape to Canada. Longing for Tennessee, however, he moved back to Nashville after the end of the Civil War. Not much is known about his early life; however, in his early seventies, Singleton began the tireless fight to encourage blacks to leave the South to find more opportunities elsewhere. Singleton did not try to politically mobilize the blacks in Tennessee. The state of Tennessee was far more Democratic and had a significantly smaller black population than other southern states where active attempts at political mobilization were made. Instead, Singleton began to encourage blacks to purchase their own farmlands. In 1874, Singleton helped to form the Edgefield Real Estate Association. This would be quite difficult to do in Tennessee, however, where whites routinely overcharged for the land and refused to sell to black farmers. As a result, Singleton saw more opportunity in the prairie lands of the Midwestern states, especially in Kansas.

Singleton was drawn to Kansas because of the 1862 Homestead Act signed by Abraham Lincoln. This act encouraged farmers to begin to settle the western states and decreed that any American citizen could have up to 160 acres. Having visited Kansas earlier in 1873, in what was then Cherokee County, Singleton thought it the perfect place for blacks in Tennessee to move to. Consequently, in 1875, Singleton later renamed his organization, Edgefield Real Estate and Homestead Association (EREHA). Singleton also firmly believed that racial equality would not be achieved in Tennessee until the blacks were removed from the land and whites were forced to live without blacks, then realizing the importance that blacks played in the area.

Singleton and Columbus M. Johnson, a black minister from Nashville and his EREHA co-founder, began by contacting Tennessee politicians to aid in the cost of transportation for the blacks who wanted to leave for Kansas. After no response from these politicians, Singleton and Johnson began to hold meetings open to blacks and whites, explaining the importance of the plan and to raise enough money for those interested in moving. So much money was raised, in fact, that in 1879, the EREHA began to leave Tennessee with black homesteaders for southern Kansas. Once settled, they incorporated a town they called Singleton Colony near the town of Dunlap in Morris County, Kansas. Approximately 2,400 settlers moved to Singleton Colony, and most of them lived in tents and other makeshift housing.

As word of the Exoduster movement spread, blacks from states such as Louisiana, Missouri, Illinois, Texas, Indiana, and Mississippi joined those from Tennessee in Kansas. Although those blacks were not associated with those from Tennessee, Singleton and the Exodusters from Tennessee helped the movers from other states, especially when white settlers emphasized they did not want so many blacks moving to Kansas.

Singleton testified before the United State Senate in 1880. He told of the poor conditions that led to the migration to Kansas and the success of the black colonies in Kansas, making him the most well-known figure in the Exoduster movement or the “father of the Kansas migration.” As much as Singleton wanted to retire and let his colleagues handle the Exodusters, he realized that, although in his seventies, it was his job to remove blacks from Tennessee until the whites there could learn to appreciate them and to then lead them back to Tennessee. Singleton did not retire. Instead, he helped to organize United Colored Links (UCL) in Tennessee Town, a town outside of Topeka named for the large number of blacks who moved from Tennessee. Among the goals of the UCL was racial equality in the United States. After working with the local Republican Party and even Greenback Party presidential candidate James B. Weaver, the UCL was disassembled.

When the UCL failed, Singleton was so discouraged that he decided to encourage blacks to move to Cypress, off the coast of Greece. Later he worked to encourage blacks to move back to Africa. In 1889, Singleton called for Oklahoma to be reserved for blacks; however, soon afterwards, he, too, faded from the limelight and died in 1892.

Throughout the 1870s, blacks began moving to Kansas, but the zeal with which Singleton spoke of migrating to another place certainly inspired blacks to leave states such as Tennessee and Missouri. In fact, more blacks migrated to Kansas during the 1870s than they did during the migration years of 1879–1881. Among the first black colonies, Nicodemus, a black colony founded by colonists from Kentucky in 1877, was thriving when Singleton began the move to Kansas.

In 1878, the Hinds County *Gazette* in Kansas tried to encourage blacks to move to Kansas. Also, the *Colored Citizen*, a black publication based in Kansas, reported on the families who had moved to Kansas and described their positive experiences. As more and more blacks came to settle in Kansas, word spread back to their original homelands telling their friends and family about the opportunities in Kansas. Unlike Nebraska and the other Midwestern states, Kansas played an important role in abolitionist John Brown's battle against slavery and slave states. During the 1850s, this struggle, known as "Bleeding Kansas," took the lives of dozens of people, but Kansas became known as a place where people fought for equality and freedom and a place where blacks had opportunity.

For the most part, although blacks moved to Kansas on their own in large numbers beginning in the early 1870s, and a more organized move followed with Singleton's push to Kansas, the Republican Kansas government never officially welcomed them to the state. Kansas extended the same call to black migrants as they did to whites who were planning the move out West. Although blacks were largely settled in Nicodemus and Singleton Colony, they soon spread throughout Kansas to cities such as Dodge City and Topeka.

As more Exodusters moved to Kansas, many were unable to afford the long trip. Many had a difficult time leaving their home state or even making it past St. Louis, Missouri. There was no free transportation or even free land. These migrants were unable to continue the trip into Kansas. As a result, a number of Exodusters were forced to stay in St. Louis, in what became known as "the Red Sea." Nonetheless, many communities in Kansas continue to have thriving black communities as a result of the thousands of blacks who left the South for Kansas.

See also: Nicodemus, Kansas; Singleton, Benjamin "Pap"; Wells-Barnett, Ida

*Angelique Harris*

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### Fanon, Frantz

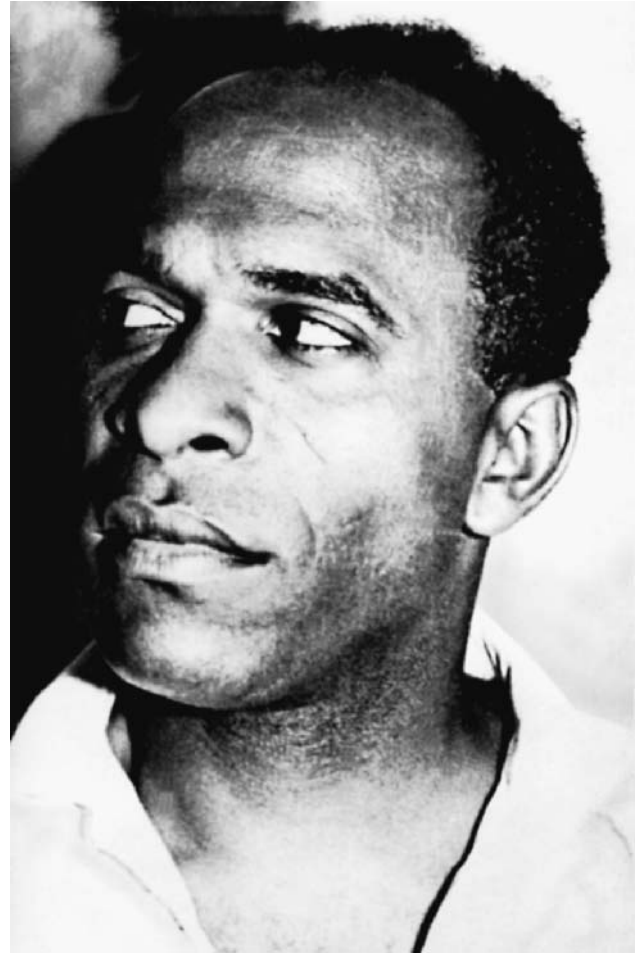
Dr. Frantz Fanon (1925–1961) was a psychiatrist, cultural critic, political theorist and diplomat who published on issues of black identity, decolonization, nationalism, and psychology and devoted much of his professional career to fighting for the freedom of Algeria from French colonial rule. Born in Fort-de-France on the island of Martinique in the West Indies in 1925, Fanon was the son of a civil servant and a shopkeeper, whose combined income made them comfortable members of the majority black middle class. Fanon attended French state school where he learned the virtues of the French language, literature, philosophy, and worldview. At the school in Fort-de-France, Fanon studied under Aimé Césaire, who would become a well-known negritude poet and local politician. In 1944, Fanon enlisted in a small battalion of Antillean soldiers and boarded a ship bound for France to fight beside the allies in World War II. He was wounded later that year in France and received a medal for his bravery. Fanon spent his convalescence near Lyon where he would return to study after the war. After completing his formal education in Martinique, Fanon again left for France and, in 1947, entered the school of medicine and pharmacology at the University of Lyon on a government scholarship that granted veterans free tuition and living stipends.

Fanon began work on his first book, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*) around the time he entered the university. It characterizes his early development as a thinker and his awakening to the meaning behind the subtle racial categorization he experienced as a marginalized subject at home and even more poignantly in France. First published in 1952, *Peau noire, masques blancs* combines elements of literary and social criticism, philosophy, and phenomenology with a psychology of race relations, paying particular attention to the situation of Martinique and its black, French middle-class mentality.

Fanon completed his studies in 1951 with a specialization in psychiatry, began clinical work the same year, and married Marie-Joséphine Dublé in 1952. In 1953, Fanon passed the competitive postgraduate qualifying exams that made him a doctor of psychiatry. He took a position in Algeria as the *Chef de service* at the Blida-Joinville psychiatric clinic. While working on his dissertation and in his clinical practice in Lyon, Fanon had treated many North Africans and this, combined with a brief period of training he spent there while in the army, convinced him that there was much humanitarian work awaiting him in the French colony.

In Algeria, Fanon was confronted by a corrupt, indoctrinated, and malpractice-ridden French medical institution that was at best held highly suspect in the eyes of the Algerian citizens. Nevertheless, Fanon diligently worked at his practice, testing experimental methods of social therapy to determine the specific needs of his Algerian clientele and to develop his own firsthand understanding of the extent of psychological pathology produced by colonialism. A year after Fanon's arrival in Blida, the Algerian revolution officially began, and as early as 1955, Fanon started to aid the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), one of the Algerian nationalist groups that led the armed insurrection against French colonial rule, by providing services for them at the hospital. In 1956, as the war escalated and Fanon's participation with the FLN became more involved and publicly suspect, it became clear that continuing his psychiatric practice under any semblance of normal operation was out of the question. Later that year, Fanon officially resigned from his post in Blida and entered exile, not only from Algeria, but also from France and any hope of professional involvement in the French medical community.

Fanon settled in Tunis, where the FLN had set up its operations and where Fanon could work as a psychiatrist in top hospitals and lecture at the university. He was also able to openly write for the FLN's paper *El Moudjahid*, later becoming a spokesman for the party. In 1958, the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (GPRA) formed to lead the nation until independence, and Fanon began to represent the FLN and the GPRA on the international stage, most notably at the All-African People's Congress in Accra. In 1959, on a trip to Morocco to reorganize the FLN's medical services in the west, Fanon suffered a spinal injury in a car accident and subsequently dodged an assassination



*Frantz Fanon was a leading ideologist of the anticolonial and Pan-Africanist movements of the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to his intellectual contributions to colonial liberation movements around the world, he also worked with the National Liberation Front during Algeria's struggle for independence. (Algerian Ministry of Information)*

attempt in an Italian hospital, but he was back in Tunis less than a month later meeting on FLN policy issues.

Fanon published his second book, *L'An V de la Révolution algérienne (Year V of the Algerian Revolution)* later that year, which contained short studies of five aspects of the war. In 1960, the GPRA sent Fanon to Accra to permanently head a delegation representing them in sub-Saharan Africa, and he traveled all over Francophone Africa in an effort to garner support for the Algerian cause. In late 1960, Fanon was diagnosed with leukemia and underwent treatment in Russia and finally the United States, where he died on December 6, 1961. His body was flown back to Tunis, snuck across the border, and buried on Algerian soil to remain there as a martyr of the revolution.

Fanon's final book, *Les Damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*), appeared just before his death and was an impassioned defense of third-world struggle for equality and independence. Much of Fanon's corpus has been published since his death, and his legacy has had a tremendous impact on political thought, cultural criticism, and race theory over the last 45 years. His ideas are still at the forefront of academic debates in various disciplines.

See also: African Imperialism

Matthew Evans Teti

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## Farrakhan, Louis

Minister Louis Farrakhan (1933–) was the principal architect of the Million Man March and is the current leader of the Nation of Islam. Farrakhan was born Louis Eugene Walcott in 1933 in Bronx, New York. His mother raised him in Roxbury Massachusetts. He adopted the surname, Farrakhan after his conversion to Islam. In his youth, Farrakhan's greatest ambition was to attend New York's Julliard School of Music. Although he was a talented singer, he was denied admission to the prestigious institution. As an alternative, he enrolled at a teachers colleges for African Americans located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Within a few years, he withdrew from the college and became a calypso singer in a Boston nightclub. He was nicknamed "The Charmer."

Throughout the earlier part of his life, Farrakhan was a devout member of the Episcopal Church. In 1955, however, having grown disillusioned with the presumed "hatred" that white Christians showed toward black Christians, he severed his church affiliation. Frustrated with the racial inequality that persisted throughout the United States during

this period, Farrakhan began seeking an alternative religious and spiritual outlet. During the early 20th century, many African Americans began aligning themselves with the black nationalist movement. The movement in America was chiefly designed to eradicate the "race problem" of the 20th century. Some nationalists, including members of the Nation of Islam (NOI), purported that abolition of white supremacy would include the defrayal of a separate space whereby blacks could control their economic, social, and political fate through "external emigration" to Africa or by disconnecting from the white masses in the United States. Farrakhan's initial reaction to the black nationalist agenda, and specifically the NOI, was one of disinterest.

At first glance, Farrakhan regarded the NOI as a peculiar and undesirable resolve to his animosity for the prejudice and discrimination persistent in the Christian church. On meeting Malcolm X, former NOI spokesperson and influential religious leader, in 1955, however, his feelings permanently changed. Farrakhan was immediately drawn to Malcolm's rhetorical abilities and within a short time, he enlisted in the NOI. Malcolm X began to train minister Farrakhan and, after Malcolm X's assassination in 1965, Farrakhan ascended as the NOI's primary representative and became minister of New York's temple number seven where Malcolm X had been preaching.

After the death of Elijah Muhammad, the original leader of the NOI from 1934–1975, the organization fell to the leadership of his son, Wallace Muhammad. Wallace Muhammad was a Sunni Muslim who sought to integrate the organization with orthodox Islamic values. To revitalize and reform the original precepts of the NOI, and to refurbish the socialization process that the organization was noted for, Farrakhan broke away from Muhammad's "new nation" in 1978. He subsequently began establishing another branch of the NOI modeled after the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and Master Farad Muhammad, the original founder of the NOI. Elijah Muhammad had been trained by Farad Muhammad who believed that African Americans were the original members of the *Tribe of Shabazz*, wrongfully exploited and enslaved in the United States. Farad is revered by NOI members as a prophet sent by God to teach African Americans a thorough and "true" knowledge of themselves and God.

With the NOI physically and ideologically splintered, Farrakhan assumed the arduous task of attempting to rebuild the NOI as it existed before the break. He successfully

secured a large following and gained the interest of members of the African American community, just as his predecessors had attempted to do. Throughout his career, he has enjoyed monumental successes. His newspaper, *The Final Call*, was established in 1979 and modeled after Elijah Muhammad's *Muhammad Speaks*. The newspaper has a circulation of more than 500,000 per edition. Farrakhan has participated in numerous political, religious, and civic organizations and has become an international voice to promote peace and enfranchisement for marginalized groups in America and abroad. The building of the Salaam restaurant in Chicago in 1995 and the expansion of Muhammad Farms, a black-owned independent agricultural system, are also included among his successes.

Farrakhan has enjoyed an extensive career and continues to add to his record colossal achievements including the 1995 Million Man March. The march represented one of the largest assemblies of African Americans in U.S. history. It was designed to inspire black men about atonement, reconciliation, hard work, and responsibility, bringing them together to make solemn oaths to be better husbands, fathers, sons, and citizens. The televised event challenged the viewing public to analyze their social and racial perspectives. After the march there was a tremendous increase in voter registration among African Americans, as well as church and mosque memberships.

In 2000, Farrakhan organized the Million Family March to fulfill similar objectives as the Million Man March and to bring African American families together in harmony. Both marches were intended to be different from the civil rights demonstrations of the 1950s. NOI officials purposefully designed the marches to focus on blacks helping themselves without interracial cooperation.

Much like his forbear, Elijah Muhammad, Farrakhan is considered one of the most controversial African American religious leaders to date. Holding fast to the tenets of black nationalism, much of Farrakhan's vision is geared toward racial solidarity, uplift, and self-efficacy. He is often scrutinized for his *radical* beliefs and charged with being anti-Semitic. Nonetheless, Farrakhan has situated himself in U.S. history as one of its most ardent and influential leaders.

See also: Black Nationalism; Million Man March; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; X, Malcolm

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## Father Divine

Father Divine (1877?–1965), born George Baker, founded an interracial religious community called Father Divine's International Peace Mission Movement that came to prominence in America in the 1930s. Many of the details of George Baker's life before becoming Father Divine are disputed. Most sources cite his birthplace as Savannah, Georgia in 1877 or Rockville, Maryland in 1879, but legal documents state that he was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1880. Members of the Peace Mission Movement, however, mark June 6, 1882 as the date of his first marriage to Peninniah. As a child, his mother, Nancy Baker, took him and his siblings to Jerusalem Methodist Church. After his mother died in May 1897, Baker's whereabouts are largely unknown until 1899, when he attended a series of storefront churches in Baltimore and, in 1902, did missionary work in the South.

Divine was influenced by a number of religious thinkers and events including Charles Fillmore's Unity School of Christianity and the Azusa Street Revival in 1906. In 1907, he joined a Baptist storefront in Baltimore, whose leader, Samuel Morris, referred to himself as Father Jehovia. Shortly thereafter, Baker became known as the Messenger. As Baker's oratorical skills grew and his number of followers swelled, he began to assert that he was the only incarnation of the divine. By 1912, Baker had formed his own ministry, leaving Baltimore for Georgia. Baker clashed often with the local ministers and was arrested several times for vagrancy and "lunacy" based on the observations of outsiders that his religious services were too enthusiastic and practiced glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. After traveling around



the country, in 1917, Baker settled in New York, specifically a mostly white community, Sayville in Suffolk County, Long Island, and took the name the Reverend Major Jealous Divine. In addition to Divine's teachings and writings, which were considered sacred, members followed the *International Modest Code* that prohibited tobacco, alcohol, and profanity and established dress codes for men and women. Divine had a diverse following that included both African Americans and whites, and members of the upper and lower class. At the height of the movement, the community had about 50,000 members.

On November 15, 1931, responding to a disturbing the peace complaint, officers arrested 80 members attending Divine's service. Fifty-five members pleaded guilty and paid a \$5 fine. Father Divine and others pleaded not guilty and stood trial. Most were found guilty and were forced to pay the fine. Justice Lewis J. Smith sentenced Divine to a year in jail and a \$500 fine. Two days later, an apparently healthy Smith died of cardiac arrest. For many of Divine's followers, the event confirmed his divinity. A new trial was ordered, but never took place. After 33 days, Divine was released from jail.

Divine's Peace Mission Movement opened hotels, restaurants, stores, and many other businesses, while providing jobs, housing, and free meals during the dire Depression years. Divine became famous for his elaborate "Love Feasts," communion banquets, and services. In the mid-1930s, Divine moved his community to Harlem. In January 1936, Divine issued his "Righteous Government Platform," which called for the elimination of racial segregation, lynching, and capital punishment and advocated for additional government funds to end unemployment and poverty. In 1940, the movement petitioned for more stringent federal prosecution of lynching. Throughout his ministry, Divine had a number of accusations leveled against him including racketeering charges; however, the movement grew steadily in the 1930s, with more than 150 communities across the country.

After the death of his first wife, Divine married Edna Rose Ritchings, also known as Sweet Angel, on April 29, 1946. After the wedding, she assumed the title of Mother Divine. In 1947, the community moved to Woodmount, a suburb in Philadelphia. While the community held a variety of beliefs and practices, they emphasized racial and gender equality, patriotism to the United States, economic independence, and celibacy. As his health declined, Father Divine put institutional structures in place for the continuation of the movement such as developing new orders with

their own codes of conduct such as the "Rosebuds" for young girls, "Lily-buds" for women, and "Crusaders" for men. Despite his death on September 10, 1965, the community was able to continue under the direction of Mother Divine. Mother Divine currently handles the affairs of the community from Woodmont, which still operates several businesses. Their newspaper the *New Day*, which appeared weekly during the 1930s, suspended publication in 1992; however, Father Divine's teachings and writings remain sacred to his followers. There are currently several hundred members of the Peace Mission Movement, with the largest communities in Philadelphia and Newark, but there are followers across the United States and around the world.

*See also:* Destination, Harlem, New York; Evangelism

Julius H. Bailey

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## Fifteenth Amendment

Most Americans take voting for granted, but the right to vote was not given to African Americans, women, and American Indians until sustained legislative and legal battles had been fought. The first such victory was the enactment of the Fifteenth Amendment. Passed by Congress on February 26, 1869 and ratified on March 30, 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited states from denying the right to vote (to African American males) on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

The Fifteenth Amendment was a catalyst of suffrage extensions. Tracing the evolution of American voting rights, it took a half-century to extend this same right to women under the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, with American Indians receiving the right to vote in 1924. Not surprisingly, the Fifteenth Amendment's color-blind language ("race, color, or previous condition of servitude") was acutely color-conscious. Thus, one lingering "badge of slavery" was what one might call "political slavery," in the sense that blacks, prior to the Fifteenth Amendment (and after),

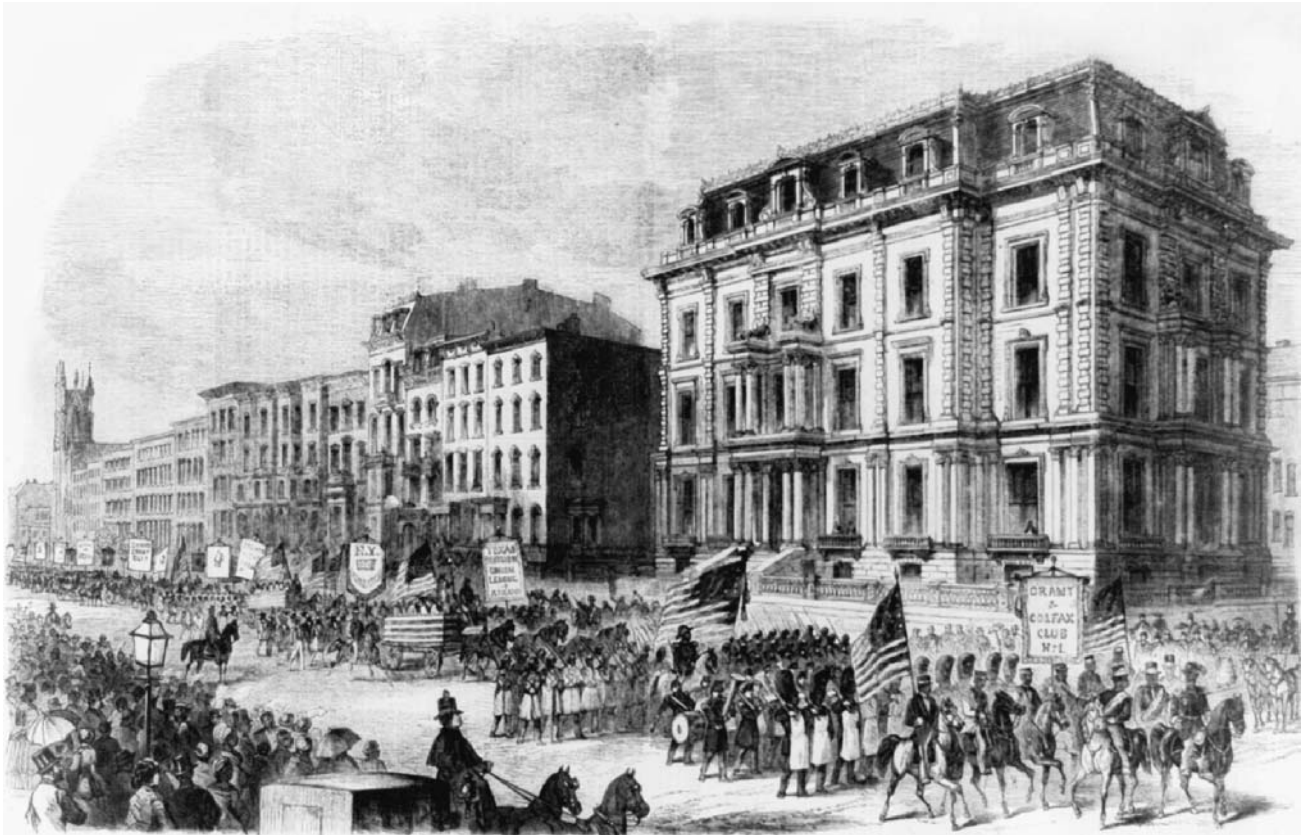
were barred from balloting, had no political representation, and perforce followed the laws of the white political establishment. In 1870, African Americans comprised around 10 percent of the nation's population (an estimated 4,000,000 out of 40,000,000). African Americans make up 14 per cent of Americans today, along with an equal number of Hispanic Americans.

Civil rights must first be recognized in principle. Then they must be realized in practice. After slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, the question of the right of blacks to vote had ignited a national controversy. In spite of the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment five years later, it took nearly a century to effectively enforce it under the Voting Rights Act (1965), which is the most successful civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress. This follows a pattern whereby the Civil War Amendments were not fully implemented until civil rights acts had been passed and enforced by direct federal intervention.

Partisan politics played a major role in establishing universal suffrage among African American men. Three years

before ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867, requiring Southern states to grant blacks suffrage rights. Yet in 1868, 11 of the 21 Northern states denied blacks the right to vote. This was not simply a regional problem. It was national in scope and called for a nationwide solution. Amending the Constitution was the surest way to enact this legislative reform. As the law of the land, the Fifteenth Amendment was binding on all states. Yet they were not bound by it for historical reasons. The Southern states were forced to accept what they had long opposed, for the simple reason that they were obliged to ratify both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as a condition to their readmission into the Union after the Civil War.

The Southern states ratified these constitutional reforms grudgingly. While the Confederacy lost the Civil War, Southern states gained national power. The way that they exercised that power was to effectively deconstruct Reconstruction. After Reconstruction, Southern states did not honor the Fifteenth Amendment. Instead, they did all within their power to systematically disenfranchise blacks



*African Americans march in New York City on April 8, 1870, in celebration of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment, which gave African American men the right to vote, was adopted by Congress on February 26, 1869, and officially ratified on March 30, 1870. (Library of Congress)*

through imposing literacy and character tests (“voter qualifying tests”), registration and poll tax requirements, along with white primaries, grandfather clauses, outright racial gerrymandering, and other restrictive devices, thereby rendering the Fifteenth Amendment a dead letter in a living document. Later, in *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649 (1944), the Supreme Court found that voting rights discrimination in primaries was unconstitutional on the basis of the Fifteenth Amendment. In *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, 383 U.S. 301 (1966), the Supreme Court held that Congress, in enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment through the Voting Rights Act of 1865, may prohibit literacy tests in an effort to eliminate racial discrimination in voting. Notwithstanding such judicial enforcement, a paradox of national-historical proportions is this: Not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 could the majority of African Americans in the South register to vote.

See also: Disfranchisement; Radical Republicans; Voting Rights Act 1965

Christopher Buck

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## Five Percenters

The Nation of Gods and Earths (NGE) is the official name of an organization popularly known as the Five Percenters. Headquartered in Harlem, with members in major cities

across the United States, the organization originated as a splinter group that broke away from the Nation of Islam (NOI) circa 1964, under the leadership of Clarence Jowers Smith, who is better known by his NOI alias, Clarence 13 X and his nickname “Puddin.” The latter moniker so-called attested to his legendary powers of persuasion. He was a gifted conversationalist with a hypnotic speaking style. Thus in street parlance his “rap,” or “game” was so sweet and smooth that people would swallow his words like pudding. The organization’s official name stems from the designation of male members as “Gods” and female members as “Earths” (analogous to the familiar gendered constructions “God the Father” and “Mother Earth”). The popular name is derived from the members’ belief that 85 percent of humanity are mentally dead, uncivilized slaves who are unaware of their true identity or the true God; 10 percent are the wealthy enslavers of the poor who use lies to teach that the true and living God is an invisible, ghostlike “spook,” and that they, in contrast, are the 5 percent of humanity who are the poor righteous teachers who do not believe in the teachings of the 10 percent and who know and teach that the Living God is the Asiatic black man.

These beliefs come directly from the *Lessons* of the NOI, the catechism-like sets of questions and answers (Q & A) that all NOI members must master (e.g., “Who is the Original Man? The Original Man is the Asiatic Black Man, the Maker, the Owner, the Cream of the Planet Earth, the father of Civilization, and God of the Universe.”) The NGE, as an offshoot of the NOI, retains many of the NOI’s teachings and heterodox Islamic beliefs, chief among them the idea that God (Allah) exists in a human form, an anathema to orthodox (Sunni and Shi’a) Muslims for whom *shirk* (associating partners with God) is the most grievous and unpardonable sin. There are several contrasts between the NOI and NGE, however. Diverging from the NOI’s creed that Allah appeared in the person of Master W. D. Fard (also known as W. D. Farrad and Farrad Muhammad), the mysterious Middle Eastern peddler who was mentor of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the NGE holds that it is not Fard Muhammad who is Allah but the black man collectively. While the NOI proclaims that it is a religious organization, and has made attempts to mainstream some of its deviant beliefs and practices so that they are in more in alignment with the orthodox Muslim world, the NGE adamantly states that it is not a religious organization, and the members do not consider themselves Muslims but gods. While

a Black Muslim takes on the letter X appended before his or her surname to indicate his “ex-slave name,” as well as his unknown African or Asiatic name, the Gods adopt divine or “righteous” names such as “Universal God Allah,” “Born Islam,” “Allah Supreme,” “Eternal Allah,” or even “Bismillah” (a transliteration of the Qur’anic [Koranic] invocation translated as “In the Name of Allah”). While the NOI has a prominent or highly visible charismatic leader, the Minister Louis Farrakhan, who maintains a tight paramilitary chain of command through the Fruit of Islam (FOI) and has a uniform dress code, the NGE has a very loose organizational structure, with no formal leader and a very relaxed style of dress. Unlike the NOI, which witnessed a struggle for leadership upon the death of “the Messenger,” Elijah Muhammad, since the mysterious, unsolved murder of “the Father,” Clarence Puddin’ 13X, in 1969 there have been no claimants to his mantle of leadership, although the Father’s close comrade Justice and the First Nine Born (first nine followers of the Father) held a place of esteem. In recent years (circa 2000), a position entitled national spokesperson has been created, but a highly centralized leadership is eschewed, as it is not in keeping with the philosophy that each of the (male) members is a god. Absent also are the small business enterprises (restaurants, bakeries, barber-shops, etc) of the NOI; although the NGE stresses the importance of individual entrepreneurship, actual economic development exists primarily at the street vending level. Finally, and perhaps most important, the NGE appeals to a much younger population than the NOI, recruiting many of its new members when they are adolescents. Although many recruits from decades past have remained with the organization for life, celebrating 50th and 60th birthdays as proud members of the NGE, the strength and character of the NGE are that it is a youth-oriented organization. Its social mission is to save the inner-city youth from violence, drug abuse, criminalization, and incarceration. The ranks of the organization are swollen with members who are under the age of 30. This demographic characteristic has a bearing on all the facets of the organization: divine names, loose organizational structure, informal dress code, and vendor-level business operations, as well as the organization’s fascination with mastery of the spoken word or “rap” for which Clarence Puddin’ 13X was famous.

Hip-hop culture has long been intertwined with Five Percenter ideology, and the appeal the NGE exerts on disenfranchised African American youth is the uncanny gift

of gab that was the “Father’s” legacy. Unexcelled as masters of the inner-city black idiom, Five Percenters can only be described as eloquent, mesmerizing, and spell-binding in their usage of Ebonics or African American inner city slang. Using the potency and the vitality of the black dialect, they open up new avenues of logic and thinking, or original ways of perceiving the world. As an expression of awe and wonderment at their verbal agility and conceptual ingenuity, NOI members refer to the Five Percenters as “scientists” because “they science out the *Lessons*,” i.e., because the Five Percenters provide elaborate and insightful commentary on catechism *Lessons* they inherited from the NOI. The central theme of the *Lessons* is the allegorical tale of the rise, fall, and eventual resurrection or reascension of a self-created race of black gods. The downfall of their highly advanced divine civilization was due to the machinations of Yakub, a disgruntled evil scientific genius, who, with the aid of his followers, created or “grafted” a genetically mutated race of white devils who were destined to rule over the black man for 6,000 years. While the NOI and the NGE share the same *Lessons* texts, the NGE’s unique contribution to the understanding of the texts is its extensive and unique brand of word-play commentary, which has its foundations in a numerology known as the Supreme Mathematics and occult science of letters known as the Supreme Alphabet. In the context of the Supreme Alphabet, A is Allah, B is Be or Born, C is See, D is Destroy, E is Equal Equality, etc., on down to Y is Why, X is Unknown, and Z is Zig Zag Zig (representing those who stray from the straight path). Using the Supreme Alphabet—and discretionary poetic license—words can be “scienced out” or “broken down” (i.e., analyzed) such that ISLAM means “I Self-Lord Am Master” or “I Surely Love Allah and Mathematics,” whereas ALLAH may be deciphered as “Arm Leg Leg Arm Head” and MAN may be viewed as an acronym for “My Almighty Name,” the esoteric “etymology” of each of these words indicating the NGE belief in the black man’s divine nature or the anthropomorphic nature of God. The Supreme Mathematics is a corresponding numerological system in which 1 is Knowledge, 2 is Wisdom, 3 is Understanding...9 is Born, and 0 is Cipher. Furthermore, an uncanny streetology or street corner logic is an inherent NGE analytical tool, in which, for instance, “knowledge” connotes “know the ledge” (i.e., know one’s limitations); and “wisdom” means “wise the dome” or “wides the dome” (make the head or brain wise or wide). The Five Percenters use this streetology, along with their esoteric Supreme

Mathematics and Supreme Alphabet to “science out the *Lessons*” (profoundly elaborate on the NOI mythology) and thus “show and prove” that they are “gods.” Each “god” has the opportunity to “show and prove” before an audience of hundreds of gods and earths at their lively monthly Sunday afternoon rallies called Parliaments. Earths, whose modest dress and head-covering often mimic that of orthodox Muslim women, take on names such as “Queen Asia Peace Refinement,” or “Everlasting Star Light,” sell dinners at the Parliaments and generally play a subdued wifely and maternal role, each woman revolving around her mate or “god” “as the earth revolves around the sun.” Five Percenter hip-hop artists (see Aidi, 2004 and Allen, 1996) have included Poor Righteous Teachers, Rakim (of Eric B. and Rakim), Big Daddy Kane, Lakim Shabazz, Busta Rhymes, Mobb Deep, and the Wu Tang Clan. Official organs over the decades have included the two defunct newspapers, *Behold The SUN OF MAN* and *The WORD*, and two current newspapers, *The Five Percenter* and *NGE Power*. Dumar Allah is the current national spokesman. The headquarters at 126th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. proclaims the title, The Allah School in Mecca (i.e., Harlem) and is easily recognized by its symbol the numeral 7 (embedded in a stellated circle), which, in the Supreme Mathematics system, stands for Allah.

See also: Black Nationalism; Nation of Islam

Yusuf Nuruddin

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## Fortune, T. Thomas

(Timothy) T. Thomas Fortune (1856–1928) was, arguably, the preeminent African American journalist of the early 20th century. Fortune was born a slave in Marianna,

Florida, on October 3, 1856. Aside from the rudimentary education he received from his father who was a Reconstruction politician, Fortune was largely self-taught and acquired early school training in the South in a variety of sectors. He attended an underdeveloped Freedman’s Bureau school in Florida, and when he was 13, Fortune served as a page in the state senate. (Fortune also possessed strong Anglo-American features that helped facilitate experiences that were fairly uncommon for recently emancipated slaves.) At age 19, Fortune would go on to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C., between 1876 and 1877, but more important, he would meet John Wesley Crommel there who would help launch and inspire Fortune’s career in journalism. At the time of their meeting, Crommel was editor of the *People’s Advocate*; he would go on to assemble the first Colored Press Association convention in 1880 and would become a founding member of Alexander Crummell’s American Negro Academy in 1897. Fortune worked briefly for the versatile Crommel before deciding to move to New York to begin his own storied journalistic career.

When Fortune arrived in New York around 1880, he began working in the printer’s trade for John Dougall’s *Weekly Witness*, a religious paper. Shortly thereafter, he met African Americans whose intellectual interests were similar to his own. One of these was George Parker who had recently begun a little weekly tabloid entitled *The Rumor*. Parker’s tabloid quickly came under financial pressures and Fortune, along with Walter Sampson, who helped secure Fortune’s job at the *Weekly Witness*, worked evenings writing copy and setting type for *The Rumor* while still working for Dougall’s paper in the day. After about a year, by which time he was clearly recognized as a far superior writer and editor to either Parker or Sampson, Fortune became a partner and insisted on changing the paper’s name from *Rumor* to *New York Globe* in July 1881. The *New York Globe* continued operating under the joint partnership of Fortune and Parker. In a short period, the *New York Globe* achieved national prominence and Fortune quickly became the most able African American journalist.

The *New York Globe* was only a four-page weekly and had a staff of able correspondents in many cities in the North and South who reported news of race conditions and political developments related to the race. In keeping with its name, the *New York Globe* thought its mission to be broad and universal in scope—insofar as African American

readership was concerned—and the newspaper sought to provide as much information pertaining to African Americans as possible within its four pages. (Incidentally, the paper was heralded in the white press for Fortune's intelligent editorials and for being remarkably free from the kind of grammatical errors that marked a newly established African American press tradition that was cropping up throughout the nation.) Also, news letters from smaller communities reported local trivia including activities of churches and fraternal organizations. One reporter of such information was the teenager William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. The paper's popularity was singly due to Fortune's editorials. Fortune was vastly admired for his frank expression, intelligent opinion, and, above all else, his sophisticated writing about issues confronting African American life. The ferocity of Fortune's editorials knew no bounds in their denunciation of hindrances facing the African American community.

In spite of his reputation, Fortune never formally secured legal proprietorship, and after the paper was besieged by turmoil, Parker mortgaged the paper without Fortune's knowledge. Shortly thereafter, Fortune was able to reverse his circumstances, and, in 1884, the *New York Globe* became the *New York Freeman* under his sole proprietorship until 1887, when the name was changed to *New York Age*. Fortune left the newspaper briefly to the management of his brother while freelance writing, and upon his brother's death, he resumed as editor. Fred Moore eventually purchased the *New York Age* from Fortune in 1907.

Fortune's tenure was marked by both successes and controversy. In addition to his reputation as a fiercely eloquent editorial writer, his efforts on behalf of African Americans were just as practical. He assisted Ida B. Wells's crusade against lynching by offering her use of the *New York Age* and providing her with contacts when he learned that her newspaper had been burned and that her life was in danger. Fortune's efforts to assist African Americans, particularly women, are also signaled by his participation in the first meeting of the National Federation of Afro-American Women, where he was one of three invited male speakers. Fortune would also rise to the presidency of the Colored Press Association that his former mentor Cromwell organized in the late 1890s. From this position, Fortune became widely recognized as an African American leader of national importance, and his opinions on uplift, religion, education, race, and a host of other issues became well known.

Fortune was brought into contact with, arguably, the most influential African American leader of the early twentieth-century, Booker T. Washington. This relationship would lead to many disappointments in an otherwise stellar career. After their meeting, Washington would begin subsidizing Fortune's *New York Age*, which was viewed by Washington's critics as an endorsement of his accommodationist policies. (Fortune would also serve as Washington's ghost writer on a number of projects.) This relationship would wear on Fortune, for although he agreed with Washington that African Americans were in need of reform, he did not necessarily agree with Washington's unwillingness to fight for social equality. It would prove too difficult to remain ideologically at odds with a benefactor whose money was necessary for his financial security. In choosing the latter, he lost the respect of many of his intellectual cohorts such as Du Bois, and perhaps most important, himself. He withdrew from public life for a period of time, having several bouts with alcoholism. After the unexpected death of Washington, Fortune returned to public life, serving as editor for various newspapers such as the *Colored American Review* and the *Negro World*, organ of Marcus Garvey's UNIA, which Fortune edited until his death in 1928. *See also:* Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Universal Negro Improvement Association; Washington, Booker T.; Wells-Barnett, Ida

Brian Lamont Johnson

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## Forty Acres and a Mule

This phrase refers to the widespread belief that slaves freed after the Civil War were promised by the federal government a parcel of free land (40 acres) and farm animals (a mule) to begin their new lives. The idea is that promise of

the government was broken and that African Americans are, therefore, still owed this debt to the present day. While untrue, the myth embodies the historical resentment of black Americans that slaves were never compensated for their labor as bondsmen, but were simply set free and left to their own devices. It also represents an undeveloped demand for present-day reparations for slavery in the United States.

The origins of the myth are unknown. It appeared among freed slaves immediately after the Civil War and persists until today. Shortly after the fall of Richmond in 1865, a freedman named Cyrus explained the meaning of the Northern victory to his former mistress: “Der ain’t goin’ ter be no more Master and Mistress, Miss Emma. All is equal. I done hear it from de cotehouse steps.... All de land belongs to de Yankees now, and dey gwine to divide it out ‘mong de colored people.” (*Been in the Storm So Long*, p. 399) In November 1865, an official of the Freedmen’s Bureau in Mississippi reported that freed blacks believed that planters’ lands and other properties were to be confiscated and distributed to them by Christmas that same year. Similar rumors circulated at the time among blacks in other parts of the defeated South.

The idea that ex-slaves would receive confiscated lands after the North won the war, although it was advocated by some abolitionists, may have had its origins in Confederate propaganda. The Freedmen’s Bureau blamed such false hopes on precisely that. But in fact, there had been numerous wartime confiscations of Confederate properties, which Union generals and officers had often distributed among freed slaves in numerous states. The most famous of these was “Special Field Order No. 15,” issued January 16, 1865, by which General Sherman, after meeting with a delegation of black ministers, set aside the Carolina Sea Islands; the rice coast south of Charleston, extending 30 miles inland, and the country bordering the St. John’s River, Florida, for the exclusive resettlement of ex-slaves. Each family was to receive 40 acres of land, although there was no mention of animals. The army did in fact assist some settlers with temporary loans of mules. All such ad hoc, wartime grants of land to freedmen were quickly rescinded, however, after the war and after the assassination of Lincoln, by President Andrew Johnson. Johnson issued extensive presidential pardons to white planters that restored to them full rights to all their properties.

The idea that slaves were owed land and mules that were never given to them remains alive in popular culture.

A scene in the film *Gone With the Wind* (1939) shows a carpetbagger promising 40 acres and a mule to ex-slaves. Spike Lee’s production company is named “Forty Acres and a Mule.” Oscar Brown Jr. produced a song entitled “Forty Acres and a Mule” (1964) that wryly demands this compensation plus interest. In his song, “Letter to the President,” (1999) Tupac Shakur asks about 40 acres and a mule. Kanye West’s song “All Falls Down” (2004) mentions 40 acres.

See also: Field Order No. 15

Anthony A. Lee

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## Fourteenth Amendment

The Fourteenth Amendment is among the most important provisions of the United States Constitution. When Americans think of their rights, provisions of the first eight amendments commonly come to mind. What they do not realize, however, is that it is only the Fourteenth Amendment that has been held to make those provisions applicable by courts against state and local governments.

This is a far cry from the original understanding or purpose of the Fourteenth Amendment. Rather, that amendment owes its genesis to the clash between the Reconstruction Congress and President Andrew Johnson. In the wake of the Civil War, Johnson proved unwilling to ratify the change in the structure of the federal system the majority of Northern politicians favored. Thus, when Congress responded to the Black Codes by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the president vetoed it; the Act was, Johnson said, clearly not consistent with the traditional allocation of powers between the state and federal governments.

Congress then sent out to the states a grab-bag amendment with provisions responding to many of the issues that

then concerned the Republican Party. It secured a dubious ratification in 1868. First, in Section I, the amendment makes a citizen of the United States and of the state wherein he resides each person born in the United States—and thus overturns part of the holding in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857). The section goes on to say that no state may abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States. In its decision in *The Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873), the Supreme Court would read this provision as protecting only those few rights (the right to travel to the federal capital, for example) that were attributes specifically of federal citizenship, which means that there has been very little litigation of this clause since.

Section I's two other provisions, however, have proven extremely significant. The first of them (the due process clause) says that no state may deprive anyone of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; the second says that no state may deny anyone equal protection of the law. These two clauses have effectively swallowed up the old notion of the reserved powers of the states in the areas of criminal procedure, church-state relations, punishment, contraception, abortion, lewdness, public speech, press freedom, “expressive” conduct, sex discrimination, and others, because it was through the due process clause that the Supreme Court gradually began to apply notions found in the first eight amendments (or, in some cases, in penumbras of emanations of those amendments) against entities of state government.

One might have thought from reading the due process clause that it was intended to guarantee that people would receive a fair hearing before being executed, imprisoned, or fined; and, indeed, there is abundant extratextual evidence to support that reading. In the late 19th century, however, the federal courts began to read substance into the due process clause, just as Chief Justice Taney had read a substantive component into its Fifth Amendment analogue in his opinion in *Dred Scott*. The first type of substance the federal courts found in that clause is captured by the term “The *Lochner* Era,” and generally related to the right to contract freely without government restrictions on wages, hours, or working conditions.

With the Supreme Court's 1937 change of heart concerning the New Deal, however, the Court gave up preventing government from adopting wage, hours, working conditions, and other labor regulations; instead, as foreshadowed in footnote 4 of *United States v. Carolene Products*

*Co.* (1938), the Court began to apply other limitations on legislative authority related to discrimination against judicially favored minorities and to a different set of individual rights.

The equal protection clause was understood in the 19th century as allowing “separate but equal” accommodations for blacks (*Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)). In the 20th century, however, the Supreme Court decided that segregation of the races was inherently unequal, first in public education (*Brown v. Board of Education I* (1954)), and later in other areas of life. In his opinion for the Court in *Brown*, Chief Justice Warren tacitly conceded that the Court's opinion that day amounted to an amendment of the Constitution when he said that the understanding of the equal protection clause that existed in the 1860s could not guide the Court in 1954; what he meant was that it would not.

This new pronouncement from the Court spurred the advent of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s; its perceived constitutional illegitimacy also inflamed southern white resistance, which reached its height in the Southern Manifesto and Massive Resistance. The result of the concerted southern political opposition to desegregation was a delay of more than a decade in ending segregation, which only began to be dismantled in earnest across the Gulf South in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Once Congress began to legislate in favor of the rights of blacks and (on their coattails) historically mistreated minorities, it soon moved into the area of granting preferences in contracting, hiring, promotions, licensing, and other areas to members of those groups. This development spawned a new group of equal protection clause cases dealing with the question whether they allowed any racial or ethnic group to be preferred on the basis of past barriers to its advancement. The Supreme Court's decisions in this area have been somewhat inconsistent, as for example in saying that preferences were permissible but quotas were not. The existence of this group of decisions, like that of the Court's decisions respecting sex discrimination, shows how far the equal protection clause has come since the *Slaughterhouse* majority's statement that it was unlikely any group other than blacks would ever be able to claim its protection.

See also: Civil Rights Act of 1866; *Dred Scott v. Sandford*; *Plessy v. Ferguson*; Radical Republicans



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**Franklin, John Hope**

John Hope Franklin (1915–2009), American historian, was born in Rentiesville, Oklahoma. His mother, Mollie, a teacher, and his father, Buck, a lawyer, named him after educator and activist John Hope. Franklin moved with his family to Tulsa in 1925, four years after the terrible race riot in that city. In his autobiography, he told of the prejudice and discrimination he and his family faced there and elsewhere.

Franklin graduated from Fisk University (where he met Aurelia Whittington, his future wife) in 1935. After receiving his PhD from Harvard in 1941, Dr. Franklin held teaching positions at North Carolina College at Durham (now North Carolina Central University), Howard University, Brooklyn College (where, in 1956, he became the first African American to chair an academic department in a predominantly white institution), the University of Chicago (where again he served as chair), and Duke University. In addition to these, Franklin has received more than 100 honorary degrees and held a number of temporary and visiting professorships.

Franklin has written widely in American history. His dissertation, “The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790–1860,” became his first book in 1944. *The Militant South, 1800–1861* (1956) described the South’s martial culture, including its ties to slavery and its contribution to secession and the Civil War. *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (1961), the first comprehensive revisionist history of Reconstruction, gave African Americans a major role in shaping their position in the postwar South. Perhaps the germ of this book was a review Franklin wrote over a decade earlier of E. Merton Coulter’s history of Reconstruction. In the review, Franklin not only criticized Coulter for repeating the racist history of William Archibald Dunning and others, he

denounced the white historians who accepted and praised Coulter’s work.

Among his dozen or so other books are *A Southern Odyssey: Travelers in the Antebellum North* (1976), *George Washington Williams* (1985), and *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (1999; written with Loren Schweninger). This last book put the final nail in the coffin of the image of the happy slave. Most recently, Franklin published *In Search of the Promised Land: A Slave Family of the Old South* (2006), on the Thomases of Tennessee.

Franklin is perhaps best known for *From Slavery to Freedom* (1947). There had been general histories of African Americans published before this (such as the one by George Williams, whose story Franklin penned in his prize-winning biography cited previously), but Franklin’s was the first to combine comprehensive coverage, an unquestionably scholarly approach, and a wonderful readability. *From Slavery to Freedom* became almost the cornerstone of modern African American Studies.

According to Franklin, historians should become scholar activists, using their knowledge and abilities for more than writing books and teaching classes. Franklin filled that role throughout his career, from working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s Legal Defense Fund in 1953 (tracing the original intent and early understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment, thus helping pave the way for the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*) to chairing the advisory board for President William Clinton’s Initiative on Race in 1997–1998.

John Hope Franklin is one of the most honored historians the nation has known. He was elected president of the American Studies Association, the Southern Historical Association, Phi Beta Kappa, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Historical Association.

He won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995. In 2000, Duke University established the John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies in his honor. With the historian Yu Ying-shih, Franklin received the million-dollar John W. Kluge Prize for lifetime achievement in the study of humanity in 2006. On March 25, 2009, Franklin died of congestive heart failure at Duke Hospital. *See also:* Association for the Study of African American Life and History; Tulsa, Oklahoma, Race Riot of 1921

David B. Parker

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**Freedmen's Bureau**

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was created on March 3, 1865. It was supposed to last for only one year after the Civil War's end. As an extension of the War Department, the Freedmen's Bureau was supposed to perform a variety of tasks including distributing food, land, clothing, medicine, creating schools, negotiating contracts, and establishing hospitals for freed people as well as white refugees. Although the task of the bureau was monumental, it was given no resources to operate. The War Department had to use its budget and staff to support the Bureau.

In May 1865, General Oliver O. Howard was chosen to lead the new agency. A native of Maine, Howard believed the Freedmen's Bureau should not show favoritism to either African Americans or whites; rather it should act as a moderator between both parties. Furthermore, Howard did not view the Freedmen's Bureau as an institution that would allow freedmen to be idle and lazy. He wanted to protect their social and political rights, but he also wanted those who were able to work. Despite Howard's view, the Bureau met a tremendous amount of resistance from Southern whites. Even Northern Democrats portrayed the Freedmen's Bureau as an institution that would promote laziness among African Americans.

Southern whites resisted the Freedmen's Bureau because it was attempting to put African Americans on an equal plane with whites. Furthermore, some of the border states, such as Kentucky, resisted the Bureau's presence because they believed that it should have only been established in states that had seceded from the Union. White Southerners also opposed the idea of the bureau educating African Americans.

Some African Americans also had problems with the bureau. Although one of the bureau's primary responsibilities was negotiating contracts between freedmen and their

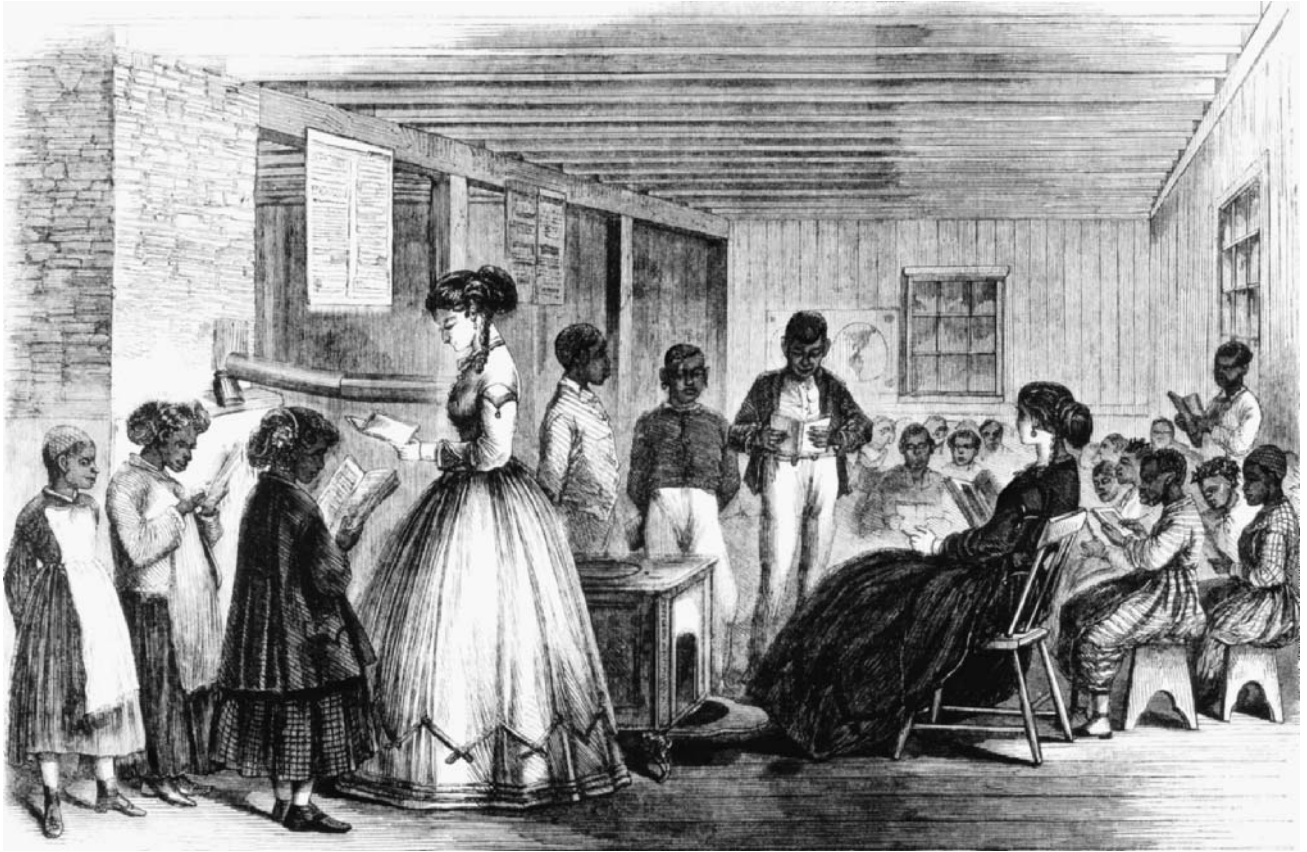
former masters, on many occasions the contracts appeared to be more favorable to the former master. Under most circumstances slaves who worked for their former masters entered into contracts for one year, were paid little for their work, given a food ration, and allowed to live in old slave cabins. African Americans, for example in Louisiana, protested the Freedmen's Bureau because they felt that it was forcing freedmen into contracts to simply put them to work and not allowing them freedom to explore their options.

Other African Americans protested the bureau's inability to provide them with land. According to the law that established the bureau agents, were permitted to set aside no more than 40 acres for freedmen as well as loyal white refugees to rent for three years with the prospect of purchasing the land. This strengthened the myth that every former slave would be given 40 acres and a mule. The amount of land, however, that bureau agents had to draw from was limited dramatically when President Andrew Johnson ordered General Howard to restore all land to former Confederates in August 1865.

Johnson's order to return land to former Confederates was only one way in which he tried to block the Freedmen's Bureau. When Congress tried to extend the bureau's life in February 1866, Johnson vetoed the bill. In July Congress overrode the veto and extended the institution's existence.

Although Johnson, Northern Democrats, white Southerners, and some African Americans had problems with the Freedmen's Bureau, it did perform valuable work, namely in educating African Americans. General Howard believed that the best tool the newly freedmen could have was a proper education. With limited government aid and nearly \$800,000 in private contributions from African Americans, approximately 4,000 schools were opened educating in excess of 250,000 students. Teachers, the lion's share of whom came from New England, performed invaluable work, but were lambasted by whites and oftentimes were refused services such as rooms or meals.

The Freedmen's Bureau also played an important role in helping to reunite families—perhaps the item of greatest concern to freedmen. Agents, teachers, and missionaries in the Freedmen's Bureau aided in writing letters and assisted in locating former slaves' loved ones. The bureau also made certain that African Americans met no resistance when they registered to vote. The Freedmen's Bureau also acted as a mediator in family disputes, namely spouse abuse. On numerous occasions of spouse abuse, the Freedmen's



A classroom at the Freedmen's Bureau in Richmond, Virginia. Formally known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, the Freedmen's Bureau was a federal agency within the War Department that was charged with supervising the transition from slavery to freedom in the erstwhile Confederacy. (Library of Congress)

Bureau ordered the guilty party to pay child support or a sizable fine.

Even though the bureau had some successes, it had many drawbacks. A portion of the bureau's agents were corrupt. On numerous occasions agents forced freedmen out of towns, made them sign contracts that were unfavorable, and sought sexual favors from African American females who came to the bureau for assistance. It was also viewed negatively by some because its presence created a deeper hatred of African Americans among whites.

Despite the shortcomings of the bureau, many African Americans believed it was important for their own protection. When the Bureau's role became limited in 1868 when certain states were readmitted into the Union, African Americans petitioned government officials to keep the bureau operating as it had since 1865. The pleas did not work. The bureau was formally abolished on June 10, 1872.

*See also:* Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Johnson, Andrew; Joint Committee of Fifteen; Radical Republicans

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### Freedom Rides

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized the Freedom Rides as a bus journey through the South to test President Kennedy's commitment to civil rights in America. These Freedom Riders, an interracial group, decided to specifically test Kennedy's commitment to enforce two Supreme Court decisions banning segregated interstate travel by forcing Kennedy to take a public stand against segregation. To achieve their goal, the Freedom Riders would travel throughout the South, stopping at various stations, with

white riders going into “black only” areas and black riders going into “white only” areas. Their route would take them from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans in little less than two weeks. On May 4, 1961, two buses left Washington, D.C. in route to New Orleans.

The Freedom Riders faced little resistance compared to what they would face in the lower South. From Atlanta, Georgia to Birmingham, Alabama the riders were met by violent white mobs. Outside of Anniston, Alabama, with riders still aboard, their bus was firebombed. As riders fled through the back of the bus, they were attacked by a white mob. Many were injured and several were left with permanent injuries, including white riders.

A second bus headed from Atlanta into Birmingham and was also greeted with violence. On their way to Birmingham, riders hoped they would be protected by local

police or even the FBI. The riders were unaware that the FBI knew of Ku Klux Klan activity in Birmingham and did nothing to prevent violence. Furthermore, the local police had received the riders’ itinerary ahead of time and passed it on to the Klan, knowing an attack would occur. A white mob was waiting for the riders and attacked them as they got off the bus. Several minutes later the attackers dispersed and police appeared.

To prevent further violent incidents, the U.S. Justice Department flew the riders to New Orleans, as buses proved to be too dangerous. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) decided to take over for CORE riders despite the immense risk of violence and even death. According to Stokely Carmichael, one of the Freedom Riders, SNCC felt “if the freedom rides were stopped because of violence, and only because of violence, then the nonviolent



*Freedom Riders enroute to Washington, D.C., from New York City hang signs from their bus windows to protest segregation. During the summer of 1961, hundreds of Freedom Riders rode in interstate buses into the pro-segregationist South to test a U.S. Supreme Court decision that banned segregation of interstate transportation facilities. (Library of Congress)*

movement was over. We might as well disband SNCC. Our movement is over. Give the racist this victory and it sends the clear signal that at the first sign of resistance, all they have to do is mobilize massive violence, the movement will collapse and the government won't do a thing. We can't let that happen" (*Ready for Revolution*, p. 186).

The new group of Freedom Riders left Nashville and headed to Birmingham where they were arrested. They were then driven to the state line and dropped off, having to fend for themselves. After making their journey back to Nashville, they again decided to head back to Birmingham. United States Attorney General Robert Kennedy wanted assurances from Alabama that they would protect the riders; if Alabama would not make those assurances, the federal government would have to intervene. Robert Kennedy sent in his assistant, John Seigenthaler, to negotiate with state officials. After intense discussion, Alabama decided they would provide protection. Alabama placed state patrol cars every 10–15 miles along the highway toward Montgomery. In addition, a plane followed overhead and two officials from Greyhound were on each bus. Despite the protection, about 40 miles outside of Montgomery, all protection disappeared. As the bus entered the Montgomery bus stations, it was eerily quiet.

Without warning, whites rushed the bus with "sticks and bricks." The first to come off the bus was a white man, Jim Zwerg. The mob took him and severely beat him, allowing other riders to disembark the bus, going unnoticed. Riders and whites sympathetic to the riders were beaten, including Seigenthaler. Later that evening, Dr. Martin Luther King spoke at a local church when a white mob surrounded the church. Federal marshals had been sent in by Robert Kennedy, but Goverson Patterson declared martial law, and National Guardsmen were sent in to control rioters and help federal marshals.

On May 24, the Freedom Riders continued to Jackson, Mississippi with adequate and constant protection. Once in Jackson, the riders were allowed to walk through the white sections of the bus stop but were subsequently arrested for trespassing. The local court was not sympathetic to the Freedom Riders, and they were sentenced to 60 days in a maximum security prison. Hundreds had been arrested and sentenced as more freedom riders came into Jackson. Some riders, including Carmichael, spent more than a month in jail before having their bonds posted. Jail had halted the Freedom Riders, but their goals had been achieved.

Robert Kennedy petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to pass a regulation making segregation illegal in interstate travel. In September 1961, the commission complied and the Freedom Riders had their victory. This victory was not only important because it showed what a direct action protest could achieve, but also because it signaled the importance of student organizations in the freedom movement.

*See also:* CORE; Lewis, John; Nash, Diane; Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

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## Freedom Schools

Freedom schools were created in 1964, during the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. One of SNCC's goals during this incredibly ambitious civil rights campaign was to create a homegrown movement among African American youths in Mississippi. To achieve this goal, SNCC organized more than 40 Freedom schools throughout the state, which ran from late June through mid-August, and was staffed by hundreds of volunteers who were mostly white, female college students.

A young African American SNCC worker named Charlie Cobb initially proposed the Freedom school idea in November 1963. When observing black Mississippi schools, Cobb noticed that there was a complete absence of academic freedom. African American students in Mississippi were not allowed to openly discuss the situation facing them, despite how poverty-stricken and disenfranchised their parents were. There were multiple instances where black teachers were fired for telling students about the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) or discussing the nationwide battle for civil rights. Furthermore, it was frowned on to teach black children anything about the functions of the U.S. government or the world outside of Mississippi. During the first days of

Freedom schools, many of the volunteer teachers recorded that their students did not know basic things such as the nation's capital, or how many states composed America. This lack of access to education, Cobb observed, created an intellectual vacuum among black students and often fulfilled its goal in rendering them powerless.

After leaders of SNCC accepted Cobb's Freedom school proposal, a conference was held in New York City to discuss the curriculum to be taught in these schools. Veteran civil rights activists such as Myles Horton, Septima Clark, Bayard Rustin, and Ella Baker, combined with young SNCC leaders and academics such as Stoughton Lynd, to create an impressive and comprehensive core curriculum for the schools. The group decided that the Freedom schools should be based on a model of participatory education. This structure called for a great deal of classroom discussion during which students would raise questions and provide answers. Teachers would merely provide background information and facilitate conversations. The conference also called for the development of remedial programs to fill basic educational gaps, and leadership training exercises that taught the students not only how to lead, but how to conduct civil rights protests by writing letters, organizing, and using modern nonviolent tactics.

As the Summer Project began in late June, volunteers noticed an incredible response to Freedom schools. Community members of all ages helped SNCC workers construct the schools, and men stood guard outside their doors at night. When a school would be bombed or burnt by racist local whites, entire communities would turn out to construct another building while school sessions continued under the shade of an old tree or inside someone's house. Within two weeks, Freedom school attendance surpassed all estimations, and by the time the summer was over, Freedom schools had more than 2,000 attendees. The Freedom schools were incredibly successful. Toward the end of the Freedom Summer, Freedom school students had started canvassing potential black voters, conducting nonviolent protests, and forming their own organizations. Freedom school students remained the most important legacy of the Freedom Summer, and they would continue the fight for civil rights in the state long after the SNCC summer project ended.

*See also:* Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

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## Garvey, Marcus

Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887–1940), a black nationalist, was born August 17, 1887 to Marcus and Sarah, the youngest of 11 children. Proud of his racial heritage, Garvey led the largest movement of people of African descent in the world to this day. His movement, Garveyism, generated racial pride, uplift, economic independence, and, most important, a return to Africa. To that end, Garvey was influential in establishing black businesses and the first black international organization for blacks, the United Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA), established in 1914. UNIA was formed to draw blacks across the world to promote racial pride, worldwide industry, the development of Africa, and educational opportunities.

Garvey's parents were Jamaicans of unmixed African stock, descendants from the Maroons, a group of slaves who escaped the Jamaican slave regime. The Maroons established independent communities after being rewarded with a treaty of independence from Britain in 1739. Marcus Garvey was raised in St. Ann's Bay on the northern coast of Jamaica. Trained as a printer's apprentice, he attended elementary school but was forced to drop out at the age of 14 to help with his family's finances. His activism started early in life. While working as a foreman printer, the union went on strike and Garvey was elected as their leader. The strike failed and Garvey was blacklisted. It was at this time he became skeptical about the use of labor unions and socialism as a form of government to assist blacks.

After his first opportunity to become active, Garvey traveled extensively to find that black people throughout the world were being treated unfairly. From Costa Rica to Venezuela, everywhere Garvey traveled he was able to observe firsthand the harsh conditions of black people across the world. As a result of this new knowledge and his desire to right the injustices of black people, Garvey used his skills to publish several newspapers. The first newspaper was

started in 1910, *Garvey's Watchman*, with a weekly circulation of 3,000 copies. He founded his second paper in Costa Rica, *La Nacion*. Garvey used his papers to attack the British consul for their indifference to the conditions of blacks. In Panama, he published *La Prensa*.

Garvey solicited support from the British, but they were indifferent to his initial concerns; thus he concluded that black people could not rely on whites to provide equality. The lack of support from the British government prompted Garvey to travel to Europe. He settled in London where he met Duse Mohammed Ali, who sparked his interest in pursuing African freedom. The turning point in Garvey's life during this time was his exposure to Booker T. Washington. After reading Washington, Garvey's quest to become a race leader began.

In 1914, Garvey returned to Jamaica where, on August 1, 1914, he established the UNIA whose motto was "One God! One Aim! One Destiny! The UNIA had several objectives. As defined by Garvey these objectives were to unify the race, inspire a spirit of pride and love, attend to the needs of the poor, undermine imperialism on the African continent, and help facilitate commerce and industrial development throughout the African world. The work of Booker T. Washington heavily influenced Garvey. Much like Washington, Garvey argued that although blacks are handicapped by circumstances, they are keeping themselves back, which causes other races to refuse to notice them. In an effort to deal with these handicaps, Garvey sought to begin an industrial and technical school in Jamaica similar to the Tuskegee Institute. In an effort to begin the school, Washington extended an invitation to Garvey to meet with him in Tuskegee, a meeting that never took place because Washington died.

By 1916, at the age of 28, Garvey set up a UNIA chapter in Harlem to recruit members. To keep up with the growing membership of the UNIA throughout the world, Garvey began to publish *Negro World*, the official newspaper of the UNIA, his greatest publishing venture. It quickly became one of the leading American black weeklies, with a regular circulation around the world of about 200,000. The *Negro World* refused to accept any advertisement that would degrade the black race, such as hair-straightening or skin-whitening compounds. On the first page of each issue was an editorial by Garvey in which he reminded blacks of their rich history. The remaining parts of the newspaper carried articles on black history and

culture, UNIA activities, and racial news. The program of the UNIA was communicated in an eight-point platform in the *Negro World*.

1. To champion Negro nationhood by redemption of Africa.
2. To make the Negro race conscious.
3. To breathe ideals of manhood and womanhood into every Negro.
4. To advocate self-determination.
5. To make the Negro world-conscious.
6. To print all the news that will be interesting and instructive to the Negro.
7. To instill racial self-help.
8. To inspire racial love and self-respect. (*Black Leadership in America*, p. 84).

Much to the fascination of whites, Garvey was a force to reckon with. He was a dominant power with a rapidly growing movement. His message of uplift, international solidarity, and support for Irish, Indian, and Egyptian independence was a threat to international order. As such, British and American intelligence agencies began to accuse Garvey of racial strife.

By 1919, there were UNIA chapters chartered in most American cities with large black populations. The headquarters of UNIA was established in Harlem. The organization had saved enough money to purchase an auditorium, which Garvey named Liberty Hall, that was used for various purposes including meetings, dances, and feeding the hungry. The UNIA also established the Negro Factories Corporation (NFC), a black business that produced a variety of commodities and provided jobs to black people, ultimately employing 300 people.

Garvey's business ventures expanded and also included the Black Star Line (BSL), a fleet of black-owned and operated steamships. The BSL was incorporated in Delaware and capitalized at \$500,000 with 100,000 shares at \$5 a share only to be sold to blacks, with no individual able to purchase more than 200 shares. The BSL was authorized to own, operate, and charter ships and to carry freight, passengers, and mail. The line was different from the NFC. It offered blacks three distinct opportunities: to invest in a black-owned business, to make money, and to make history. Although many laughed at the idea of the BSL, it was able to purchase several ships, the *S. S. Yarmouth*, *S. S. Shadyside*, and *Kanawha*. Blacks everywhere marveled at the accomplishment of Garvey's BSL.



*Black separatist Marcus Garvey, in uniform as the president of the Republic of Africa. Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to realize the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African repatriation. Garvey's rallying call for the UNIA was, "Up, you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will!" (Library of Congress)*

At UNIA's pinnacle, Garvey called for the First International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World. The delegates attending the convention represented 48 states, 25 countries, and 3 continents. Dignitaries at the convention included an African prince, the mayor of Monrovia, Liberia, and tribal chiefs. The event was a momentous occasion where the various units of the UNIA were amassed together. In a parade through Harlem, the Black Cross Nurses, ready to come to the aid of black people, were dressed in white. The African Legion, which included many World War I veterans dressed in dark blue uniforms with red stripes, were mounted on horseback and marching with precision, indicating to the world that the organization would be prepared to use force to gain black redemption. The white press took notice of the pageantry, which displayed the might and organization of Garvey's group.

Flying high in the midst of the crowd were the crimson, black, and green banners of the delegates that welcomed

Garvey with a five-minute standing ovation. His opening statement preached black nationalism calling for the freedom of Africa. Garvey stated:

We are the descendants of a people determined to suffer no longer. We shall now organize the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world into a vast organization to plant the banner of freedom on the great continent of Africa. . . . We do not desire what has belonged to others, though others have always sought to deprive us of that which belonged to us. . . . If Europe is for the Europeans, then Africa shall be for the black peoples of the world. We say it; we mean it. . . . The other races have countries of their own and it is time for the 400,000,000 Negroes to claim Africa for themselves (*Great Lives Observed*, p. 65).

The convention designated Garvey as the provisional president of the African Republic, an exile government. Other officers in this government included the titles of supreme potentate, supreme deputy potentate, and an entire cabinet. The Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, a statement of protest and plan of action for blacks, was also adopted at the convention.

By 1922, Garvey's momentum took an incredible turn downward. The black establishment waged mounting attacks against the business activities of the UNIA because of the large sums of money it had collected from blacks. A few disgruntled stockholders also lodged complaints and accused the BSL of mismanagement. As a result, Garvey and several associates were arrested and charged with 12 counts of mail fraud in promoting the stock of the BSL. Shortly after his arrest, with an operating budget of merely \$31.12, Garvey announced BSL's operational activities would desist. The trial was delayed and Garvey was released on bond.

While awaiting trial, Garvey promised to return to the UNIA. Much to the dismay of the America's black elite, Garvey maintained a faithful following; however, disgruntled BSL stockholders and employees sued him. At his trial, Garvey denied overstating the profits of the BSL. He did admit that there were no assets and the corporation had more than \$600,000 in operating expenses. The trial also revealed that the BSL never paid dividends to stockholders. The judge stated that Garvey had preyed on his own people. In addition to the business troubles faced by Garvey, there were also domestic troubles that became the center of attention for the black elite in mounting attacks against Garvey.



By 1922, when the third annual convention of the UNIA met in Harlem, his opposition had mobilized and called its own meeting. A group called Friends of Negro Freedom, organized by the editors of *Messenger* magazine, Chandler Owen, and A. Philip Randolph, adopted the slogan "Garvey must go!" This group also called for his immediate deportation. Another major argument against Garvey were various rumors that he had made an agreement with the Ku Klux Klan. The opposition's most fatal move against Garvey was a letter written to the United States attorney general in 1923 protesting the delay of Garvey's trial.

Although no one knows the influence of the letter, Garvey's trial began within six months after the letter was written. Garvey mounted his own defense by blaming his critics and competitors for BSL's demise. The trial revealed that Garvey had used the BSL for promoting the sale of stock rather than using it as a business enterprise. It also revealed that funds were transferred between the BSL and other UNIA business ventures without proper accounting methods. Garvey was found guilty of promoting the sale of BSL stock knowing the company was in financial trouble. He was sentenced to five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine. The codefendants were acquitted. Garvey's attorneys made plans for appeals as he was remanded to Tombs Prison in New York.

Garvey was released on bail in September 1923. While waiting appeal, he pursued another maritime venture, the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company, which purchased one ship, the *General G. W. Goethals*. At the 1924 convention, Garvey declared the ship to be named the *Booker T. Washington*. He hoped it would be the vessel to carry blacks back to Africa. The UNIA sent machinery and technical experts to Liberia to claim the land that had been promised them for colonization only to find that the goods had been confiscated by the shipping company for lack of payment. The experts were also immediately deported amid fears from Liberians that they would be a domestic threat. Garvey's hopes for the *Booker T. Washington* never came to fruition.

By 1925, Garvey's appeals were rejected and the Supreme Court refused to hear the case. On February 8, 1925, he entered the Atlanta penitentiary to begin serving a five-year prison term. Although efforts were made to continue the work of the UNIA, they fell short because of a lack of a flamboyant leader. Surprisingly during Garvey's time in prison, even those who had never supported him became increasingly aware that he had fallen victim to a contentious

America. After supporters urged clemency for Garvey, in 1927, President Coolidge commuted his sentence. As an alien, United States law required nonresidents convicted of a felony to be deported. So on release, without having an opportunity to visit UNIA headquarters in New York, Garvey was taken to New Orleans and put aboard the *S. S. Saramacca* headed for Panama and the West Indies.

Even in his homeland of Jamaica, Garvey continued the work of the UNIA by visiting local chapters. The *Negro World* also continued to publish editorials to be sent to his American following. With the support of his wife, in 1928 he traveled to Europe and established new UNIA headquarters in London and Paris. He also presented a petition to the League of Nations at Geneva and urged them to create a "free Negro state in Africa."

By 1929, Garvey issued a call for the Sixth International Convention of Negro Peoples of the World to be held in Kingston, Jamaica. Similar to the first international convention, this was the last major UNIA convention that garnered great attention. Most of the discussion at the conference involved improving the conditions blacks around the world. The delegates established a department of health and public education to improve the health conditions of blacks through the world, and it also sought to establish UNIA consulates in black population centers and to publicize grievances and to protect the rights of blacks. Much to the dismay of critics, even after serving jail time and being deported, Garvey continued to be a force among blacks.

Garvey also seemed to become a dominant force in Jamaican politics by organizing the Jamaican Peoples Political Party. He ran an unsuccessful bid for the Jamaican legislature, which could have been derailed by the lawsuits and complaints by American chapters of the UNIA when he moved the headquarters to Jamaica. By the 1930s, the Garvey movement slowed significantly because the Depression left black Americans in disarray. Just as conditions in America supported Garvey's elevation as a race leader, other conditions in America accompanied his decline.

The seventh convention proved to be a disappointment and Garvey moved the headquarters to London in 1935. Although small meetings of the UNIA were held in the mid-1930s, Garveyism had declined. By the late 1930s, Garvey's health was failing after suffering with pneumonia and a stroke that left him paralyzed. On June 10, 1940, Garvey died. In London, Garvey's death went unnoticed, but in the United States, black and white newspapers paid

tribute to him. With mixed reviews on his triumphs and setbacks, they all agreed, it was unlikely that black America would see another Garvey.

See also: Black Star Line; Pan-Africanism; Universal Negro Improvement Association

Angela K. Lewis

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## Georgia Educational Association

By August 1865, black Georgians helped organize the Georgia Educational Association (GEA) in Augusta. An offshoot of the Georgia Equal Rights Association (GERA), this organization began when a group of African American farmers from Wilkes County attempted to purchase a large plot of land in neighboring Dougherty County in the fall of 1865. Pooling together more than \$7,000, this group, led by Lawrence Speed and Wallace Sherman, sought the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau to facilitate the sale. Although the black farmers had sufficient funds and the power of the federal government behind them, they only managed to rent 500 acres of land on the Whitlock Place Plantation in Dougherty County. This disappointment represented the first of many defeats in the attempt to redistribute land and wealth in the postbellum South.

The Wilkes County farmers sought the creation of an independent African American community, completely removed from the controls and limitations imposed by white Southerners. Movements of this nature were rampant in the

South during the 1860s and 1870s. Just four years earlier in Port Royal, South Carolina, General William T. Sherman occupied the region and freed thousands of slaves. Once liberated and granted land, they immediately became yeomen farmers seeking to grow crops and sustain their community. Of importance, they actively distanced themselves from "slave crops," refusing to grow cotton and indigo. Hardworking and eager to maintain their freedom, this community made a collective decision to grow food crops for internal consumption. This decision meant they sought removal from a white-controlled market economy and from white society in general.

The Port Royal example was repeated in the 245-mile tract of land Sherman granted to African Americans in his Special Field Order No. 15. Issued on January 16, 1865, the order mandated that the 400,000 acres of abandoned and confiscated land be divided among former slaves. On receipt of this land, more than 40,000 freed people settled and cultivated this region, which encompassed the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry and Sea Islands. Again, they refused to grow cotton, opting instead for the independent existence guaranteed through the cultivation of nonmarket food crops.

While the Wilkes County freed people failed to purchase their own land, they did succeed in creating an organization that continued to seek self-determination for black Georgian communities. In August 1865, they helped organize a statewide convention held in Augusta. Delegates from black communities throughout the state attended to discuss their fate and future. Out of this convention emerged the GERA, which sought to address all of the major issues of the Reconstruction Era—social rights, land reform, and literacy. Moreover the GERA, as historian Lee Formwalt contends, sought to achieve its goals without the aid of the federal government, Northern progressives, or Radical Republicans.

Within a year of its founding, the GERA formed the GEA as its education and literacy wing. One of the primary purposes of the GEA was to create and financially support elementary schools for African Americans in local communities throughout the state. Local auxiliaries held regular meetings and primarily raised funds to pay for school supplies and teacher salaries while the statewide association held a series of conventions to publicize its mission and garner additional financial and political support. By late 1867, 120 black elementary schools were erected by the GEA

in 53 counties. Black communities in Georgia purchased 57 school buildings to meet their own education needs. In Augusta, the Wilkes County farmers, who helped found the Dougherty County Educational Association, opened its first elementary school on the Gintown plantation in 1866. Members of the Dougherty County branch of the GEA taught at both of the local black elementary schools and played a determining role in the curriculum. The Albany, Georgia branch of the GEA opened its elementary school in 1866 and freedmen Jack Mallard, an active member of the Association, instructed 23 students in a building constructed and owned by the African American community. In Savannah, 16 of the 28 black elementary schools were established in 1866 by the GEA. Through the Association's publication, the *Loyal Georgian*, the GEA explicitly voiced its goals and nationalist leanings. In 1866, the paper reported that GEA schools were controlled and taught by African Americans for the benefit of freed people whose donations and drive sustained these schools.

Clearly, then, the GEA rejected paternalist appeals and approaches to the education of African Americans in Georgia and sought to actively define the role of schools within the many black communities throughout the state. They established a model for community-based schools in which the GEA generated funds to purchase or rent land, erected schools, determined the curriculum, and hired teachers. Unlike the situation practiced later under segregation, the locus of control and power in the community-based model was not in the hands of an outside and hostile group. Thus in many ways, the GEA epitomized black self-determination, autonomy, and sovereignty in the post-Civil War South.

Several prominent black leaders and politicians in Georgia played important roles in the association, including James Porter, Jefferson Franklin Long, William Jefferson White, and Tunis George Campbell. Each used their activism in the GERA/GEA to launch impressive political careers. Despite a political platform calling for "Relief, Homesteads and Schools for the People," the Republican party did nothing to directly support the efforts of the GEA and was more interested in gaining political support than supporting the GEA in its continued efforts to establish schools in local communities. Joining this political tug-of-war, the Freedmen's Bureau had long been an obstacle to the goals of the GEA. Although the bureau provided invaluable service in mediating the sale and transfer of land and buildings used by the GEA to erect schools, members

of the association voiced significant concerns because some of the local agents of the Freedmen's Bureau in Albany came from slave-holding families.

Even many of the Northern whites in the bureau dealt with freed people in a condescending and abusive manner. As a result, many African Americans in Dougherty County knew that they could not expect any real support from the federal government. On this note, GEA leaders contended that its African American members should be accountable only to people of their own selection, but not to whites. Thus, the GEA fostered a nationalist, race-conscious perspective as a result of the justifiable suspicions its members had of both Northern and Southern whites. As a result, local auxiliaries of the GEA often debated about whether to even hire white Northern teachers even in the absence of other viable options. Although efforts like this were relatively short-lived, they did represent the collective strivings of black communities in the postbellum South as they sought to carve out autonomous spaces in the midst of racial hostility and intolerance.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Freedmen's Bureau; Port Royal Experiment; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians

Walter C. Rucker

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## Grandfather Clause

In 1870, after the Civil War, the United States government added three new amendments to the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed due process and equal protection

to all citizens, regardless of race or color. The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the right to vote to all citizens regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Although many Southern states still held their Civil War mentality of white superiority, these amendments forced the states to accept African Americans as equal—at least under the law.

Many of the Southern states wished to evade the newly instituted amendments, especially the Fifteenth Amendment. To circumvent this amendment, some Southern states implemented new laws that prevented African Americans from voting. Educational and property qualifications were often installed for this purpose. More specifically, literacy tests were implemented, poll taxes were added, and grandfather clauses were administered. A grandfather clause countered the government’s implementation of the Fifteenth Amendment by forbidding any African American from voting unless he was a citizen, or descendant of a citizen, that had the right to vote before 1867. This stipulation eliminated all African Americans from voting because African Americans were not given the right to vote until after 1867. These clauses were adopted into state constitutions so as to legally prevent African Americans from voting.

Grandfather clauses were seen as the most beneficial way to prevent African Americans from voting. Educational and property qualifications often prevented poor whites from voting, but grandfather clauses hampered only African Americans. Furthermore, by the 1890s, a good number of African Americans were able to pass the literacy tests, pay the poll taxes, or circumvent any other regulation Southern governments tried to impose on newly independent African Americans. By implementing grandfather clauses Southern governments were able to prevent all African Americans from voting, even those that could pass the educational, property, or financial qualifications.

Seven Southern states implemented grandfather clauses in the late 1890s to early 1900s. Although many African Americans objected to these clauses, they remained in place until 1915 when the United States Supreme Court declared them to be unconstitutional in *Guinn v. United States*.

The use of grandfather clauses was part of a larger picture that included Jim Crow laws and Black Codes. Jim Crow laws were passed in the Southern United States at the end of Reconstruction, the period of rebuilding in the South after the Civil War. These laws discriminated against

African Americans and restricted them from voting, and other fundamental rights, through constitutional and legal means. Like grandfather clauses, Jim Crow laws were found to be legal until 1915. Similarly, Black Codes were implemented after the conclusion of Reconstruction in the South. These codes sought to return African Americans to a position of bondage or servitude. Although African Americans were free in terms of terminology, the Black Codes returned them to a position of servitude in actuality. Jim Crow laws and Black Codes in general, as well as grandfather clauses in particular, were held to be legal by both the Southern state governments and the national government until 1915 with *Guinn v. United States*.

Grandfather clauses, Jim Crow laws, and Black Codes all undermined the legislation the national government put in place at the conclusion of the Civil War. By implementing these discriminatory laws, the Southern states were able to successfully continue in their practice of putting down African Americans and restricting their advancement. These acts, therefore, prevented African Americans from receiving the equality they so desired. It would take almost another hundred years, and endless civil rights battles, to bring the legislation and equality that African Americans so desired.

*See also:* Black Codes; Disfranchisement; Fifteenth Amendment; Jim Crow

Mindy R. Weidman

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## Great Migration

The Great Migration was the mass exodus of more than 1 million African Americans from below the Mason-Dixon Line to the North between 1916 and 1930. This migration produced a massive demographic shift, resulting in

significant economic, social, and political changes for the United States. The highest rates of migration occurred from 1916 to 1918, when approximately 400,000 African Americans moved to the North. Between 1910 and 1930, the African American population in the North increased by 20 percent; however, most African Americans did not leave the South. Many moved from rural areas to southern cities and many others did not move at all.

The first blacks to move north were predominantly young, unskilled, and male. Many of these men went with the intention of settling in the North and sending for their families when they could save enough money. Others planned to earn some money and then return to the South. Another surge in migration, beginning in 1920, brought more black intellectuals and professionals to the North. In fact, by the end of the 1920s, Harlem and Chicago became centers for the black intelligentsia and black culture. Most migrants settled in cities like Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, and others because of cheaper, easier transportation via train, as well as numerous job opportunities. Many black women had already traveled north before World War I to work as domestic servants.

Numerous forces compelled African Americans to leave the South during this period. A major factor was the lack of job opportunities in the South, as well as increased opportunities for employment in the North. Because of segregation and the systems of sharecropping and tenant farming in the largely agricultural South, African Americans had few chances to advance in the jobs they did have and barely any chance to break into more prestigious careers reserved for whites. Moreover, this period saw many changes in southern agriculture, among them increased use of machinery to replace human labor, which further limited blacks' likelihood for financial well-being.

Environmental factors contributed to a fiscal downturn in the farming economy. The boll weevil, a beetle that feeds on cotton, infested and destroyed cotton fields throughout the South during the 1910s and 1920s, causing many people to lose their source of income. Ultimately, the South was forced to diversify its agriculture, ending its dependence on cotton as the primary crop. Another significant environmental factor that affected the southern economy was the Great Mississippi flood of 1927, which destroyed many homes and plantations. As a result of substantial rainfall in the summer months of 1926, the Mississippi River overflowed, flooding more than 270,000 square miles in the

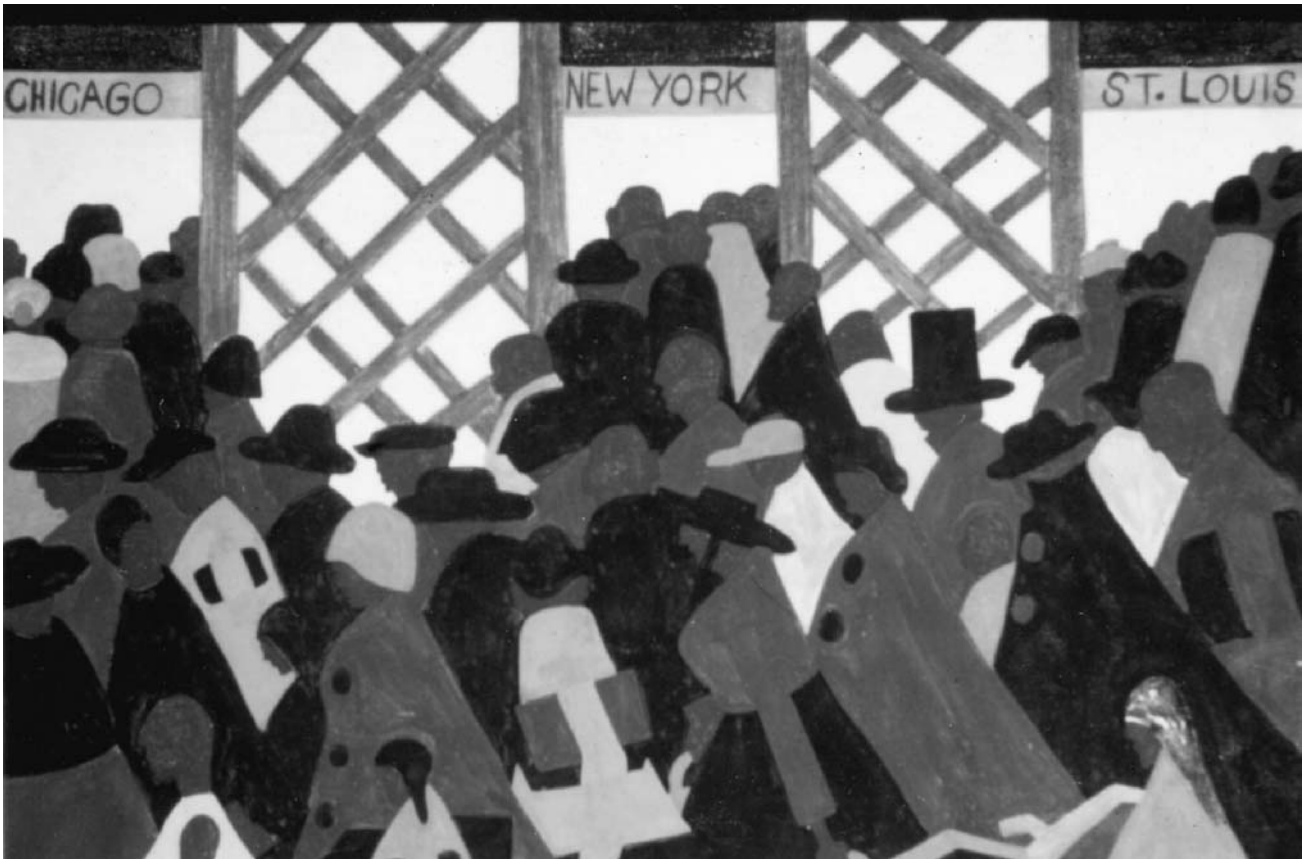
states of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. By 1927, migration to the North had begun to slow, but the desperate situation this flood created for many families encouraged more people to go north.

By contrast, more jobs became available in the North during this period, and northern industries actively recruited southern labor. By 1914, many European countries, although not the United States, were involved in World War I. Many Europeans living in the United States returned to their homelands to contribute to the war effort. European immigration to the United States also slowed considerably. In 1900, Europeans entered the United States at a rate of more than 500,000 per year; by 1916, the immigration rate from European countries was less than 300,000 per year. The Selective Service Act of 1917 created even more job opportunities for unskilled laborers in the North. This law, passed the year the United States entered World War I, required that all men 21 to 30 years old register for service in the U.S. military. Ultimately, 4.8 million men served in World War I (more than half were drafted), leaving many jobs open.

By 1917, Congress also began passing legislation to halt immigration. The United States's exclusionary stance on immigration culminated in the Immigration Act of 1924, which limited the number of immigrants from any country to 2 percent of the total number of people from that country already in the United States. This federal law, also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, also excluded the immigration of individuals from Asian countries. The Immigration Act of 1924 was aimed chiefly at limiting the influx of individuals from southern and eastern European countries, the majority of whom were industrial workers and had been immigrating since the 1850s.

The dwindling number of immigrants and loss of many men to the military encouraged northern businesses to recruit African Americans in the South as cheap sources of labor. Northern agents went south and offered African American men jobs and train fare to northern cities. Also, black newspapers advertised jobs and published articles about opportunities for blacks in the North. Ministers often read letters in their churches from African Americans who found better opportunities in the North. So many African Americans headed to the North that many companies eventually stopped recruiting because they did not need to.

African Americans were driven north by more than economic prospects. The end of Reconstruction in 1877



Painting by African American visual artist Jacob Lawrence depicting African Americans migrating north during World War I. (National Archives)

saw the reinstatement of white control of the South, replacing African Americans who held political office after the Civil War with whites and ushering in the period commonly referred to as the nadir of race relations. The post-Reconstruction South was particularly violent and oppressive for blacks. Jim Crow laws, reified by the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision, segregated public spaces, invoking the "separate but equal" doctrine. African Americans were offered subpar educational resources. Blacks were politically disenfranchised and could not serve on juries. Moreover, the South was rife with racial violence, including lynching. Also, the Ku Klux Klan began a second wave of violence and intimidation in the 1910s and 1920s, which eventually extended to the North. Many blacks went North in hopes of escaping the repressive South.

The Great Migration had significant and longlasting implications for the North and for African Americans. The abrupt arrival of thousands of African Americans in northern cities produced a new kind of white discrimination in the North, as whites attempted to segregate neighborhoods,

schools, workplaces, and leisure spaces. To keep blacks out of all-white neighborhoods, whites used violence or collaborated with realtors to create racially restrictive covenants. Moreover, it was nearly impossible for African Americans to secure mortgages in order to purchase homes in black neighborhoods owing to a practice called "redlining," in which neighborhoods deemed least desirable and too risky for mortgages were circled in red on city maps. These neighborhoods tended to be older, inner-city neighborhoods, populated mostly by blacks and ethnic minorities.

In several cities throughout the North (and South as well), ethnic and racial tensions were exacerbated by post-war economic anxieties. During the Red Summer of 1919, 25 cities experienced race riots. The riot in Chicago, which lasted a week, was among the worst; 23 African Americans and 15 whites were killed. In addition, 342 blacks and 195 whites were injured. More than 1,000 people were left homeless from the fires that ravaged the city. The Great Migration also contributed to white flight from the cities into the suburbs as a result of racial tension. Whites were able

to move to the suburbs because of highway expansion, as well as mortgages from the Federal Housing Authority and the Veterans Administration. The result of white flight was fewer tax dollars for the city, where blacks remained, and a shift in political power.

African Americans, particularly migrant blacks, tended to get the worst jobs at the lowest rates of pay. Even by the 1960s, unions were still predominantly white: northern plumbers unions were 99.8 percent white, electrical workers unions were 99.4 percent white, and carpenters unions were 98.4 percent white. Still, it seems that African Americans migrating from the South fared better than African Americans born in the North. Migrant blacks in the North made more money overall, were more likely to be married, and had lower rates of nonmarital childbearing than northern-born African Americans. Also, migrant children were more likely to live in two-parent households than nonmigrant children.

The mass migration of African Americans to the North coincided with, and helped produce, a new age of modernity. One of the most significant cultural results of the Great Migration was the Harlem Renaissance. The development of a black middle class in Harlem, as well as the influx of blacks into the city, contributed to this cultural revolution, which occurred during the 1920s and ended with the Great Depression. The Harlem Renaissance spanned many genres, including music, drama, literature, and poetry, and articulated what was unique about the black experience in America. The Great Migration introduced the North to blues and jazz music and southern food as well. The dissemination of southern culture was aided in this period, as it could not have been previously, by the popularity of newspapers and advances in radio and film technologies.

One of the most substantial effects of the Great Migration was the restoration of African Americans' political rights. Blacks did not suffer the same kind of systematic disfranchisement in the North that they had in the South. Because African Americans were able to vote, and did vote, politicians were forced to consider their demands. In the North, African Americans were afforded better economic opportunities, which allowed them to contribute to various organizations that worked for civil rights. Moreover, blacks' shared experiences provided a milieu for alliances, fostered by their proximity to one another. City dwelling encouraged organized protest among African Americans that was highly visible. Thus by using their newfound electoral

leverage in the North, African Americans were able to defeat Jim Crow in the South.

*See also:* Black Nadir; Destination, Chicago, Illinois; Destination, Detroit, Michigan; Destination, Harlem, New York; Harlem Renaissance; Urbanization

Laurie Lahey

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## Griggs, Sutton

E. Sutton Griggs (1872–1933), an African American preacher and writer, was one of the few outspoken critics of anti-black propaganda in the South who turned to racial accommodation during the early decades of the 20th century. Born in Chatfield, Texas, Griggs was the son of Reverend Allen R. Griggs Sr., a former slave, who rose to prominence as the president of the Baptist National Convention.

Griggs graduated from Richmond Theological Seminary in Virginia in 1893 and served as a pastor of the First Baptist Church in Nashville until 1913. During this time, he was instrumental in establishing the American Baptist Theological Seminary and was its president for one year, from 1925 to 1926. The reverend established the Tabernacle Baptist Church and built an institutional church in Memphis with the intention to provide spiritual help and employment opportunities to the local people.

Griggs was one of the well-published black authors of the Jim Crow South. His novels and treatises informed his theological and sociological perspective on southern race relations. His fictional work, *Imperium Imperio*, published

in 1899, introduced the new and self-respecting African American and defended black Americans' basic rights, including the right to vote. Three years later, he wrote another book, *Unfettered, Dorlan's Plan* that elaborated his objectives to achieve racial equality and said that this racial parity would eventually tear down racial barriers.

Disappointed with his community's unwillingness to rally behind these works, Griggs temporarily abandoned his writings until the National Baptist Convention came forward to finance his next novel, *The Hindered Hand*. In this book published in 1905, Griggs strongly denounced the racist writings of Reverend Thomas Dixon Jr., whose works supported white brutality and segregation. Along the same lines he published a pamphlet, *The One Great Question: Study of Southern Conditions At Close Range*, in 1907. It forecasted a gloomy scenario of human rights violations in the South. In this social and political treatise, he condemned the racist attitudes of the city fathers of Nashville and their policy of encouraging white brutality on African Americans. Frustrated with the lack of response from the city black community, Griggs converted to racial accommodation and directed his message on racial collaboration to the white community.

He published a series of articles in 1911 under the title *Wisdom's Call* that urged African Americans in the South not to migrate to the North. This work made him popular with the members of the white established Memphis Industrial Committee. It was their support and the backing of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce that facilitated Griggs to spread his ideas. He published a little newspaper, *The Neighbor*, in 1919 in which he advised his community to maintain good relations with the white community and supported lynching as a means to control violence and crime. This stand contradicted his earlier works that condemned such brutality. The white press appreciated his message but did not publish the criticism from the local black community and the NAACP regarding his position on lynching.

Griggs published his next work, *The Science of Social Efficiency*, in 1923. The conciliatory tone of Reverend Griggs is evident in this work that advised African Americans to move ahead as a group and adopt Christian virtues and subordinate themselves to the white establishment. To carry this message to black public schools, Griggs sought endorsements of educators, school board presidents, and state teachers associations. He traveled to several southern states where he lectured on the retarding forces that impeded the progress of his community. In a span of four

years, from 1925 to 1929, Griggs published *The Stepping Stones to Higher Things*, *The Winning Policy*, and *the Co-operative Nature and Social Education*. Despite his efforts to convey his message of biracial harmony and cooperation, these works were not prescribed in the curriculum.

African Americans did not purchase his books because they believed that these works damaged their racial pride. Lacking financial and moral support from his community and receiving inadequate funding from the white community, Reverend Griggs was caught in a financial squeeze. He could not make the church mortgage payment and was forced to sell his church in a Memphis public auction. He relocated to Denison, Texas, where he spent his last three years as a pastor in the church, which his father established, and died in Houston on January 1933.

Griggs represented a segment of courageous African American intellectuals who adopted different strategies in attacking racism in the South during the period that witnessed lynching, black disenfranchisement, and the ascendancy of the Ku Klux Klan. Whether he succeeded or not in his attempts to grapple with the social evils, he stands as one of the shining stars in the galaxy of black scholars before the 1920s Harlem Renaissance.

*See also:* A Negro Nation Within the Nation; Accommodationism; Black Nationalism; Jim Crow; Self-Segregation

Sivananda Mantri

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## Haley, Alex

Alex Haley (1921-1992) was a biographer, novelist, and genealogist who is most noted for the book and miniseries *Roots* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Born in Ithaca,



New York, on August 11, 1921, he moved with his family to Henning, Tennessee, the year he was born and he spent five years there. At the time of Haley's birth, his mother, Bertha George Palmer Haley, was a music teacher and his father, Simon Alexander Haley, was a graduate student at Cornell University. After moving to Tennessee, Haley's father served as a professor of agriculture at a number of black colleges. While they were living in Henning, Haley's maternal grandmother, Cynthia Palmer, told stories about the family's genealogy, which could be traced back to an African named "Kin-tay" who would be Haley's great-great-great-great-grandfather. In 1937, Haley briefly attended Elizabeth City Teachers College in North Carolina, a stint that lasted until 1939. After dropping out of college, Haley enlisted in the Coast Guard as a messboy. This would begin a 20-year association with the Coast Guard.

During World War II, Haley rose in the rank of petty officer third class and began volunteering to write love letters for his fellow sailors, which they sent to girlfriends and wives. By 1949, Haley became the first member of the Coast Guard with a journalist rating, eventually advancing to chief petty officer and chief journalist through his retirement in 1959. Having honed his writing during his years in the Coast Guard, Haley began publishing in the private sector. He became a senior editor for *Reader's Digest* and wrote articles for a number of other publications. In September 1962, he began a long and lucrative relationship with *Playboy* magazine, interviewing such notable figures as Miles Davis, Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali, Jim Brown, and Malcolm X. Haley's work and association with *Playboy* was literally the genesis of the joke about men reading the magazine just for the interviews. His interview of Malcolm X was the beginning of a project that grew, over time, to the publication of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in 1965. Within a decade, this book had sold more than 6 million copies.

The work for which Haley is best known is the novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* published during the bicentennial of the United States in 1976. Although mostly fictional and only loosely based on Haley's family, this work initiated serious interest in African American genealogy. Moreover, when ABC aired the first *Roots* miniseries, 130 million people in the United States watched the eight episodes, shattering previous records for television viewers of a U.S. miniseries. Approximately 85 percent of all television homes saw all or part of the miniseries. After winning

a National Book Award, the Spingarn Medal, a Pulitzer Prize, and more than 200 other awards for *Roots*, Haley became the source of controversy, as allegations of plagiarism were raised by Harold Courlander. In 1978, Courlander went to U.S. District Court, claiming that Haley lifted more than 80 passages from his 1967 work entitled *The African*. Haley's principal defense was that he had never read Courlander's book, but this was proven false when Joseph Bruchac provided an affidavit claiming that he had personally provided Haley a copy of *The African* five or six years before *Roots* was published. In the end, Haley settled out of court for \$650,000 and issued a public acknowledgment of his wrongdoing.

After *Roots*, Haley's next major project, *Queen*, was to be based on a grandmother who was the daughter of an enslaved woman and her white owner. Haley died of a heart attack on February 10, 1992 in Seattle before finishing *Queen*. Per a prior agreement, David Stevens completed the work, and it was made into a 1993 movie. Haley has earned a number of posthumous awards, including having a U.S. Coast Guard cutter named in his honor in 1999; he was the recipient of the Korean War Service Medal in 2002.

See also: Atlantic Slave Trade; Senegambia; X, Malcolm

Walter C. Rucker

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## Hamer, Fannie Lou

Fannie Lou (Townsend) Hamer (1917–1977) was born October 6, 1917, in Ruleville, Mississippi. She was the last of 20 children of Lou Ella and James Townsend. Residing in the Mississippi Delta, the Townsend family were descendants of Mississippi's enslaved population. Like most black families of the era, they were sharecroppers. Sharecropping generally bound most workers to the land; workers who were born poor, lived poor, and died poor. Fannie Lou's early life was no exception.

At the age of six, Fannie Lou joined her parents in the cotton fields. By the time she was 12, she was forced to drop

out of school and work full time to help support her family. She endured hard labor with few rewards throughout her teens and young adult years. At age 27 she married another sharecropper named Perry “Pap” Hamer and went to work on the plantation that employed her husband. Later, Fannie Lou and Pap adopted two children, Dorothy Jean and Virgie Lee.

In August 1962, Mrs. Hamer attended a meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in her hometown of Ruleville, Mississippi. From that moment on, her life’s path was forever altered. Inspired by the youthful enthusiasm of the student organizers, this is where she made the fateful decision to attempt to register to vote. Her earlier attendance at several conferences sponsored by the Regional Council of Negro Leadership had prepared her to move forward in her own personal struggle for civil rights. She had become part of the movement that would later lead to her activism as a civil rights worker and organizer. Upon learning of Mrs. Hamer’s decision to register to vote, her landlord forced her to leave the plantation and denied her further opportunity to work. Mrs. Hamer was not deterred. She traveled to local communities to help spread the word about voter registration. During this period of history, blacks who attempted to vote or who were involved in voter registration efforts were threatened with violence, loss of job, harassment, and murder. In June of the following year, Mrs. Hamer and several SNCC colleagues traveled to Charleston, South Carolina to participate in voter registration and literacy workshop activities. On their return home, they stopped in Winona, Mississippi. Here they were jailed and brutally beaten by law enforcement officers. This beating left her blind in her left eye and her kidneys permanently damaged.

As a leader and organizer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) that was formed in April 1964, Mrs. Hamer was selected as a delegate to attend the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It was here, during her electrifying testimony before the convention’s credentials committee, that she rose to national prominence as she sought to prohibit the seating of the all-white Mississippi delegation. An attempt at compromise would offer the MFDP two delegate seats. The compromise was rejected by the party. The overall effort to seat the MFDP failed, but the Democratic Party agreed that, in the future, no delegation would be seated from a state where anyone was illegally denied the vote. Mrs. Hamer

would forever be remembered as a powerful voice of the civil rights struggle who so precisely articulated the pain and frustration of millions of African American citizens. The Democratic Party and the nation took note. Roughly a year later, the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed.

After her memorable experience in Atlantic City, Mrs. Hamer turned her attention to building strong institutions for addressing problems at the local level. She continued her work in Mississippi, ran for Congress in 1964 and 1965, and was seated as a member of Mississippi’s legitimate delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1968 in Chicago, Illinois. She played an active role in antipoverty programs, especially Head Start, and in 1969 founded the Freedom Farms Corporation, designed to help poor farming families—black and white—become economically self-sufficient. In addition, she was a local



*Fannie Lou Hamer, a Mississippi field hand for most of her life, became a prominent advocate of civil rights. As Mississippi’s Democratic Party refused African American members, Hamer helped form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) whose members attempted to unseat the regular party delegation at the Democratic National Convention in 1964. (Library of Congress)*

leader in Dr. King's Poor Peoples Campaign. In 1971 she sought, unsuccessfully, to become a Mississippi state senator as an independent.

The last six years of Mrs. Hamer's life were marked by severe health and financial problems, but during this times she received numerous honors and awards that recognized a lifelong role in the Civil Rights movement. She died on March 14, 1977. The official cause of death was breast cancer. Her funeral in Ruleville drew a cross section of national dignitaries who came to sing her praises. And rightfully so: Mrs. Hamer was one of the most significant participants in the struggle to achieve freedom and social justice for African Americans in the 20th century. In July, 2008, a coalition of local civil rights activists, lead by Alderwoman Hattie Jordan and Patricia Thompson, national scholars, and concerned citizens dedicated the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden, in Ruleville, Mississippi, marking the final resting place of Mrs. Hamer and her beloved husband, Pap.

*See also:* Johnson, Lyndon Baines; MFDP; Poor People's Campaign; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

*Patricia Reid-Merritt*

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## Hampton, Fred

Fred Hampton (1948–1969) was one of the greatest young political activists to emerge during the Black Power movement. Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), was brutally murdered in his prime by the Chicago police and the FBI.

Hampton was born in Blue Island, Illinois, on August 30, 1948. He started his political career while he was a student at Proviso East High School. He helped found the Maywood NAACP and was admired by both blacks and

whites as an influential youth leader. He attended Triton Junior College in 1966, and, by the fall of 1967, Hampton attended Crane Junior College on Chicago's west side. Crane Junior College, later known as Malcolm X College, was a central meeting place for black activists.

In 1968, Fred Hampton founded the Illinois and Chicago Chapters of the BPP. The BPP was a national organization dedicated to the liberation of black people. He was a gifted leader that made the Chicago BPP one of the most prominent branches in the country. Hampton strove to alleviate the oppression of black people and improve their living conditions. He established several community service programs that included free breakfasts for children, a free medical clinic, and political education classes.

Hampton was a charismatic public speaker who instilled hope and pride in many Chicagoans throughout the city. He spoke out against police brutality and advocated that members of the community defend themselves. Hampton created coalitions with other socially active groups such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). He also reached across racial boundaries to build coalitions between black, white, and Latino street gangs.

Hampton and other BPP members gained national attention because they publicly advocated the use of weapons for self-defense and patrolled the community in an effort to prevent abuse by the police. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, stated that the Black Panther Party was "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country." The FBI's COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) was established to neutralize black political activists and destroy their organizations. Many activists were killed or unjustly incarcerated as a result of COINTELPRO. Hampton was sent to Menard Prison for an alleged theft charge but was released on appeal after only a few months.

As a result of COINTELPRO, the Chicago BPP headquarters, located at 2350 W. Madison, was ransacked several times by the police. On December 4, 1969, Chicago police raided a nearby apartment at 2337 W. Monroe where many BPP members slept. The police fired shots into the apartment to deliberately kill BPP leaders. Mark Clark, BPP defense captain of the Peoria, Illinois branch, was killed first with a single shot to the heart. Fred Hampton was killed next. Fellow BPP members heard two shots immediately before the police confirmed that Hampton was dead. There were seven survivors of the raid including Hampton's beloved Deborah Johnson who was pregnant with their son.

Johnson was uninjured, but four other members sustained gunshot wounds. All of them were arrested and charged with attempted murder.

Thousands of community members visited the crime scene and were appalled by the apparent slaughter of these young leaders. Many concerned citizens demanded an investigation. The initial investigation, however, exonerated the police. Although no law enforcement officials were ever convicted of the crimes, subsequent investigations established that the raid was in fact a successful assassination attempt that was approved and sanctioned by the FBI. Eventually, 25,000 pages emerged that confirmed that FBI involvement had been suppressed from the evidence.

The investigations also proved that FBI informant William O'Neal was paid handsomely for his efforts and avoided incarceration for prior criminal activity. O'Neal infiltrated the Chicago BPP and served as the chapter chief of security and Hampton's bodyguard. O'Neal supplied the FBI with a floor plan of the apartment that was critical in the assassination plot because it indicated where members slept. Many BPP members believed that O'Neal drugged Hampton so that he would be unable to defend himself during the raid.

Ballistics evidence proved that the police shot at least 200 bullets into the apartment. BPP members were ambushed and therefore unable to successfully defend themselves. As a result of the findings, the murder charges against the BPP members were dismissed. The Clark and Hampton families filed a multimillion dollar lawsuit that was eventually settled for \$1.85 million.

Deborah Johnson, now known as Akua Njeri, and Fred Hampton Jr. work together with the December 4th committee to keep Fred Hampton's legacy alive.

See also: Black Panther Party; BPP, Chicago Branch; COINTELPRO; Hoover, J. Edgar

*Claudette L. Tolson (Ayodele Shaihi)*

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## Harlem Renaissance

For all its failings, the Harlem Renaissance (1917–1934) (originally called the “Negro Renaissance”), was a spectacular success—spectacular because it was, in fact, a spectacle, a public exhibition of African American poetry, prose, drama, art, and music. This was not just “art for art’s sake,” but art to redraw the public image of “colored” people in America. Enjoying a “double audience” of black and white, the Harlem Renaissance was the fairest fruit of the New Negro movement, whose mission it was to bring about racial renewal through cultural diplomacy. The Harlem Renaissance was not only a golden age of African American arts but a valiant effort to remove the masks of racial stereotypes in order to put a new face on African Americans. To a certain degree, it not only improved race relations somewhat (a nearly impossible task, given the entrenched racial prejudices of the day), but instilled a racial pride and nobility among African Americans whose lives the Harlem Renaissance touched.

The chief strategist and “voice” of this cultural movement was philosopher Alain Locke (1885–1954), who edited the premiere and pivotal anthology of the Harlem Renaissance, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925), which is described later. As the first African American Rhodes Scholar in 1907, Locke studied abroad in Oxford (1907–1910) and the University of Berlin and the Collège de France (1910–1911), before receiving his PhD in philosophy from Harvard in 1918. Locke figures prominently in the Harlem Renaissance and served as its principal art critic, promoter, and power broker.

One can say that Alain Locke further democratized American democracy in paving the way for the Civil Rights movement. During the Jim Crow era of American apartheid, when civil rights were white rights (under *Plessy v. Ferguson's* “separate-but-equal” doctrine), Locke was the real genius behind the Harlem Renaissance, which David Levering Lewis (Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of W. E. B. Du Bois) aptly characterized as a movement that

sought to achieve “Civil Rights by Copyright.” As the acknowledged “dean” of the Harlem Renaissance, Locke may well be regarded as the Martin Luther King of African American culture. Locke’s anthology, *The New Negro*, has been hailed as the first “national book” of African Americans. He ingeniously used culture as a strategy for ameliorating racism and for winning the respect of powerful white elites as potential agents for social and political transformation.

The arc of the rise and fall of the Harlem Renaissance is imprecise. Coexisting with the Jazz Age, the Harlem Renaissance was made possible in part by powerful social forces that effected sweeping changes in America at this time, beginning with the end of World War I in 1918. Foremost among these forces was the Great Migration, a massive exodus of an estimated 13 million African Americans from the rural South to the urban North in the period between 1910 and 1930. These shifts in American demography resulted in the rise of a black middle class in major American cities, particularly in the Northeast. In the midst of this status revolution, one place stood out in particular: Harlem. With this sudden influx of blacks and capital, Harlem became the race capital of black America.

Harlem is a large sector of upper Manhattan in New York City. What was taking place in Harlem was the formation of a distinct racial consciousness. Locke characterized this psychic event in that “American Negroes have been a race more in name than in fact” or “more in sentiment than in experience,” reflecting a “common condition rather than a common consciousness.” In response to this “problem in common rather than a life in common,” the Harlem Renaissance offered African Americans their “first chances for group expression and self-determination” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 6). The Harlem Renaissance succeeded in the first objective, but failed in the latter.

Parties played a major role both in Harlem night life and in the Renaissance itself, whose official inaugural began with a formal banquet. On March 21, 1924, *Opportunity* editor and sociologist Charles S. Johnson had invited a group of young writers and artists to a dinner party of the Writers Guild held in the Civic Club, a restaurant on 14 West Twelfth Street near Fifth Avenue in Harlem. The Civic Club was the only “upper crust” New York nightclub free of color or sex restrictions. The party was called to celebrate Jessie Redmon Fauset’s first novel, *There is Confusion*, and to recognize a newer school of writers that included Eric

Walrond, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Gwendolyn Bennett.

Evidence suggests that it was Alain Locke himself who originally used the term “Renaissance” to characterize the Harlem cultural movement. In 1928, Locke revealed that, in 1924–1925, “the present writer [Locke] articulated these trends as a movement toward racial self-expression and cultural autonomy, styling it as the New Negro movement” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 446). Published in 1925, *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro* was an instant success. It sold an estimated 42,000 copies in two printings.

Capitalizing on this success, Locke expanded the special issue and recast it as an anthology in book form. *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925) was the inaugural and the epochal centerpiece of the New Negro movement. *The New Negro* featured 34 contributors, 4 of whom were white. The volume showcased most of the stellar figures of the Harlem Renaissance who went on to pursue independent literary and artistic careers in their own right. W. E. B. Du Bois contributed the final essay. Locke proclaimed *The New Negro* to be “our spiritual Declaration of Independence” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 43).

The prime movers of the Harlem Renaissance believed that art held more promise than politics in bringing about a sea change in American race relations. Although their philosophies of art had shades of differences, their overlap intensified their commonality. As the chief proponent of the “talented tenth,” W. E. B. Du Bois was staunch in his conviction that art should serve the interests of the race. In “Criteria of Negro Art” (1926), Du Bois bluntly demands that art should be used explicitly for propaganda. In Locke’s view, the problem with propaganda is that it “harangues, cajoles, threatens, or supplicates” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 27). It operates from a defensive posture. In his classic essay, “The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts,” in *The New Negro*, Locke proclaims what the function of art must be: “Art must discover and reveal the beauty which prejudice and caricature have overlaid. And all vital art discovers beauty and opens our eyes to that which previously we could not see” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 258). Although it was true that the Harlem Renaissance enjoyed a “double audience,” the primary audience was white. In its purest form, beauty will be the vehicle of truth: “After Beauty, let Truth come into the Renaissance picture” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 28).

In 1926, Langston Hughes published his manifesto, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in the *Nation*, cited as a sacred text by the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. Hughes takes a diffident, almost devil-may-care approach: "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too." Locke praised the essay as a "declaration of cultural independence" (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 446). In his preface to *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1931), editor James Weldon Johnson wrote that each people is judged by the standard of its own culture. In his November 1928 *Harper's Magazine* essay, "Race Prejudice and the Negro Artist," Johnson argues that, while racism was being fought on educational, economic, political and sociological fronts, it is the African American artist who was charged with undermining racial prejudice. Johnson's philosophy of art accords with and synthesizes those of Du Bois and Locke in that producing "great" black art is a key to gaining a reciprocity of respect.

Art is a surplus of creative energy. Art requires support. Thus much of the creative work of black artists and writers was dependent on white patrons and persons of influence, who were key protagonists of the Harlem Renaissance. This is a remarkable fact. Legally barred from congregating socially, it was practically illegal for blacks and whites to have social relationships beyond the most impersonal kinds of interactions. White patrons played a key role in publishing for and marketing black arts to white consumers for their mutual enrichment. Carl Van Vechten was probably the pivotal white promoter of the Harlem Renaissance. In 1926, he published *Nigger Heaven*, a controversial novel about black life in Harlem. Van Vechten was often excoriated for the title. *Nigger Heaven* was partly a collaborative black-white effort: James Weldon Johnson and Walter White read the galley proofs, and poet Langston Hughes wrote verses to replace song lyrics that Van Vechten had used without permission, which prompted a lawsuit.

A patron of Alain Locke, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and others, Charlotte Osgood Mason was a secret benefactor of major Harlem Renaissance artists and writers. She eschewed publicity and forbade the very mention of her name. Instructing her patrons to refer to her affectionately as "Godmother," her purse had strings attached. This fact has jaundiced Harlem Renaissance art

in the eyes of its critics, for Mason's obsession with African primitivism had to be satisfied. Nonetheless, Mason's patronage was the lifeblood of some of the key Renaissance figures.

"Negro poets and Negro poetry are two quite different things," Locke wrote in 1926. "Of the one, since Phyllis Wheatley, we have had a century and a half; of the other, since Dunbar, scarcely a generation" (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 43). The advent of a self-conscious "Negro poetry" by "Negro poets" helped cultivate the group consciousness that Locke found to be singularly lacking among African Americans historically yet developing rather suddenly in his generation. As Locke predicted, the Harlem Renaissance poets have entered into the canon of mainstream American literature.

A West Indian and British citizen, Claude McKay contributed the poem, "White House," to *The New Negro* anthology. Because of its politically sensitive nature, Locke changed the title to "White Houses." In his social protest poem, "To America," McKay personifies the United States as a tiger, racially terrible yet magnificent in its awesome power. McKay's greatest claim to fame is his military sonnet, "If We Must Die," which appeared in the July issue of the *Liberator* during the Red Summer of 1919, when race riots swept across 25 of the nation's inner cities like a firestorm. The poem, McKay says, "exploded out of me" and is now considered to be the inaugural address of the Harlem Renaissance. This poem took on the power of an anthem: it was reprinted by virtually every leading African American magazine and newspaper. McKay's sonnet surpassed his race when Winston Churchill used "If We Must Die" to rally British soldiers in battles against the Nazis in World War II.

Disinclined to identify himself as a Negro poet, Countee Cullen could not ignore the pain of the black experience. With Keats as his poetic idol, Cullen used white poetic forms, such as the sonnet, to solemnify that angst. Harper and Brothers published his first volume of poems, *Colors*, in 1925, which won the first Harmon Foundation Award in Literature in 1926. In Harvard Graduate School in 1926, Cullen took a course in versification from Robert Hillyer, who paid tribute to Cullen as the first American poet to publish a poem in rime royal. In 1926, Countee Cullen became assistant editor of *Opportunity* magazine, and began to write a regular column, "The Dark Tower." On April 9, 1928, Cullen married Nina Yolande, daughter of

W. E. B. Du Bois, in an event hailed as the social event of the decade. But the marriage was short-lived.

Acclaimed by many as the poet-laureate of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes was “discovered” in 1924 by poet Vachel Lindsay, who was Hughes’s literary idol. Hughes was a busboy at the time and had seized the opportunity to give Lindsay some poems when the latter dined at the Washington, D.C. hotel where Hughes worked. At a formal banquet hosted by *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life* (organ of the National Urban League) to present awards for its annual poetry contest, Langston Hughes won second prize for “The Weary Blues,” which became the title of the collection of poems published by Knopf in 1926 on the recommendation of Van Vechten, who personally hand-delivered the manuscript to the publisher and wrote the foreword as well. Locke credits Hughes with bringing about, for the first time, a “revelation of the emotional color of Negro life, and his brilliant discovery of the flow and rhythm of the modern and especially the city Negro, substituting the jazz figure and personality for the older plantation stereotype” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 53).

Locke recognized the contribution of visual artists to the Harlem Renaissance: “The Negro artist thus found his place beside the poets and writers of the ‘New Negro’ movement, which in the late Twenties and through the Thirties galvanized Negro talent to strong and freshly creative expression” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 192). Harlem Renaissance artists helped develop a visual vocabulary and grammar of images representing African Americans. In the 1925 *Harlem* issue of the *Survey Graphic*, Locke published seven portraits of Harlem folk, sketched by Winold Reiss. Son of Fritz Reiss, a landscape painter, Winold studied under Franz von Stuck of Munich. “Winold Reiss has achieved,” Locke claims, “what amounts to a revealing discovery of the significance, human and artistic, of one of the great dialects of human physiognomy, of some of the little understood but powerful idioms of nature’s speech” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 17). Locke praises Reiss for achieving, through painting locally in Harlem, a “universality” of the human experience.

Acknowledged by some as the father of Black American visual art, Aaron Douglas was recognized by Locke as “the pioneer of the African Style among the American Negro artists” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 177). In addition to being an illustrator, whose work first appeared in the *Harlem* issue and then in *The New Negro*, Douglas was

a muralist, whose work appeared in Club Ebony in New York, in the Sherman Hotel in Chicago, and in Fisk University. In developing his distinctive style, Douglas contributed the illustrations to *God’s Trombones* (1927), by James Weldon Johnson, which features cycles of sermon-poems. Douglas drew on Egyptian and African art and was influenced by cubism, art deco, and art nouveau as well. These illustrations are considered to be Douglas’s finest work.

A bodybuilder as well as a writer, Jean Toomer was a biracial man, who could pass for white and ultimately did. In 1923, he published *Cane*, a novel set in Georgia, which Langston Hughes praised as the best prose ever written by an African American, and which Locke hailed as “a brilliant performance” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 447). Toomer was a one-book author, whose career was abortive for personal reasons. In spiritual pursuit of the “four-conscinal” and “illuminant” Absolute, Toomer subsequently became a follower of the mystic Gurdjieff and married a wealthy white woman, Margery Latimer. When James Weldon Johnson invited Toomer to contribute to a revised edition of *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1931), Toomer refused, no longer wishing to identify himself as a Negro.

Born of a Danish mother and a West Indian father, Nella Larsen won the Harmon Foundation’s Bronze Medal for Literature in 1929 for her novel *Quicksand* (1928), which W. E. B. Du Bois acclaimed as comparable in quality to the fictional works of Charles Chesnutt. Although legally black, she had loyalties to both races, a theme of racial fusion and confusion explored in *Quicksand*, in which the main character, Helga Crane, is a full projection of Larsen herself. Locke describes *Quicksand* as a “study of the cultural conflict of mixed ancestry” and hails it as a “truly social document of importance” illuminating “the problem of divided social loyalties and... the conflict of cultures” (*The Critical Temper of Alain Locke*, p. 202–3). In 1930, she became the first black woman to win a Guggenheim Fellowship.

There are more than 130 published plays by 37 Harlem Renaissance authors. On May 22, 1921, *Shuffle Along* opened on Broadway’s David Belasco Theater. With lyrics written by Noble Sissle and music by Eubie Blake, *Shuffle Along* became the first musical revue scored and performed by African Americans. It launched the careers of Josephine Baker and Florence Mills. Locke distinguished three plays as “outstanding”: Eugene O’Neill’s *Emperor Jones*, Paul Green’s

Pulitzer Prize-winning *In Abraham's Bosom*, and DuBose Heyward's Charleston folk-drama, *Porgy*.

The year 1929 was a big one for Harlem renaissance drama: the Negro Experimental Theatre founded in February, the Negro Art Theatre formed in June, and the National Colored Players was created in September. That same year, Wallace Thurman collaborated with white journalist and playwright, William Jourdan Rapp to write a murder melodrama, *Harlem*. Produced with an all-black cast (except for a white policeman), the Broadway performances of *Harlem* proved a significant milestone in the development of black drama. It opened at the Apollo Theater on Broadway and was a huge success.

The Harlem Renaissance arose during the period of American progressivism, with its faith in the reform of democracy. Ultimately, the Harlem Renaissance crashed along with the stock market in the early years of the Great Depression, and its failure to effect any real social change was dramatically underscored by the Harlem riot of 1935. Without a unifying ideology, it was given over to exoticism and exhibitionism and failed in its stated mission to solve the racial crisis through cultural diplomacy. It was not so much that the Harlem Renaissance failed; rather it was America that failed the Harlem Renaissance. This failed impact was the fate of modernist movements in general, which sought to create a social conscience for the age of modernity. Yet Houston A. Baker sees the publication of Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) as a success in its own right. The Harlem Renaissance created a place in the national literary tradition, officially recognized in the March 13, 2002 "White House Salute to America's Authors" event, which paid tribute to writers of the Harlem Renaissance who created rich art and became agents of social change. Its cultural diplomacy became a cultural legacy.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B.; Father Divine; Garvey, Marcus; Hughes, Langston; Hurston, Zora Neale; Locke, Alain; New Negro Movement

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## Hayes, Rutherford B.

Rutherford Birchard Hayes (1822–1893) was the 19th president of the United States from 1877–1881. He was born in Delaware County, Ohio, on October 4, 1822. Hayes graduated from Kenyon College and Harvard Law in 1842 and 1845, respectively. He began practicing law in Lower Sandusky, Ohio in 1845. In 1849, Hayes moved to Cincinnati where he built a lucrative law practice and worked in city government.

Once the civil war began, Hayes became commander of the Ohio Volunteer Army on the side of the Union. He fought on the side of the North throughout the entire Civil War conflict. Hayes served in the U.S. House as a Republican representative from 1865 to 1867. He had



a reputation throughout his entire life for honesty. He had refused to leave his command in the Civil War in order to campaign for Congress. While Hayes served in the U.S. Congress, he openly supported the Fourteenth Amendment that extended civil rights to African Americans and the passage of Freedman's Bureau Bill. He also supported the amendment to override President Andrew Johnson who Hayes felt had succumbed to the pressures of former confederates.

Hayes served two nonconsecutive terms as governor of Ohio from 1868 to 1872 and from 1876 to 1877. He campaigned and fought hard against tremendous opposition as governor for universal suffrage of African American males and for their fair treatment. As governor of Ohio, Hayes supported President Ulysses S. Grant's sympathetic policies toward minorities, such as the use of the army to break up the Ku Klux Klan. Hayes attempted to generate support in the U.S. Congress for Grant's attempt to peaceably acquire Santo Domingo as a voluntary place of refuge for African Americans to escape the racism of the South.

Hayes became President of the United States in 1877, largely because of the votes of African Americans; however, most predicted that Democrat Samuel J. Tilden would win the presidential election of 1876. Tilden actually won the popular vote by about 250,000 votes. The Electoral College votes were contested in the states of South Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, and Oregon, which were states with large numbers of African American voters. Either candidate had to have at least 185 Electoral College votes to win. Initially, Tilden had 184; Hayes had 165. A total of 20 Electoral College votes were from the contested states. After several weeks of negotiations, Hayes won the election after he agreed to remove Union troops from the South, appoint at least one Southerner to a cabinet post, and to construct a transcontinental railroad through the South to rebuild its economy. This agreement is known as the Compromise of 1877 and it brought about an end to Civil War Reconstruction.

After the Compromise of 1877, the South, with the exception of African Americans, almost entirely voted Democratic until the Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. The compromise proved to be a step backward for African Americans. Contrary to Hayes's approval, many of the reforms instituted since the Civil War were rescinded. Jim Crow laws were instituted and upheld as constitutional under a "separate but equal" jurisprudence. Hayes

continued throughout his entire presidency to fight against the suppression of the rights of African Americans. He was successful during his presidency in getting legislation passed in 1879 that allowed female attorneys, regardless of race, to argue cases before the Supreme Court. He did not seek reelection in 1880, keeping his pledge that he would not run for a second term. Hayes left office on March 4, 1881. He died on Tuesday January 17, 1893.

*See also:* Black Nadir; Compromise of 1877; Republican Party; White Supremacy

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## Hill, Anita

Anita Faye Hill (1956–), currently a professor in the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, was a former colleague of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas who courageously accused him of sexual harassment and gave testimony in this regard during Thomas's 1991 Senate confirmation hearing. Born on a farm in Murriss, Oklahoma, on July 30, 1956, Hill earned an undergraduate degree in psychology from Oklahoma State University in 1977. During her matriculation at Oklahoma State, Hill had served as an intern for a local judge, and this experience spawned her interest in law. In 1980, she earned her JD degree from Yale University and, in the same year, Hill was admitted to the DC Bar. She became a practicing lawyer with the firm of Ward, Hardraker, and Ross in Washington, D.C. By 1981, Hill was special counsel to the assistant secretary of the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights where she began working, for the first time, with Clarence Thomas. According to her sworn testimony 10 years later, Thomas began making repeated sexual advances and lewd remarks to her.

When Thomas became chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Hill served as his adviser and, according to her testimony, his sexual harassment of her intensified. The lewd and vulgar remarks Hill recalled during the Senate confirmation hearing including vivid descriptions of pornographic movie scenes and an infamous joke about a pubic hair Thomas claimed to have found on a Coke can. Hill served as Thomas's assistant from 1982 to 1983 before accepting a faculty position at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, where she served as an assistant professor of civil rights from 1983 to 1986. In 1986, Hill accepted a position as a professor specializing in contract law at the University of Oklahoma. By 1991, she quickly became a household name when President George H. W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to replace Thurgood Marshall on the U.S. Supreme Court. On September 3, 1991, Hill was approached by the Senate Judiciary Committee to provide background information on Clarence Thomas. Although she initially did not divulge details, when prompted by investigators to discuss rumors of sexual harassment and improper conduct on the part of Thomas, Hill cooperated with the Senate Judiciary Committee on September 9. She was later interviewed by the FBI in the midst of the confirmation hearings. Thomas denied all allegations made by Hill and claimed that he was the victim of a "high-tech lynching." After extensive investigation and debate, the Senate confirmed Thomas by the narrow margin of 52–48.

In March 1992, *American Spectator* published an article by David Brock that claimed Hill had lied and exaggerated during the hearings and infamously stated she might be "a bit nutty and a bit slutty." In 1993, Brock expanded these claims into a book-length diatribe entitled, *The Real Anita Hill*. After repudiating his own book and personally apologizing to Hill, Brock published a book-length commentary on the entire affair entitled *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative* (2002). Hill's own book, *Speaking Truth to Power* (1997), offers an insightful view of the events surrounding the Thomas confirmation and the experiences Hill had with sexual harassment. Most recently, Hill serves as a professor of Social Policy, Law, and Women's Studies at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and, in 2008, she was awarded the Louis P. and Evelyn Smith First Amendment Award by the Ford Hall Forum. *See also:* Thomas, Clarence

Walter C. Rucker

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## Hip-Hop

When someone mentions the term "hip-hop," it either garners interest, disdain, or indifference. Many people are curious about what it is, what it does, and how it functions. People often mistake hip-hop as a music form, but it is not. Hip-hop is a culture, with its own lexicon, ideology, and aesthetic. Simply put, hip-hop includes a dance style (breaking and pop locking, among others), graffiti and tagging, and rap music. Founded in New York City's area of the South Bronx in the 1970s, rap music was the cultural backlash to disco's prominence in the national and urban music scene. Before rap music emerged onto the music scene of New York City's Harlem and South Bronx streets, there was already a counterculture—a subculture—that was percolating. Urban art was in full expression, whether it was dance, music, poetry, or painting. Amidst the ugliness and the decay of New York City that existed as a result of several failed economic policies and the many aftereffects of the Vietnam War, many already marginalized black, Asian and Latino youths found beauty in their new meaning for existence, their new voice. It was performed with passion and pursued with a vision for having something to call their own, something no one could take from them, something different and unique. This energy is what contributed to the creation of a new culture: hip-hop.

Considered the founding father of rap music and hip-hop culture, DJ Kool Herc had no initial intentions of creating a musical and cultural phenomenon. What was supposed to be a commonplace back-to-school party turned into the

beginning of a cultural revolution. What Kool Herc created in the park of Sedgwick and Cedar Streets in the South Bronx simply evolved out of innovation and invention. His crew, the Herculords, included his famous sound system, MCs and dancers, while he managed the turntables. During intermissions, Kool Herc would maintain the crowd's interest by keeping them on the dance floor. Breakdancing, called B-Boying (and B-Girling), was an opportunity for dance crews to battle and flaunt new moves and styles. Herc's use of the break beat, the instrumental break in a song, was a highlight at his parties and shows. Another of Kool Herc's highlights was his ability to rap to the crowd. "Rap" is the slang term for "talk," and Herc's West Indian (Jamaican) cultural roots influenced the way he deejayed. In the Caribbean tradition of "toasting," the deejay raps over a break beat to keep the crowd motivated. In addition, the important aspect of toasting is the call-and-response element, which connects the deejay to his audience and vice versa. Herc's rival deejay was Flash, who also excelled in using break beats. Flash's advantage was that he could mix and scratch faster than anyone else, hence his name. His prowess earned him the title grandmaster, which indicates that he is the best at his skill. Grandmaster Flash and his crew, The Furious Five, were the stuff of legend. With Flash and his crew making history in Harlem and Herc's crew controlling the Bronx, interested people from every corner of New York City's five boroughs (Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island) would flock to sold-out, thereby spreading the culture and its elements.

Hip-hop is an organic culture that is steeped in the art of improvisation and innovation, creative intelligence, and artistic flair. Deemed as a culture by Afrika Bambaataa of the Zulu Nation, hip-hop exists as a cultural entity that requires active participation and involvement in order for it to thrive. Similar to the theological tenets of Christian and Muslim faiths, hip-hop culture also had its tenets, termed the five elements. It was determined that there are five elements of the culture, which are requisite for its existence: the deejay, the MC, the B-Boy (or B-Girl) breaker, the graffiti artist, and the knowledge of self. The five elements were not instantaneously identified and labeled until after the establishment of hip-hop as a culture. Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation were supporters of the Five Percent Nation of Islam, which was an offshoot of the Nation of Islam. The religion was founded by Clarence 13X, a former disciple of the Nation of Islam. It is also noted that the Zulu

Nation is the world's oldest and largest grassroots hip-hop organization; its primary purpose is to promote knowledge, peace, and understanding among those within the hip-hop community.

Deejays (DJ = disk jockey) are the focal point of the culture, because without them, there is no music. Interestingly, it was the famed DJ Luvbug Starski who coined the term "hip-hop." There were many aspiring MCs and dancers, but they needed the deejay's permission to perform for the crowd. If the deejay thought a person's skills were lacking, s/he was instantly dismissed. Therefore, the deejay functioned as a filter, controlling who was going to be heard and who was not. By the time hip-hop gained enough attention to be on the radio, New York City deejays such as Red Alert and Mister Magic used their positions on rival radio stations to promote their respective crews, Boogie Down Productions (BDP) and the Juice Crew. Another important element of deejaying is being able to perform on the turntables. Grand Wizzard Theodore invented the scratch entirely by accident. While in his room practicing, his mother called him and he simply scratched the record by stopping it from spinning—hence the beginning of what DJ Babu of the Dilated Peoples later termed as "turntablism," or turntable arts.

Turntable arts have progressed significantly since the advent of Grandmaster Flash. Other than the ones already mentioned, notable DJs are Jam Master Jay of RUN-DMC, DJ Scratch of EPMD, Master Don, DJ Bobcat, Spinderella of Salt-n-Pepa, Q-Bert, the X-ecutioners, DJ Jazzy Jeff, DJ Steve Dee, and Cocoa Chanelle. A quality hip-hop deejay must also be able to function as the catalyst at parties. If the deejay was in a rap group, s/he often had the responsibility of producing the songs. Because of this overlap, several of the aforementioned producers are also deejays; however, some producers are better recognized for their music production, such as DJ Premier, Dr. Dre, DJ Marley Marl, Da Beatminerz, and DJ Quik. The DJ and production duo the Awesome 2 are also recognized by the Paley Center for Media (Museum of Television and Radio) for having the longest running hip-hop radio program in radio history.

If the deejay is the focal point, the MC is the second in command. The abbreviation MC has been said to stand for master of ceremony, microphone controller, microphone checka', move the crowd, and microphone commander. Whatever the case, anyone who considers himself or herself an MC has to prove lyrical prowess and deftness. Because

of the fierce competition, it was common to witness a battle between aspiring MCs. The title MC had to be earned, not simply applied. Unbeknownst to them, the historic battle between MC Busy Bee and Kool Moe Dee of the Treacherous Three determined which standard and criteria aspiring MCs were going to follow. Moe Dee's aggressive, witty, and rapid-fire lyrics set the precedent for future MCs to this day. Similar to playing the dozens, MC battles required lyrical skill and wit in the form of signifying; they were unscripted and unrehearsed lyrical contests in which the crowd decided the winner. There are many rappers who are not MCs, but every MC is a rapper. In current times, the MC garners so much attention that the DJ's visibility has fallen by the wayside.

In the 1990s, it became common to see rap groups sans a DJ; however, some groups still adhere to the tradition. Some notable MCs are Pebble Poo, Melle Mel, MC Lyte, Rakim, KRS-ONE, Queen Latifah, LL Cool J, Ice Cube, Scarface, Lauryn Hill, Big L, Buckshot of Black Moon, Too \$hort, Nas, Big Daddy Kane, Common, Ludacris, Roxanne

Shante, Mos Def, Wu-Tang Clan, Jay-Z, Ice-T, T. I., Big Punisher, Tupac, Bahamdia, Notorious B.I.G, Da Brat, the LOX, Grandmaster Caz, and Black Thought of the Roots. Being a quality MC means that one has to be original and authentic and possess a style atypical of the mainstream. There is a difference between being unique and being odd or strange; if an MC's style is too farfetched, it will not be readily accepted, but if it is intriguing, it will be a signature style. For example, Wu-Tang Clan's late member Old Dirty Bastard named himself as such because there was no father to his style. The MC has been made synonymous with the West African griot or storyteller, and, like the griot, s/he has the responsibility of properly representing his/her people and their history. MCs that appropriate or misuse their talents are harshly criticized as sellouts and are demoted to being considered as mere rappers.

Much like the generational and controversial dances of years past, such as the jitterbug and the twist, breaking itself became a cultural phenomenon. Breaking in its current form involves many sophisticated movements and



Rappers Fat Joe, left, and Terror Squad perform during the UrbanAID2 concert in New York, on Tuesday April 9, 2002. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

techniques that emphasize finesse and acrobatics. Moves such as top rocking, down rocking, power moves, and freezes are standard basics of the dance form. The term “B-Boy” stands for Bronx boy, break boy or beat boy, but because dancers waited for the break beat in a song play to showcase their moves, the term break dancing became synonymous with B-noying. It is debatable whether there is an historical, concrete location of place for the history of breaking; however, it has always been considered a manifestation of African dance. Its modern form was first noticed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in California and New York. After gaining much visibility performing in public places, such as sidewalks, public parks, subway platforms, breaking New York City was almost commonplace. The interest in breaking, which the mainstream considered a new dance craze, quickly caught the attention of corporate America and Hollywood.

In 1983, the films *Flashdance*, *Style Wars*, and *Wild Style* were released nationwide. The 1984 film *Beat Street* was also released with much success. The West Coast style of breaking was also on the scene and was made more popular in the 1984 Hollywood films *Breakin’* and *Breakin’ 2: The Electric Boogaloo*. Before the films, breaking was already gaining national attention. The 1976 television series *What’s Happening!* also brought the early forms of breaking into America’s homes, with the character Rerun, who was a breaker that specialized in popping and locking. The actual character, Fred Berry, was a member of a breaking crew. James Brown was also credited with inspiring breaking with his 1969 hit, “The Good Foot,” which many breakers danced to. James Brown himself also danced with a remarkable flair, which laid the foundation for classic footwork moves.

It is important to note that the history of African American dance was steeped in the inventive and creative spirit. Whether it was a classic jitterbug or softshoe step, African American dance embodied a unique spirit and essence, which many have linked to the history of slavery and oppression. Breaking’s ethnic origins have been linked to Brazilian capoeira, a traditional martial arts dance that was performed by African slaves. The spirit and inventiveness of breaking, however, has an apparent connection to that of African American tap dancing. The tap dance challenges and routines made famous by notable figures like the Nicholas Brothers and Howard “Sandman” Sims were equally inventive and uncharacteristic, and they were constantly evolving and developing new movements. Breaking

is an ever-evolving dance form, but it remains true to its roots and traditional structure. Offshoots of breaking that have gained popularity are clown dancing and krumping. Similar to B-Boy culture, their crews are called fam (short for family), and they are predominantly based on battling and street/public performance. All of these dance forms have gained an international audience, and there are films and performers that hail from many nations and continents. One B-Boy crew that arguably has the most recognition worldwide is the Rock Steady Crew, which was founded in 1977 in the Bronx. They have members nationwide and in several international locations, such as Japan, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Graffiti became tied to hip-hop culture, but it is not exclusive to it. The meaning of graffiti is simply illicit writing on public property. Examples of graffiti have also been found in ancient sites in Turkey, Egypt, Syria, and Greece. Some art historians, anthropologists, and archeologists have classified historical artifacts and places such as cave paintings, tomb writings, and the landmark El Morro National Monument as representations of historic graffiti forms; however, in its modern form, it was considered a cultural nuisance. As urban graffiti became more popular, artists looked for ways to make their work more technologically advanced and noticeable. In New York City, the trains became mobile canvases for graffiti artists; some painted entire sides of subway cars (called bombing) with their trademark designs and signatures (known as tags).

Two graffiti artists who are credited with starting the New York City graffiti movement are Julio 204 and TAKI 183, whose scrawlings were visible throughout parts of the city. In addition to featuring legendary MCs and breakers, the film *Wild Style* also featured legendary graffiti artists such as Dondi (Donald White), Lady Pink (Sandra Fabara), and Lee Quiñones. These artists have since gained prominence and recognition for their talent and have had their works displayed in some of the most notable museums and art galleries, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Dondi was incredibly prolific before his untimely death in 1998. Fabara and Quiñones also have a wealth of material that remains on display in permanent collections. Lady Pink was considered a trailblazer for women graffiti artists, which, like other hip-hop elements, tends to be predominantly male. Her presence paved the way for current graffiti artists of fame and infamy such as Los Angeles’s graffiti

queen Tribe. Because it is illegal and considered a form of vandalism, many graffiti artists work under an alias.

In the August 2008 arrest of Danielle Bremner (aka “Dani” and “Utah”) and her husband Jim Clay Harper (aka “Ether”) for graffiti vandalism, they were listed as wanted criminals in the cities of New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, London, Madrid, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. Graffiti culture is its own subculture, and it will likely never be accepted as art in mainstream society. It has been termed street art and guerilla art, but neither term has further legitimized it. Because hip-hop is a culture that is lived and not performed, it is not uncommon for deejays and breakers to also be graffiti artists; when people engage with the culture, they often explore its various facets and components. For example, Rock Steady Crew DJ JS-1 was well known as a graffiti artist under the alias “Jerms,” and the rap group the Artifacts were known taggers and bombers. The 2007 documentary film *Bomb It!* features many notable and legendary graffiti artists who talk about graffiti’s history from ancient eras to contemporary times.

Hip-hop culture has often been criticized for its commercial value, but it also has plenty of substance. Brand Nubian’s 1998 album *Foundation* featured in its liner notes the phrase “Do the Knowledge.” Similar to the beliefs espoused by African American intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Mary Church Terrell, many figures in hip-hop culture also espouse the values of pursuing an education. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on learning African American history and culture, which was considered necessary for understanding one’s place in American society.

During the politically volatile 1980s and 1990s, ideologies from the black arts movement and the Black Power movement were particularly celebrated and acknowledged as important beliefs. Groups such as Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, and X-Clan were vocal about the miseducation in the nation’s school systems, where European history and values were taught, almost exclusively. RUN-DMC was known for their crossover hit “Walk This Way” on the 1986 album *Raising Hell*. The album’s final track, however, is “Proud to Be Black,” which celebrates the successes and triumphs of key African American such as George Washington Carver, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Benjamin Banneker, Malcolm X, Harriet Tubman, Jesse Owens, and Muhammad Ali. Boogie Down Productions’ frontman, KRS-ONE, often promoted black empowerment in his lyrics. His song “You Must Learn” on his 1989 *Ghetto*

*Music* album also talks about African American inventors not taught in schools such as Eli Whitney, Madame CJ Walker, Garrett Morgan, and Charles Drew. On this album KRS vehemently attacks the education system posing rhetorical questions in songs “Why Is That?” and “Who Protects Us from You?”; the former song discusses the history of blacks being intentionally omitted from Western history, including the Bible, and the latter was inspired by the ever-present police brutality and Tiananmen Square incident in China. In both songs, KRS encourages his audience to ask important questions to those persons who are considered to have authority, and he asserts that blacks have to take responsibility for their education and safety.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there were concerted efforts to organize hip-hop political movements. Two successful movements were the Stop the Violence Movement, which was the proponent of ending street violence and the gold boycott, which was to force the jewelry industry to divest from Apartheid South Africa. Instead, many sported African medallions, Kente cloth clothing, and also made music about worldwide racial discrimination. The energy of the teens and young adults in the hip-hop community was fueled by their affinity for rebellion and resistance. Some rappers, like Paris, endorsed the Black Panther Party’s ideologies. X-Clan showed photos of Patrice Lumumba, an armed Harriet Tubman, and Fidel Castro in their video “Heed the Word of the Brother.” In this song, they also accuse Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates of stealing their knowledge from Africans and are told to “step off” at the song’s conclusion. Queen Latifah’s 1989 album *All Hail the Queen* has an insignia of Africa, colored in black, with red and green lettering encircling it. Her music video for the song “Ladies First” shows footage of antiapartheid protests in South Africa and features a slideshow of African American civil rights leaders, such as Harriet Tubman and Angela Davis. The fervor of Nelson Mandela’s 1990 release also encouraged many in the hip-hop community to struggle for civil rights. Ice Cube’s monumental 1990 album *AmeriKKK’s Most Wanted* champions Maoist ideologies for political resistance. Education was considered a civil right, and in addition to the aforementioned groups, others such as Dead Prez, Black Star, A Tribe Called Quest, The Roots, LL Cool J, Nas, GangStarr, Dilated Peoples, Arrested Development, Chamillionaire, Master-P, Eve, and Native Tongues have released material that focuses on pertinent issues in the African American community (violence, education,

racism and discrimination, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, etc.). Recent political topics have included the 2005 Hurricane Katrina devastation, the 2006 Shawn Bell shooting in New York City, and Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign and election win.

Although it was once deemed a fad, hip-hop has proven to be a viable cultural institution. More than three decades have passed since its inception and it is likely to persevere for generations to come. Representations of hip-hop culture can be seen throughout the world, whether DJ Honda from Japan or the Cookie Crew from London, the first international female MCs. There is also a strong hip-hop presence in Germany and other parts of Eastern Europe where graffiti artists and B-Boys are everpresent at parties and showcases. India's Panjabi MC has had two major U.S. hits with MCs Sha Stimuli ("Stop What You Doin," 2004) and Jay-Z ("Beware the Boys," 2005). British singer M.I.A., who is of Sri Lankan Tamil descent, creates music that has obvious connections and ties to hip-hop culture. There is a Hispanic hip-hop presence throughout most of the Americas and the Caribbean, which has allowed for the success of the hip-hop-infused Reggaeton, a Rap-Reggae-Spanish hybrid form of music. MCs such as Ivy Queen, Tego Calderón, Don Omar, and Daddy Yankee have established themselves as iconic figures; however, it was Panama's El General who pioneered the genre in the early 1990s. In the United States, there have been creative attempts to fuse rap with jazz (American classical music), techno, country music, gospel, blues, and European classical music.

Just as jazz music was controversial in its beginnings, hip-hop has also encountered naysayers and critics. As a form of African American artistic expression, hip-hop culture continues to thrive and excel beyond people's expectations. It is a multibillion dollar industry; however, it is still marginalized as a culture by the mainstream. Furthermore, there are more concerted attempts for black artists to have legal ownership of their art and to have more creative control than black artists had in the past. Still, there is a significant gap between hip-hop as product and hip-hop as culture. Those who consume hip-hop as product are likely disconnected from the culture and the people who live it. Although the product is important and allows for creative exposure, it has too often been the target of criticism for celebrating misogyny, violence, materialism, and use of the word "nigger" or "nigga." Many producers' sample music also leaves distaste in musical purists' mouths. Hip-hop

culture has a different focus, in which the culture is not defined by acts of social deviancy and self-denigration. Because of the financial incentive, there are irreconcilable differences between those who wish to preserve the integrity of the culture and those who continue to exploit it for personal gain. Whatever hip-hop culture's future, it will certainly remain a viable and influential form of black artistic expression.

*See also:* Black Folk Culture; Shakur, Tupac; Urbanization

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## Historically Black Colleges and Universities

These institutions were created under the laws of segregation and before 1964 with the express purpose of educating African Americans. From their arrival on the shores of the United States, black people have thirsted for knowledge and viewed education as the key to their freedom. These enslaved people pursued various forms of education despite rules, in all Southern states, barring them from learning to read and write. A few black colleges appeared immediately before the Civil War, such as Lincoln and Cheyney Universities in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce in Ohio. With the end of the Civil War, the daunting task of providing education to more than 4 million formerly enslaved people was shouldered by

both the federal government, through the Freedman's Bureau, and many northern church missionaries. As early as 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau began establishing black colleges, resulting in staff and teachers with primarily military backgrounds. During the postbellum period, most black colleges were so in name only; these institutions generally provided primary and secondary education, a feature that was true of most historically white colleges—starting with Harvard—during the first decades of their existence.

As noted, religious missionary organizations—some affiliated with northern white denominations such as the Baptists and Congregationalists and some with black churches such as the African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion—were actively working with the Freedmen's Bureau. Two of the most prominent white organizations were the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the American Missionary Association, but there were many others as well. White northern missionary societies founded black colleges such as Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. The benevolence of the missionaries was tinged with self-interest and sometimes racism. Their goals in establishing these colleges were to Christianize the freedmen (i.e., convert former enslaved people to their brand of Christianity) and to rid the country of the “menace” of uneducated African Americans. Among the colleges founded by black denominations were Morris Brown in Georgia, Paul Quinn in Texas, and Allen University in South Carolina. Unique among American colleges, these institutions were founded by African Americans for African Americans. Because these institutions relied on less support from whites, they were able to design their own curricula; however, they also were more vulnerable to economic instability.

With the passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890, the federal government again took an interest in black education, establishing public black colleges. This act stipulated that those states practicing segregation in their public colleges and universities would forfeit federal funding unless they established agricultural and mechanical institutions for the black population. Despite the wording of the Morrill Act, which called for the equitable division of federal funds, these newly founded institutions received less funding than their white counterparts and thus had inferior facilities. Among the 17 new “land grant” colleges were institutions such as Florida Agricultural and Technical University and Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University.

At the end of the 19th century, private black colleges had exhausted funding from missionary sources. Simultaneously, a new form of support emerged, that of white northern industrial philanthropy. Among the leaders of industry who initiated this type of support were John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Julius Rosenwald, and John Slater. These industry captains were motivated by both Christian benevolence and a desire to control all forms of industry. The organization making the largest contribution to black education was the General Education Board (GEB), a conglomeration of northern white philanthropists, established by John D. Rockefeller Sr. but spearheaded by John D. Rockefeller Jr. Between 1903 and 1964, the GEB gave more than \$63,000,000 to black colleges, an impressive figure, but nonetheless only a fraction of what they gave to white institutions. Regardless of their personal motivations, the funding system that these industrial moguls created showed a strong tendency to control black education for their benefit—to produce graduates who were skilled in the trades that served their own enterprises (commonly known as industrial education). Above all, the educational institutions they supported were extremely careful not to upset the segregationist power structure that ruled the South by the 1890s. Black colleges such as Tuskegee and Hampton were showcases of industrial education. It was here that students learned how to shoe horses, make dresses, cook, and clean under the leadership of individuals like Samuel Chapman Armstrong (Hampton) and Booker T. Washington (Tuskegee).

The philanthropists' support of industrial education was in direct conflict with many black intellectuals who favored a liberal arts curriculum. Institutions such as Fisk, Dillard, Howard, Spelman, and Morehouse were more focused on the liberal arts curriculum favored by W. E. B. Du Bois than on Booker T. Washington's emphasis on advancement through labor and self-sufficiency. Whatever the philosophical disagreements may have been between Washington and Du Bois, the two educational giants did share a goal of educating African Americans and uplifting their race. Their differing approaches might be summarized as follows: Washington favored educating blacks in the industrial arts so they might become self-sufficient as individuals, whereas Du Bois wanted to create an intellectual elite in the top ten percent of the black population (the “talented tenth”) to lead the race as a whole toward self-determination.



Beginning around 1915, there was a shift in the attitude of the industrial philanthropists, who started to turn their attention to those black colleges that emphasized the liberal arts. Realizing that industrial education could exist side by side with a more academic curriculum, the philanthropists opted to spread their money (and therefore their influence) throughout the educational system. The pervasive influence of industrial philanthropy in the early 20th century created a conservative environment on many black college campuses—one that would seemingly tolerate only those administrators (typically white men) who accommodated segregation. But attention from the industrial philanthropists was not necessarily welcomed by institutions like Fisk University, where rebellions ensued against autocratic presidents who were assumed by students to be puppets of the philanthropists. In spite of these conflicts, industrial philanthropists provided major support for private black colleges up until the late 1930s.

At this time, the industrial philanthropists turned their attention elsewhere. In response, Frederick D. Patterson, then president of the Tuskegee Institute, suggested that the nation's private black colleges join together in their fundraising efforts. As a result, in 1944, the presidents of 29 black colleges created the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). The UNCF began solely as a fundraising organization but eventually took on an advocacy role as well.

Until the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, both public and private black colleges in the South remained segregated by law and were the only educational option for African Americans. Although most colleges and universities did not experience the same violent fallout from the *Brown* decision as southern public schools, they were greatly affected by the decision. The Supreme Court's landmark ruling meant that black colleges would be placed in competition with white institutions in their efforts to recruit black students. With the triumph of the idea of integration, many began to call black colleges into question and label them vestiges of segregation. Desegregation proved slow, however, with public black colleges maintaining their racial makeup well into the current day. In the state of Mississippi, for example, the *Fordice* case was mired in the court system for almost 25 years, with a final decision rendered in 2004. The case, which reached the United States Supreme Court, asked whether Mississippi had met its affirmative duty under the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause to dismantle its prior dual university

system. Despite ample evidence to the contrary, the high court decided that the answer was yes. Although the *Fordice* case applied only to those public institutions within the 5th District, it had a rippling effect within most southern states, resulting in stagnant funding levels for public black colleges and limited inroads by African Americans into predominantly white institutions.

After the *Brown* decision, private black colleges, which have always been willing to accept students from all backgrounds if the law would allow, struggled to defend issues of quality in an atmosphere that labeled anything all black as inferior. Many black colleges also suffered from "brain drain," as predominately white institutions in the North and some in the South made efforts to attract the top 10 percent of their students to their institutions once racial diversity became valued within higher education.

The black college of the 1960s was a much different place than that of the 1920s. The leadership switched from white to black and, because blacks had more control over funding, there was greater tolerance for dissent and black self-determination. On many public and private black college campuses throughout the South, students were staging sit-ins and protesting against segregation and its manifestations throughout the region. Most prominent were the four black college students from North Carolina A & T who refused to leave a segregated Woolworth lunch counter in 1960.

During the 1960s, the federal government took a greater interest in black colleges. In an attempt to provide clarity, the 1965 Higher Education Act defined a black college as an institution whose primary mission was the education of African Americans. The recognition of the uniqueness of black colleges implied in this definition has led to increased federal funding for these institutions.

Another federal intervention on behalf of black colleges took place in 1980 when President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12232, which established a national program to alleviate the effects of discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand black colleges to provide quality education. Since this time, every U.S. president has provided funding to black colleges through this program. President George H. W. Bush followed up on Carter's initiative in 1989, signing Executive Order 12677, which created the Presidential Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities to advise the president and the secretary of education on the future of these institutions.

Currently, more than 300,000 students attend the nation's 105 historically black colleges (40 public four-year, 11 public two-year, 49 private four-year, and 5 private 2-year institutions). This amounts to 28 percent of all African American college students. Overall, the parents of black students at black colleges have much lower incomes than those of parents of black students at predominantly white institutions. Many researchers who study black colleges, however, have found that African Americans who attend black colleges have higher levels of self-esteem and find their educational experience more nurturing. Moreover, graduates of black colleges are more likely to continue their education and pursue graduate degrees than their counterparts at predominantly white institutions. Despite the fact that only 28 percent of African American college students attend black colleges, these institutions produce the majority of our nation's African American judges, lawyers, doctors, and teachers.

Black colleges in the 21st century are remarkably diverse and serve varied populations. Although most of these institutions maintain their historically black traditions, on average 13 percent of their students are white. Because of their common mission (that of racial uplift), they are often lumped together and treated as a monolithic entity, causing them to be unfairly judged by researchers, the media, and policymakers. Just as predominantly white institutions are varied in their mission and quality, so are the nation's black colleges. Today, the leading black colleges cater to those students who could excel at any top tier institution regardless of racial makeup. Other institutions operate with the needs of black students in the surrounding region in mind. And some maintain an open enrollment policy, reaching out to those students who would have few options elsewhere in the higher education system.

See also: Freedmen's Bureau

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## Hoover, J. Edgar

The longest serving bureaucrat in history, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover (1895–1972) presided over the erection of a domestic security state in the United States between 1919 and 1972. Born into the respectable racism of segregated Victorian society, Hoover was obsessed by fear of racial miscegenation and consistently responded to African American demands for justice and equality as threats to moral propriety and social order. Ignoring the pervasive violations of federal civil rights laws that characterized the American South, Hoover exploited moral panics to repress African American political movements.

During World War I, as Hoover rounded up enemy aliens, the Bureau of Investigation (BI) had launched a large-scale investigation into the activities of black civilians and soldiers, and equal rights organizations and publications. Federal bureaucrats were most alarmed by the radical syndicalists of the International Workers of the World (IWW), an industrial union that engaged in general strikes, attempting to organize all workers irrespective of race or nationality, on the basis of economic radicalism and opposition to the war. In 1918, BI investigations facilitated the incarceration of Benjamin Harrison, the IWW's most prominent black activist.

During the 1919–1920 Red Scare, Hoover was appointed to head the antiradical General Intelligence Division (GID) of the BI and launched investigations into political associations among African Americans. His agents reached entirely erroneous conclusions regarding relationships between the IWW and African American publications like the socialist *Messenger*, the procommunist *Crusader*, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's *Crisis*. BI agents even investigated anticommunist groups such as the African Blood Brotherhood and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Finding no evidence for tax-violation or white slavery charges against Garvey, Hoover obtained a conviction on

mail fraud in 1922 and, after five years of incarceration, secured his deportation from the United States.

Dragnet raids, alliances with vigilantes, *agent provocateur* activities, and partisan use of BI agents brought about the abolishment of the GID in 1924, when Hoover rose to the position of director. His agents secretly continued to monitor outspoken black organizations such as the NAACP and the Moorish Science Temple. When Hoover gained authority to investigate subversive activities among Communists and Fifth Columnists in the years before World War II, the FBI investigated and reported to the White House on organizations such as the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington movement.

The FBI launched a systematic investigation of African American life during WWII, monitoring all black-owned newspapers, recruiting paid black informants, and conducting electronic surveillance against groups ranging from the National Negro Congress to the NAACP. Attempting to stem a tide of racial protest, Hoover even ordered his agents to find out if black female domestic servants were demanding a voice in their working conditions. As the Justice Department was drawn into minimal enforcement of black civil rights for the first time, Attorney General Nicholas Biddle ordered Hoover to investigate lynching and pogroms against black defense workers. Hoover resisted. FBI reports tried to deflect responsibility for racial conflict to agitation by pro-Axis subversives.

During the Cold War, the FBI investigated any group that adopted positions on peace, civil liberties, racism, or economics that paralleled the Communist Party line. Hoover viewed the Civil Rights movement as a target for Communist infiltration, so FBI agents and informants penetrated liberal groups such as the NAACP, American Friends Services Committee, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Congress for Racial Equality, and Students for a Democratic Society. They collected and disseminated information on political opinions, plans, and activities of sympathetic university professors, student groups, civil rights activists, and labor unions. Racist police departments and citizens councils received scant attention.

As the *Brown* decision and nonviolent direct action campaigns provoked racial backlash, Hoover was forced to investigate anti-civil rights bombings and killings. Between 1960 and 1964, FBI agents merely took notes as police brutalized civil rights demonstrators, and an FBI

informant even led the Klan beating of the Freedom Riders in Birmingham, but the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act forced change. After 1964, agents helped local police prevent Klan terrorism and launched a successful covert operation against the Klan. At the same time, however, the bureau also provided political intelligence to President Johnson on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenge, launched covert action against nonviolent groups such as the Poor People's Campaign, and systematically repressed militant groups such as the Black Panther Party, committing some of the grossest violations of civil liberties that have ever occurred in the United States.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; COINTELPRO; Garvey, Marcus; King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

John Drabble

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## Houston, Charles Hamilton

Attorney and educator Charles Hamilton Houston (1895-1950) was born in the District of Columbia, to William LePre Houston, a lawyer and part-time professor, and Mary Ethel Hamilton, an accomplished hairdresser and former school teacher. A bright youngster, Houston enjoyed a middle-class upbringing and had great pride in his heritage. He attended the racially segregated Washington, D.C. public school system, where he graduated from M Street

High School at the age of 15, before enrolling at Amherst College in Massachusetts in 1911.

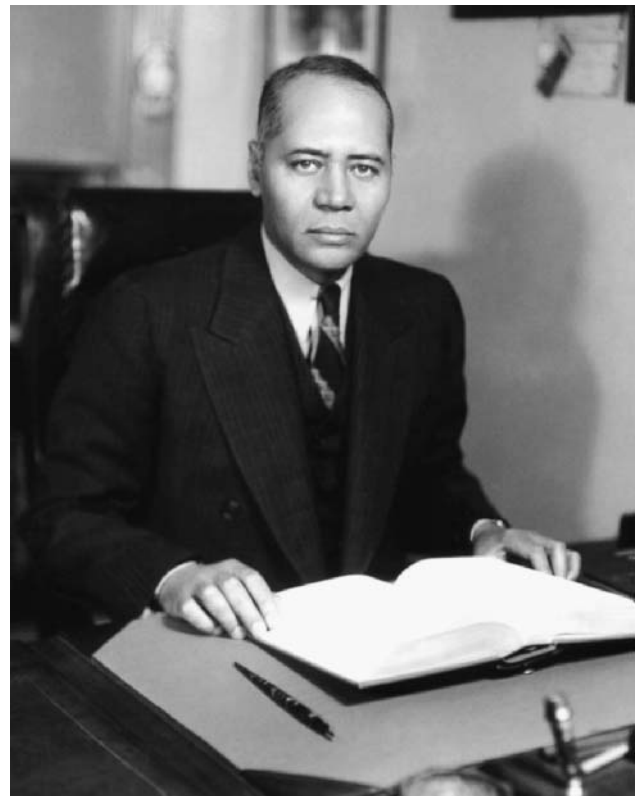
Houston graduated with a BA degree, *magna cum laude*, as one of Amherst's six valedictorians. He was the only black student in the Amherst class of 1915 and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. After briefly teaching English at Howard University, Houston enlisted in the army in 1917 and was sent to Camp Fort Des Moines in Iowa in June 1917. While there, he sought training in the artillery corps, but black officers were trained to serve only in the infantry. Thus, Houston was commissioned first lieutenant of infantry, a position he resigned in June 1918 to attend artillery school. Later he reported to Camp Meade, Maryland, where he won his commission as a second lieutenant of artillery. Houston and other black officers were sent to France where they encountered racism and segregation in the army.

After being honorably discharged from the army in 1919, Houston returned to Washington, D.C. Disturbed by the discrimination he and other black officers encountered and experienced in the army, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his father who was then a leading member of the Bar of the District of Columbia. Houston entered Harvard Law School in the fall of 1919, and, after his first year, distinguished himself among his fellow students and was honored by becoming the first black to serve as editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. Houston earned a bachelor of law degree (*cum laude*) in 1922, and made history again in 1923, when he became the first black person to be awarded a Doctor of Juridical Science at Harvard.

Houston was then awarded a one-year fellowship to study law in Europe at the University of Madrid in Spain, from which he earned a Doctor of Civil Law degree (1924), before returning to Washington, and was admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia that same year. After a short period, he began a lifelong law partnership with his father in Washington, D.C., while also teaching at Howard University Law School. During his distinguished legal career, Houston answered numerous calls, but he remained closely associated with his father. On August 23, 1924, he married his first wife, Margaret Gladys Moran, but they were divorced in 1937. He married his second wife, Henrietta Williams, in August of that same year, with whom he had one child.

In 1929, Houston was appointed vice dean of Howard University Law School, where he also served as a professor of law. He directed the work of the law school as the chief administrative officer until 1935, and, during

his administration, Howard Law School trained most of the nation's blacks who entered the legal profession. The law school, however, lacked national recognition, and Houston worked tirelessly and provided leadership that helped transform Howard into a nationally distinguished legal training ground with a mission of racial advancement. His hard work paid off by 1931, when Howard University Law School was fully accredited by the American Bar Association and had gained membership in the Association of American Law Schools. During his tenure, Howard University Law School graduated and trained almost three-fourths of the nation's black law students. Many of the lawyers Houston mentored and trained carried on the struggle for equal justice and won numerous important cases after his death. Thurgood Marshall, the first black Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Hill, and William Bryant, all of whom were distinguished civil rights litigators and later federal jurists, are examples of the national litigators that Howard Law School produced.



Charles Hamilton Houston was the special counsel for the NAACP who led the judicial fight for civil rights from 1929 until his death just four years before the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. (Library of Congress)

In 1935, Houston left Washington, D.C., to become the first full-time paid special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), headquartered in New York City. As head of the legal department, Houston launched a campaign against racial segregation in public schools that would later help to dismantle segregation. Houston handled and won numerous important cases during the 1930s and 1940s, some of which helped to lay the groundwork for the landmark cases of the 1950s. For example in 1938, Houston won his first case for equality in educational opportunity, *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938). To protect the rights of persons accused of crimes, Houston litigated *Hollins v. Oklahoma* (1935) and *Hale v. Kentucky* (1938), in which the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the convictions and death sentences of African Americans who had been tried by juries from which African Americans were excluded on the basis of their race. As the major architect and the dominating force behind the NAACP's legal program, Houston aimed high and made heavy inroads. In 1940, he left the organization and returned to private practice in Washington, D.C., but he remained involved in the fight for the rights and welfare of African Americans including discrimination in education, labor, and housing. He was succeeded as NAACP special counsel by his former student, Thurgood Marshall.

Thereafter, he rejoined his father and formed the firm of Houston & Houston, later known as Houston, Houston, Hastie, & Bryant. His work in the firm covered many areas including discrimination in employment, housing, the rights of the accused, and other aspects of discrimination. Houston also won victories as a civil rights litigator in private practice, successfully arguing and winning cases before the United States Supreme Court, including *Steel v. Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co.*, and *Tunstall v. Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen* (1944), when he challenged discriminatory actions by government negotiators and contractors with regard to fair representation regardless of race or union affiliation. In 1948, Houston assisted the NAACP in preparation for a housing discrimination case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, and was the chief counsel before the Supreme Court in *Hurd v. Hodge* (1948), in which the Supreme Court ruled against judicial enforcement of racially restrictive covenants in the District of Columbia. Throughout his career, Houston was involved in numerous civic duties including National Legal Aid Committee (1940–1950); he was

vice president for the American Council of Race Relations (1944–1950), vice president of the National Lawyer Guild, a member of the National Board of Directors and chairman of the national Legal Committee of the NAACP, two years a member of the Board of Education in the District of Columbia, and a member of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices (1944), before resigning the next year. An active participant in the civil rights struggle beyond academia, Houston was also engaged in political activism during his lifetime, including marching in the 1930s for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys and testifying before congress against lynching and other forms of racial inequality. An incredibly high-energy educator and lawyer, Houston inspired faculty and students with his philosophy of social engineering.

Historically, Charles Houston's most important impact was his strengthening of Howard University Law School, as well as his tireless work as a civil rights litigator for the NAACP. Houston's extensive work and dedication to improving legal education at Howard is notable, and achieving accreditation for the law school was one of the greatest accomplishments for Houston and those who shared his vision. During his administration, Houston commanded and encouraged the legal army to fight and seek equality for African Americans, and many of the cases that Houston argued were instrumental in setting precedents that were later used in the Supreme Court's landmark decisions of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Bolling v. Sharpe*, which declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

Charles Hamilton Houston muddled through the forests of oppression and discrimination seeking equal protection and justice for those who could not fight for themselves. Among the early builders of the road to freedom that later activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. significantly expanded and strengthened, no one played as major a role as Charles Hamilton Houston. He was the chief engineer and the dominant force on the civil rights legal scene. One of the greatest civil rights activist in American history, Houston was the primary force behind the ultimate success of the long struggle that led to an end of the legalized discrimination and in particular, the notion of "separate but equal."

Houston was instrumental in training a generation of fearless civil rights lawyers throughout the country, who carried on the struggle and remained an inspiration to

those dedicated to social justice today. Aside from training the great Thurgood Marshall, he was also a close advisor to Marshall. The magnitude of Houston's contributions toward the quality of justice in American society today is tremendous. This civil rights icon was a giant of a man who dedicated his life to the cause of freedom that all Americans enjoy today. Houston made marked contributions to the Civil Rights movement and the struggle against oppression of African Americans, for which he was posthumously awarded the coveted Spingarn Medal by the NAACP. In 1958, Howard University renamed its law school building in honor of Charles Hamilton Houston.

Throughout his legal career Houston was a pillar for African Americans. For three decades, Charles Houston's civil rights advocacy focused on achieving recognition of equal rights and opportunities, legal guarantees, and elimination of legalized racial discrimination. In spite of the increasing prominence of black scholars, legal academia does not recognize the Houstonian intellectual heritage. This deeply committed strategist, legal counsel, educator, mentor, and adviser in the struggle against racial discrimination remains a model for activists in the cause for justice and equality.

Charles Houston's fast pace in the struggle for racial justice and equality was eventually cut short by a heart ailment. He was first hospitalized for exhaustion and suffered a severe heart attack in 1948, but he never recovered. Houston died on April 20, 1950, in Washington, D.C., four years before fully realizing his struggle against "separate but equal." He left behind his second wife, Henrietta Williams Houston, and their only child, Charles Hamilton Houston Jr. The death of this civil rights icon brought an irreparable loss to the black community and to America. Houston was buried in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery in Suitland, Maryland.

See also: *Brown v. Board of Education*; Jim Crow; Marshall, Thurgood; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; *Plessy v. Ferguson*

*Njoki-Wa-Kinyatti*

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## Houston, Texas, Mutiny, 1917

On the night of August 23, 1917, more than 100 African American soldiers from the 24th Infantry, in defiance of their white officers, marched from Camp Logan to nearby Houston armed and angry. In a frenzied state fueled by mounting frustrations and fear, these men believed Corporal Charles Baltimore, a military police officer and model soldier, had been killed that afternoon by local police, and they wanted answers. At the conclusion of their two-hour march on Houston, 16 whites, which included five police officers, and 4 black soldiers had been killed. Serious consequences awaited those perceived to be responsible for the Houston riot. This racial violence occurred in the early months of the U.S. mobilization for World War I and weeks after the East St. Louis massacre where white mobs invaded black neighborhoods without law enforcement protection, killing nearly 40 African Americans.

In late July, 654 career black soldiers who made up the 3rd Battalion of the 24th Infantry traveled from New Mexico to their new assignment at Camp Logan, a newly created military training camp located three-and-one-half miles from downtown Houston, Texas. Washington assigned these soldiers the responsibility of guarding construction of the military camp. Immediately, these African American soldiers of the 24th Infantry experienced racial hostility and discrimination. White construction workers on the camp site they guarded resented the black soldiers' authority and regularly harassed them and hurled racial slurs. White Houstonians, strongly committed to white supremacy, refused the newly arrived black soldiers the same respect they accorded white soldiers. Local whites reasoned that respecting these soldiers would imply equality and would raise the expectations of local blacks for similar consideration. Also, Houston's police force had a notorious reputation for brutality to its black population, the largest of any city in Texas. During the soldiers' off-duty visits to town in the weeks that preceded the riot, Houston police regularly insulted, beat, and arrested black soldiers for minor infraction of local customs. Members of

the 24th Infantry resented the disrespectful behavior, the police brutality, and fastidious enforcement of Houston's segregation statutes. As proud and self-confident men who had spent the last few years in western states, the soldiers were not accustomed to the South's Jim Crow mores and regularly defied the injustice.

Whether the soldiers reacted spontaneously to mounting frustrations, anger with repeated police abuse, and fear of white mob violence or secretly plotted revenge is disputed, but on the evening of August 23, emotions exploded. That day two police officers beat and arrested an enlisted man, Alonzo Edwards, who tried to protect a local black woman from police harassment. Unlike local whites, Houston's black residents welcomed and revered the soldiers. Viewed as heroes and leaders, black Texans expected the soldiers to protect them. These expectations intensified the soldiers' humiliation, for recent incidents revealed they had been unable to protect even themselves from police brutality. To quell escalating tensions between soldiers and the police, a negotiated agreement assigned 12 black, non-commission officers as military police to monitor soldiers' behavior in town. Consistent with the agreement, Corporal Baltimore inquired about Edwards's arrest to a police officer who asserted that he did not answer to "niggers." The police officer struck Baltimore in the face with his pistol and shot at him three times as he chased him into a vacant building. Although Baltimore escaped with his life, word reached camp that this highly respected MP had been killed.

Cooler heads did not prevail in this difficult situation. Experienced leadership from the 3rd Battalion—black and white—had recently been transferred, and their replacements, especially the white commissioned officers, had not earned the men's trust and proved inadequate for this challenge. Anger, confusion, and fear prevailed in the camp that evening. Rumors of pending trouble led white officers to plead for calm, but shouts that the white mob was coming transformed the chaos into action. More than 100 soldiers, following Sergeant Vida Henry's lead, scrambled for weapons and ammunition and marched to Houston, targeting the police station in the Fourth Ward as their destination. The next two hours altered many lives and Henry killed himself before dawn.

After the Houston riot of 1917 the army launched an extensive and hasty investigation that led to the largest court-martial in American military history—the prosecution of 118 soldiers. The first of three court-martials

found 54 men guilty of mutiny and murder. In all, 13 men, perceived as the leaders, were sentenced to death, and 41 others to life in prison. The army quickly carried out the mass execution of these 13 soldiers before Secretary of War Newton Baker or President Woodrow Wilson could review the sentences. Two subsequent court-martials convicted 52 more soldiers; 6 of these men were ultimately executed and 22 more received life sentences. White officers were not prosecuted nor were any white civilians tried. News of the Houston riot traveled rapidly across the South, fueling existing racial animosity. Southern governors, who did not want black soldiers training in their states' new military camps, used the Houston riot to support racist contentions that integrated military training would never work, especially in the South. The NAACP petitioned for many years to have the life sentences of convicted soldiers reduced. As a result of these petitions, most of the men facing life sentences were released throughout the 1920s. The last prisoner was paroled in 1938.

*See also:* Jim Crow; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; World War I (Black Participation in)

Janet G. Hudson

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## Howard Beach Incident, 1986

In the 1980s, several racially motivated attacks dominated the headlines of New York City newspapers. The city had a legacy of race bias murders. On September 15, 1983, artist and model Michael Stewart died on a lower Manhattan subway platform from a chokehold and beating he received from several police officers. A year later, on October 29, an elderly grandmother, Eleanor Bumpers, was murdered by a police officer in her Bronx apartment as he and other officers tried to evict her. Later that year, on December 22, a white man, Bernhard Goetz, shot and seriously wounded four black teenagers he thought were going to rob him on a subway train in Manhattan. The Howard Beach racial incident in late 1986 propelled the predominantly Italian and

Jewish community into the national spotlight, exposing racial hatred in New York City.

On the early morning of December 20, 1986, a white mob attacked three stranded African Americans in Howard Beach, an insular community in the borough of Queens. On that night, four African American men—Cedric Sandiford, 36; Timothy Grimes, 20; Michael Griffith, 23; and the car's owner, Curtis Sylvester, 20—were traveling from their home base in Brooklyn to Queens to pick up Griffith's paycheck. On the northbound trip back home, the 1976 Buick they were traveling in stalled on Cross Bay Boulevard, near Howard Beach. Griffith, Sandiford, and Grimes decided to walk to Howard Beach, a few miles away, to locate a pay phone.

At midnight, after entering Howard Beach, the three were initially confronted by a small group of white pedestrians, who yelled racial slurs and told them to get out of their neighborhood. By then hungry and tired, the men decided to dine and rest at the New Park Pizzeria on Cross Bay Boulevard. When Sandiford, Grimes, and Griffith left the restaurant at 12:40 A.M., a mob of 12 white youths were awaiting them with baseball bats, tire irons, and tree limbs. The gang, led by Jon Lester 17, included Salvatore DeSimone, 19; William Bollander, 17; James Povinelli, 16; Michael Pirone, 17; John Saggese, 19; Jason Ladone, 16; Thomas Gucciardo, 17; Harry Bunocore, 18; Scott Kern, 18; Thomas Farino, 16; and Robert Riley, 19.

The white youths began harassing the African Americans. Ladone, another of the ringleaders, yelled taunts and racist epithets. The mob then attacked Griffith and Sandiford, but Grimes brandished a knife on the angry mob and he escaped with minor injuries. Sandiford begged them not to kill him before Lester knocked him down with a baseball bat. With the mob in hot pursuit, the severely beaten Griffith managed to run. He ran several blocks to the nearby Belt Parkway, where he jumped through a small hole in a fence adjacent to the highway. As he staggered across the busy six-lane expressway, trying to escape his attackers, he was hit and instantly killed by a car driven by Dominic Blum, a court officer and son of a New York police officer.

At 1:00 A.M. when the police arrived at the scene, they encountered a bloody and dazed Sandiford nearby, walking west on the parkway. The officers brought him back to Griffith's lifeless body on the parkway. They treated him like a suspect, ripping off his jacket and subjecting him to a spread-eagle search. After being interrogated, a badly bloody and bruised Sandiford was placed in a squad car.

The officers refused him medical attention and forced him to tell his version of the assault several times until dawn.

That morning, an incensed New York Mayor Edward Koch and African American police Chief Benjamin Ward condemned the crime in the media. Koch compared the incident to a lynching, and Ward scolded the Queens commanding officer for his officers' insensitivity toward Sandiford, who by then was receiving legal representation from experienced civil rights attorneys C. Vernon Mason and Alton Maddox.

The incident sparked immediate outrage in the African American community, prompting black civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton to organize several protests in Howard Beach, as well as the Carnarsie and Bath Bay sections of Brooklyn. Groups of mostly African Americans marched through the streets with signs comparing the racial climate in Howard Beach to apartheid in South Africa. White residents greeted them with signs that read, "Niggers Go Home," "White Power," and "Bring Back Slavery."

In addition to the leadership of Sharpton, Reverend Floyd Flake, who had just been elected to Congress, Sonny Carson of Black Men Against Crack, and Reverend Herbert Daughtry of the Black United Front publicly criticized the racially motivated incident and the law officials handling of the case. They issued calls for boycotts on all white-owned Howard Beach businesses and New York City pizzerias. Because of the racial sensitivity of the case, New York Governor Mario Cuomo assigned Special Prosecutor Charles J. Hynes. Four of the white youths—Kern, Lester, Ladone, and Pirone—were brought to trial on manslaughter, second-degree murder, and first-degree assault charges. The others were charged with lesser offenses.

During the trial, which began on October 7, 1987, State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Demakos and the jury listened to Lester's attorney deny that his client was a racist. He stressed that Lester had a cordial relationship with African Americans. Lester's mother insisted that he was not racist because he once dated a black female. Attorneys for the other defendants tried the same strategy, portraying their clients as compassionate individuals. The defense team said one of the stranded motorists was a drug addict who instigated the entire incident.

On December 21, 1987, after lengthy deliberation, the jury found three of the four principal defendants guilty of second-degree manslaughter and first-degree assault, but innocent on attempted murder and riot charges. The jury





Protesters, including Al Sharpton (center) and James Bell (third from right), president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, organized a rally held in Howard Beach, Queens, New York, to bring attention to a white mob attack on three black youth. (AP Photo/Ed Bailey)

acquitted Michael Pirone of all charges. The other participants received lighter sentences and, in most cases, received community service.

During Lester's sentencing on January 22, 1988, Judge Demakos said that the teenager and his community failed to display remorse or a sense of guilt for his role in the crime, and sentenced him to 10 to 30 years in prison. The following month, Ladone received a 5- to 15-year sentence, and Kern was sentenced to 6 to 18 years in prison.

The verdict upset the defendants' families and friends, but the decision satisfied most of those who supported the victims. Jon Lester was freed from prison on May 29, 2001, and moved to London. Ladone was released in spring of the same year and Kern was set free the next year. After the Howard Beach incident, race-related crimes continued to plague New York City. Howard Beach was followed in 1989 by the brutal killing of an African American teenager, Yusuf Hawkins, by a gang of white youths in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn.

See also: Bensonhurst, New York, Incident of 1989; Sharpton, Al; White Mob Violence

Dwayne A. Mack

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## Hughes, Langston

Known as the "poet laureate of Harlem," Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was an African American poet, playwright, short-story writer, novelist, and columnist. Largely associated with the Harlem Renaissance of the late 1920s and early 1930s, he continued to write prolifically well beyond this period. His engagement with ideas of racial consciousness was influential on poets such as Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas and the development of the French Negritude movement of which they were part. Hughes's literature focused on the social uplift of poor African Americans, combated against

racial stereotypes, and celebrated black identity, even as it acknowledged its seemingly insurmountable problems.

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, on February 1, 1902, the son of James Nathaniel Hughes, a lawyer, and his wife Carrie Langston Hughes. A year after Hughes's birth, his father, faced with the problems of American racism, unrelenting poverty, and an 18-month-old child to support, moved to Mexico. He subsequently prospered and thus was able to send money back to the United States for the support of his son. Hughes went to live with his grandmother Mary Leary Langston in Lawrence, Kansas, whose first husband had been killed during John Brown's slave rebellion at Harpers Ferry in 1859. Her second husband, Hughes's maternal grandfather, was an abolitionist. Mary Langston instilled a great deal of this racial pride in her grandson. Although he lived briefly with his mother in Topeka, Kansas and Colorado and visited his father in Mexico with her in 1908, she had to move around, seeking work in several different states, and Hughes spent the majority of his first nine years with his grandmother.

Hughes cultivated his love for books and reading after a visit with his mother to the library in Topeka in 1907. As a teenager his passion and talent for writing developed. He contributed to his high school literary magazine the *Belfry Owl* and was elected class poet in his senior year. From 1915 until he graduated high school in 1920, Hughes lived with his mother, first in Lincoln, Illinois, and then in Cleveland, Ohio, cultivating his poetic ability and reading the works of Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Carl Sandburg who would heavily influence his own work. It was also during his high school years that his fellow students introduced him to the socialist ideas that would shape his political leanings and inspire the commitment to the poor that he demonstrated throughout his life.

Hughes had a strained relationship with his father, who did not support his son's decision to become a writer. During the summer of 1919, Hughes had lived with his father in Mexico, but while there he became depressed and had suicidal thoughts. After graduating from high school in 1920, Hughes spent a year in Mexico with his father, writing one of his most well-known poems, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" on the train ride there. The poem was subsequently accepted for publication in 1921 by *Crisis*, the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Hughes gained further publishing success that year in the *Crisis* affiliated publication *The*



*For more than five decades, from the 1920s through the 1960s, Langston Hughes wrote poetry, fiction, and plays that were meant to capture the essence of the black experience in America. (Library of Congress)*

*Brownies Book* with two poems, a children's one act play, and the essay "In a Mexico City."

Although his father wanted to him to attend a European university, Hughes enrolled at Columbia University in 1921 to follow a course of study in engineering. He soon became disillusioned, however, with both the college program and his fellow students, preferring instead to spend his time at Broadway shows and in uptown Manhattan's Harlem district. After only a year he dropped out, owing to a combination of his own disinterest and the racism he experienced at the institution. He took up odd jobs, including one as a crew member of a merchant freighter, the *S. S. Malone*, sailing along the west coast of Africa. Hughes continued to write poetry as he traveled. In 1923, he penned "The Weary Blues," which would eventually give its name to the first collection of his poetry. He continued to publish work in *Crisis* and in the National Urban League's *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*. In 1924, he sailed to Europe, where

he lived in Paris, working in a restaurant and listening to jazz. While he was there, Alain Locke, professor of philosophy at Howard University, invited him to Venice to procure poems from him for the special edition of *Survey Graphic* magazine that would, in 1925, become *The New Negro*, the written manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance.

By this time, Hughes was becoming an integral part of the group of artists, writers, and thinkers that made up this cultural movement. After returning home from Paris, Hughes returned to New York where he met the poet and children's book author Arna Bontemps with whom he was to collaborate on a number of projects. At this time he also met many of the major players in the Harlem scene including Wallace Thurman, Zora Neale Hurston, and James Weldon Johnson, and he renewed his acquaintances with Countee Cullen and Carl Van Vechten. He enjoyed more literary success as his poem "The Weary Blues" won *Opportunity* magazine's first prize for poetry. The year 1926 saw the publication of his anthology of the same name, a collection filled with a mixture of jazz, blues, and traditional verse that celebrated African American experience and creativity. Although Hughes often garnered criticism from black middle class reviewers because of his refusal to comply with what he viewed as an excessive reliance on an ideology devoted to the assimilation and accommodation of Eurocentric values and racial integration, both this text and his subsequent publication *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927) established Hughes as a major name in the Harlem Renaissance community.

Hughes enrolled at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, in February 1926, becoming a member of the first black fraternity Omega Psi Phi. That summer he stayed in New York joining with Wallace Thurman, Zora Neale Hurston, Aaron Douglas, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, and Richard Bruce Nugent to found *Fire!!*, a black periodical for young African American artists. Only one issue was published. In 1927, Hughes met Charlotte Mason, popularly known as the "Godmother." Mason, a wealthy white woman, became Hughes's literary patron, a relationship that became troublesome for Hughes. Mason desired Hughes to align himself and his work with her ideas of the primitive, a view of his work that Hughes did not share. After graduating from Lincoln University in 1929, however, Hughes proceeded to complete the manuscript for his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, a book influenced by, but not entirely based on, Hughes's childhood growing up in the Midwest, with

the financial support of Mason. The book was published in 1930, but shortly thereafter Mason and Hughes quarreled, causing Hughes to sever his connection with his benefactress. His relationship with Zora Neale Hurston (also under Mason's patronage) also suffered, as they argued over the financial details and authorship of their collaborative play *Mule Bone*. This disagreement ended their friendship, the play was abandoned, and Hughes sunk into another period of intense depression and disillusionment.

After his breakups with Mason and Hurston, Hughes traveled to the American South and to Haiti. After receiving a grant in 1931 for \$1,000 from the Rosenwald Fund, Hughes embarked on a poetry reading tour of southern black colleges. During his trip he visited the Scottsborough boys, who had been unjustly incarcerated in an Alabama jail for the alleged rape of two white women. *Dear Lovely Death* and *The Negro Mother* were published in this year, as was his highly controversial poem "Christ in Alabama," which attacked black colleges for failing to speak out against the Scottsborough boys situation. It was published without his consent in *Contempo*, a Chapel Hill college magazine, and drew an angry crowd to his subsequent reading at that college. This did not deter Hughes, however, and he was met at many other colleges in the South with admiration and enthusiasm.

In 1932, Hughes traveled to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) as part of an African American group, with the aim of participating in a film project entitled *Black and White*. Although the project was unsuccessful, Hughes stayed in the Soviet Union for a time where his leftist engagement was reinvigorated and he wrote some of his most political poetry. At this time another of Hughes's highly controversial poems, "Goodbye Christ," was published in the communist journal *Negro Worker* and was met with public indignation. Upon his return to the United States in 1933, Hughes, as well as suffering from illness, became depressed at the public reaction to "Goodbye Christ." Instead of returning to New York, he stayed in Carmel, California, where he wrote his first volume of short stories *The Ways of White Folks* (1934), a negative take on race relations. On October 22, 1934, Hughes's father died in Mexico. Hughes found out too late to attend the funeral, but he traveled to Mexico in January 1935 to organize his father's affairs.

In 1937, Hughes traveled to Spain as a correspondent for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, reporting on the Spanish Civil War and socializing with writers and critics such

as Ernest Hemingway, Nancy Cunard, and Pablo Neruda. Upon his return in 1938, the International Workers Order published his most politically charged and socially engaged work to date, *A New Song*. Sadly, Hughes's mother died from cancer this same year.

The second half of the 1930s brought great literary success for Hughes as he penned a number of well-received plays. *Mulatto*, written several years earlier, was produced at the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York City in 1935 and enjoyed an extensive run on Broadway; the Karamu Theatre in Cleveland produced *Little Ham* and *Troubled Island* in 1936, *Joy to My Soul* in 1937, and *Front Porch* in 1938; and the Harlem Suitcase Theatre produced *Don't You Want to Be Free?* (1938). In 1939, Hughes extended his literary repertoire to screenplays, collaborating with Clarence Muse on the script for the film *Way Down South*. After having met Richard Wright in 1938, the pair collaborated on a poem titled "Red Clay Blues," which was published in 1939 in *New Masses* magazine.

The 1940s began for Hughes with the publication of his autobiography, *The Big Sea* (1940), which documents the story of his childhood, as well as providing an extensive commentary on the Harlem Renaissance and his involvement in it. He founded a play company in 1942 called the Skyloft Players and continued his success as a playwright with the Chicago production of *The Sun Do Move*. His seventh volume of poetry, *Shakespeare to Harlem*, also appeared in this year, but received mixed reviews. Some critics accused Hughes of producing a poetry that was superficial and old fashioned and that failed to respond to the social context of World War II, whereas others praised him for his artistic subtlety. At the end of this year, Hughes began writing what would become a weekly column for the *Chicago Defender*. In 1943, he introduced his now famous Jesse B. Semple (later known as "Simple") character to the column. A comic figure, representative of the black "everyman" in America, Simple had moved from Virginia to Harlem, and each week, despite his lack of formal education, he would philosophize on the important issues of the day.

In 1946, the American Academy of Arts and Letters bestowed Hughes with a prize for \$1,000, illustrating his importance as an American writer. Throughout the remainder of the 1940s, Hughes continued to publish work of a mixed variety. In 1947, he wrote the lyrics for a Broadway production entitled *Street Scene*, a commission that finally enabled him to become financially solvent and purchase

the house in Harlem in which he would live until his death in 1967. Another collection of poetry, *Fields of Wonder*, appeared in 1947. *One-Way Ticket* (1949), a collection of verse that was typical of Hughes's tragic-comic style, but that disappointed critics by being far from groundbreaking, followed two years later. The year 1949 proved to be a busy one for Hughes. Aside from his own poetry, he co-edited *The Poetry of the Negro 1746–1949* with Arna Bontemps, an important poetic anthology and an endeavor that showed his continuing commitment to demonstrating the richness of black poetry. In addition, his translation of *Cuba Libre: Poems by Nicolás Guillén* was published, and his 1936 play, *Troubled Island*, was converted into an opera by William Grant Still. The following year he had more musical success when another of his plays, *Mulatto*, became the basis for the opera *The Barrier*, performed at Columbia University and written by Jan Meyerowitz who Hughes met in 1947.

By the 1950s, Hughes's Jesse B. Simple column in the *Chicago Defender* had proved so successful that Hughes brought out his first collection of Simple stories: *Simple Speaks His Mind*. During the rest of his life, Hughes produced four more Simple books featuring his "everyman" protagonist, including *Simple Takes a Wife* (1952) and *The Best of Simple* (1961), and an off-Broadway play, *Simply Heavenly* (1957). During the first half of the 1950s, Hughes published consistently in various artistic forms. *Montage for a Dream Deferred* (1951), his first book-length poem, used the rhythms of bebop jazz and demonstrated his ability to break new ground in poetry. A translation of Garcia Lorca's *Gypsy Ballads* (1952); *Laughing to Keep from Crying* (1952), a short story collection; three children's books; and *Five Foolish Virgins* (1954), an oratorio with Jan Meyerowitz demonstrated Hughes's continued literary output and wide artistic range, despite the personal difficulties he was facing at this time as a result of his previous engagements with leftist politics. Although Hughes associated himself with the Left, published in communist magazines, and participated in communist protests run by organizations such as the John Reed Club, he never joined the Communist Party. In 1953, however, he was called on to testify before Senator Joseph McCarthy's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in Washington, D.C. The charges did little to upset his career, however.

A year after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, which outlawed segregation in schools, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* was published, featuring photographs by African American photographer Roy DeCarava and an

accompanying text by Hughes. Hughes's text and DeCarava's beautifully intimate photographic portraits captured the essence of everyday African American life in Harlem. Published by Simon and Schuster, it was incredibly well received and firmly established the reputations of both men to adeptly explicate the intricacies of black life in America.

The second volume of Hughes's autobiography was published in 1956. Entitled *I Wonder as I Wander*, it moves beyond Hughes's experiences in the Harlem Renaissance and discusses his experiences with leftist politics and his travels in the Soviet Union. He finished off the decade with the production of another opera with Jan Meyerowitz, *Esther; The Book of Negro Folklore* (1958), co-edited with Arna Bon-temps; and *The Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (1959), which received harsh criticism in the *New York Times* from James Baldwin. Hughes remained productive throughout the 1960s. The book-length poem, *Ask Your Mama* (1961), a fusion of jazz rhythms, myth, and history, mused on issues including humanism, pan-Africanism and free speech. Deeply invested in ideas central to the black arts movement, it received mixed responses from critics, suggesting that Hughes's universal literary appeal was waning.

The final years of Hughes life saw no letup in his literary output. A commissioned history of the NAACP in 1962, three more plays, another collection of short stories, and an edited collection of stories by African American writers were among his final artistic endeavors. The final Simple story appeared in the *Chicago Defender* in 1966. On May 22, 1967, Hughes died in a New York City hospital from postsurgical complications and a diseased prostate gland. His ashes were placed under the floor of the foyer of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, demonstrating his lasting centrality in the African American cultural imagination. His final poetic collection, *The Panther and the Lash*, an exploration of the Black Power and Civil Rights movements, was posthumously published in 1967. Hughes's work enjoyed a literary renaissance in the 1980s with a series of conferences and programs dedicated to his work and legacy.

Langston Hughes was one of the most influential and inspirational African American writers of the 20th century. Able to capture the intricacies and nuances of the lives of everyday African Americans and dedicated to a view of the world that was inclusive of the most impoverished and unfortunate, Hughes's work and life reflect commitment to art that supports racial, social, and personal uplift.

*See also:* Harlem Renaissance; Hurston, Zora Neale; Locke, Alain; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; New Negro Movement

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## “If We Must Die”

Claude McKay wrote “If We Must Die” in 1919. It was his most famous sonnet and, according to many, it inaugurated the Harlem Renaissance. McKay was born in Jamaica in 1890 and immigrated to the United States in 1912. He was a well known Harlem Renaissance author and wrote many novels, short stories, and poems.

“If We Must Die” first appeared in the July 1919 issue of the *Liberator*. It was hugely popular and was reprinted dozens of times. McKay wrote this sonnet in the midst of the Red Scare and the Red Summer of 1919. Shortly after World War I, tensions flared between American employers and laborers, and race riots broke out in a number U.S. cities. McKay was working as a waiter for the Pennsylvania Railway Company during this time, and he and his co-workers were acutely aware of the growing racial tension and violence. They were particularly anxious because they traveled from one city to the next with no way to gauge the racial tensions they would encounter in unfamiliar towns. McKay wrote “If We Must Die” in this context. He read it to the

other men working in his dining car, and their enthusiastic and emotional response encouraged him to take the poem to Max Eastman for publication in the *Liberator*. Shortly after the initial publication, the sonnet was reprinted in the *Crusader*. It appeared in the September 1919 issue, and the editors hoped the republication would encourage members of the African American community to engage in the fight for racial empowerment and equality.

While confronting the political climate of the time, McKay presented a model of African American masculinity in "If We Must Die." It called for black men to battle courageously against racial oppression, and it developed out of the difficulty that McKay encountered when attempting to create a masculine identity while experiencing degrading racial oppression. In this work, the role that women should play in the battle for racial uplift was noticeably absent, reaffirming the importance that McKay and his publishers placed on reestablishing a masculine racial identity. The author's use of a communal voice was also notable. In this work he attempted to speak to and for the entire African American community and presented a collective African American voice. The work stressed the importance of camaraderie and the willingness to die an honorable death for the cause of racial uplift. McKay also emphasized African American humanity by referencing animals. Rather than dying like "hogs," McKay said African Americans would die "like men." While calling African Americans to fight bravely, this imagery also illustrated the degree to which McKay understood and experienced the dehumanizing effects of racism.

Although race was at the center of "If We Must Die," explicit reference to race was notably absent. McKay did not disclose the racial makeup of the "kinsmen" or the "common foe." This did not keep Americans from recognizing that the poem was about race, but it did allow other groups to appropriate the sonnet. For example, Winston Churchill used "If We Must Die" to call British troops to fight against the Nazis in World War II. Although the sonnet was written in response to racial tension and violence in the United States and was directed to the African American community, it was well known outside the African American community and gained McKay international prestige.

See also: Black Self-Defense; Chicago Race Riot of 1919; Harlem Renaissance; McKay, Claude; Red Summer Race Riots

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## Jackson, Jesse

The Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson Sr. (1941–) emerged as a leader during the Civil Rights movement. In a long career alternately marked by success and controversy, Jackson founded economic justice organizations, ran for president twice, and negotiated with a host of foreign leaders. Jackson's distinctive and powerful speaking style is characterized by wordplay, rhyming couplets, and the phrase "I am somebody," a refrain aimed at cultivating the self-worth of dispossessed youth.

Jackson was born Jesse Louis Burns in Greenville, South Carolina, on October 8, 1941. His mother, Helen Burns, was an unwed 16-year-old. Her pregnancy dashed the hope of her mother, Matilda "Tibby" Burns, that Helen, born when she herself was only 13, would attend college on a singing scholarship. Jesse's biological father, Noah Robinson, was a married man who lived next door with his wife and stepchildren. In 1943, Jesse's mother married Charles Jackson, who later adopted Jesse when he was about 15. They had one child, Charles Jackson Jr.

Robinson, a former boxer and a well-known figure in Greenville's black community, acknowledged his paternity. He had little contact with Jesse, however, who has since said that as a child he would stand staring at the Robinsons' house hoping for a glimpse of his father. Subsequently, Robinson's wife gave birth to three sons, the eldest of whom, Noah Robinson Jr., went on to earn an MBA and become a young standout in the business world but was imprisoned for defrauding the IRS and being an accessory to attempted murder. Questions about these convictions dogged his half-brother on the 1988 campaign trail.

Jackson graduated from Sterling High School in Greenville in 1959. A distinguished student leader and athlete, he chose a football scholarship to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana over a professional baseball contract. Jackson traced his first integration protest to his attempt to take books out of the Greenville library over winter break. He left Illinois after one year and transferred to the historically black North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro. Jackson maintained he was not allowed to quarterback at Illinois because he was black. This comment caused controversy when it came to light that the school's starting quarterback that year was also black. At his new school, Jackson became student body president and met Jacqueline (Jackie) Lavinia Brown, who became his wife. The two participated in sit-in movements to integrate public facilities in Greensboro. Jackson graduated with a sociology degree in 1964.

Jackson has five children with his wife, Jackie: Santita, Jesse Jr., Jonathan, Yusef DuBois, and Jacqueline Lavinia. Santita attended Howard University and sang in a backup group for Roberta Flack. Jesse Jr. attended his parents' alma mater, as did Jonathan and Jacqueline, and in 1995 was elected to the United States Congress representing the second district of Illinois. Yusef attended the University of Virginia on a football scholarship and became a lawyer. In 2001, it came to light that Jackson had fathered a sixth child, Ashley Laverne Jackson, in an affair with Karin Stanford, a former staffer who was being paid through Jackson's organizations.

After a stint with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Jackson moved his growing family north to attend Chicago Theological Seminary. He became increasingly interested in the Civil Rights movement, participating in the 1965 march on Selma, Alabama, and dropped out of seminary in 1966 six months shy of graduating to become a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) staff under Martin Luther King Jr. He was later ordained a Baptist minister by Clay Evans and C. L. Franklin, Aretha's father. Chicago Theological Seminary awarded him a Master of Divinity degree in 2000 based on credits plus experience.

In 1966, King named him the head of SCLC's Chicago branch of Operation Breadbasket, an organization founded to persuade businesses such as grocery stores and bakeries to hire more blacks and carry more products from black businesses. Under Jackson's leadership, the organization

struck deals with several businesses that resulted in hundreds of jobs for blacks.

In April 1968, Jackson was traveling with King's retinue in Memphis to support a garbage workers' strike when King was gunned down outside his hotel room. There seems little dispute that Jackson was at the hotel when the shooting happened, but some of the tales told about the event were contested. Other civil rights leaders present became angry when Jackson claimed he cradled the dying leader's head in his arms and when he appeared on television the next day in a blood-spattered sweater. To many, Jackson's attempt to emerge as a major black leader after King's death was an insensitive grab for power. Jackson stayed with SCLC for three-and-a-half years but left after a suspension resulting from his independent incorporation of the first Black Expo, which was meant as an SCLC fundraiser.

In the early 1970s, Jackson founded his own organization, Operation PUSH, or People United to Save Humanity ("Save" later became "Serve"). He also began speaking at high schools to African American youth to promote hard work, education, and responsibility. Jimmy Carter's administration rewarded Jackson's school ministry, named PUSH for Excellence, with grants that later dried up under Ronald Reagan's presidency. Jackson also began to travel abroad, developing a vision that incorporated all the world's oppressed poor. In 1972, he initiated such travel with a trip to Liberia. In 1979, he spoke in South Africa against apartheid. The same year, he traveled to the Middle East and compared the conditions of the Palestinians to African Americans' plight in the United States. A picture of him hugging PLO leader Yasser Arafat caused a major controversy and became for many American Jews a lingering source of distrust of Jackson. During that visit the Israeli government refused to see him, but he made several return trips in which he met with both governments and attempted to spread the Civil Rights movement's concepts of nonviolent resistance and radical love as a political weapon to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Although he had never held public office, Jackson made two noteworthy bids for the Democratic nomination for president in the 1980s. In 1967, King had proposed the Poor People's Campaign, a movement that would bring together the country's economically dispossessed regardless of ethnicity. The idea foundered after King's assassination but later found new life as Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, an organization he later merged with PUSH. Jackson's



Reverend Jesse Jackson, founder of Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), addresses supporters of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill for full employment, January 1975. (Library of Congress)

economic populism made substantial inroads with white farmers and factory workers. He also toured the country promoting voter registration and likely can be credited with the registration of millions of new voters in the 1980s. These new voters provided the margin that elected a contingent of black congresspeople and mayors in that decade.

Jackson's first presidential bid got a boost from his negotiation to release Robert O. Goodman Jr., a black lieutenant shot down and captured by Syria. Jackson accused the government of working less assiduously for Goodman's release than they would have if he were white. The Reagan administration decried his trip as reckless, but Jackson succeeded in obtaining the release.

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan traveled with Jackson to Syria, where his status as an American Muslim impressed the Syrians. Before Jackson received Secret Service protection as a presidential candidate, Farrakhan supplied him with Fruit of Islam guards from his organization. Not long after the Syria trip, Jackson's close relationship with Farrakhan fed into the black-versus-Jew controversy

that seemed to haunt Jackson's career. Jackson's growing support and appeal following Goodman's release came to an abrupt halt when he referred to Jews as Hymies and called New York Hymietown in an off-the-record conversation with *Washington Post* reporter Milton Coleman, creating possibly the most intractable controversy of Jackson's entire career. Farrakhan, already an unpopular associate given his organization's association with a theology of the intrinsic evilness of the white race, threatened to have the black journalist who reported on the conversation killed. Setting aside Farrakhan's militance and black-supremacist theology, however, he and Jackson shared a platform of economic justice, self-reliance, and education, and both surprised white observers in the 1980s with their ability to draw large black crowds. Jackson only reluctantly distanced himself from Farrakhan after Farrakhan called Judaism a "dirty" religion.

Jackson tried to bounce back from the Hymietown affair with a trip to Cuba and South America. The highlight was an eight-hour session with Fidel Castro in which he



persuaded the Cuban leader to release 22 Americans held on drug charges and 27 Cubans held for political activities. Jackson finished third in the 1984 primary season behind eventual nominee Walter Mondale and Gary Hart. He garnered just over 3 million votes.

Gary Hart's 1988 bid met an early demise after an affair came to light. Jackson, often rumored to have a series of amorous relationships, risked a similar disclosure but nevertheless entered the race with polls showing him to be a leading prospect for the nomination. The crowds he drew wherever he went seemed to indicate the same. When 800 townspeople in Greenfield, Iowa, forewent the Super Bowl to hear Jackson speak, he made Greenfield his Iowa headquarters and soon was running second only to Richard Gephardt in the 97 percent white state. He won about 10 percent of the caucus share in that state and 10 percent of the votes in the New Hampshire primary. Jackson did better than expected on Super Tuesday, ending the day with more of the popular vote than any other Democrat. He followed that performance by claiming 55 percent of the vote in Michigan and briefly looked like the frontrunner. Ahead of the New York primary, New York City Mayor Ed Koch resurrected the Hymietown comments and the Arafat hug, which hurt Jackson in that state even though he had spent the previous four years repairing relationships with the Jewish community. Jackson eventually lost the nomination to Michael Dukakis, but along the way, he finished second with almost 7 million primary votes, about 2 million of them from whites. Jackson was disappointed not to be offered the vice presidential slot. Nevertheless, he threw himself into the Democratic campaign, logging more miles on Dukakis's behalf during the general election campaign than the candidate did.

Jackson declined to run in subsequent elections and was often critical of Democratic candidates. In March 2007, he endorsed Barack Obama, who went on to be the first African American to become a major party's nominee. Despite the endorsement, Jackson made headlines for grumbling that Obama did not give enough attention to racial issues, and in a particularly fraught incident, he was caught wearing an open mike and making a vulgar comment about Obama because of the way he talked about African Americans.

Jackson's commitment to global diplomacy long outlasted his official political career. In 1990, Jackson traveled to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein after his invasion

of Kuwait and negotiated the release of hundreds of captives during the runup to war between Iraq and a U.S.-led coalition. In 1999, he negotiated the release of three U.S. military personnel captured by Slobodan Milosevic's regime. In 2004, he traveled to Libya and Sudan in an effort to end the Sudanese civil war. In 2005, Jackson met with the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, and condemned evangelist Pat Robertson's comment that Chavez should be assassinated.

From 1991 to 1997, Jackson served in his only elected office, as one of two District of Columbia statehood senators, often known as "shadow senators," a position created to lobby for the district's statehood. In 1997, President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave Jackson the title Special Envoy for the President and Secretary of State for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa. In 2000, Clinton honored Jackson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor, for his lifetime of work on behalf of the poor and minority communities.

*See also:* Abernathy, Ralph David; CORE; Farrakhan, Louis; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Obama, Barack; Operation PUSH; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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## Jackson, Maynard

Maynard Jackson (1938–2003) served as the first African American mayor of a major southern city. Elected mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, in 1973, Jackson held this position for the maximum of eight consecutive years after being re-elected in 1977. In 1989, he won a third term as Atlanta mayor working with community leaders to bring the 1996 Summer Olympic Games to the city. Jackson was born on

March 23, 1938, in Dallas, Texas, to Maynard H. Jackson Sr., a local minister, and Irene Dobbs, who hailed from a socially prominent black family in Atlanta. John Wesley Dobbs, the Dobbs family patriarch, was one of the major political figures in the Atlanta black community. At the age of seven, Maynard Jackson Jr. and his family moved to Atlanta where his father had accepted the pastorship of Friendship Baptist Church.

As did most southern blacks in this era, Jackson attended racially segregated schools. In this environment, Jackson bonded with friends he would maintain for a lifetime. At the age of 14, Jackson entered Morehouse College, graduating in 1956 with academic honors. A Ford Fellow while at Morehouse, he graduated at 18 years of age and decided to become a lawyer rather than a minister like his father. Living outside the South for the first time, Jackson attended Boston University Law School. Although successful in all of his previous educational endeavors, Jackson could not manage to keep up in his studies at Boston. The family had placed pressure on the teenager to become a legal giant and Jackson thought he failed them. Years later, he still found it difficult to discuss the problems he faced in Boston. In 1961, still embarrassed about his problems in law school, Jackson transferred to North Carolina Central Law School in Durham, North Carolina, determined to make amends for the earlier disappointment. Jackson worked hard at Central Law School, graduating in 1964.

Jackson began his family a year after law school when he married Burnella "Bunnie" Hayes Burke. The couple raised three children: Elizabeth, Brooke, and Maynard III. Given the energy required to complete law school and start a family, Jackson did not find the time to participate in formal civil rights demonstrations. Moreover, doing so might have compromised his standing in the legal profession, especially in the Deep South where he planned to practice. Instead, Jackson worked within the system to effect change, beginning his career at the National Labor Relations Board. He also offered his services to the poor through a legal clinic.

Politics was the next major hurdle for Jackson. Believing that it was time for African Americans to think big when it came to Southern politics, Jackson entered the race for the United States Senate in 1968. In this election he ran against incumbent senator Herman Talmadge, the segregationist former governor of Georgia. Lacking adequate funding, Jackson lost the election handily, but there were positive

signs in this defeat. A certain anti-Atlanta sentiment had long characterized Georgia politics, a fact reflected in the less than one-third of the total vote that went to Jackson in the election. Losing statewide contests in Georgia did not always speak to how one might perform in a city election. In fact, Jackson did win the popular vote in Atlanta that year, something that encouraged him to consider entering city politics. In 1969, Jackson won the elected position of vice mayor of Atlanta, beginning his political career.

Although white mayors in Atlanta had at times attempted to serve the needs of the black community, there remained in the 1970s a lingering belief that only a black mayor could adequately address the desperate situation black people faced after decades of Jim Crow racial discrimination. In 1969, the city elected Sam Massell as mayor. Jackson soon found the vice mayoral job weakened by amendments to the city charter. In 1973, he decided to run for mayor against the incumbent. Massell had received the support of black community leaders in the last election and expected the same when he ran for a second term, forcing blacks to choose between him and Jackson. Initially black business leaders asked Jackson to wait another four years before running for mayor, but Jackson convinced them that now was the time. Eventually, prominent black business executives, such as Jesse Hill of Atlanta Life Insurance Company, decided to back Jackson against Massell. Fearing he would lose the election if blacks stood by Jackson while whites split their votes, Massell resorted to negative advertising to increase his appeal to some voters. In these ads, entitled, "Atlanta, too Young to Die," Massell depicted an Atlanta overrun with trash and desolate of life. The implication, despite later protestations by Massell, was that a black mayor would ruin the city. The 1973 mayoral campaign highlighted two problems Maynard Jackson experienced as mayor: exaggerated black expectations of a black mayor and exaggerated white anxiety over a black mayor. In the end, Jackson won the 1973 race with 95 percent of the black vote and 17.5 percent of the white vote.

In its first two terms, the Jackson administration changed the racial complexion of City Hall, increased the number of black businesses receiving municipal contracts, and proved that Atlanta would not suffer dire consequences under black leadership. The same policies that resulted in these changes, however, also brought Jackson the ire of the Atlanta business establishment that had traditionally controlled City Hall. In Atlanta, a major city without a seaport,

commerce had always taken a leading role in city affairs. Economic conservatism seemed a natural outgrowth in a city continuously facing challenges from other southern metropolitan areas to its role as leader of the New South, a name given to the region to emphasize the progress southerners had made since the Civil War. During the Civil Rights movement, while Birmingham, Alabama, and other southern cities received negative publicity after outbreaks of violence toward blacks, Atlantans reveled in the knowledge that their city remained peaceful, or as former Mayor William Hartsfield had proclaimed, Atlanta was a city “too busy to hate.”

To increase the number of black businesses involved in city ventures such as the expansion of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit (MARTA) system and construction of the new Hartsfield Atlanta Airport terminal (subsequently to become the busiest airport in the world), Jackson founded the Atlanta Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program. MBE mandated that from 25 to 35 percent of city contracts awarded had to go to minority-owned firms. Joint ventures between white firms and those owned by minorities also qualified under the program to ensure that all could directly benefit from MBE. When the mainstream business community expressed outrage that MBE rules applied to the construction of the international airport, a project deemed crucial to the future of the city, Jackson remained committed to his stated goals. In a standoff between Jackson and white business leaders, Jackson refused to issue any contracts until black firms received the same type of consideration historically given to white firms. Jackson halted all construction for a year until white business elites agreed to work along with black firms. By the end of Jackson’s second term, MBE had succeeded in awarding 34 percent of all city contracts to firms with significant minority involvement.

Although Jackson would see MBE as a success, in the early years the white business community often thought of him as a reverse racist. Long used to controlling city projects, mainstream white leaders had usually considered blacks only when there was an apparent effect on the city as a whole. Otherwise, black neighborhoods remained ignored. Jackson changed things by acknowledging that the black community was an integral part of Atlanta that required some special attention to address decades of neglect. To some white leaders, however, the affirmative action plans proposed by Jackson were proof that Atlanta would soon

reach the “death” that Sam Massell had preached during the 1973 campaign. In the end, Atlanta continued to prosper economically as the majority of Atlantans supported Jackson Administration policies.

When elected Atlanta mayor in 1973, Jackson proclaimed he would never “sellout” his city. Blacks believed that Jackson had to improve their everyday lives. But it became apparent that major changes were difficult, if not impossible, to implement on a local level. For example, Jackson had limited control over the allocation of funds by the federal government for low-income housing. And with the movement of white businesses from the inner city to the suburbs in the 1970s, a process known as “white flight,” the urban tax base declined. In 1977, when city sanitation workers went on strike, demanding a pay raise, Jackson realized he had no choice but to stop the attempt by the mostly black workers to force him to submit to their demands. Jackson fired 1,000 sanitation workers, ultimately concluding the strike was a manifestation of the belief by some blacks that a black mayor was in office primarily to offer redress for the inequality they suffered. Jackson knew that the city faced financial constraints that prevented the pay increase at the time and chose to break the strike.

In 1982, Jackson left the political arena to work as a municipal bond attorney. He also served on various corporate boards. Back in 1976, Jackson and Bunnie had divorced. The next year, Jackson married Valerie Richardson, a New York business executive. The two had two children, Valerie and Alexandra. Before leaving office, Jackson persuaded Andrew Young to succeed him as mayor. Young continued Jackson administration policies for two consecutive terms. Still interested in politics and now more seasoned in the corporate boardroom, Jackson ran for a third term in 1989. In this election, he managed to receive the support of the mainstream Atlanta business community in his win against civil rights leader Hosea Williams. Jackson suffered from heart problems and in 1992 he underwent surgery. The next year, deciding he needed to spend more time with his family and recuperate from his surgery, Jackson announced he would not seek a fourth term as Atlanta mayor despite his popularity.

After leaving office, Jackson remained involved in the Atlanta business community via Jackson Securities, the firm he founded in 1994. He also continued to work for the Democratic Party, serving as a vice-chair and almost

becoming Democratic Party chair in 2001. Jackson died in Washington, D.C., on June 23, 2003 of a heart attack.

See also: Williams, Hosea

David Kenneth Pye

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## Jet Magazine

*Jet* first appeared on November 1, 1951, at a cost of 15 cents. The magazine served as a black version of the largely white *Quick*, a small news publication founded in 1949 by Gardner Cowles, the creator of *Look* magazine. *Jet*, like its white counterpart, was approximately four inches by six inches and featured brief encapsulations of the pertinent news of the day. In 1970, its dimensions were broadened to approximately five inches by eight inches. According to John Johnson, its creator, *Jet* was designed to summarize “the week’s biggest Negro news in a well-organized, easy-to-read format.”

John Harold Johnson created *Jet* in Chicago, Illinois, the third publication of his Johnson Publishing Company. Born in the small Mississippi delta community of Arkansas City, Arkansas on January 19, 1918, Johnson and his mother moved to Chicago in 1933. While attending DuSable High School, Johnson met Harry Pace of the Supreme Life Insurance Company, who employed the graduate as he continued his education at the University of Chicago. Johnson excelled in his work with Supreme’s company magazine and eventually became its editor. The small publication carried information about the African American populace in a style similar to that of *Reader’s Digest*. Believing there was a commercial market for such a publication, Johnson gained a \$500 loan using his mother’s furniture as collateral in November 1942. With that initial investment, Johnson created *Negro Digest* and the Johnson Publishing Company. *Negro Digest* began a consistent trend throughout the history of the company

of mimicking successful periodical models of the mainstream white press and reformulating them with stories and photographs of interest to the black community.

Within a year of *Negro Digest*’s inception, its sales reached \$50,000. Johnson parlayed that success into his creation of *Ebony*, a photography-heavy periodical in the tradition of *Life* and *Look* that celebrated the successes of African Americans. *Ebony*’s growth prompted Johnson to create a convenient, succinct publication to give readers easy access to the news of African Americans in politics, society, and entertainment. The first known black news-magazine, *Heebie Jeebies*, appeared in Chicago in 1925 under the leadership of P. L. Prattis. The publication was short-lived, and the next national attempt was Johnson’s *Jet*. The magazine’s scope was broad and its news coverage brief and readable, allowing it to give a sweeping portrait of the state of the national African American community. In 1951, *Ebony*’s executive editor, Ben Burns, took on the additional duties of serving as executive editor for *Jet*. *Ebony*’s associate editor, Edward Clayton, became *Jet*’s managing editor.

From its inception, *Jet* presented interesting logistical problems. The small size of the magazine’s white predecessor, *Quick*, led to difficulty in retaining advertisers who were forced to produce separate, smaller advertising copy for presentation in the magazine. The periodical discontinued publication in 1953, four years after its creation, primarily because of lack of advertising revenue. Johnson anticipated the problem, diverting the profits from the successful *Ebony* to the new publishing venture until advertisers realized the benefits of advertising in a small magazine. Although initially successful, *Jet*, like *Ebony* and most periodicals of the decade, suffered from a mid-1950s recession that hurt both subscription and newsstand sales. The Johnson Publishing Company, however, gave *Jet* more exposure than *Negro Digest* or any of its other publications, save *Ebony*, and the small magazine recovered. *Jet* quickly gained a reputation for accurate, accessible coverage, which kept it viable through economic downturns.

That reputation only grew with *Jet*’s coverage of the events of 1955. In August of that year, 14-year-old Chicago native Emmett Till was accused of whistling at a white woman in Money, Mississippi. He was subsequently lynched, his body mangled and mutilated after his death. Once the boy’s corpse was returned to Chicago, photographers documented the wounds, and in the September 15, 1955 issue of *Jet*, the pictures appeared. The issue sold out.

Johnson Publication Company reporters covered the resulting trial of Till's accused murderers, and *Jet's* photos and subsequent coverage alerted the African American public and the national news media to the poor state of race relations in the South. As the Civil Rights movement grew, *Jet* maintained its coverage, offering descriptions of the Montgomery bus boycott and resulting civil rights activism without editorial comment.

*Jet*, in fact, never offered editorial comment, but it did use the draw of sensational headlines to attract readers. Among its coverage of civil rights injustices in the South, *Jet* interposed articles with titles such as "One of the Sexiest Men Alive, Says Miles Davis' New Bride" and "Ten Ways to a Mink Coat." Although editorials remain absent from *Jet's* pages, the magazine's tone remains celebratory and positive. Like its fellow Johnson publication *Ebony*, the smaller newsmagazine reflected its owner's conservative devotion to the possibilities of free market capitalism to grow the infrastructure of the African American community, but never as overtly as its sister periodical.

*Jet's* resources allowed it to cover the national happenings of African Americans, and its effectiveness led to the shift in focus of black newspapers away from national coverage. Although *Jet's* coverage was often cursory, its scope pushed city publications to focus on state and local issues. Its staying power was also manifest within the Johnson Publishing Company, as *Jet* has outlived other Johnson publications such as *Tan*, *Black Stars*, *Black World*, and the original *Negro Digest*. The success of *Jet* led Johnson to attempt another periodical of similarly small dimensions, a monthly called *Hue*. Although *Hue* was initially successful, the advertising problems that felled *Quick* and threatened *Jet* soon combined with the recession of the mid- and late 1950s to end the life of *Hue*. The circulation of its predecessor, however, has remained strong. *Jet's* circulation was close to 800,000 by the close of the 1980s, and today that number is almost 1 million. The modern incarnation of *Jet* features a compendium of notable births and deaths, sections on black history, celebrity gossip, and sports, along with music and television listings and the "Jet Beauty of the Week." The brief and accessible news coverage that made the periodical relevant, of course, still forms the core of *Jet's* copy.

See also: *Ebony Magazine*; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Till, Emmett

Thomas Aiello

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## Jim Crow

"Jim Crow" was the American social practice of racial segregation, most prevalent from the 1880s to the 1960s, that robbed African Americans of their basic civil and civic rights and assaulted black people's humanity. This method of segregation allowed African Americans and whites to live within the same cities and towns, while still maintaining white economic, political, and social superiority. Through a series of social customs and state and federal laws, white Americans created "white only" public spaces designed to link free African Americans to their previously enslaved status. For example, the practice of "Jim Crow" required that newly freed African Americans ride in separate sections of public transportation vehicles and sit in separate sections of church, and that black children attend different schools from their white counterparts. By 1896, a racist Louisiana state law, requiring that white and black people sit in separate compartments on trains was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which institutionalized the doctrine of "separate but equal" accommodations and embedded "Jim Crow" segregation into southern culture and law for the next 60 years.

Although the term "Jim Crow" is most frequently associated with racial segregation in the 20th century, it was first harnessed as a racial and spatial epithet in 1830s antebellum Massachusetts. A white actor, Thomas Dartmouth Rice, performing with black cork make-up on his face, made "Jim Crow"—the likeable yet derogatory African American slave he played on northern stages—a national and international sensation. The cultural impact of the show was so great that by 1834, Northerners from all classes—from street urchins to congressional politicians to newspaper editors—alluded to "Jim Crow's" oft quoted refrain: "Weel about and turn about and do jis so, Eb'ry time I weel about and jump Jim Crow." The popularity of both the tune and the character prompted Massachusetts's railroad

conductors, when segregating black travelers on the newly minted trains, to name the dirty, drafty, and unkempt compartments reserved for drunken men, poor whites, and African Americans as the “Jim Crow car.” The first record of this usage is 1838.

As early as the 1820s, free people of color vigorously protested segregation on public transportation in newspaper editorials. They further organized their protest strategies against the “Jim Crow car” and launched a concerted battle against the Massachusetts railroads from 1838 to 1843. African American abolitionists such as Charles Lenox Remond, Frederick Douglass, and David Ruggles refused to move from first-class seats, prompting violent confrontations between themselves and the railroads’ cronies. These abolitionists and their white advocates demanded equal accommodations and argued that receiving equal treatment on public transportation was a right of citizenship.

Furthermore, black activists developed a sophisticated analysis of such racial segregation. They debunked the notion that African American travelers were set apart from whites because they smelled or were disrespectful to white women. Pointedly, black abolitionists highlighted the fact that during the antebellum period, white American men and women traveled alongside enslaved African Americans frequently and never made complaints. Instead activists argued that what whites found so odious about black travelers in the antebellum North was not their skin color or their mere presence, but the social implications of their freedom. They argued that whites feared black political and economic success and imagined that black men sought sexual liaisons with white women because for so long, white men had exploited enslaved African American women in the South. Black freedom threatened social order. Segregation in public spaces such as the “Jim Crow car” was a way for Anglo-Americans to minimize the impact of African American freedom and to cripple black citizenship.

After 4 million African American slaves were freed in the South in 1865, it took just decades for the Southern states to produce laws that echoed the customs of the antebellum North. In the decades after enslavement, and throughout the 20th century, a new generation of black activists, emboldened by a legacy of African American activism against “Jim Crow,” believed that segregation threatened the meaning of freedom and citizenship and fought to overturn *Plessy v. Ferguson* through multiple protest strategies, including the courts.

In 1954, through a series of protracted legal battles, the legal arm of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) successfully overturned *Plessy* in the public schools. The famous U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, is largely considered the first victory of the modern Civil Rights movement. Soon after, a grassroots movement to desegregate public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama culminated in the successful Montgomery bus boycotts of 1956. Even as white supremacists in the South resisted “Jim Crow’s” demise through deadly violence against African American and other activists, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law, which outlawed racial segregation and gender discrimination in public schools, public places, and employment. These laws profoundly changed the face of “Jim Crow” in the United States, but many argue that the process of racial equality and integration is not yet complete. “Jim Crow” may no longer be an explicitly legal practice of racial exclusion, but socioeconomic factors that relegate African Americans and other Americans of color to poorer neighborhoods with less well-equipped schools and less chance for economic opportunity have fostered a reincarnation of “Jim Crow” into the 21st century.

*See also:* Black Nadir; *Brown v. Board of Education*; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Montgomery Bus Boycott; *Plessy v. Ferguson*

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## Johnson, Andrew

Andrew Johnson (1808–1875), the 17th president and regarded as no ally of African Americans during Reconstruction, was born in North Carolina. Growing up in an

extremely poor family, Johnson became an indentured servant to a tailor at age 14. By the time he was 17, his family had settled in Tennessee. His early experience in poverty and as an indentured servant later shaped his policies toward African Americans during Reconstruction.

A successful politician before the Civil War, Johnson was viewed during the conflict as a champion of freedom for slaves in Tennessee. When President Abraham Lincoln appointed Johnson military governor of Tennessee in 1862, Johnson did all he could to abolish slavery in the state. Abolitionists and African Americans applauded Johnson's efforts. His fame continued to rise and, in October 1864, he endeared himself to all who believed in the abolition of slavery when he delivered his "Moses" speech in Nashville. In it he proclaimed that he would lead the slaves of Tennessee out of bondage. What the African Americans and abolitionists did not realize was that his motivations for eliminating slavery in Tennessee were not fueled by sympathy for slaves, but rather were energized by hatred of large slave owners. Johnson, who had grown up in poverty and owned five slaves before the Civil War, held a hatred for slave owners common among poor Southern farmers.

In the presidential election of 1864, Johnson became Lincoln's choice for vice president. When Johnson became president on April 15, 1865, after Lincoln's death, many abolitionists and African Americans felt confident that he would carry the same attitude toward slavery as president as he had as military governor of Tennessee. During the early weeks of his administration, however, Johnson made it clear that, although he would recognize the freedom of former slaves, he did not believe they should play any important part in the rebuilding of the nation. Johnson's proclamations of amnesty and reconstruction for the former Confederate states were lenient and excluded African American involvement. Johnson's reconstruction policy opened the door for the creation of Black Codes, restrictive measures created by states to take away the few rights of African Americans.

Furthermore, Johnson blocked every congressional effort to extend political suffrage to the newly freed men. Johnson firmly believed that the majority of former slaves did not have the mental capacity to be involved in the political process. Johnson also believed that political suffrage for former slaves would create extremely hostile racial tensions throughout the South. Although he felt the majority of former slaves did not have the ability to assume the

responsibility of citizens, he did believe that a limited number of African Americans could vote—if they served in the army, if they were literate, or if they owned property.

Radical Republicans in Congress did not approve of Johnson's plan of limited suffrage. Johnson, however, informed them that he did not believe it was within the boundaries of his constitutional power to impose universal African American suffrage on the states. He stated that he could merely advise states of what to do, but not actually order them to do it. Johnson argued further that an extension of universal suffrage to African Americans would hurt the status of poor whites in the South. Johnson concluded that if all former slaves were allowed to vote, they would be heavily influenced by their former masters and therefore the wealthiest individuals in the South would control politics. Ultimately Johnson believed this problem could be solved with the removal of African Americans from the South.

In 1866, Johnson hampered conditions for African Americans more when he restored much of the land confiscated by the U.S. government to its white owners. This was a major blow to the Freedmen's Bureau, as it was supposed to use that land to help promote African American land ownership. Johnson defended his position by stating that much of the land seized by the government belonged to poor farmers and it was not them, rather the rich, large slave owning planters who ought to be punished by having their land seized, as they were the ones responsible for the Civil War.

Johnson alienated himself further from the Radical Republicans when he blocked legislation for a civil rights act and an extension of the Freedmen's Bureau. Johnson vetoed both measures claiming that they would promote laziness among African Americans. Furthermore, Johnson felt that it was improper to vote on such important legislation when the 11 former Confederate states had no representation in Congress.

Johnson's anti-African American policies during Reconstruction came partially from his experiences as a poor child and undoubtedly ruined his presidency. Many allies of African American suffrage demanded Johnson's removal. Less than a year after Johnson became president, Republicans in Congress began to override his vetoes and made him powerless. His presidential control became further depleted in 1868 when he missed being removed from office by one vote for violation of the Tenure of Office Act. He

died in 1875, the same year he reentered politics as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee.

*See also:* Black Codes; Freedmen's Bureau; Joint Committee of Fifteen; Lincoln, Abraham; Radical Republicans

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## Johnson, Lyndon Baines

Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908–1973), was the 36th president of the United States. He ascended to the presidency on November 22, 1963, when President John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917–1963) was assassinated while on a political trip in Dallas, Texas. Johnson completed Kennedy's term and, in 1964, was elected to a term in his own right in a landslide.

Little about his early life suggested that Johnson would become known as one of the most powerful politicians in American history and the civil rights president. Johnson was born one of five children in Stonewall, Texas, to Samuel Ealy Johnson Jr. and Rebekah Baines in a farmhouse located on a poor part of the Pedernales River. His father served in the Texas legislature, and young Lyndon was steeped in politics from the time he was a small boy. The family was poor, however, and by the time Lyndon was a teenager, his father was trapped in debt and lost the family home. The elder Johnson struggled financially for the rest of his life. Family, friends, and biographers agree that this is when Johnson developed his affinity for the poor and disadvantaged, regardless of race.

Johnson did poorly in school and was unable to get into college. He worked odd jobs for a few years after high school and was finally admitted to Southwest Texas State Teachers College, now Texas State University, San Marcos, in 1927. Miserable there, he left college and went to Welhausen School, where he taught fifth through seventh grades and served as the principal to a student body made

up of poor Mexicans and blacks. He returned to college and graduated in 1930. He later took a job at Pearsall High School, where he taught public speaking and advised the district championship debate team.

A gregarious person, Johnson gained the attention of United States Congressman Richard Kleberg who asked him to be the secretary in his Washington office. It was here Johnson blossomed; he learned the arcane rules of Congress and was elected speaker of an organization of congressional workers known as the Little Congress. Johnson also caught the eye of his political idol, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who appointed him as the Texas director of the National Youth Administration (NYA). Johnson was a most energetic NYA director and was very helpful to African Americans caught in the vice grip of the Depression. He was described as “warmly disposed to giving disadvantaged blacks opportunity for education and work” so that they could help themselves. While he blocked the representation of African Americans to the Texas NYA, he did appoint a black advisory board and enjoyed great success in the black community. He resigned from the NYA in 1937 to run in a special election for the Tenth Congressional District to the House of Representatives.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, FDR helped him obtain a commission to the United States Naval Reserve, where he won a Silver Star. He left the military after FDR ordered members of Congress to leave the active service and won a second run for the United States Senate in 1948 by a mere 87 votes. There were allegations of voter fraud, and for the rest of his life he could not shake the ironic nickname “Landslide Lyndon.”

Johnson eventually became one of the most powerful Senate majority leaders in history. He did this by prodigious hard work, developing powerful alliances, mastering the byzantine rules of the Senate, and knowing his colleagues as well as they knew themselves. He understood their ambitions, remembered their families, and kept track of their strengths, weaknesses, and peccadillos. He used this information to develop what came to be called the *Johnson treatment*. Through the use of flattery, cajolery, intimidation, doublespeak, humility, and the sheer force of his personality, Johnson so overwhelmed people he was almost always able to enlist them to further his goals.

While in Congress, he was an ardent supporter of FDR and typically voted, as did his Southern colleagues, against the federal antilynching bill, eliminating the poll





*President Lyndon B. Johnson meets with civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. at the White House in March 1966. (Lyndon B. Johnson Library)*

tax, denying federal funds for lunch programs at black schools, and denying the federal government the right to send absentee ballots directly to soldiers stationed overseas, effectively disfranchising thousands of African American servicemen and servicewomen. He explained that his votes were not based on racial prejudice, but on upholding states' rights.

Johnson held the conventional views of his time as they applied to blacks. He was not above repeating racist jokes, and he routinely called blacks, including those who worked for him "nigger," especially when he was in the company of other Southerners. On the other hand, he often helped his black constituents or individual blacks he happened to meet. For example, he hired Zephyr Wright, a college graduate who could not find a job, as the Johnson family cook and spoke sorrowfully about how difficult it was for her to travel with the Johnsons when there were virtually no public accommodations available to blacks.

Privately, he often supported the concept of equal opportunity. Although he refused to support a federal

antilynching bill, on occasion he publicly expressed his horror of the crime. He opposed the poll tax, seeing it not as a racial issue, but something that hurt all those who were disadvantaged, regardless of race. LBJ also supported the civil rights plank in the 1948 Democratic platform, and he refused to ally himself with the Dixiecrats, white segregationists who bolted the Democratic party and formed the States' Rights Party. Nevertheless, he repeatedly made the distinction between passing civil rights laws and attacking poverty, which he thought more helpful to minorities.

Events of the 1950s, however, forced civil rights matters to the forefront of American politics. In the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), the United States Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional. In 1955, Emmett Till, a black teenager from Chicago, was murdered for allegedly whistling at a white woman when he was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi, sparking an international outcry. In 1955, blacks in Montgomery, Alabama, led by a young minister named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., protested against segregated

seating on city buses by boycotting the bus company for more than a year, and the Supreme Court supported their position by declaring segregation in public transportation unconstitutional.

Johnson also recognized earlier than most of his Southern colleagues that there was a shift in the public perception regarding racial equality; he knew that the South as a region would never prosper if it continued to focus on the old bugaboo of race. Furthermore, by the late 1950s, his own political ambitions were such that he began to think of running for the presidency, and he knew it would require him to prove that he was not just a southern leader, but a national one. To this end, he determined that his political fortunes would be advanced by helping to pass a civil rights bill.

In 1956, the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a sweeping civil rights bill to Congress. It provided for creation of a bipartisan United States Commission on Civil Rights that would be empowered to investigate racial discrimination and recommend remedies for its eradication; aimed to turn the small civil rights section of the Department of Justice into a full-fledged division led by an assistant attorney general; proposed that the United States attorney general be given the power to obtain injunctions in civil rights cases and that those cases be moved from state courts to federal courts; and sought to expand the power of the Justice Department to ask for injunctions against those who threatened or interfered with the right to vote.

After some pruning by congressmen, a weaker bill passed in the House and moved over to the Senate, where it faced a buzz saw of criticism in the chamber long dominated by segregationist Democrats. As majority leader, Johnson knew that the bill could tear apart the Democratic party for years to come as it pitted anti- and pro-civil rights supporters against each other. Flexing his parliamentary muscles, he sent the bill to the Judiciary Committee, where Democrat and segregationist Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi eviscerated and then buried it in committee. Legislators who supported civil rights eventually agreed to drop their request for moving cases from state to federal courts, and enough southern senators grudgingly agreed to support it. Still, Senator Strom Thurmond, an ardent segregationist, conducted what was then the longest filibuster ever when he spoke for more than 24 hours straight against the bill. Greatly weakened and watered-down, the bill finally passed both chambers on August 29 and was signed

into law by President Eisenhower on September 9. Through it all, Johnson proved he could rise above partisan, sectional interests and think of the nation as a whole.

In 1959, Eisenhower sent another civil rights bill to Congress. This bill aimed to allow the federal government to inspect local and state voter registration polls and levy penalties against anyone who interfered with the right to register or vote. Once again LBJ aimed for a bill that was narrowly focused so as to protect the rights of African American voters but would not alienate his southern colleagues. This bill aimed to allow the federal government to inspect local and state voter registration polls and levy penalties against anyone who interfered with the right to register or vote. LBJ again aimed for a bill that was narrowly focused so as to protect the rights of African American voters but not alienate his southern colleagues.

The bill passed the House and moved to the Senate. The Senate began debate on February 29, 1960; however, a group of 18 southern Democrats split into three teams of six each so as to create a continuous filibuster. By using this method, each senator would be required to speak for only four hours every three days. To blunt the impact of the filibuster, Johnson began requiring the Senate to meet in 24-hour sessions. A 15-minute break was allowed before the Senate sat for another 82 hours on March 2. The filibuster was then broken, and Congress passed the bill. President Eisenhower signed the bill into law on May 6, 1960. Both bills had been so weakened in the process that they were more symbolic than substantive. They did, however, prove that Congress could deal with such a volatile issue as civil rights without tearing the nation asunder, and Johnson again demonstrated his prowess as a national leader.

Emboldened by his success, Johnson began actively seeking the 1960 Democratic nomination for the presidency. He was outmaneuvered, however, by Senator John F. Kennedy, the junior senator from Massachusetts and a man Johnson felt to be unqualified for the presidency, particularly in the field of civil rights. In a somewhat surprising move, Kennedy offered Johnson the post of vice-presidential running mate, and even more surprisingly to some, Johnson accepted. It is certain that Kennedy could not have won the presidency without Johnson; his presence on the ticket ensured that several southern states that had gone over to the Republican party during the Eisenhower years returned to the Democratic fold.

Civil rights activity bubbled to the surface from the beginning of the Kennedy administration. The president had raised expectations during the campaign by implying that civil rights reform could be achieved in part through vigorous activity by the executive branch. Thousands of demonstrations in favor of racial equality took place across the country. In 1961, the Freedom Rides tested compliance with the Interstate Commerce Commission's directive against segregation in interstate travel. The violence unleashed against the riders drew the personal intervention of Robert F. Kennedy, the United States attorney general. In 1962, the administration sought to enforce a federal court order requiring the University of Mississippi to admit James Meredith as its first African American student. When it was clear that the local and state police would not maintain order, Kennedy federalized the Mississippi National Guard. A riot ensued and two people were killed. On June 11, Alabama governor George C. Wallace fulfilled a campaign promise to stand in the schoolhouse door to prevent the admittance of two black students, Vivian Malone and James Hood, to the University of Alabama. President Kennedy federalized the Alabama Guard, and both students were admitted without violence or bloodshed. On June 12, Medgar Evers, field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was assassinated in the driveway of his home. On August 28, 1963, the March on Washington, which focused on civil rights and economic justice, brought 200,000 people to the nation's capital. These events appear to have been tailor-made for a man with the ambition and legislative skills of Lyndon Johnson. Yet Kennedy rarely sought the advice of his vice president on civil rights.

Kennedy did recognize, however, that his administration could no longer rely on ad hoc solutions to individual civil rights crisis. On June 19, he sent a far-reaching civil rights bill to Congress. The Kennedy civil rights bill was a multiprong attack on racial discrimination designed to outlaw discrimination in public accommodations, expand and protect the right to vote, and bar employment discrimination. It also contained a provision to cut off government funding to institutions who engaged in racial discrimination. In a nationwide television address, he labeled civil rights a moral issue and urged Congress and the American people to act to ensure equal rights for all Americans.

After President Kennedy was assassinated, several months later, Johnson told a joint session of Congress that

passage of the Kennedy civil rights bill would be the most fitting memorial to the slain president. As president, he placed his reputation on the line and worked tirelessly to get the Civil Rights Act passed. The success of his career in Congress was of great benefit in this area, and he relished using the Johnson treatment at the presidential level.

In the House the bill had been bottled up in the Rules Committee by segregationist chairman Howard W. Smith, who refused to release it. Over the course of the winter recess, public opinion moved toward support of the bill, and Smith finally released it from the Rules Committee. On February 10, 1964, the House passed the bill 290 to 130 and sent it to the Senate. Parliamentary maneuvers on the part of Democratic Majority Leader Mike Mansfield sent the bill to the full Senate for debate, bypassing the Judiciary Committee where it was sure to be stalled by southern segregationists. Southern Democrats launched a 54-day filibuster, but the liberal Democratic Whip Hubert Humphrey led the movement to invoke, breaking the filibuster. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 73 to 27, and Johnson signed the bill on July 2, 1964. He was said to have predicted that the Democratic party had lost the southern vote for years to come. The impact of the bill was such that racial discrimination in public accommodations was virtually wiped out.

The right to vote, however, was still in question. Several civil rights organizations had been leading voter registration activities in Alabama since 1963. Demonstrators and activists were met with violence perpetrated by law enforcement officials and citizens. In response to the situation, the Johnson administration sent a voting rights bill prohibiting states from interfering with or denying the right to vote to Congress in mid-March 1965. The act also proposed to outlaw literacy tests and extend federal oversight of elections.

On February 18, an Alabama state trooper shot a young black man named Jimmie Lee Jackson who was trying to protect his mother and grandfather from the police. Jackson died on February 24, and civil rights worker James Bevel suggested a march from Selma to Montgomery to confront Governor George Wallace about Jackson's death. Instead, the march became an outlet for black anger and a memorial to Jackson. Wallace declared the march a threat to public safety and vowed to prevent it. On March 7, about 600 marchers made their way across the Edmund Pettus Bridge where they were met by law enforcement officials who charged into the crowd on foot and horseback,

beating demonstrators. The scene, referred to as Bloody Sunday, was captured by the media and beamed throughout the world.

King organized a second march, but federal district judge Frank M. Johnson issued a restraining order until additional hearings could be held. On March 9, King led a ceremonial march to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, stopped to pray and then turned back. That same evening, three white ministers who had traveled to Selma for the march found themselves in front of the Silver Moon Café, a gathering point for segregationist whites. The three were brutally attacked by several whites, and James Reeb, a Unitarian minister, died of his injuries.

Judge Johnson lifted the restraining shortly thereafter, and a third march was planned for March 21–24. Citizens, college students, civil rights activists, religious leaders, and celebrities joined the three-day effort. On March 25, King dazzled the crowd of 25,000 with a speech beside the state capital. Later that night, Viola Liuzzo, a white Chicago wife and mother of five, was murdered by Ku Klux Klansman as she transported volunteers to their homes. Her passenger, a young black man named Leroy Moton, was not hurt, and played dead while Klansman searched the car.

It is widely believed that the murders of Rev. Reeb and Mrs. Liuzzo, both of whom were white, forced Congress to act quickly on the voting rights legislation. After a Senate filibuster, cloture was invoked, and the bill passed on May 11; the House passed the bill on July 10. Conference committees resolved the differences in the two bills and sent it to President Johnson, who signed the act on August 6, 1965. The impact of the law was immediate; the number of black registered voters in the 11 states of the Old Confederacy soared.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did not resolve the persistent poverty, police brutality, overcrowding, poor health care, and a lack of public transportation for millions of African Americans, especially in the urban North. Beginning in the summer of 1965, a series of rebellions broke out in inner cities across America. The first major riot was in the East Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts in August, 1965. That rebellion lasted almost a week, and Governor Pat Brown was forced to call out the National Guard. Thirty-four people were killed, and property damage was estimated at more than \$30 million. Major disturbances also happened in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, and 57 other cities in 1967. President

Johnson ordered about 5,000 troops from the 82nd and 101st Airborne units into Detroit when Governor George Romney reported that the Michigan Guard was unable to restore civil order.

In the wake of the rebellions, Johnson formed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, chaired by Illinois governor Otto Kerner. The so-called Kerner Commission issued a bleak report on American race relations, stating the root causes of the rebellions were poverty, discrimination and injustice, and recommending that the federal government mount a vigorous attack on those fronts. The Commission also famously reported that America was splintering into two societies, one black and one white.

The racial rebellions that occurred in the latter part of the 1960s caused a severe backlash among white Americans who thought that Johnson had moved too quickly on racial equality, and endangered his most important program, the War on Poverty, the foundation of what he called the Great Society. Johnson had signed the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. The Act created the Office of Economic Opportunity, which was the administrative arm of several programs. Head Start was designed to help disadvantaged preschoolers, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was a domestic Peace Corps whose purpose was to help the poor across America, and Upward Bound sought to prepare poor teenagers for college. The Education Act funneled more federal money to colleges and universities and provided low-interest loans to financially strapped students. Funding for the first stage of the act was a modest \$1 billion.

The War on Poverty was the first government program to involve poor communities in planning and implementing the programs that served them. In this respect, it taught leadership and organizing skills and gave meaningful paid work to hundreds of thousands of poor Americans. Increasingly, however, it was buffeted by disagreements among politicians, anger from white Americans who thought that the program rewarded shiftless and lazy blacks, and ever rising expectations by African Americans. The biggest obstacle to the program, however, was increased spending on the war in Vietnam, where 25 percent of the frontline troops were African American.

In 1968, a presidential election year, it was assumed that President Johnson would run for a second term. The United States, however, was mired in an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam; thousands of young people took

to the streets in demonstrations—some of them outside the White House—and burned their draft cards in protest. The Tet offensive in January of that year showed that the administration had not been truthful about the war, and for the first time, it seemed to be admitting that the war was unwinnable. Urban rebellions continued, and many young people seemed to be inhabitants of a counterculture that was a maze of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n roll.

Senator Eugene McCarthy, the liberal Democrat from Minnesota, had come out against the war and entered the presidential race, and hundreds of college student volunteers cut their hair, shaved their beards, and became “Clean for Gene.” Although he lost the New Hampshire primary to LBJ by 42 to 49 percent, he was able to show how vulnerable the sitting president was. After McCarthy’s strong showing, Robert Kennedy, the junior U.S. senator from New York and brother of the slain president, announced his candidacy, a move LBJ had always feared. On March 31, in a televised news conference, Johnson announced that he would not run for, nor accept, the nomination of the Democratic party for a second presidential term.

On April 4, civil rights leader and Nobel Prize winner Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to support sanitation workers in their fight for better wages and working conditions. Riots broke out in dozens of cities as angry and frustrated blacks sought to avenge King’s death. On June 4, Robert Kennedy was assassinated after he had claimed victory in the California primary. Kennedy had been one of the few whites in public life who understood the plight of minorities and the underclass. The country was spinning out of control.

The death of King heightened a sense of urgency in Congress as it debated a third piece of civil rights legislation. On April 11, Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibited racial discrimination in the advertisement, sale, or rental of housing. It was the last piece of civil rights legislation he would sign. When Johnson turned the White House over to Republican Richard M. Nixon on January 20, 1969, he was one of the most unpopular presidents in history. He had, however, done what he sought to do; he had built on the work of his longtime idol, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and gone so much further. He had created the Great Society—a society that made racial equality not merely a dream, but a reality.

See also: Civil Rights Act of 1964; Civil Rights Act of 1968; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; Kerner

Commission Report; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Voting Rights Act of 1965; War on Poverty

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## Joint Committee of Fifteen

When the Thirty-ninth Congress convened in December 1865, it faced the monumental task of opposing the Presidential Reconstruction plan crafted by Andrew Johnson. After preventing senators and representatives from the 11 Southern ex-confederate states from taking their seats in Congress, radical and moderate congressmen formed the Joint Committee on Reconstruction to investigate conditions in the South and to report whether any of the ex-confederate states should be entitled to congressional representation. This committee of 15 congressmen, was composed of six senators and nine representatives, of which 12 were Republicans and the remaining 3 were Unionist Democrats. These 15 members of Congress oversaw a massive investigation that called 144 witnesses and generated more than 700 pages of testimony. The committee concentrated its efforts primarily on the treatment of African Americans and Northern whites in Southern states, the continued necessity of the Freedmen’s Bureau and federal troops in the South, and the lasting hostilities of former Confederates toward the U.S. government.

On April 28, 1866, the Joint Committee submitted its findings. Their report claimed that the South was still in disarray in the aftermath of the Civil War and that the former confederate states should not actively participate in the federal government until civil rights of all their citizens were guaranteed and high-ranking confederate officials were barred from political office. These

recommendations led directly to a bill that extended the life and enlarged the functions of the Freedmen's Bureau and a proposal that would grant civil rights to African Americans in the South. The two measures were vetoed by President Johnson, but Congress eventually overrode both vetoes. The extension of the Freedmen's Bureau and the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1866 signaled the beginning of radical Republican ascension and the end of Johnson's absolute control over Reconstruction. The most lasting legacy of the Joint Committee's efforts was a set of resolutions drafted on April 30, 1866 that became the Fourteenth Amendment. Passed by Congress on June 16, 1866, this amendment made African American citizenship a Constitutional fact, but every Southern state, with the exception of Tennessee, refused to ratify the measure. Preparing for a protracted political fight, Radical Republicans called for a convention to be held in Philadelphia of Unionists from the South to denounce the doctrine of state sovereignty and support the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Among the Northern representatives at this convention was Frederick Douglass who successfully persuaded the convention to also support granting the right to vote to South African American men. The Fourteenth Amendment was eventually ratified and Douglass's appeal for black suffrage became the basis for the Fifteenth Amendment passed by Congress on February 27, 1869. *See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1866; Douglass, Frederick; Fifteenth Amendment; Fourteenth Amendment; Freedmen's Bureau; Radical Republicans

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## Karenga, Maulana

Dr. Maulana Karenga (1941–), professor, activist-scholar, ethical philosopher, author, and leading Afrocentric cultural theorist, was born in Parsonsburg, Maryland. The youngest of 14 children, he migrated to California in the late 1950s to attend the University of California at Los Angeles. He first

attended Los Angeles City College before transferring to UCLA where he received a BA (cum laude) and a masters degree in political science and African studies. Dr. Karenga holds two PhD's; the first in political science from the United States International University, and the second in social ethics from the University of Southern California. He also holds an honorary doctorate of philosophy from the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. Best known as the creator of *Kwanzaa*, Karenga has distinguished himself as one of the leading African-centered scholars and activist-intellectuals in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The framework for Karenga's intellectual and practical work is *Kawaida*, a philosophy of culture and struggle that he began to develop early in his career. As a student in the early 1960s, Karenga's meetings and discussions with Malcolm X had a tremendous impact on his developing social consciousness. Building on Malcolm's teaching, he defined the goals of the Black Power movement and his organization, US, as self-determination, self-respect, and self-defense. He also drew on the works of Sekou Toure, Marcus Garvey, Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyerere, and others to develop *Kawaida*, a Swahili term he defines as meaning a synthesis of tradition and reason. Central to *Kawaida* philosophy is the *Nguzo Saba*, the Seven Principles. They are *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith). The *Nguzo Saba* is also the value system on which the pan-African holiday *Kwanzaa* is based. Created by Karenga and first celebrated by US in 1966, today *Kwanzaa* is widely celebrated by millions throughout the African community on every continent in the world. Moreover, the Seven Principles are used by thousands of organizations and institutions as value orientations for their projects.

During the height of the Black Power movement, Karenga interrupted his studies to become an active participant. After the Watts rebellion in 1965, he formed US in Los Angeles and began to establish himself as an activist-scholar and movement leader. Eventually, US would also become a leading cultural and social change organization.

Grounded in the philosophy of *Kawaida* and dedicated to the liberation and empowerment of black people, US and its supporters often found themselves at odds and/or competing with the Black Panther Party, who had also committed themselves to the right of self-defense, self-determination, and the liberation of African people. Both

groups were targets under the FBI's COINTELPRO infiltration program, which consciously provoked conflict between them. Conflict between the two groups spilled over from the community to the UCLA campus where a personal confrontation between members of both groups led to a shootout in 1969 that resulted in the death of two members of the Black Panther Party, the wounding of an US member, and charges being brought against several members of US. Marred by attempts to discredit him and US, Karenga, still a target of law enforcement officials, endured a period of incarceration from 1971–1975 after he was convicted of felonious assault, a case he maintains was a political prosecution. This led to US's temporarily going underground, but strengthened Karenga's resolve to remain committed to the black liberation movement. He wrote extensively during his captivity. In his essays, he laid out the essential tenets of his philosophy, including developmental changes on issues of race, class, and gender. After his release, he returned to rebuild his organization and became active again in the movement.

For more than four decades, Karenga has played a key role in national united front efforts in the black community. In the late 1960s, he was a founding member of the executive committee of the Black Power conferences and later, in the 1980s and 1990s, assumed leadership roles in the National Black United Front, the National African American Leadership Summit, and the African American Leadership Family Retreat. In 1984, US held the first annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference in Los Angeles and Karenga invited the late scholar, Jacob Carruthers, to cohost it with him. Out of this conference grew the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations. Karenga also serves as Chairman of the National Association of Kawaida Organizations (NAKO), which was established in 1987, and as director of the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies in Los Angeles. In 1995, he served on the national organizing committee of the Million Man March/Day of Absence and authored the *Mission Statement* for the project.

Dr. Karenga has had a profound and far-reaching effect on black intellectual and political culture. Through his organization US and his philosophy, *Kawaida*, he has played a vanguard role in shaping the Black Power movement, the black studies movement, the black arts movement, the black student union movement, and the black independent school movement. Moreover, he has been instrumental in the development of Afrocentricity, rites of

passage programs, African life-cycle ceremonies and the Simba Wachanga Youth Movement.

Professor and former chairman of the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach, Karenga serves on the board of the National Council for Black Studies and the Cheikh Anta Diop International Conference. His publications are extensive. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Karenga has gained national and international recognition. He has lectured on the life and struggle of African peoples on the major campuses in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, the People's Republic of China, Britain, and Canada. He is credited with having a profound impact on the development of black cultural and political consciousness throughout the African world. *See also:* Afrocentricity; Asante, Molefi Kete; Black Power; Kwanzaa; National Council for Black Studies; US Organization

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## Kennedy, John Fitzgerald

John Fitzgerald "Jack" Kennedy (1917–1963), served as the 35th President of the United States from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. Kennedy was a tremendous figure in U.S. history as it related to the experience of African Americans during the crucial years of the Civil Rights movement. Indeed, the struggle over civil liberties was perhaps the most pressing domestic issues of the Kennedy administration. As a strong advocate of the movement, Kennedy helped push civil rights legislation through Congress, supported the integration of schools and universities throughout the South, and collaborated extensively with leaders of the Civil Rights movement.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional in a federal

court case called *Brown v. Board of Education*. However, this ruling was widely ignored throughout the South and schools as well as restaurants, theatres, bathrooms, and many other public facilities remained segregated. As a result, the struggle for civil rights and social justice became an issue that necessitated action. Led by individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and by organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Civil Rights movement began to take action in the form of a series of sit-ins and non-violent protests. As early as 1957, astute congressional leaders began to recognize that civil rights legislation would eventually become inevitability.

In 1956 and 1957, as the Junior Senator from Massachusetts, Kennedy designed a strategy for how to accommodate African Americans as well as a wide variety of Democrats in regards to civil liberties. However, this strategy was hardly the position of a staunch civil rights advocate. Instead, it was a political maneuver and calculated with thoughts of a campaign for the presidency in 1960. Kennedy engaged in debates on the Senate floor regarding Titles III and IV of a bill, which would give the U.S. Attorney General the power to intervene in school desegregations with military force. He was able to support this bill without upsetting northern liberals or southern conservatives, both constituencies that he would need in his bid for the presidency in 1960. Indeed, Kennedy walked a very thin line, which brought criticism from several staunch civil rights advocates.

This legislation culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which created a commission to monitor violations of civil liberties, especially as it applied to voting. It also upgraded the Civil Rights office to the Justice Department and gave that office the power to commence civil measures against states that discriminated based on race. Further, many saw Kennedy's support of a bill carrying an amendment guaranteeing the right of all Americans to serve on federal juries as a fake bill with no real substantive power to change the status quo. However, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was the first time since Reconstruction that the United States Congress had acted in any way to protect the civil liberties of African Americans. Thus, Kennedy's journey down the path of civil rights began, and public sentiment held that he was trying to press forward with equal treatment of African Americans, but that he was most concerned with securing national unity through a legality course.

In Kennedy's bid for the White House in 1960, against Richard Nixon, he chose the tenuous position to advance

civil rights. This position was politically expedient as it secured the African American vote as well as consolidated the votes of northern liberals whom were antisegregation. However, Kennedy was taking a political gamble in losing the support of southern Democrats such as A. Willis Robertson and Harry F. Byrd of Virginia who were pro-segregation. Kennedy began to add many leaders of the Civil Rights movement to his staff including Marjorie Lawson, William Dawson, and Frank Reeves who advised him on how to espouse an aggressive civil rights agenda. The Kennedy campaign also encouraged the creation of a national organization to create a nationwide voter registration drive within African American communities.

Throughout the campaign, Kennedy applauded the peaceful non-violent strategies of civil rights activists; he spoke at several engagements at predominantly African American conferences, and criticized the inaction of previous presidents whom failed to bring integration sooner. Further, he promised to support civil rights legislation including a pledge to see more African Americans hired in the highest levels of the federal government. Kennedy also cultivated favor amongst African Americans when he telephoned Coretta Scott King in regards to the jailing of her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Indeed, not only did Kennedy sympathize with Mrs. King, but also his phone calls, as well as those of his brother Bobby, convinced Georgia's governor, Ernest Vandiver, to set Dr. King free. This multifaceted strategy landed Kennedy the support of African Americans in his bid for the presidency in 1960. Given the slim margin of victory (about 100,000 votes), African American voters played a significant role in sealing the victory for Kennedy. Richard Nixon's attempt to strengthen his support among southern voters, as well as his silence about issues surrounding civil liberties caused many African American voters to reconsider their old ties to the Republican Party, which went back to the party's pro-civil rights record during Reconstruction in the mid to late 1860's.

Upon winning the presidency, which was one of the closest elections in U.S. history, Kennedy grew increasingly concerned about the violence surrounding the Civil Rights movement, and particularly the Freedom Rides. His interests in civil liberties continued to display this concern as his policies addressed the prevention of further disorder and violence. Because of his stance during the election, Kennedy was in a fixed position amongst southern democrats.



However, it actually freed him to aid the Civil Rights movement in several ways. His first act as president towards support of the movement was the issuance of Executive Order Number 11063. This order obliged government agencies to discontinue discriminatory practices in federal housing. Kennedy also named Vice President Lyndon Johnson to be the chair of a newly appointed Committee on Equal Employment. Further, nominating African Americans to a number of posts including Thurgood Marshall to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, Carl Rowan to Deputy Assistant of the Secretary of State, and George L. P. Weaver to Assistant Secretary of Labor further ingratiated Kennedy to African Americans.

One of the defining moments of the Kennedy Administration in regards to civil rights was on June 25, 1962. James Meredith had applied to the University of Mississippi, had been rejected based on his race, and thus filed a complaint for racial discrimination in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The Fifth circuit ruled that the University should admit Meredith, but the Governor of Mississippi (Ross Barnett) stated that he would physically stand in the way of integration. As a result, Kennedy sent 300 federal marshals to enforce the court's decision. There were riots on campus that yielded the deaths of 2 individuals, over 200 arrests, and many federal marshals sustained serious injuries. Kennedy then put the Mississippi National Guard under federal jurisdiction and made sure that Meredith was admitted. Indeed, Kennedy did not back down or succumb to the stubborn challenge from southern governors. Later, in June of 1963, Kennedy took the same action against George Wallace in the desegregation of the University of Alabama.

In August of 1963, Kennedy proposed to Congress the strongest civil rights bill yet seen in U.S. History. However, the strong bloc of southern voters in the House and Senate were able to keep the bill from passing. In support of Kennedy's bold new legislation a coalition was formed between several civil rights organizations including the SCLC, NAACP, CORE, and SNCC, which organized a massive march in Washington. Later that August, about 250,000 marchers gathered near the Lincoln Memorial in support of equality in the job market, freedom, and civil justice through the passage of Kennedy's legislation. This is the context for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech and the march was a visual and palpable representation of that dream. African Americans and whites, young and old, men and women gathered in the hopes that their children could one day live in a nation

where they will not be "judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Using television images, many Americans witnessed this important protest of racial discrimination and there was no doubt that the March on Washington helped pave the way towards the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, in an act that became a double-edged sword for the Civil Rights movement, the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November of 1963 proved to be a tremendous loss, but also perhaps a tremendous gain for the movement.

The legacy of John F. Kennedy as it related to the Civil Rights movement was fully realized by the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After the death of Kennedy, Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson was inaugurated the 36th president of the United States. Johnson, having only taken the oath of office four days prior, disclosed to the nation that he planned to support Kennedy's civil rights bill as a testament to Kennedy's work towards civil justice. A southerner from Texas, many leaders of the Civil Rights movement feared that Johnson would only buttress the southern voting bloc in the legislature that had kept such a bill from previous passage. However, with years of legislative experience at work, Johnson was able to push the bill through Congress despite massive resistance in the form of southern filibusters. It is safe to say that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the zenith of decades and even centuries of work on behalf of the African American in U.S. history. The act banned segregation and racial discrimination in public facilities such as restaurants, hotels, schools, libraries, and swimming pools.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 also called for a ban of racial discrimination in the American workforce. No longer could employers discriminate based on race, religion, ethnicity, or sex when considering a hire, promotion, or termination. To enforce these positions, the federal government was granted the power to withhold federal funding to any organization that was discriminating in any way. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 led to the desegregation of many public schools, it created the Employment Opportunity Commission to oversee practices of racial prejudice in employment, and it gave the attorney general the power to initiate prosecution on behalf of those who had been the victims of unfair injustice. This is perhaps one of the greatest legacies of the Kennedy administration as it related to the Civil Rights movement. Unfortunately, it was not until after Kennedy's premature death that the dream was fully realized.

In August of 1965, Congress passed another act that augmented the 1964 legislation. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, although signed into law by Lyndon Johnson was also a part of the Kennedy civil rights legacy. This act outlawed the educational requirements throughout many states in the South that called for the reciting of the constitution or for the “proper” interpretations of various sections of the constitution in order to vote. Many of these requirements had kept African Americans from voting and therefore had a tremendous affect on the racial bias of state and local elections. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 also gave the attorney general the power to assign federal voter registrars to record African American voters. This had a tremendous influence on the numbers of the African American electorate. For instance, in Mississippi alone, the number of enrolled African American voters grew from 28,000 in 1964 to over 250,000 in 1968.

Many have called John F. Kennedy a reluctant participant in the Civil Rights movement, but he was an essential participant nonetheless. To be sure, he was a politician with a calculated agenda. However, Kennedy had also accomplished more for the civil rights of African Americans than any other president in U.S. history, perhaps with the exception of Abraham Lincoln. Further, his extra-legislative support such as phone calls, meetings, and words of encouragement given to the leaders of the Civil Rights movement lent moral support from the highest office in the land. There have been very few Presidents in the U.S. history who risked so much for the freedoms and liberties of African Americans. Indeed, Kennedy was advocating a position that almost half of the country disagreed with. Indeed, he realized that the African American deserved equal rights, and that they lived in a country where all men were created equal and were endowed with certain inalienable rights. John F. Kennedy was the first American president to interpret that statement of the constitution quite literally.

*See also:* Castro, Fidel; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Hoover, J. Edgar; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; King, Martin Luther Jr.; March on Washington, 1963; Marshall, Thurgood; Voting Rights Act of 1965

*Otis Westbrook Pickett*

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## Kennedy, Robert F.

Robert “Bobby” Francis Kennedy (1925–1968), or “RFK,” was a leading and influential political figure during the struggles for racial and economic equality of the 1960s. Formally trained as a lawyer and experientially as a politician, RFK served as attorney general to the United States from 1961 to 1964, during some of the most pivotal years of the Civil Rights movement. From 1965 until his assassination in 1968, he served as the United States Senator from New York, using his position and his political expertise to champion for racial, social, and economic equality.

Born the seventh of nine children into the prominent, powerful, and wealthy Kennedy family, Robert Kennedy graduated from Harvard University in 1948 with a degree in government and earned a law degree from The University of Virginia Law School in 1951. Throughout the 1950s, RFK worked as a lawyer for the United States Department of Justice and for various Senate Committees. In 1952, he served as campaign manager for his brother, John Fitzgerald Kennedy Jr., vying to become the U.S. Senator from Massachusetts. And in 1959, he managed another JFK campaign: his bid to become the 35th President of the United States.

Elected to the presidency in 1960, JFK appointed Robert Kennedy as his attorney general. Robert Kennedy’s job was to ensure the constitutional rights of the American people, and nowhere was he called to do so more than in the southern struggles for racial equality. Initially, Robert Kennedy believed that the most necessary gain in these struggles would be unhindered access to the ballot box. African American citizens in the South often faced harassment for exercising their right to vote, so RFK dispatched federal marshals into these southern states to investigate and begin prosecuting counties that condoned voter intimidation.

While RFK tried to contain the Justice Department’s policies to legislation, students, and civil rights leaders opted for a different strategy. Lunch counter sit-ins, freedom rides, protest marches, school integration, and many other

varieties of nonviolent direct action proliferated across the South. Robert Kennedy provided Justice Department support wherever possible. He dispatched federal marshals to pacify angry mobs during the first Freedom Rides of May 1961. He encouraged President Kennedy to provide armed protection for endangered persons, such as for James Meredith, who in September 1962 integrated the University of Mississippi in Oxford. And RFK negotiated with segregationist southern leaders—such as Alabama governor John Patterson, who opposed the integration of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa—to enforce federal law.

By this time, Robert Kennedy understood that although enfranchisement was certainly important, only a more comprehensive guarantee of civil liberties could ensure the rights of U.S. citizens. He urged his brother to draft a comprehensive civil rights bill to send to Congress, and he insisted that President Kennedy publicly address the civil rights issue. Thus, on June 11, 1963, President Kennedy became the first president to publicly declare the struggle for racial equality a moral issue. Immediately thereafter, civil rights leaders began planning a national March on Washington for Freedom, Jobs, and Justice to advocate for quick passage of this legislation. Robert Kennedy's Justice Department guaranteed the marchers federal protection.

The March on Washington took place on August 1963, but JFK did not live to see the passage of the civil rights legislation. He was assassinated on November 22, 1963. His vice president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, assumed the presidency and asked Robert Kennedy to remain attorney general. In July 1964, RFK witnessed the signing of his brother's civil rights bill into law as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The next month, RFK resigned his post as attorney general in order to campaign in New York for an U.S. Senate seat.

As a U.S. senator, Robert Kennedy continued to fight for racial equality, as well as for economic and social equality. In the latter half of the 1960s, nonviolent protest gave way to more confrontational methods. Riots erupted in urban centers around the country, but rather than condemn the rioters, Robert Kennedy encouraged people to consider the conditions that might engender such actions. He called attention to inequities in education, housing, employment, and living wages. He took steps to mitigate against such injustices, supporting, for example, the United Farm Workers and forming the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education. He visited the impoverished Mississippi Delta in 1967 and afterwards, actively pursued food assistance for the area.

Such community rehabilitation endeavors, the most famous of which revitalized the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in Brooklyn, occupied his Senate career. He implemented community development corporations, programs that combined residents' needs and energies with federal grants and private sector investment in community improvement.

In March 1968, Robert Kennedy announced that he would challenge Lyndon Johnson for the presidency. Over the next few months, RFK stormed the primary race, bolstered by the overwhelming support of those to whom he reached out most African Americans, Hispanics, student protestors, the poor, the dispossessed, and the suffering. On June 4, 1968, celebrating an important primary win in California, Robert Kennedy was shot at the Ambassador Hotel. He died two days later. Much like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated only two months earlier, Robert Kennedy believed in the principles of equality and progress on which the United States was founded so deeply that he struggled and sacrificed to preserve them.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1964; Freedom Rides; Hoover, J. Edgar; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; King, Coretta Scott; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Meredith, James; Los Angeles, California, Riot of 1965

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## Kenyatta, Jomo

Jomo Kenyatta (1889–1978) was the figurehead of the Kenyan independence movement and Kenya's first freely elected prime minister. Kenyatta was born a part of Kenya's largest cultural group, the Kikuyu, who were a sedentary, agricultural people inhabiting a stretch of land extending

northeast from Nairobi, around the base of Mount Kenya and onward north. At the age of 10, Kenyatta wandered away from home and into a Scottish mission, which took him in and gave him a Christian education. Kenyatta eventually ran away to Nairobi, which was nearly a westernized, European city by the turn of the century, and he found employment there as a clerk. In Nairobi in the early 1920s, Kenyatta began participating in the Young Kikuyu Association (later the Kikuyu Central Association, KCA), a group of Kenyan youth with mission educations who spoke out against governmental inequities toward Kenyan workers and farmers. In 1925, Kenyatta took up full-time political work and published a monthly newspaper, *Mwigwithanla*, with the aim of uniting the Kikuyu to regain control of their land.

In 1929, Kenyatta traveled to London as a representative of the KCA to voice the Kikuyu grievances to the British government. The colonial office ignored Kenyatta's protestations, but he remained in Europe and spent nearly two years traveling and meeting with liberal politicians. In 1931, Kenyatta returned to London to argue for Kikuyu rights, and this time Kenyatta's platform in favor of returning seized land and ceding equal representation to Kenyans was entertained by various committees, although only marginally and unofficially. Kenyatta briefly moved to Birmingham and attended classes at a Quaker college called Woodbrooke, before returning to London. From 1933 to 1936, Kenyatta worked in the Department of African Phonetics at University College, as well as teaching Kikuyu at the School of Oriental and African Languages. In 1936, Kenyatta attended the London School of Economics and earned a degree in anthropology. Expanding the anthropological work he had done on the Kikuyu, Kenyatta published it in the form a book, *Facing Mount Kenya*, in 1938.

Kenyatta began lecturing in anthropology in 1939, but with the outbreak of World War II, he moved to Sussex where he farmed, spoke to local groups about Kenya, and lived a quiet country life. The trials of war and suppression of the KCA resulted in the governmental effective silencing of the situation in Kenya for more than five years. In 1945, Kenyatta assisted in the organization of a pan-African congress in Manchester on which he sat as the representative of the KCA. The congress resulted in the formation of the Pan-African Federation that aspired to coordinate the independence movements that were ripening in the colonies. Realizing that his own power to effect

change in London was limited and placing hope in a unified African petition for human rights, Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946.

On his return to Kenya, Kenyatta worked with the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association, and, in 1947, he was elected president of the Kenya African Union (KAU), a group that united the various splintering factions of contemporary Kenyan politics. The political climate had grown dark by the time Kenyatta arrived home, with multiple special interest organizations acting on their own and isolating themselves from a larger community. Accommodating the incongruous demands of these parties was impossible, and Kenyatta submitted to maintaining partiality while trying to encourage positive social protest. In the end, Kenyatta was able to do little to persuade the masses, whose backgrounds and beliefs differed greatly, to adopt unified, non-violent, and democratic resistance.

As conditions worsened in Kenya, gangs resorted to vandalism, acts of terrorism against Europeans, and the murder of Africans who refused to take part or allegedly sympathized with the government. Kenyatta became an easy target for blame, as he was widely revered and still regarded as the leader of the Kikuyu. The rebellion came to a bloody climax in 1952 and on October 20, by decree of the governor, Kenyatta and close to 200 Kenyans were arrested under suspicion of their participation in the ongoing uprising known as Mau Mau. In 1953, Kenyatta was charged with organizing Mau Mau and, in a questionable trial, he and five Kikuyu leaders were sentenced to seven years in prison. Despite the arrests, Mau Mau continued in Kenya and the four years of conflict (1950–1954) resulted in more than 13,000 deaths, less than 1 percent of them European.

In 1961, Kenyatta was released from prison and quickly rose to the head of the Kenya African Nationalist Union (KANU). Kenya obtained official independence from Great Britain in 1963, at which time Kenyatta was elected prime minister in the country's first free general elections. Selecting ministers who would represent the multiple cultures couched within Kenya's borders, as well as the interests of the settlers who remained, Kenyatta focused on the unification of Kenya fractured populace in the first years of independence. He initially took many positive steps toward economic recovery and land reform, but he could not prevent the political dissidence that divided the KANU into two parties in 1966 and led to further divisions between people of different cultures. When violence broke out in



*Jomo Kenyatta, newly elected prime minister of Kenya, waves to supporters on June 19, 1963. (Library of Congress)*

1969 along party lines, Kenyatta banned the opposition party and imprisoned a number of its leaders, although this did not stop the feuding that would continue to shake the balance of Kenyan politics throughout Kenyatta's tenure. During the 1970s, Kenyatta promoted industrialization and foreign investments that led Kenya to rapidly expand and develop into a westernized nation. Kenyatta led Kenya until his death in 1978 and despite the turmoil that shrouded his term as prime minister, he is remembered as a great leader, a powerful orator, and an enduring voice for human rights. *See also:* African Imperialism; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Nkrumah, Kwame; Pan-Africanism

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## **Kerner Commission Report**

In the aftermath of the so-called long hot summer of 1967, the nation was convulsed by major outbreaks of racial violence in Newark, Detroit, Cleveland, and numerous smaller cities. The official response to the riots was President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Executive Order 11365, issued on July 29, 1967, which established a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Two days earlier, Johnson appointed the

11-member commission during a presidential address to the country. In essence, the commission would investigate civil disorders and would make recommendations to the president, Congress, governors, and mayors for implementing measures to help contain race riots in the future. After seven months of investigation, the commission completed and submitted a report on February 29, 1968 named after its chairman, Illinois governor and later federal judge Otto Kerner Jr. Kerner was, in many ways, a prototypical member of the commission. Like New York Mayor John Lindsay, vice chair of the commission, Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Kerner was a political moderate.

The Kerner Commission Report was issued as a 426-page book, which, ironically, became a national bestseller, with more than 2 million copies in print. Charged by Johnson to investigate what happened, why it happened, and what could be done to prevent it from happening again, the commission issued findings that were surprisingly progressive given the embrace of moderate political ideology

of most the its 11 members. According to the commission white racism was the cause of race riots between 1965 and 1967, and the country was becoming “two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” The Kerner Commission Report dispelled a number of myths embraced by President Johnson and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director J. Edgar Hoover. The principal misconception corrected by the Kerner Commission Report was that race riots were not the product of black extremists or white radicals. Instead, they were the result of a suffocating mix of high unemployment (and underemployment), chronic poverty, poor housing conditions, poor schools, lack of access to affordable health care, police brutality, and harassment faced by millions of African Americans living in inner cities. The formation of the racial ghetto, the Kerner Commission Report claimed, was the fault of white America and, as white America was a factor in its creation, whites were also responsible for the conditions that made race riots possible.

The Kerner Commission Report recommended fundamental changes in federal policy to ameliorate the oppressive



*Meeting of the Special Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission), at the White House on July 29, 1967. From left to right, Roy Wilkins, Governor Otto Kerner (Chairman), and President Lyndon B. Johnson. (Lyndon B. Johnson Museum and Library)*

conditions faced by African Americans. Specifically, the Commission called for federal initiatives directed at improving public services, schools, employment opportunities, and housing in predominantly African American inner-city neighborhoods. In addition, it called for a complete restructuring of the welfare system and for a national system of income supplementation that would address underemployment and single-parent households. By 1968, the political winds had shifted considerably. With the election of President Richard M. Nixon, many of the Kerner Commission Report's recommendations would be ignored or greatly delayed.

*See also:* Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Urban Ghetto; War on Poverty

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## King, Coretta Scott

Coretta Scott King (1927–2006) was the wife of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., an author, and a civil rights leader in her own right. Born on April 27, 1927, in Heiberger, Alabama, she was raised on a farm owned by her parents, Bernice McMurry Scott and Obadiah Scott. The second of three siblings, King's family was not wealthy despite her father's entrepreneurial spirit. Obadiah Scott owned a truck, ran a barbershop, owned a lumber mill, all while growing cotton on the family's own land. In the midst of the Great Depression, she and her siblings picked cotton to supplement the meager family income. As a school-age child, King walked five miles each day to attend the Cross-road School, a segregated, one-room school in neighboring Marion, Alabama. Owing to her parents' emphasis on education and King's own innate academic skills, she excelled in her studies, graduating from Lincoln High School

as class valedictorian in 1945. She entered Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio the following autumn on an academic scholarship. During her time as an undergraduate, she joined the Antioch chapter of the NAACP and the Race Relations and Civil Liberties Committees. After receiving word that the Yellow Springs school board would not allow her to do required practice teaching, she continued her education at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston with a scholarship to study concert singing.

Shortly after transferring to the New England Conservatory, King met Martin Luther King Jr. who, after his graduation from Morehouse College, was enrolled as a divinity student at Boston University. A year after their first meeting, the two were married on June 18, 1953. She completed her degree in voice and violin and moved with her husband in September 1954 to Montgomery, Alabama. Within a few short months of becoming pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, King and his wife became involved in the Montgomery bus boycott. Between 1955 and 1968, King would often be with her husband at the front lines of various struggles against segregation and injustice. The couple would have four children: Yolanda (b. 1955), Martin Luther III (b. 1957), Dexter (b. 1961), and Bernice (b. 1963). After her husband's assassination on April 4, 1968, King was involved in organizing a commemorative service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta every January 15 to mark his birth and honor his life. This commemoration was expanded to serve as the basis for calls for a national holiday. By Act of Congress, national observances of the holiday began in 1986. King also played a pivotal role in establishing the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, which opened its doors to the public in 1981.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, King was actively involved in a number of movements seeking equality, justice, and civil rights. She had been an ardent opponent of the apartheid regimes of South Africa, working tirelessly with Winnie Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) as well as politicians in the United States, including President Ronald Reagan, to combat the racist policies and denial of liberties to the black majority in the beleaguered nation. In addition to her opposition to apartheid, King was actively involved in addressing capital punishment; HIV/AIDS prevention; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights, and has been a staunch critic of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and various policies of President George W. Bush,

including the push to propose a marriage amendment. In honor of her continuing role as a voice for justice, she was awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize in 2004 by the government of India. After a lifetime of struggle, King's health began to fail in 2005 when she suffered a stroke and a mild heart attack. On January 30, 2006, King died at the age of 78 in Rosarito Beach, Mexico of complications from ovarian cancer. On November 20, 2006, her remains were laid to rest next to her husband's at the King Center in Atlanta.

See also: Antipartheid Movement; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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## King, Martin Luther Jr.

More than a civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1965) was the human symbol of the quest for racial integration in the United States. His emergence, notoriety, evolution, and demise paralleled that of the Civil Rights movement itself. He became the nation's preeminent spokesman for the strategy of nonviolent direct action, the dismantling of Jim Crow laws in the South, and the creation of a larger "beloved community." He negotiated between the push of political expediency and the pull of militant black activists, all the while combating enemies who perceived him as a dangerous radical. A complex man burdened by political responsibility and torn by personal temptation, he forged an evolving vision of social justice that transformed the American political landscape.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929, King was raised in relative privilege. His father was pastor at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, which served a middle-class clientele. The second of three children, Martin enjoyed a comfortable home life, material security, and the attention of a loving family. Of course, he periodically endured the indignities of segregation. He mostly thrived, however,

within the institutions of the black bourgeoisie, especially the church. A serious and moody child, Martin possessed erratic work habits but precocious intelligence. He graduated high school at 15 and attended Morehouse College, a training ground for Atlanta's young, elite African American men. Here he developed not only his mind, but also his taste for dandy clothes and pretty women. Before his senior year, less out of spiritual fire than professional resolve, he decided to follow his father's footsteps and enter the ministry.

King attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania from 1948 to 1951. At this tiny, liberal, predominantly white institution, he laid the deep and wide intellectual foundation that later informed his crusades for justice. He read the classics of Western philosophy, the key texts of Hinduism and Islam, and the writings of Mohandas Gandhi, whose campaign of nonviolent resistance fascinated King. He also questioned the liberal, optimistic belief in progress; influenced by Reinhold Neibuhr, he interpreted human nature as inherently sinful, and he believed that social change demanded not just reason but the stirring of passionate faith. From 1951 to 1953, King attended Boston University, from which he received his doctorate in theology in 1955. In Boston he met and romanced Coretta Scott, a student at the New England Conservatory of Music. They married in 1953. King also developed enthusiasm for Georg Hegel's notion of the dialectic, a theory of history that resonated with his capacity for absorbing and amalgamating opposing ideas into a useful whole. His intellectual talents, however, did not include original scholarship; his dissertation is rife with unattributed passages from other scholars' work.

In 1954, King took the pastorship at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, the site of his unlikely surge to national prominence. Dexter catered to a small congregation of black professionals, and King's early sermons had little political bent. But in December 1955, the Montgomery police arrested Rosa Parks, a dignified seamstress and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) secretary, for refusing to vacate her seat on the segregated city buses. The black leadership recognized the political opportunity, declared a bus boycott, and formed the Montgomery Improvement Association; they elected the 26-year-old King president only because he had avoided the rivalries among the older ministers. King soon displayed his oratorical gifts, stirring



a mass meeting to a fever pitch with an impassioned fusion of American democracy and Christian righteousness. He urged nonviolent protest, which not only placed the protestors on higher moral ground, but also engendered support from white liberals. For more than a year, Montgomery's black citizens walked and established carpools, and King endured unjustified arrests and a bombing of his home. The national media paid King and the boycott significant attention. In November 1956, the Supreme Court ruled Montgomery's bus segregation unconstitutional, and the next month King and his aides triumphantly boarded a bus and sat in front.

In the public mind, King had become the preeminent African American leader. His appearances inspired crowds of joyous hope. He met with President Dwight Eisenhower, sidestepped attacks by an insane black woman and a hateful member of the American Nazi Party, traveled to Ghana for its 1957 independence celebration, and toured India for a month to further absorb Gandhi's lessons. He founded and

led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a political network for civil rights activism.

With Roy Wilkins and A. Philip Randolph he led a 1957 mass meeting in Washington, D.C., known as the prayer pilgrimage, but it failed to attract much attention from the media or the federal government. King was struggling to give direction to this nascent movement. In 1959, he resigned from Dexter and based himself at SCLC headquarters in Atlanta. He had so far failed to inspire wide-scale grass roots activism or a political victory on par with Montgomery.

The student sit-in campaigns of 1960, starting in Greensboro, North Carolina, and spreading through much of the South, energized the Civil Rights movement. These protests of segregated public facilities awakened a generation of young black activists. They both needed King, because he already reigned as the spokesman of racial justice, and resented him, for they regarded nonviolent direct action as a temporary tactic rather than a bedrock element of faith. In April 1960, King spoke at the organizing meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). During the next year's Freedom Rides, when activists from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and SNCC encountered violence while desegregating bus terminals in the South, King again offered encouragement and political clout, but he declined to place himself on the dangerous frontlines of the Freedom Rides. "Where is your *body*?" asked the young activists. They wanted less moral support and more aggressive leadership.

King did face harassment, violence, and jail. In October 1960, he began a four-month sentence in an Atlanta prison on a trumped-up traffic violation. Here King's national stature proved critical. Republican Vice President Richard Nixon had been Dwight Eisenhower's point man on civil rights, and he had worked behind the scenes to get King released. But Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy, distant from black protestors and quiet on King's arrest, placed a concerned telephone call to Coretta. The Kennedy campaign publicized the gesture in black newspapers and in pamphlets distributed to black churches, helping deliver a close election over Nixon.

Yet the Kennedy administration resisted any alliance with King. Kennedy feared King's capacity to stir up disorder, and he first invited to the White House more established black leaders such as the NAACP's Roy Wilkins. Attorney general Robert Kennedy also sanctioned FBI surveillance



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Mathew Ahmann, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, in the Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963. (National Archives)*

of King and his associates. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, a Puritanical man with little sympathy for blacks, considered King a disloyal radical. King's trusted white adviser, Stanley Levison, moreover, once had financially supported the Communist Party. So Hoover's agents, who offered little protection to the civil rights demonstrators in the South, tapped the telephones of King and Levison. Hoover's obsessive hatred aside, the FBI tapes reveal nothing politically incriminating about King.

What the tapes (and other sources) do reveal is that King had his own flaws and weaknesses. He could be vain and pompous. In private, he offered the occasional crude comment. He enjoyed bawdy late-night drinking sessions and smoked cigarettes, although never in public. King also indulged in pleasures of the flesh. Sexual temptation followed him throughout his constant travels, and King did not resist. His sexual romps were not public knowledge, although friends warned him of the dangers to his image, and elements of the black community whispered rumors. J. Edgar Hoover regarded him a moral degenerate and maintained the FBI surveillance. Such behavior should reinforce that King was not a god but a human being. His transgressions, moreover, reinforced his own view of human nature. His private guilt over his sins may even have informed his public calls for self-discipline among African Americans by using nonviolent protest in the civil rights struggle.

In December 1961, King arrived in Albany, Georgia, at the behest of the Albany movement, a coalition of community civil rights groups. His involvement gradually escalated from a speech, to a protest march, to an arrest, and finally to a longer commitment for the city's desegregation. King brought media attention and SCLC resources to this civil rights campaign, but the Albany movement faltered. The NAACP fretted about militant SNCC tactics; local leaders resented the condescension of SCLC deputies; SNCC feared that King would leave Albany with a symbolic victory but little change to the substance of racial patterns. Police chief Laurie Pritchett also defused the demonstrators' tactics of moral theater by avoiding crude violence before television cameras and by arranging to jail demonstrators outside the city. King was arrested twice, but city leaders paid his fine and suspended his sentence, so that he could not become a media martyr. King left Albany in 1962 with his prestige bruised and with few public facilities desegregated.

The lessons of Albany, however, did inform the triumphant 1963 SCLC campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. The city's poisonous race relations were personified by the notorious commissioner of public safety, "Bull" Connor. Unlike in Albany, King and SCLC gave direction to the entire series of protests, and "Project C" began with specific targets: the desegregation of three downtown department stores, leading to broader desegregation, the hiring of blacks for city jobs, and the formation of a biracial council. They trained volunteers in nonviolent resistance and raised reserves of money. Through early April, SCLC held sit-ins, marches, and mass meetings. After a state court injunction barring further protests, King led another march and was arrested. His admirers noted that it was Good Friday.

While in prison, he read that liberal white clergymen had condemned his campaign for "extremism" from "outsiders." King's response, scribbled on scraps of paper with a smuggled-in pen and referred to as "Letter from Birmingham Jail," powerfully outlined King's basic philosophies. He defied state law, he wrote, because of a higher moral law. He rejected the plea that African Americans must be patient, arguing that freedom for the oppressed arrives only when the oppressed demand freedom. Nonviolent direct action, moreover, did not promote racial ill will so much as bring it to the surface. Finally, he cited history's great "extremists": exponents of Christian love such as Jesus Christ and Martin Luther, and symbols of American democracy such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. His disquisition slowly filtered into the American consciousness, but when King emerged from jail on Easter Sunday, Project C was floundering.

In May, SCLC began using children for their protest marches. Thousands poured from the 16th Street Baptist Church, singing freedom songs and clapping their hands. This sublime street theater invigorated Project C. Now, too, Bull Connor responded with violence, unleashing policemen on black demonstrators with billy clubs, electric cattle prods, attack dogs, and high-pressure fire hoses—images that circulated throughout the nation. The protesters maintained the demonstrations, pressuring the city's business community and gaining a settlement that met SCLC's original demands. Birmingham's violence continued, but a corner had been turned. Civil rights protests again spread throughout the South, and national attention focused on the plight of black southerners. President Kennedy now proposed a civil rights bill desegregating public

accommodations, calling it a “moral issue... as old as the Scriptures and as clear as the American Constitution.” King had pricked the nation’s conscience.

The momentum continued in late August with the March on Washington. An interracial throng of 250,000 congregated at the Lincoln Memorial to hear speeches from assorted civil rights, labor, and religious leaders on live television. King supplied the climax. He began his speech solemnly, with a measured pace, using the metaphor of a promissory note to recall the American government’s unfulfilled commitment to protect the constitutional rights of its black citizens. Then he summoned the preaching rhythms of his sermons at mass meetings. “I have a dream,” he declared, providing poetic examples of racial brotherhood. “Let freedom ring,” he intoned, not just in the South but throughout the nation. Only upon transcending the barriers of race and religion and region could the nation achieve true freedom. The “I Have a Dream” speech, beamed into America’s living rooms, proved an iconic moment in the nation’s history.

After Birmingham and the March on Washington, the nation’s racial fissure seemed to fill with a high tide of liberal goodwill, particularly washing over King. *Time* named him Man of the Year in 1963. In 1964, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. In June 1964, Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting the segregation of public facilities and backing it with significant enforcement mechanisms. Passage of the act depended not only on the political skills of new President Lyndon Johnson, but also on the climate of moral justice embodied by King.

Nevertheless, the barriers to racial peace stayed high, liberal optimism started to fizzle, and King could no longer embody any consensus of black political thought. SCLC’s 1964 campaign in St. Augustine, Florida, featured white mobs so vicious that any progress was impossible; only a King oration kept the city’s blacks from responding with violence in kind. For some activists, King had become too moderate. SNCC members mocked him as “De Lawd” for his preachy ego. When the interracial Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party tried to obtain delegate seats at the 1964 Democratic Convention, King urged acceptance of a compromise proposal, alienating him from militants. The ultimate converse to King, of course, was Malcolm X, both before and after his 1964 exile from the Nation of Islam. The fiery leader countered King’s values of nonviolence and integration with calls for eye-for-an-eye justice and black nationalism.

In 1965, King and SCLC came to Selma, Alabama. The campaign illustrated the forces buffeting King. President Johnson urged patience as the Civil Rights Act went into effect. Not wishing to antagonize Johnson, King left for Atlanta in early March, before a planned march to the state capital of Montgomery. The march began without him, and television cameras captured the brutal violence on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, as the Selma police turned back the marchers with clubs and tear gas. King returned to Selma. By accepting Johnson’s compromise to halt a second march upon reaching the bridge, he angered SNCC and other civil rights supporters.

The Selma campaign nevertheless succeeded. The violent police response led Johnson to propose a voting rights bill on national television, capped by the phrase “We shall overcome.” The march to Montgomery was accomplished with the protection of federal marshals. And in August Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, eliminating the procedures that had long disfranchised most southern blacks. Along with the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act transformed the South, finally allowing African Americans access to the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

As King realized, however, the road to racial equality only began with these basic rights. In ghetto neighborhoods outside the South, African Americans faced police harassment, possessed little political power, lived in substandard public housing, and suffered the economic and social dislocations of poverty. So King expanded his vision, visiting Chicago in 1965 and launching a campaign for open housing in 1966. Leading protest marches and lobbying city leaders for the elimination of de facto housing segregation, King faced resistance as stiff as that in the South. The ills of the ghetto also demanded more radical solutions than King could muster. He had developed a reputation as a black messiah, generating unfair expectations. When he failed, as in Chicago, his followers were disillusioned. Meanwhile, the political winds of African American protest drifted from King’s core values of nonviolence and integration. During a June 1966 march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, King remained a folk hero, revered by the black masses. But when Stokely Carmichael of SNCC called for “black power,” black activists cheered the messages of self-defense and rejection of white liberal support.

King’s own call for social justice evolved and broadened. By 1967, he was an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War. He called for a “revolution of values” in the United

States that transcended the greed governing American involvement in Vietnam. His stance alienated many liberals and infuriated Lyndon Johnson, but King, sailing beyond the political mainstream, upheld his Christian principles. In 1967, King also announced an interracial crusade called the Poor People's Campaign. The movement would be highlighted by an encampment on the Washington Mall, designed to force the federal government to more deeply address the concerns of the American poor. Some of the SCLC staff doubted the political wisdom of such a radical call, but again King forged beyond the boundaries of liberal reform.

In March 1968, in the midst of planning the Poor People's Campaign and again guided by his swelling cry for economic justice, King arrived in Memphis to lend support to striking sanitation workers. During an April 3 speech, King predicted that he might not arrive at the "Promised Land" with everyone else. Typically, he suggested his own impending martyrdom. This time he was right. The next day, stepping onto his motel balcony, King was struck by an assassin's bullet and died. A political era seemed to perish with him. His death sparked 130 separate instances of racial violence, leading to the deaths of 46 people. That summer's Poor People's Campaign, led by King lieutenant Ralph Abernathy, suffered from disorganization and ended in failure. His vision of a beloved community seemed a distant memory.

Martin Luther King's spirit, however, still courses through the veins of the nation. Within his own time, King had become the public face for an entire movement, and he represented the ideals of racial brotherhood and Christian love. His leadership was integral to generating the federal legislation that reconfigured the South. His icon proved important for injecting African Americans into the larger national consciousness. His conscience prodded political complacency as the movement's goals changed. And his legacy continues to inform how we view the Civil Rights era, both its triumphs and its tragedies. In 1986, King's birthday became a federal holiday. That gesture recognizes not only the man, but the ideals that he embodied.

See also: Abernathy, Ralph David; Affirmative Action; Baker, Ella; COINTELPRO; King, Coretta Scott; March on Washington, 1963; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Poor People's Campaign; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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## Korean War (Black Participation in)

The Korean War was the catalyst for the racial integration of the United States Armed Forces. Whereas the African American community openly protested racism and pressed for civil rights during World War II, it was more reluctant to criticize American foreign policy and race politics during the Korean War.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S Truman issued Executive Order 9981 with the intent to establish equal treatment and opportunity in the armed services for peoples of any race, color, religion, or national origin. The Committee on the Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces, established by this order, reviewed the racial situation within the armed forces and pushed for the implementation of racial integration with the secretary of defense and the service secretaries. The upcoming presidential election, pressure from civil rights groups, and international attention

compelled Truman to act. Truman hoped to gain the support of blacks, both in the election and in the struggle against communism. He also wanted the promise of equality in the military to improve America's international civil rights record, which played a vital role in the cold war conflict.

The navy and the air force were initially more open to integration than the army, which argued that integration threatened national security. The advent of the Korean War in June 1950, however, revealed the urgent necessity of racial integration of the military and accelerated its implementation. As a result of the growing need for combat troops, the military, in particular the army, soon realized that segregation endangered combat readiness and the war's ultimate success. It proved inefficient and ineffective to continue training and using soldiers in segregated units and on segregated posts. The numbers of African Americans entering the army increased rapidly, so that the all-black units could no longer absorb all black enlistees. The white units, however, especially on the front line, were in

dire need of new recruits. The military eventually began to integrate African Americans on posts and in combat units. Military integration increased morale for black and white soldiers alike. Military performance improved and the troops became more effective.

During the three-year war, at least 600,000 African Americans served and about 3,200 died in action. The African American community welcomed the integration of the armed forces in the Korean War, observing its progress and criticizing its flaws. As in preceding wars, many African Americans believed that black military service and participation in the war would help improve the status of their race and propel them toward full equality. The majority of the black press celebrated the performance of African Americans in the war and showcased it as proof of the patriotic dedication of the black community and the untenability of the argument of white racial superiority.

In 1954, the military declared that the armed forces were officially desegregated. This was certainly not the case



*Men from the 24th Infantry Regiment, the U.S. Army's first all-black unit, move up to the firing line in Korea on July 18, 1950. (National Archives)*

on all levels. Furthermore, this assertion did not solve the problem of continuing racism within the military. Race still played an important role in assessing, sometimes unfairly, the performance of African Americans. Nevertheless, with military desegregation and the Korean War, a microcosm and rather conservative force of American society was fundamentally altered.

On the home front, the Korean War amplified the anticommunist hysteria and McCarthyism. Critics, whether affiliated with communism or not, were monitored, restricted, and chastised. The fear of McCarthyism and the pressure of Cold War conformity were omnipresent. These developments negatively affected the African American quest for civil rights by reducing Truman's civil rights activism and by stifling more radical forms of activism that had proved so powerful during the World War II. The Civil Rights movement felt pressured to limit its more radical mass movement activism and its affiliation to left-wing groups.

The majority of the African American Civil Rights movement backed the government's anticommunist quest and initially the Korean War effort. It often relied on Cold War rhetoric to solicit civil rights and assess the events in Southeast Asia. The integration of the armed forces furthered their support for the war. Many viewed the war as a necessary and appropriate tool against the spread of communism and, as such, believed that African Americans should participate.

The African American attitude toward the Korean War shifted between support for and criticism of the American "police action" because of its latent racist underpinnings. Only a minority of African Americans, however, dared openly oppose the seemingly pervasive anticommunist consensus. Black dissenters were enraged by being denied equal rights at home while being recruited to fight for democracy that did not exist for them in the United States. Those who dared to speak up were assigned the devastating label of "communist sympathizers" and were thereby discredited and silenced. Leading antiwar African American activists, like Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois, were chastised for their open protest of the war.

See also: Cold War and Civil Rights; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Jim Crow; Robeson, Paul

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## Ku Klux Klan

During Reconstruction (1866–1877), agents of the Democratic Party revived the tradition of pre-Civil War regulators and slave patrols to create paramilitary vigilante groups. These secretive ritual fraternities, quickly subsumed under the label Ku Klux Klan, endeavored to counter the Freedman's Bureau, destroy the Republican Party infrastructure, reestablish control over black labor, and restore racial subordination in all aspects of Southern political, economic, and social life. Klansmen murdered thousands and terrorized tens of thousands of prominent Republicans, merchants who bought from and sold to freedmen, landowners who rented land to freemen, independent black farmers and railway workers, and indeed, any black person who breached the code of social deference.

Conflating sexual fear and partisan politics, Klansmen posed as chivalrous avengers of victimized white womanhood, their chosen symbol of the white South. They asserted their own racial privileges by forcing Republicans to engage in sexual acts, raping black women, and sexually mutilating black men. Although localized and lacking synchronization, Klan violence, including uncounted whippings, beatings and rapes, murders, and massacres played a major role in disarming black militia and preventing black voting in at least eight states.

Republican parties were destroyed at the local level and in many cities, while Georgia and Louisiana succumbed to

white supremacy. The Republican-controlled Congress responded with a series of Enforcement Acts that broke the Klan in 1872, but by that time the terrorists had served their purpose. After 1873, when Congress defeated the anti-Klan Enforcement Act and the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments did not protect violations of civil rights by private parties, remaining Reconstruction governments steadily collapsed before white paramilitaries and mob intimidation. Although other paramilitary groups such as Mississippi's "whitecappers" sprung up in the mid-1890s and mid-1900s, lynching and the legal system maintained a rigid caste system in the South for the next four decades.

During this period, American history textbooks lauded Klansmen as heroes who had redeemed the South from a

corrupt regime. Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel *The Klansmen* popularized this view, portraying Klansmen as latter-day Galahads who had resorted to violence only under extreme provocation. Using revolutionary cinematic techniques, D. W. Griffith adapted the novel for his 1915 epic film *The Birth of a Nation*. The film portrayed freedmen as beasts who dragged Southern society into anarchy. In the climactic scene, mounted Klansmen rode in to save the white heroine from rape, to castrate and lynch her African American assailant, and to redeem the South by ending fratricide among white men and reuniting the nation.

The film inspired circuit-riding minister and fraternal organizer Col. William Simmons to revive the Klan and combat modern sexuality, slackers, and aliens. The Second Klan was confined to Georgia and Alabama until 1920,



Members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) burn a cross in Swainsboro, Georgia, on February 4, 1948. (Library of Congress)

when Simmons employed anti-Saloon League veteran and tenement activist Elizabeth Tyler and her companion in the Southern Publicity Association, Edward Clarke. The two agents used modern advertising and mass marketing techniques to study local communities, identify the political and social concerns of conservative Protestants, and employ recruiters to offer membership in the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Although strongest in the upper Midwest and West, the secret fraternal order quickly spread across the nation. By the mid-1920s, the Second Klan had become a predominantly urban, mainstream social movement of 4 million members that represented a cross section of white Protestant denominations and social classes. In the context of the time, these Klansmen were no more reactionary, racist, ethnocentric, religiously bigoted, or socially alienated than the general white Protestant population. Klansmen propounded anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic nativism, especially in the North and West, but black migration to urban areas also created small-business, employment, and housing competition, posing a direct challenge to conservative conceptions of America as an Anglo Saxon Protestant nation.

Racist ideology was central for the smaller Klan units that engaged in vigilante violence against blacks in the South. Here Klansmen also assaulted whites for a variety of moral offenses, but terrorized blacks for voting, owning property, or defending themselves against white violence. Armed supporters of Mary McLeod Bethune stood down a squad of Klansmen in Daytona, Florida during the 1920 election, but six blacks and two whites were killed in the central Florida town of Ocee during a mob attack on black voters. Three years later, Klansmen joined a mob of 250 whites that destroyed Rosewood, a mostly black town in Levy County and, according to survivors, killed 40 black residents. Sexual scandals and the failure to enforce Prohibition led to decline after 1925, but Klan activity never disappeared in parts of the South. Where racist rhetoric remained apocalyptic, Klansmen used extralegal coercion, lynching, flogging with rawhide straps, and other forms of vigilante violence to terrorize and murder African Americans. As economic destitution, unionization, and New Deal programs combined to undermine white supremacy during the 1930s, Klansmen fused racism with anticommunism to prevent black men from entering the skilled trades. In Alabama and Georgia, urban police, rural sheriffs, and Klansmen worked together to terrorize labor organizers in

the steel plants and cotton fields. In Florida, the Tampa seaman's union and the United Citrus workers were attacked. Klan vigilantes also flogged and murdered union organizers in cities such as Dallas and Atlanta.

World War II provided a new context, as black veterans spearheaded the Double Victory campaign. The largest Klan was concentrated in Georgia, but Klans also grew in Alabama, Florida, and North Carolina. Despite the tireless efforts of anti-Klan activists such as Stetson Kennedy to mobilize the Justice Department against them, Klan terrorists responded to African American activism with arson and dynamite, targeting black businesses, homes, and churches in the 1940s and early 1950s. Florida Klansmen dynamited integrated housing projects and murdered two black men in 1951. On Christmas Eve, Klansmen and police assassinated Florida NAACP activist Harry Moore and his wife, detonating a bomb they had planted in their bedsprings. Federal authorities managed to convict only three Klansmen on perjury counts, and Moore's murderers walked free. Klansmen terrorized Dade County landowner Mamie Clay and flogged a group of her friends whom police had arrested and turned over to them; however, federal authorities convicted a sheriff on civil rights violations. Federal and state prosecutions were also very successful in the Carolinas in 1953, where scores of Klansmen, including a police chief, had engaged in a two-year campaign of cross-border terror.

Implementation of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in the border states led to the organization of Citizens' Councils by middle-class whites throughout the South. The ultimate failure of massive resistance, however, turned people toward the Klan. Alabama Klansmen bombed black homes and churches in Montgomery and abducted and castrated black handyman Edward Aaron near Birmingham. During a 15-month period in 1957–1958, 46 bombs exploded at black and Jewish institutions in Miami, Jacksonville, Nashville, and Atlanta. In the Deep South, the politics of massive resistance retreated in the face of accelerating direct action protests after 1960. The beginning of token school desegregation, combined with federal enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act, spurred tens of thousands of lower-middle class and working class whites to join Klans in the urban and Piedmont South. Vigilantes were often sponsored by local police: Birmingham police gave Klansmen full license to beat the Freedom Riders in 1961,



a sheriff deputized the Klansmen who led violent counter-demonstrations in St. Augustine Florida during 1963–1964, and the city government sponsored the Bogalusa, Louisiana Klan, which harassed demonstrators in 1965.

Klan violence also grew more lethal in the 1960s. In September 1963, Klansmen planted a massive bomb beneath the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham Alabama. It exploded during Sunday church services, killing three little girls. In 1964, Georgia Klansmen killed black serviceman Lemuel Penn. In Mississippi 35 shootings, 30 bombings, 35 church burnings, 80 beatings, and at least 6 racially motivated murders took place during the first eight months of 1964. Fourteen died in civil rights-related killings that year and four more murders were perpetrated in 1965. Victims included two black teenagers and three civil rights workers who were murdered by police and Klansmen near Meridian during Freedom Summer. In 1967, Mississippi Klansmen killed Vernon Dahmer with a firebomb, the same method that had been used against Frank Morris in Ferriday Louisiana three years earlier. In rural Louisiana, a black self-defense force called the Deacons for Defense and Justice protected civil rights workers from white mobs and engaged in gun battles on nightriders, but Louisiana Klansmen killed pioneer Sheriff's Deputy O'Neal Moore. During the Selma to Montgomery march, Alabama Klansmen shot and killed civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo as an FBI informant made mental notes. The Klansmen who killed Penn, Dahmer, Liuzzo, and the three civil rights workers near Meridian were all convicted in federal court during the 1960s. One Klansmen was convicted of murder in the Birmingham church bombing in 1977, and a handful of others have been convicted between the 1990s and the opening decade of the 21st century. Yet the killers of Morris, Moore, and a number of other victims may never see a court of law.

Between 1964 and 1971, media -exposure, selective enforcement of local law, tax audits, and a FBI covert action program finally neutralized Klan violence. Klan membership declined to a few thousand, as white supremacy slowly changed from being an integral part of Southern life into an extremist ideology. Klans revived in the rural South during the late 1970s and attacked civil rights activists with weapons on a number of occasions. On November 3, 1979, a group of Klansmen and neo-Nazis, led by a police informant, fired on an interracial group of anti-Klan protesters in North Carolina, killing five. Despite television footage of the methodical killings, all were acquitted. In 1987, the

Southern Poverty Law Center won a multimillion-dollar suit on behalf of the mother of Michael Donald, murdered by members of the United Klans of America, destroying the largest Klan organization in the country. By then, racists were joining neo-Nazi, skinhead, or Christian Identity groupings, and the Klans had splintered into a myriad of tiny groups. In general, however, as society changed around it, white supremacists lost touch with the mainstream. Although racists continue to commit racist murders, such as the brutal lynching of James Byrd Jr., in Jasper Texas in 1998, they are prosecuted and convicted by outraged jurors. The overwhelming majority of Americans today roundly condemn both white supremacist ideology and racist violence. *See also:* Fifteenth Amendment; Fourteenth Amendment; Lynching; *The Birth of a Nation*; White Citizens' Council; White Mob Violence; White Supremacy

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### Lawson, James

A founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), James Morris Lawson Jr. (1921–) participated in many of the significant civil rights initiatives

of the 1960s including the Nashville sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, and the Memphis sanitation strike. Born on September 22, 1928, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania to the Reverend James M. Lawson Sr. and Philane Cover, Lawson grew up in Massillon, Ohio, where his father was pastor of a Methodist church. After graduating high school, Lawson studied sociology at Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio. While at Baldwin Wallace, he received notice to report for military service. Because he was a committed pacifist, Lawson refused to serve. As a result he was convicted of draft evasion and sentenced to two years in prison. Lawson returned to Baldwin Wallace after serving 13 months of his sentence to finish his sociology degree.

After graduation, Lawson traveled to India as a missionary for the Methodist Church. While in India he was exposed to the nonviolent teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi. As Lawson studied nonviolence, the philosophy was being applied in the American South by Martin Luther King Jr. in the Montgomery bus boycott. When he returned to the United States, Lawson met with King while he was a student at Oberlin College's school of theology. Profoundly moved by the struggle to dismantle segregation in the South, Lawson was determined to play a role in it. He was appointed southern regional director for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), an organization devoted to nonviolence.

After one year of study at Oberlin College, he enrolled in Nashville's Vanderbilt Divinity School. While in Nashville, Lawson married Dorothy Wood and they had three sons: John, Morris, and Seth. In addition to his position with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Lawson was also appointed projects director for the Nashville chapter of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In these roles he conducted workshops on Christian nonviolence for students from Nashville's African American colleges: American Baptist, Fisk, Meharry Medical, and Tennessee A&I.

Several of Lawson's students, inspired by his commitment to nonviolence, launched sit-in demonstrations at several downtown Nashville lunch counters on February 13, 1960. The demonstrations continued until May 10, when government and businesses leaders agreed to desegregate downtown stores. Lawson's leadership during the Nashville sit-ins made him one of the leading civil rights figures in the American South. But there was a cost. Angered over Lawson's leadership of the sit-ins, Vanderbilt

Chancellor Harvie Branscomb expelled him in March 1960. Undeterred, Lawson completed his divinity degree at Boston University and continued to spread the gospel of Christian nonviolence.

As the Nashville sit-ins reached their climax, Lawson traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina's Shaw University in April 1960 to attend a gathering of students committed to the civil rights struggle. At this meeting SNCC was formed to expand civil disobedience throughout the South. In May 1961 the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) adopted nonviolence with its Freedom Ride demonstrations. The rides were designed to pressure President John F. Kennedy and the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce a 1960 Supreme Court declaring segregated bus terminals unconstitutional. When demonstrators were attacked by an angry white mob in Montgomery, Alabama, Lawson joined the effort. Boarding a bus at Montgomery, Lawson and several other Nashville sit-in veterans journeyed to Jackson, Mississippi where they were arrested and sentenced to 30 days in the state penitentiary at Parchman. When Lawson was released from prison, he returned to divinity school in Boston.

After graduation from Boston University, Lawson was appointed pastor of Scott Church in Shelbyville, Tennessee, and in 1962 he was assigned to Centenary Methodist in Memphis. Although the elimination of racism and segregation was Lawson's primary focus, he did look beyond the struggle in the South. The Memphis pastor also expanded his promotion of Christian nonviolence to include the controversial war in Vietnam. In 1965, he traveled to Southeast Asia as a representative of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Clergymen's Emergency Committee on Vietnam. While in Southeast Asia the committee met with a cross section of people including students, U.S. and South Vietnamese government leaders, North Vietnamese soldiers, and labor leaders. Upon their return Lawson and the other committee members issued a report calling on the United Nations to intervene in the conflict to bring peace to the region. Although Lawson remained concerned about the war in Vietnam, events in Memphis led him to again confront American racism.

In February 1968, sanitation workers, poorly paid and forced to endure unsafe conditions, spontaneously walked off the job. When Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb refused to negotiate, the strike became much more than a labor dispute. Because workers were predominately African

American and desperately poor, Lawson joined their struggle and emerged as the most eloquent civil rights leader in Memphis. Drawing on his involvement in SNCC, Lawson and other leaders formed the Committee on the Move to Equality (COME). Lawson extended an invitation to Dr. King to speak in Memphis, which led to King's death in April 1968. Lawson continued to agitate for social change in Memphis until he moved to Los Angeles in 1974 to pastor Holman United Methodist Church. In 1982, he chaired the Peace Sunday Movement, which staged a large demonstration at the Rose Bowl. Lawson retired from the pulpit in 1999 but remains one of America's most eloquent leaders in the ongoing struggle to achieve social progress by just and peaceful means.

*See also:* CORE; Freedom Rides; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Lewis, John; Nash, Diane; Sit-In Movement; Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Gerald Wayne Dowdy

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## League of Revolutionary Black Workers

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers was officially launched in Detroit, Michigan in October 1967 after the Detroit Rebellion of that same year. It was the final outcome of a combination of independent black industrial labor-related movements in the Detroit metropolitan area. The league grew as a result of the United Auto Workers (UAW) failure to address the racist and inhumane working conditions of black people employed in Detroit's manufacturing sector. It consisted of radical, prolific blue-collar black workers with strong organizational skills. Historic and heroic struggles of black people provided the movement's strengths, inspiration was garnered by the revolutionary struggles of the developing world, and their convictions were guided by a

Marxist-Leninist ideology. The league's goal was to unify black workers across Detroit.

In the 1960s, the UAW began to lose touch with minority members whose weekly organizational fees were deducted from their wages, although they had little representation on the organization's board of directors. Black workers held the view that the UAW was racist, oppressive, and not representative of their needs. The league developed out of the frustration of black workers who grew weary of the UAW's failure to meet their demands about improving their working conditions. Their demands were not unfounded, as the historical record reveals factory owner's productivity strategies that center on forced labor of black workers to work harder and faster in unsafe and unhealthy conditions. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, conditions at the plants continued to deteriorate. Management hid these problems from outsiders, projecting plant life as harmonious and well paid. Unions were often loosely organized and too polarized to project to outsider a real picture of what was actually happening in the plants. The league arose in response to these conditions.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers united radical black organizing activists in Detroit's factories, neighborhoods, high schools, and colleges and university campuses against the horrendous racially charged circumstances that dominated life for black workers in the 1960s and 1970s. Revolutionary Union Movements (RUMs), built by ordinary black workers from Detroit's auto factories were at the heart of the league. The RUMs effectively organized black workers to resist the racist and exploitive conditions in these factories and within the white-dominated UAW that officially represented the workers.

General Gordon Baker, John Watson, John Williams, Luke Tripp, Kenneth Cockrel, Mike Hamlin, and Chuck Wooten sat on the league's seven-man executive committee. Hamlin, Watson, and Cockrel held leadership positions and provided different but equal strengths to the mission of the organization. Hamlin embodied the stance that favored community building and student support, which enabled the league to carry out demonstrations when court injunctions stopped workers from protesting. Watson advocated the power of and need for an independent newspaper that would educate the public and challenge the ruling elite's power structure. In 1967, he actualized his vision through his editorial position on Wayne State University's student paper the *South End*. Watson used the paper as a political arm for all

radical revolutionary groups throughout the Detroit metropolitan area. He supported the equal publication of all views, and the paper was widely distributed to segments outside the university, including automobile factories. Cockrel provided legal expertise; he served the league by filing for a nonprofit status and keeping league activities within the law to avoid convictions from criminal and civil actions. The league's awareness of the reality of this aspect of organizing is how they differed from the Black Panther Party.

In 1971, the league began to take a different form and merged with the Black Workers Congress whose manifesto centered on worker's rights, worker's demands, the elimination of racism, the liberation of women, and foreign policy questions. The Black Workers Congress had a strong beginning but petered out, as it was unable to put its ideology into practice and spent the majority of its time in meetings and setting up, but not applying, potential agendas. Eventually, the former members of the league dropped out and formed the Communist League, which advocated a multi-racial communist party based on the writings of Lenin and Marx. It accepted whites and all people from the developing world and emphasized the role of industrial workers and professional revolutionaries.

The legacy of the League of Revolutionary Workers is extensive. Despite repression from the joined forces of Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, the UAW, and Detroit and suburban police departments, it distributed mass circulation newspapers and plant bulletins, organized pickets and rallies, formed community and student groups, ran opposition union candidates, and led wildcat strikes that successfully shut down production. In these ways the league is responsible for building the last sustained mass revolutionary unions in the United States.

See also: Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1967

Jill E. Rowe-Adjibogoun

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## Lee, Spike

Shelton Jackson Lee (1957–), or “Spike” Lee, is best known for his popular black films like *Do the Right Thing*, *Jungle Fever*, and *Mo' Better Blues*. Affectionately terming his films “Spike Lee Joints,” much of Lee's work primarily consists of race films like his *Bamboozled* and *Get on the Bus* that have been produced by Lee's own company, 40 Acres & a Mule Filmworks. In addition to these, Lee's impressive filmography includes more than 45 film credits as director, and more than 70 film credits overall, serving as producer or writer in other films such as *Drop Squad* and *Tales from the 'Hood*. Moreover, in addition to his specifically black films, Lee's filmography also include mainstream motion pictures like *25th Hour* and *Inside Man* as well as a host of documentaries exploring sports figures like *Jim Brown: All American* and historical figures such as *A Huey P. Newton Story*.

As a director, Spike Lee is best known for his unique stylistic elements, which include signature close-up shots, repetition, and montage just to name a few. Spike Lee joints are typically identified by the number of scenes with the actor and camera both placed on a dolly, such as Pierre Delacroix's circular motion that introduces the plot of *Bamboozled* or his use of montage to advance the story of “Indigo” and “Clark” confronting a cheating “Bleak Gil- liam” in *Mo' Better Blues*. Also, the small cadre of black actors including Denzel Washington, his sister Joie Lee, and Delroy Lindo help to distinguish a Spike Lee film when they are all cast together. And last, the regular practice of casting his own part in the film is another Spike Lee feature that began with his first film. Much of Lee's unique style and critical acclaim began with *She's Gotta Have It*, which was noted both for the film itself, as well as for Lee's part as “Mars Blackmon.” Shot at one location in black and white, and edited in Lee's own apartment, *She's Gotta Have It* was made with only \$175,000 and in 12 days but went on to gross over \$7 million in box office receipts. Many of the elements first attempted in *She's Gotta Have It* have since



Film director Spike Lee. (Onestepbeyond70/Dreamstime)

been refined and now continue to punctuate Lee's larger body of work.

Over the course of Lee's career, the reception of his brand of filmmaking has oscillated between controversial and celebratory, garnering much debate for his depiction of women (in films like *Girl 6*) while also hailed for its ability to represent communities of African Americans through popular cinema. His heavy-handed artistic touch makes films like *Malcolm X* an important piece for scholars of black film because of its mixed reception—critiqued by some for its historical inaccuracy, but also applauded as an artistic endeavor heavily supported by black celebrities like Janet Jackson and Michael Jordan who funded its completion. Lee's style and politics almost force a commitment to his vision that not only congeals his films into a single body of work across film genres, but also compel his fervor to finance his own films.

Viewers of Lee's work will also find pieces of the director's own biography dispersed throughout the films, and across characters in a single film. So Spike Lee's life story beginning with his birth in Atlanta Georgia on March 20, 1957 to Bill Lee, a jazz musician, and Jacquelyn Lee, a schoolteacher, is signaled in the parents of "Bleek Gilliam" in *Mo' Better Blues*. And although Lee moved to Brooklyn, New York, during adolescence to complete his secondary education before returning to Atlanta for college, the

significance of Brooklyn as a backdrop is iterated across his entire body of work. Lee even found a fictional place for the actual loss of his mother on screen, by interspersing the story of migration between New York and Atlanta with the story of a family losing its matriarch in *Crooklyn*. Lee's filmic portrayal of the historically black college experience retold through *School Daze* also speaks to his own choice to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and attend Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Developing his film interests in college, Lee quickly gained recognition for his talent. Upon completing a bachelor degree, he went on to New York University film school where he made award-winning films "the Answer" to D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* and *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barber-shop: We Cut Heads* as a graduate student. Since then Lee has firmly established himself as a noted black filmmaker. Although he has yet to receive an Academy Award, he has been recognized with a nomination for best documentary for his film *Four Little Girls*, while his *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* went on to win the Human Rights Film Award and the Venice Horizons Documentary Award at the 2006 Venice Film Festival.

See also: Bombingham; Million Man March; *The Birth of a Nation*; X, Malcolm

Jasmine Nichole Cobb

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### Lewis, John

John Lewis (1940–) was a student leader in the Civil Rights movement, serving as chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from 1963 to 1966. Lewis was born on February 21, 1940, in rural Alabama, one of 10 children. His parents were poor sharecroppers who managed to buy their own small farm when Lewis was four. As

a boy, he made his playmates listen to impromptu sermons he gave, and he imagined becoming a pastor. As he grew older, he heard Martin Luther King's radio preaching, and at 16, Lewis's pastor allowed him to give his first sermon. He was in high school when the Montgomery bus boycott started.

In 1957, he went to American Baptist Theology (ABT) Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, a school that allowed students to work in exchange for tuition. He met James Bevel at ABT, another man who would emerge as a leader. The next year Lewis met James Lawson and began studying the principles of nonviolence with him. Nashville students began having regular workshops in preparation for non-violent actions protesting segregation in the future, which included role-playing sessions in which some students would pretend to be segregationists while others acted as protestors.

On February 1, 1960, four African American students sat at a whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Lewis and his peers had been preparing for a moment like this, and the Nashville sit-ins began February 13. Within a couple of weeks, protestors were being attacked and arrested. This movement was eventually successful, and Nashville's lunch counters were integrated. Following the spread of the sit-in movement throughout the South, students formed SNCC in April, and Lewis was a major organizer. In the wake of the sit-ins, northern universities began inviting Lewis and other leaders to speak about the movement.

In 1961, Lewis took part in the Freedom Rides, designed to test a Supreme Court ruling banning segregation on interstate buses. The interracial group of riders planned to board buses in Washington, D.C. and ride them to New Orleans. Lewis had to leave the original group early because of an obligation, but he returned to Nashville to organize additional riders to keep the rides going in light of the violence the original riders endured. Lewis left with a group from Nashville and faced a violent mob at Birmingham's terminal. When Lewis disembarked in Montgomery, he faced a worse situation, and mobs beat Lewis and other riders severely. Police arrested riders in Jackson, Mississippi; they were eventually sent to Parchman Prison. Hundreds of other students, witnessing these events, began following Lewis's path on buses throughout the South.

Lewis and his peers next turned their efforts to discrimination against African Americans in employment.

The Nashville Student Movement (NSM) picketed and boycotted Nashville stores that took African Americans' money but would not employ them. In the fall, Lewis enrolled at Fisk University and became chair of the NSM.

In June 1963, Lewis was elected as SNCC's Chair, and he moved to Atlanta to fulfill his duties. He thus was one of the "Big Six" civil rights leaders at the August 1963 March on Washington. Lewis also gave one of the speeches at the March, although other leaders pressured him to revise his speech because they thought it too inflammatory. He and his SNCC colleagues did so moments before the speech was to begin.

Lewis continued working on a variety of civil rights projects. Major ones included the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which would run a slate of African American candidates in that state, and Freedom Summer in 1964, which would bring hundreds of white volunteers from the North into Mississippi, well known as the most dangerous southern state for civil rights workers. In fact, on June 21, the day the first wave of volunteers began their journey South, three civil rights workers were murdered, one African American and two whites. The results of Lewis's and his colleagues' efforts in Mississippi were mixed: many African Americans registered to vote, but the Democratic Party refused to seat the MFDP's delegation at its August convention.

After Freedom Summer, SNCC faced increasing organizational problems. Because of its growth, it was becoming difficult for committee members to continue making decisions by consensus. In addition, more and more SNCC workers were becoming less attached to nonviolence as a tactic, whereas others, like Lewis, remained deeply committed to it as a philosophy. SNCC had projects in operation all over the South, and although Lewis tried to keep abreast of all of them, in January 1965, he turned his attention to voter registration in Selma, Alabama. This action involved potential voters marching to the courthouse and attempting to register, where they were refused entrance and often arrested or beaten.

In the wake of a protestor's death—police shot him in the stomach as he tried to protect his mother from a beating—Lewis and others organized a march from Selma to Montgomery. The day the march was to begin, March 7, is now known as "Bloody Sunday" because mounted police severely beat, stomped, and tear gassed protestors as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Lewis led the

marchers and was among the first to be beaten; he had to be hospitalized with a fractured skull.

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed, the already-simmering issues of African American separation and the rejection of nonviolence came to the fore within SNCC. In May 1966, at the end of SNCC's annual meeting, in this case a long, contentious, and emotion-filled one, SNCC elected the fiery Stokely Carmichael as chair, replacing Lewis. He remained with SNCC for a short time, leaving in the wake of controversy over the June Meredith March in Mississippi and the emergence of the black power slogan.

Since leaving SNCC, Lewis has most recently served as the U.S. Representative from Georgia's 5th District, representing Atlanta since 1986. Before becoming a member of Congress, he worked on the Voter Education Project in the South and then in the Carter administration as associate director of ACTION, which oversaw volunteer programs. He also served on Atlanta's City Council, taking office in 1982.

*See also:* Black Power; Bloody Sunday; Freedom Rides; Lawson, James; March on Washington, 1963; Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; Selma March; Sit-In Movement; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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## Little Rock Nine

In the battle for school integration, nine black students became heroes to civil rights supporters when they enrolled at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, for the 1957

school year. The “Little Rock Nine,” as the students were known, participated in one of the more famous integration conflicts, as white students and parents actively opposed their attempt to integrate the Little Rock school district. After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, in which the Supreme Court ruled segregation illegal in public schools, members of the Little Rock School Board began working on a plan for integration. After three years of deliberations and controversy, the board settled on a plan that would gradually integrate the district, beginning with high schools in the 1957–1958 school year. Initially, the board selected 17 black students to attend Central High, but by August, the number had dwindled to 9. A group of anti-integration Central High parents, called the Mother's League, sought a federal injunction to stop the school from integrating, but a judge refused their request. The students planned to enter the school for the first time on September 3, 1957.

Orval Faubus, the governor of Arkansas, had not been as militant in his opposition to integration as some of his southern counterparts, but he ultimately decided to oppose the integration of Central High. The night before the students were scheduled to attend school there, he addressed the state via television. Claiming to have received word that white supremacists were traveling to Little Rock to prevent the integration of Central High, he ordered troops from the Arkansas National Guard to prevent any black students from entering the school. The students did not attend class the first day of school, but Daisy Bates, an official with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), decided that the students should attempt to enter Central on September 4. The group planned to arrive at school together with Bates. Eight of the students did meet before school, but one student, Elizabeth Eckford, did not have a phone and was not aware of the plan. When the eight students arrived, they were shouted at and threatened by an angry mob of white segregationists. Members of the National Guard denied the students entrance into the school. Because of the violence, NAACP leaders decided to postpone integration until they could expect better conditions for the students.

Determined to enforce the orders of the federal courts, President Dwight Eisenhower arranged a meeting with Faubus. At the meeting, Faubus agreed to order National Guard troops to protect the students, but he later reneged on that promise. On September 20, a federal judge ruled that Governor Faubus could not legally use the Arkansas

National Guard to deny the students entrance into Central High. Although he expressed disappointment with the decision, Faubus accepted it and agreed not to send troops to the school. On September 23, the students planned to attend school. Before they arrived, another angry mob of white parents and segregation supporters gathered outside the school. They harassed and physically harmed several black reporters who were in Little Rock to cover the event. When the students arrived, the mob attacked them, shouting insults and threats. Although the students made it safely inside the building, by late morning the city police who were patrolling the school felt the mob was uncontrollable. Worried for the physical safety of the children if the mob overcame police barricades, school officials sent the students home out the back entrance of the school.

To ensure that the children could attend the school without threat of physical injury, President Eisenhower ordered the 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to protect the students. With the troops' assistance, the students were able to attend school safely. To make sure that the students were safe once inside the building, members of the 101st served as escorts for them. After several months, the 101st troops left, and the students had to fend for themselves. They faced consistent persecution from their fellow students, including threatening letters, harassing phone calls, and physical abuse. Despite the harassment, the black students continued to attend school. Eight of the nine students completed the school year. Minnijean Brown was suspended in December for responding to harassment by pouring her soup on two white boys. She was expelled during the spring semester for insulting white students. Ernest Green was the only senior of the group. In May, he became the first black graduate of Central High School. The following school year, Governor Faubus closed down Little Rock schools in an effort to avoid further integration. When courts ruled his act unconstitutional, the school district was forced to integrate for the 1959 school year. Jefferson Thomas and Carlotta Walls, two of the original "Little Rock Nine," were the only two black students assigned to Central High. The students' ordeal was another example of tenacious white resistance to integration. The actions of the "Little Rock Nine" ensured that, despite the resistance, Little Rock schools would eventually integrate.

See also: Bates, Daisy; *Brown v. Board of Education*; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967

The term "Long Hot Summer" is often applied to the riots occurring in the United States during the spring and summer months of 1965, 1966, and 1967. These violent disturbances often began in hot weather, often required the assistance of the National Guard, and caused much financial damage, many arrests, and many deaths. They helped to point out to the nation the discrimination still prevalent at the time, as well the reforms needed to heal a nation divided by race.

Part of understanding the Long Hot Summer Riots is understanding the effect of the Great Migration. From about 1890 until 1965, black Americans from the South migrated to northern cities. They were looking for opportunity and a better life. In the South, there was violence against blacks, lynchings, and Jim Crow laws (laws that limited the voting rights of black Americans). And the primarily agricultural-based economy of the South was in trouble: there was an attack of the boll weevil as well as a drought. The North offered opportunity, especially during World War I when European immigration declined and there was a growing need for laborers in northern factories and businesses.

Typical of other immigrants, these black Americans who migrated to the North congregated in neighborhoods—most often in the older, less desirable parts of inner cities. But unlike other immigrants, blacks were excluded from moving into better neighborhoods because of discriminatory practices. In fact, segregation by neighborhoods continued into the latter part of the 20th century. (The Fair Housing Act of 1968 legally put an end to these practices.)



Continued discrimination, overcrowding, high unemployment, and inadequate schools made these neighborhood potential powder kegs, especially if their populations were aware of news being reported by the media.

Although the media did report on continuing civil rights gains before to the period of 1965 through 1967, they also presented images of racism and violence. In 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till was lynched in Money, Mississippi, and pictures of his battered body appeared in *Jet* magazine. This was also the year of the highly publicized stance by Rosa Parks in Alabama. In 1957, media images showed federal troops in Little Rock as they enforced the desegregation of Central High School. In 1963, there were violent outbreaks in Savannah, Cambridge, Maryland, Philadelphia, Chicago, and especially in Birmingham, Alabama, where racists bombed a church, killing four little girls. In 1964, there were a number of disturbances and racially motivated murders: three civil rights leaders were lynched in Mississippi and law enforcement was implicated; blacks started using Molotov cocktails; a number of cities, including the New York neighborhoods of Harlem and Bedford Stuyvesant, had violent altercations. All of these events were reported in the media. Things were heating up.

Then, on August 11, 1965, in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in the middle of a summer heat wave, a simple incident ignited a major riot. A highway patrolman stopped a speeding black driver and arrested him for driving under the influence. A mob started to congregate and events escalated. Passing white motorists were dragged out of their cars and beaten; automobiles were overturned and set on fire. Eventually, the National Guard had to be called in to restore order. In all, 34 people were killed, nearly 4,000 people were arrested, and there was \$35 million in damages.

In the spring of 1966, emotions again flared in Watts, although not to the extent they had the previous year. But in July, Chicago exploded with rock-throwing and fire-bombing. Again it required the National Guard to quell the violence. Three people were killed by stray bullets and there were 533 arrests. Within weeks, violence requiring the National Guard also broke out in the Hough neighborhood of Cleveland. Later the same month, the courts had to ban demonstrations by white extremists in Baltimore, Maryland. In all, 43 different cities had racially violent events in 1966.

In 1967, nearly 150 cities had racial disturbances. Those in Detroit and Newark were major. But it seemed that just as a violent situation in one city began to calm, violence broke out in another, from Nashville (April 7), to Jackson, Mississippi (May 10), to Houston (May 16) to Tampa (June 11), to Cincinnati (June 12), to Atlanta (June 17).

Then in July 1967, the two worst riots of the summer broke out, the first in Newark, New Jersey. Lasting from July 14 to July 17, the riots in Newark began in the Central Ward and spread into the downtown area. In the end, there was \$10 million dollars in damage, 725 people injured, 1,500 arrested, and 23 people killed. The unemployment rate for black males between 16 and 19 was 37.8 percent, and there was a long history of perceived police brutality.

The Detroit riots began on July 23 and lasted for five days. The flash point for the violence was the arrests of 82 people who were at an after-hours bar celebrating the return of two Vietnam War veterans near the home of Danny Thomas, a Vietnam veteran who had been killed by a gang of white youths. The neighborhood became inflamed and the violence escalated. In the end, there was \$22 million dollars in damage, 1,189 people injured, and 43 people killed—the youngest was 4 years old and the oldest, 68—and 7,000 people arrested.

As a result of all the violence, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a Commission on Civil Disorder on July 28, 1967 to be chaired by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois. Their famous conclusion stated, “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal” (*The Kerner Report*, p. 1).

See also: Detroit, Michigan, Riot of 1967; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kerner Commission Report; Los Angeles, California, Riot of 1965; Urban Ghetto; Urbanization

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## Los Angeles, California, Riot 1965

The Los Angeles riot of 1965, also known as the Watts riot, or Watts rebellion, was one of the most explosive, racially charged civil disturbances of the 1960s. The riot began on August 11 when a white police officer, Lee W. Minikus, stopped Marquette Frye, a 21-year-old African American man, and Ronald Frye, his 22-year-old brother, for reckless driving. After Marquette, the driver, failed the standard Highway Patrol sobriety test, Minikus informed him that he was under arrest for drunk driving. Having arrived on a motorcycle with no way to take Marquette to jail, Minikus radioed for a police vehicle and a tow truck to remove the car from its location at 116th Street and Avalon Boulevard, a predominantly black neighborhood two blocks away from the Frye home in the Watts community.

After learning that Minikus would not release the car to him, Ronald went home to find his mother, hoping she could claim the vehicle and prevent impoundment. Mrs. Frye, Ronald, the tow truck, the patrol vehicle, and Minikus's motorcycle partner arrived simultaneously, as a growing number of residents and passers-by watched Marquette's arrest unfold. By this time, Minikus called in for more reinforcements as the number of onlookers quickly swelled from dozens to hundreds, intensifying tensions between the Frye family and the officers. These tensions erupted into violence within minutes when Mrs. Frye became enraged over the forcible arrest of Marquette. Witnesses grew increasingly more hostile, as Marquette, Ronald, and their mother fought with the arresting officers, leading to the subsequent arrest of the entire family. As the scene cleared, the crowd became irate, throwing bottles and rocks—even spitting—at officers, resulting in the arrests of two other African Americans who police alleged incited the crowd to violence.

Within hours of the arrests, rumors spread throughout the Watts community about police treatment of the Frye family, and those arrested from the crowd; chaos and rebellion ensued. A number of Watts community members engaged in violence and vandalism throughout the night and into the early hours of the morning. By the next day, police still failed to gain complete control over the pockets of disturbances erupting throughout Watts. Over the course of the next two days, local community activists, religious leaders, teachers, business owners, and the Los Angeles County

Human Relations Committee worked to prevent further outbreaks of violence and destruction, but their efforts were largely unsuccessful. Violence, looting, and destruction permeated the Watts community and some adjacent areas for the next few days.

In an attempt to restore peace, then Governor Pat Brown sent the National Guard to quell the unrest. The arrival of National Guardsmen, however, only served to heighten tensions and spread the destruction into south-east Los Angeles. Guardsmen found it difficult to control each incidence of rebellion; they also found it difficult to distinguish African American victims of the riot from African American participants, prolonging the riot's end. Lasting six days, the riot left 34 people dead, more than 900 seriously injured, and 4,000 arrested, as well as more than \$35 million in property damage and destruction.

To many white Americans, the rioting and destruction in Watts appeared to be a violent reaction to an isolated event. To others, the rioting was simply inexplicable, an unlawful and terrifying response to things of which they had no complete knowledge. Furthermore, media images and descriptions of African American rioters served to intensify already demonized perceptions of African Americans held by whites, who had little to no real contact with them. The Frye arrest symbolized much more for many of the residents of Watts, and rioting represented a dramatic solution to deeply rooted problems within the African American community that both the local and federal government ignored for decades.

When the rioting ended, Governor Brown enlisted the help of a government panel, the McCone Commission, to find reasons why the Watts community exploded as it had, and to provide details on what exactly occurred during the days of unrest. The McCone Commission, led by former CIA director John McCone, released a comprehensive report—*Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning?*—in December 1965 detailing their findings on the revolt, and pointing to several of its underlying determinants. The commission concluded that unemployment, underemployment, inadequate schooling, and a tense relationship between the Los Angeles Police Department and African American residents all contributed to the unfolding of the Watts riot. They also maintained that the presence and illegal activities of African American gangs and petty criminals were other important mitigating factors in the six-day rebellion.

Although the McCone Commission arrived at many accurate conclusions, in a sense, they were obvious, particularly to those living in African American communities in and around Los Angeles. Moreover, implicit and explicit prejudices about poor African Americans and Hispanic Americans informed the commission's conclusions. They overlooked and underestimated the persistence of conflicts within poor African American families caused by outside factors of unemployment, insufficient educational resources, and a lack of proper housing in Watts and other African American communities in Los Angeles. Furthermore, the report downplayed the ongoing problem of police brutality against African Americans by the Los Angeles Police Department, an issue which, by the 1960s, became more salient as its occurrences rose. Therefore, the assertion that the Los Angeles Police Department struggled to control African American criminal activity in Watts, without acknowledgement of its tendency to brutalize and terrorize African Americans—specifically young African American men—was a major failure in the McCone Commission report. This, however, was merely one of several instances within the report in which the McCone Commission overlooked or minimized the social and historical factors that led to the riot.

In the two decades before the Los Angeles riot, African Americans experienced extreme prejudice in the job and housing markets, and the same sources of discrimination largely excluded them from full participation in the American economy. Also, despite the gains of civil rights activists and organizations, such as Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP, forcing integration in the educational system through legislation, many schools throughout the United States remained segregated. White Americans fled into suburban communities to avoid sending their children to school with African American youths, allowing middle class African Americans to move into formerly white-occupied areas, and increasing the number of poor African American ghettos throughout the nation. Despite the diligent efforts of civil rights activists to create greater African American inclusion in American society, African American communities continued to endure restrictive housing provisions limited to overcrowded urban areas, or underdeveloped suburban and rural areas. Likewise, employment opportunities for African Americans were often limited to positions of service to white Americans. In short, where African Americans did not create political, economic, educational, and social spaces in which they could participate

fully, few, if any, existed. The McCone Commission's failure, or inability, to recognize these overwhelming problems in the daily lives of many African Americans in Los Angeles reflects perhaps their greatest source of discontent, for it was an outgrowth of yet another point of frustration in African American life—invisibility.

High levels of segregation, poverty, and discrimination made African Americans, poor African Americans especially, in Los Angeles figuratively invisible to white and middle class Americans. At the very least, they were domestic, and public servants of varying sorts, those who lived on the other side of town. At most, they were agitators of racial integration and racial equality, or sources of racial conflict. Invisibility therefore, played a significant role in the actions of many African Americans during the Los Angeles riots. For some, it was an attempt at gaining national attention, a drastic move to expose the great inconsistencies within the professed American ideals of freedom and equality, and the praxis of those ideals. Indeed, a significant number of studies revealed that African American rioters did not randomly destroy property in Los Angeles, but that much of the property burned or looted belonged to business owners who discriminated against African American community members. Conversely, a significant number of rioters had no underlying political motives; the civil unrest provided an opportunity to commit crimes or provided access to things they would not have ordinarily afforded. Still others in the African American community did not participate in the riots; the extent of their involvement was through the media, or through voluntary aid to those seriously injured during the riots. Consequently, the commission's failure to address or acknowledge the issues vital to preventing further outbreaks of civil rebellion left many in the African American community disillusioned.

The feeling of disillusionment among African Americans was merely one of many impacts of the Los Angeles riot. Rioting in Watts, and its national media coverage, sparked rioting in hundreds of other cities around the United States throughout the 1960s. African American communities in New York City; Washington, D.C. Providence, Rhode Island; Hartford, Connecticut; Phoenix, Arizona; Chicago, Illinois; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; and Jersey City, New Jersey all erupted into revolt. Each city had its own legacy of long-term social and political exclusion and discrimination. Watts and other African American communities in Los Angeles remained

largely poor communities segregated from upper and middle class Los Angeles residents. The plight of poor African Americans in Los Angeles gained greater media coverage, and increased white Americans' awareness of their plight, but white American attitudes about African Americans shifted very little, if at all. White Americans now understood what happened in African American communities, but because of the riot, they were less inclined to sympathize, thus maintaining a strenuous relationship between white Americans and African Americans. Conversely, African American rioting in Los Angeles and other African American communities forced all Americans to rethink the nature and impact of race on all groups within the United States. For those who did riot with underlying political agendas, at least some part of their grievances was recognized. Still, gaining heightened recognition for the legion of problems plaguing inner-city black communities did not necessarily generate useful solutions. Yet another impact of the riot was the shift in African American leadership, from the older generation of African Americans who used legal strategies and nonviolent means of civil disobedience to address discrimination, to the younger generation who had lost faith in the previous strategies of political agitation and were not opposed to violent means of civil disobedience if necessary. This new leadership represented a shift in the African American Civil Rights movement that brought with it messages of cultural pride, nationalism, and empowerment, and gave rise to organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the black arts movement.

Perhaps the most discouraging impact of the riot in Los Angeles is the relative lack of change in the area. The lessons of the riot and its successors throughout the country have seemingly gone largely ignored. To a great extent, the problems that existed for many African American Los Angeles residents in the 1960s remain prevalent. The greatest example of this was the occurrence of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which included residents of various economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Nonetheless, there are many existing civil rights organizations within Los Angeles working to address the persisting problems of social injustice in Los Angeles.

See also: Kerner Commission Report; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Urban Ghetto; Urbanization

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## Los Angeles, California, Riot 1992

The ill-famed beating of a 25-year-old African American on March 3, 1991 and the equally notorious assault of a 33-year-old white truck driver on April 29, 1992, "book-ended" 109 hours of violence and looting in Los Angeles, California, from April 29 through May 4, 1992. The toll of the Los Angeles Riot of 1992: 53 dead, 2,383 injured, 12,000 arrested, 7,000 fires, and 3,100 businesses damaged or destroyed, at a loss estimated at between \$700 million and \$1 billion, makes Los Angeles the site of the most deadly and costly riot in contemporary U.S. history.

The Los Angeles Riot of 1992 is a story of intersections. The intersection of Foothill Boulevard and Osborne Road in the middle-class Lake View Terrace neighborhood of Los Angeles is where George Holliday—an Argentinean-born plumbing supply salesman—videotaped the beating and arrest of Rodney G. King by four officers of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in the early morning hours of March 3, 1991, after King was pulled over for speeding. The intersection of West Florence and South Normandie Avenues in gritty South Central Los Angeles is where Reginald Denny was pulled from his truck, beaten and robbed by six young men in an expression of lawlessness, fueled ostensibly by rage at the April 29, 1992 acquittal of the four LAPD officers for the beating of King. Filmed from a helicopter hovering some 1,000 feet above Florence and Normandie, the Denny beating was broadcast live from coast to coast.

The video of two brutal beatings, at two starkly different intersections in America's second largest city, serves as

an iconography of cause and effect. In the almost 20 years since the riot, scholarship has explored other intersections in attempts to explain why Los Angeles erupted in violence in 1992. For some scholars and students of urban America, the beating of King and the subsequent acquittal of Officers Laurence Powell, Timothy Wind, Theodore Briseno, and Sergeant Stacey Koon ignited decades of smoldering resentment against a police department at once praised and yet vilified for a “tough-on-crime” approach to policing that many saw as harboring a violent racism at its core. Such was the conclusion of an independent commission at the time of the Rodney King beating whose examination of the LAPD wrote of an alarming disregard for unwarranted force under the “color of law.”

Other scholars point to economic disenfranchisement, paying particular attention to the decline of manufacturing in Los Angeles, and the concomitant growth of an increasingly suburban-centered service economy in the high-technology “knowledge-industries,” as well as increasing competition for low-paying unskilled jobs among African Americans and Hispanics. A protracted economic recession in 1992 contributed to already high inner-city unemployment, which in turn contributed to an increase in the illegal drug trade, property crime, and assault. The impact of this recession on the chronically unemployed young men and women in the city of Los Angeles devastated an already distressed group at the margins. In 1992, unemployment approached 50 percent for inner-city youth. Rodney King was emblematic of the lives of the men and women of his generation. On March 3, 1991, King was an underemployed part-time usher at Dodger stadium who three months earlier was released from prison after serving time for an armed robbery.

In 1990, sociologist Theodore Caplow and his colleagues noted a 20-year decline in rioting and violent demonstration in the United States, which they attributed to the use of the courtroom and litigation as the primary mode of nonviolent struggle in the post-Civil Rights era. At first glance, the Los Angeles riot seems to belie this conclusion. Yet almost 48 hours after the verdict in the LAPD criminal trial, Rodney King broke his long silence to declare that he would have his day in court. King, perhaps more than anyone else, understood that the criminal prosecution of four police officers was not a final instance of justice denied. In a civil suit against the City of Los Angeles, King was awarded \$3.8 million dollars in compensation for his brutal beating.

A 1993 federal civil rights trial against the four officers resulted in a guilty verdict against Powell and Koon for violating King’s civil rights.

On April 29, 1992, acquittal mixed with hopelessness was the base for an alchemy of rage, not only for the beating of King, but for the violent death of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins, who was killed in Compton, California on March 16, 1991, just 10 days after the beating of Rodney King. Harlins was shot in the back of the head after an altercation with Soon Ja Du, a 49-year-old Korean-immigrant merchant who wrongly accused Harlins of stealing a container of orange juice. Convicted of voluntary manslaughter, Du was sentenced to five years probation, 400 hours of community service, and a \$500.00 fine; the sentence was upheld on appeal. Harlins’s brutal slaying was recorded by the store’s security camera. Like the King videotape, the videotaped slaying of Latasha Harlins seemed to show that justice was yet again denied to an African American. The jury acquittal in the beating trial of the four LAPD officers *and* the sentence imposed on Du were the two events that caused the eruption of lawlessness and violence that began on the evening of April 29, 1992.

The Los Angeles riot began as a violent insurrection in response to a perception of the failure of the American system of justice. Anger and chaos during a period of economic decline quickly led to what witnesses described as a “party-like” atmosphere of gleeful looting by inner-city poor of all ages and races. Political pundits on the right attributed a “culture of poverty” to the looting; critics on the left viewed the riot as a response to nascent economic disenfranchisement resulting from globalization. Scholars of the “new media” place Holliday’s videotape at the advent of “citizen-journalism,” pointing out that Holliday’s video led to sweeping reforms of the LAPD. Other analysts accuse the media of simplifying the King beating and particularly charge that the editing of the Holliday tape for broadcast left out important images of King that led the jury in the criminal trial to conclude that King was violently resisting arrest.

When Rodney King assured the public that he would have his day in court, he also pleaded, “Can we all get along?” This simple question goes to the heart of the agonizing history of conflict and social relations in the United States. It is the image of an unidentified young African American man, however, who, more than any other, captured the essence of the riot. Surrounded by antipolice graffiti, a photographer

captured the young man just moments after he spray-painted the powerful message that emerged from Los Angeles in the Spring of 1992, *no justice, no peace*.

See also: Los Angeles, California, Riot of 1965; Urban Ghetto; Urbanization

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## Louima, Abner

In August 1997, Abner Louima (1966–) was beaten and sexually assaulted by New York Police Department (NYPD) officers at the 70th Precinct in Brooklyn. The Louima case, like the earlier Rodney King case in Los Angeles, exposed police brutality to the public. The abuse of Louima was also one of several instances of police violence against unarmed black men in New York City in the late 1990s and after. Ten years after the torture of Louima, the activist Reverend Al Sharpton stated, “Louima is to police-community relations what Selma was to the voter rights movement” (“One Man & One City Forever Changed”).

Louima, then a security guard in his early thirties, had immigrated to the United States from Haiti in the early 1990s to escape political violence. On August 9, 1997, he was arrested for a crime he did not commit. Officer Justin Volpe, then 25 years old, arrested Louima after a fight broke out at Club Rendez-Vous in Flatbush, Brooklyn, falsely claiming Louima had hit him. The abuse began as Louima was transported to jail. Another man, Patrick Antoine, accused of being involved in the fight, was arrested and struck by police officers.

At the 70th Precinct station, Volpe, with the help of Officer Charles Schwarz, took Louima into a bathroom and beat him. Volpe sodomized him with a stick, the handle

from a toilet plunger, tearing Louima’s colon and bladder. Volpe then forced the stick into Louima’s mouth and broke several teeth. The officers left Louima bleeding and half-naked on the dirty floor. Hours after the attack, an ambulance was summoned to bring Louima to a hospital. Police initially dismissed Louima’s ruptured colon as the result of consensual sexual activity. A nurse doubted this explanation, and the case was reported to the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, which did not follow up on the call.

Louima’s case came to public awareness when Mike McAlary of New York’s *Daily News*, tipped off by NYPD officers, wrote a series of columns that eventually won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary. Officer Eric Turetsky came forward soon after McAlary’s series began, saying he saw Volpe and Schwarz go into the bathroom with Louima, and that Volpe proudly displayed the stick afterwards. (McAlary died of cancer in late 1998.)

In August 1997, thousands marched with members of Louima’s family to City Hall to demand redress from Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. During Giuliani’s term in office (1994–2001), the shooting deaths of two unarmed black men, Amadou Diallo in 1999 (an immigrant from West Africa), and Patrick Dorismond in 2000, kept police brutality a prominent issue. The city of New York paid more than \$18 million in settlements in these cases and in police brutality cases that unfolded after Giuliani left office. Louima received a settlement of \$8.75 million in 2001. (Patrick Antoine, who was also arrested and beaten that night, received a settlement of \$250,000 in 2000.)

At trial, Volpe testified to sodomizing Louima and threatening his life if he ever came forward. Volpe was convicted of raping and beating Louima and sentenced to 30 years in federal prison, not to be released before 2025. Charles Schwarz was convicted of lying about participating in the attack. He served five years in federal prison and was released in May 2007.

Other officers accused of lying about Volpe and Schwarz’s actions had varying fates. Thomas Bruder and Thomas Wiese were convicted in 2000 and had their convictions overturned in 2002. Both were fired. Each later sued, but failed to have his job restored. Rolando Aleman and Francisco Rosario received probation. Michael Bellomo was acquitted.

After the court settlement, Louima and his family moved to Florida. Louima has used the money to pay tuition for hundreds of students in Haiti. Fueled in part by his

real estate work, the Abner Louima Foundation has worked to establish hospitals in Haiti. Since 1997, Louima has spoken out about his own and other cases of police brutality. He marched with Reverend Al Sharpton in a demonstration against the December 2006 police shooting of Sean Bell, an unarmed black man. Ten years after his abuse by police, Louima reported still feeling physical pain from his injuries. He stated that he forgave, but could not forget, the attack. In an editorial for New York's *Daily News*, he wrote he was lucky to have survived and stressed the importance of community involvement in curbing police brutality.

See also: Sharpton, Al

Denise S. Guidry

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## Lowndes County Freedom Organization

The Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) was an effort initiated by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1966 to organize an independent political party in Lowndes County, Alabama. Black residents of rural Lowndes County were impoverished, and few if any blacks actually owned land. Although blacks made up the majority of the population in the county, they

held no elected offices and were virtually excluded from participating in local politics. Lowndes County was often referred to as "Bloody Lowndes" because of its history of racial violence.

Before the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African Americans in Alabama who were registered to vote constituted less than 20 percent of those eligible to vote. Civil Rights organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), SNCC, and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); along with the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC)—a political action group—worked to increase the number of black registered voters in the state. Increased voting registration activity in neighboring Selma in 1965 spurred some action in dormant Lowndes County.

Unlike the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), an interracial political party created to empower rural southern blacks, LCFO was not an alternative to the Alabama Democratic Party, but rather, a third party. The goal of LCFO was not initially to form an all-black political party; the lack of participation by whites facilitated such circumstances. The goal of the organization, however, was to circumvent the existing political structures that prevented blacks from participating in the local political process. The LCFO, also known as the Black Panther Party, adopted the image of a black panther as the symbol for the political party. The panther symbol, when juxtaposed against the Alabama Democratic Party's symbol of a white rooster, was meant as a representation of strength. If the LCFO were successful, SNCC planned to organize political parties similar to the LCFO in other areas of Alabama.

Despite the dangers that African Americans faced when they attempted voter registration activity, local blacks met with members of SCLC on March 19, 1965 and formed the Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights (LCCMHR). The LCCMHR was created to facilitate black voter registration, as well as to act as an intermediary between the black community and the local government. John Hulett, Lowndes County native and one of only two African Americans registered to vote in the county, was elected the first chairman. Although SCLC had initially helped to establish the LCCMHR, it failed to continue to support the organization. When no support staff was sent to Lowndes County to begin political organizing, Hulett reached out to SNCC for help.

The passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed disfranchisement tactics such as literacy tests and

as a result Lowndes County saw an increase in black voter registration. The rise in black political activity strengthened white opposition. On August 20, 1965, civil rights worker Jonathan Daniels was killed when a deputy sheriff fired a shotgun at a group of protesters. SNCC cited the deaths of white civil rights sympathizers Jonathan Daniels and Viola Liuzzo as pivotal events that strengthened the resolve of the organization to raise black political consciousness in Lowndes County. SNCC took the lead in helping to form the Lowndes County Freedom Organization. John Hulett was also elected to head LCFO.

A specification in Alabama state law permitted the establishment of a political party at the county level. After the failed seating of the MFDP in Atlantic City in 1964, members of SNCC decided that an independent political party would better serve the black residents of Lowndes County. The independent party could gain recognition when nominated candidates of the independent party received 20 percent of the votes in the county election. The 1966 elections proved to be crucial for LCFO. Despite the defeat of LCFO candidates in the general election, scholars believe that the creation of LCFO proved to be an important step in the emergence of black power politics.

The LCFO represented a change from previous SNCC projects. Stokely Carmichael served as project director and brought a brash new militancy that counterbalanced the rural grassroots movement in Lowndes County. The Lowndes County project was the first project since the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer project that was not an interracial movement. In 1966, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California. Inspired so much by the Stokely Carmichael and the LCFO, Newton and Seale adopted the black panther symbol to represent their organization. In 1969, the LCFO merged with the National Democratic Party of Alabama. See also: Black Panther Party; Black Power; Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture); MFDP; Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Voting Rights Act of 1965

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## Lynching

Lynching is a form of extralegal violence that has been used as a means of enforcing white supremacy and social control in the United States. In its 1940 definition of lynching, the Tuskegee Institute stipulated that “there must be legal evidence that a person has been killed, and that he met his death illegally at the hands of a group acting under the pretext of service to justice, race, or tradition” (*Lynching in the New South*, p. 17). Lynching has taken multiple forms, including hanging, shooting, burning, and beating to death. In some cases it involved dismemberment and torture, and on some occasions was performed as a spectacle before large crowds.

The term lynching is derived from Colonel Charles Lynch, a patriot in frontier Bedford County, Virginia, during the American Revolution. Plagued by Tories and outlaws, Lynch and other community leaders decided to take matters into their own hands in order to control lawlessness and restore peace and security. Acting outside formally constituted law enforcement mechanisms, Lynch presided over an informal court and thus established “lynch law” in the region. Similar practices were used in other areas of Revolutionary Virginia and elsewhere.

The Revolutionary War furnished the ideological justification for the violent abuse of alleged enemies of the public good. The democratically inspired doctrine of popular sovereignty was cited by vigilantes who worked “out of doors” to protect and perpetuate established patterns of social and political order, especially when community members felt threatened. Vigilante groups, including lynch mobs, were frequently led by those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, including businessmen, professionals,



planters, politicians, and law enforcement officers. Accordingly, vigilantism can be interpreted as a socially conservative phenomenon.

Lynching, along with other forms of vigilantism and social violence, was used in antebellum America to discipline those perceived to transgress social, political, and racial orthodoxies. Black and white abolitionists were frequently targeted, the most famous incident being the lynching of newspaper editor Elijah Lovejoy in 1837. Members of religious minority groups such as Catholics and Mormons were also victimized by lynching during this period. Lynching was applied as an alternative system of justice in the Old West; the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 was the iconic embodiment of organized frontier justice.

Although lynching did not disappear in other regions of the country—a 1920 lynching of three black men in Duluth, Minnesota, provided one noteworthy example—after the Civil War it became an increasingly southern and racial affair. Reconstruction-era violence in the South was particularly bloody, with the Ku Klux Klan and other parallel groups acting as the paramilitary arm of the white Democratic Party. Most violence in this period targeted African Americans who sought to challenge the white power structure through upward mobility in education, politics, or economics. Whites who were working in the South to secure African American rights or promote the Republican Party were also victimized. Lynching represented an effective means of suppressing African American assertiveness, maintaining a pliant and subservient black labor force, and smothering black political power. Federal troops were largely successful in breaking up the Klan in South Carolina after the passage of the 1871 Civil Rights Act, but white terrorism continued virtually unabated in other states, especially Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida.

The height of the lynching era in the United States lasted from roughly 1880 to 1930. The Tuskegee Institute recorded the lynching of 3,437 African Americans and 1,293 whites from 1880 to 1951. Sociologists Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck counted 2,462 black victims in 2,018 separate incidents of lynching from 1882 to 1930. In addition, 1,977 blacks were legally executed in 10 southern states (as opposed to only 451 whites) during the same period, for a combined total of 4,291 blacks who were violently put to death in the South from 1882–1930—an average of about one African American killed every four days. Lynching statistics, kept in systematic fashion only from 1882 to 1968,

are understandably imprecise, as they were often based on incomplete information, and there were many additional lynchings that went unrecorded. Patterns of lynching varied from state to state and county to county: Virginia, for instance, had substantially fewer lynchings than Georgia, and approximately one-third of southern counties had no black lynchings from 1882–1930.

The most common rationale for southern lynching was that it was an exercise in popular justice. Southern whites believed there existed a kind of social contract between the races that defined the limits of acceptable behavior; lynching was one means of policing those boundaries and punishing transgressors. Legally constituted mechanisms for enforcing social order were considered too slow or feeble, and many Southerners expressed doubt in the criminal justice system's ability to carry out its responsibilities. Rather than seeing themselves engaged in illegal activity, lynchers believed they were serving the larger social good and a higher law, sidestepping the more precise and tedious process of establishing guilt through evidence and then meting out proportional punishment. Historian Michael Pfeifer has argued that 19th- and early 20th-century lynching existed as part of a conflict over the nature of criminal justice, pitting rural and working-class supporters of "rough justice" against middle-class and progressivist advocates of due process. In most cases, there was little proof that lynching victims actually committed the purported offenses they were killed for. Only a tiny number of white participants in lynch mobs were ever apprehended, and fewer still were convicted. Most lynchings therefore were performed with at least the tacit consent, if not approval, of the surrounding white community.

Scholars have offered a number of theories to explain the causes of black lynching, reflecting the complexity of the phenomenon. Early sociological views argued that mob violence was the result of weak educational, religious, and civic institutions; exploitative economic relationships; poverty; and ineffective law enforcement. Because lynching was associated with a premodern rural culture, the modernization of the southern economy would strike at the roots of the practice. A more recent historical treatment posited that lynching served to teach all southerners, black and white, male and female, precisely where in the social hierarchy they stood, with blacks as debased, white women as vulnerable, and white men as the protectors of womanhood and civilization. Another theory suggested that lynching

was a reaction to the possibility of post-emancipation interracial relationships between black men and white women, and represented an effort by psychologically frustrated white men to maintain their own status as well as control over black female sexuality. Other historians have situated lynching within the context of the Southern culture of honor or white insecurities fueled by the combined force of race hatred, sexual fears, honor, moralism, and localistic republicanism. Yet another approach sees lynching as a form of human sacrifice connected to the peculiar version of Protestant Christianity practiced in the postbellum South. Some of the most recent interpreters of lynching have emphasized its role as a means of labor control, specifically in maintaining a large, inexpensive, and submissive labor force. They suggest that it served as a crucial mechanism for perpetuating a plantation economy in the postbellum South and was attached to the distinctiveness of southern politics and cotton culture.

Rather than viewing lynching as an outdated relic of premodern barbarity or primitivism, it is more useful to understand it as a modern phenomenon. The essentially modern character of lynching was particularly prominent in spectacle lynchings such as Henry Smith (Paris, Texas, 1893), Sam Hose (Newnan, Georgia, 1899), and Jesse Washington (Waco, Texas, 1916). The thousands of people, including women and children, who assembled to witness the lynchings drove cars or arrived on specially chartered trains, took photographs of the event and the victims, and spread the news via newspapers, telegraph, and radio. The mass production of lynching postcards, distributed nationally through the mail, made even more people virtual participants. "Trophies" acquired from the victim's body were displayed in the front window of Main Street stores. For many white southerners, spectacle lynchings were a grisly but popular form of mass entertainment.

African Americans mounted a sustained opposition to lynching, particularly in the late 19th and 20th centuries. One of the most prolific and vocal critics of lynching was Ida B. Wells. In contrast to the prevailing myth among whites that lynching was primarily used to discipline black rapists and murderers, Wells demonstrated that lynching victims were accused of rape in only about one-third of cases, and approximately two-thirds of all lynchings were for small offenses such as shoplifting and "insolence." Driven out of Memphis, Tennessee, because of her antilynching writings, Wells moved to New York and

also traveled to Great Britain where she helped foster a transatlantic antilynching crusade.

Many other prominent African Americans also spoke out against lynching, including Mary Church Terrell, Mary McLeod Bethune, Walter Francis White, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Paul Robeson. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People advocated laws to halt the practice and conducted an in-depth study that resulted in the publication *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1918*. The American Communist Party and International Labor Defense made antilynching a cornerstone of their platform designed to attract African Americans as members. Black newspapers documented and condemned lynchings, and black playwrights wrote 14 antilynching plays from 1916–1935. Interracial groups formed to protest lynching, and southern white women sought to end the practice via the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching.

For the most part, the federal government was timid in its response to lynching. In 1901, George Henry White, the last former slave to serve in Congress, introduced a bill that would make lynching a federal crime, but it was summarily defeated. President Theodore Roosevelt made public statements against lynching, engendering harsh feelings from white southerners, but he did little in terms of concrete action. The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, introduced in 1918, passed the House of Representatives before being killed by filibuster in the Senate. Yet another antilynching bill, the Costigan-Wagner Bill, was defeated in 1935. Despite pressure from his wife Eleanor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt refused to speak out in favor of the bill, fearing backlash from the core Democratic constituency of the white South. Some progress was made after World War II, and the Truman administration called for federal antilynching legislation in 1947, but the power of southern Democrats over Senate committees prevented any movement on the issue. In short, the federal government never passed an antilynching bill, a failure that the U.S. Senate formally apologized for in 2005.

Lynching was used against other minority groups in American history as well. An estimated 600 Mexicans were lynched between 1848 and 1930, with at least 163 lynched in California alone from 1848–1860. Native Americans and Chinese Americans were also lynched in the West. Italian Americans, particularly Sicilian immigrants, were lynched in numerous states in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Indeed, the largest mass lynching in American history occurred in New Orleans in 1891, when 11 Italians were lynched after being acquitted of murdering the city police chief. One of the most famous individual lynchings in the United States, which helped lead to the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915, was of the Jewish factory owner Leo Frank in Atlanta.

Persistent opposition to lynching, combined with an increased commitment to law and order by southern state politicians, led to a significant decline in the practice, as the rate fell to about 10 blacks lynched per year in the South during the 1930s. Lynching continued to wane in the 1940s and 1950s until surging in reaction to civil rights activism in the 1960s. Mississippi was particularly violent, headlined by the Klan-orchestrated murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in Philadelphia during the 1964 Freedom Summer. Lynching has fallen to negligible levels since the 1960s; when it has occurred, such as in Alabama in 1981 and Texas in 1998, the white perpetrators have been apprehended, convicted, and even executed by the state.

*See also:* Antilynching Campaign; Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Wells-Barnett, Ida; White Mob Violence

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## Manchester Conference, 1945

Held in Manchester, England, from October 13–21, 1945, the Manchester Conference—often referred to as the Fifth Pan-African Congress—brought together more than 200

delegates from across Africa, the West Indies, and North America in its call for black self-determination. For many scholars, the Manchester Conference represents a turning point in the history of Pan-Africanism and nationalism in Africa. Previous Pan-African conferences, namely the series of congresses organized by W. E. B. Du Bois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP), never offered a direct challenge to the nature or future of European rule in Africa, but instead the conferences' organizers focused their attention on securing political, social, and economic reforms from the colonial powers. The Manchester Conference, however, dramatically altered the method and message of the Pan-African struggle, as its delegates demanded the immediate end to European rule in all of Africa and the West Indies. For the next two decades, the radical message of the Manchester Conference set the tone for the African struggle for independence as a new generation of nationalist figures—led by Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson—invoked the lessons of Manchester as they guided their respective countries to independence in the 1950s and 1960s.

The ambition to hold a fifth Pan-African conference grew out of a desire on both sides of the Atlantic to resurrect the Du Boisian congresses of the 1910s and 1920s. These conferences, beginning in Paris in 1919, represented an important meeting ground for a growing diasporic concern for events in Africa. African American and West Indian delegates dominated the debates at these conferences as they called on the colonial powers and the international community to exercise greater responsibility in the governing of African affairs. In particular, they demanded reforms in the fields of land ownership, labor, and education. After the 1927 New York Pan-African Congress, Du Bois began to set his sights on holding the Fifth Pan-African Congress within Africa itself. This fifth conference was to take place in Tunis in 1929. Yet, it never got off the ground, as it encountered resistance from a French government nervous about allowing a potentially subversive and embarrassing meeting to convene in one of its colonies. Furthermore, the onset of the Great Depression further stymied Du Bois and others' efforts at organizing a fifth congress in 1929 or in the early 1930s.

By the mid-1940s, the political and social exigencies of World War II had led many to seek the renewal of the Du Boisian Pan-African movement with a Pan-African conference to be held on the continent itself. Through pressure from Amy Jacques Garvey, the first wife of the famed

black nationalist Marcus Garvey, Du Bois began to explore the idea of holding a Pan-African conference in Liberia at the conclusion of the war. In his preparations, he contacted black leaders throughout the United States, the West Indies, and in Europe. Yet in Britain, he encountered resistance to his ambition for a Liberian conference as he learned of preparations for a fifth conference already being made by the little known and newly formed Pan-African Federation (PAF).

Led by prominent British-based activists George Padmore, Ras T. Makonnen, and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, the PAF represented a union of African and black student and activist organizations aimed at challenging the political and social structure of life within Britain and its empire. Issues of race, unequal distribution of wealth, labor, and education emerged as the most prominent interests of the PAF and its member organizations as they made preparations for a conference set to coincide with the second meeting of the World Trade Union Congress (WTUC) scheduled for September 1945 in Paris. This conference was not merely intended to renew the Pan-African tradition forged by Du Bois in the 1910s and 1920s. Rather, the PAF also looked to its envisioned conference as an opportunity to incorporate a more diverse and radical collection of black voices in shaping the future of Pan-African politics. For the leaders of the PAF, this included a greater emphasis on the involvement of black student organizations, as well as of African and West Indian labor leaders through the forthcoming Pan-African conference.

From the United States, Du Bois looked on the PAF's arrangements with both interest and concern. In his correspondence with Padmore and others, he cautioned against holding another conference in Europe, citing the need to extend the movement into Africa itself. He further expressed his dismay at the failure of the PAF to approach the NAACP for support in the conference's organization. For its part, the PAF did not refute Du Bois's suggestion at holding a conference in Africa. Instead, the organization even acquiesced to Du Bois's wish to classify the proposed Paris conference as an "exploratory conference" for a future meeting on the continent. In spite of this, Du Bois and the PAF were never able to clear the tensions between them. Padmore and the PAF continued with their preparations with only minimal input from Du Bois and the NAACP. For instance, Padmore, the PAF, and its affiliated organizations decided the conference's agenda, dates, and even the

ultimate venue change from Paris to Manchester, England, without Du Bois's or the NAACP's prior notice or approval. As a result, when the Manchester Conference convened in October 1945, it did so as a meeting of British-based black and African organizations primarily concerned with challenging the problems of race and colonialism within the scope of the British Empire. Yet in spite of the tensions between him and the organizers, Du Bois not only attended the conference, but also accepted the organizers' invitation to serve as the "International President of the Congress" in celebration of his pioneering role in shaping the 20th-century Pan-African movement.

The Manchester Conference's first panel opened on October 15 with a discussion of the "The Colour Problem in Britain." Introducing the topics to the delegates, Edwin Du Plan of the Gold Coast reminded them that, after World War I, Britain's black community faced large-scale unemployment with the return of white soldiers from the war. The need for soldiers and the creation of low-paid factory work during the World War II helped alleviate the country's problem with black unemployment, yet Du Plan noted it had little effect on countering the political and social barriers faced by Britain's black community. Even when black workers were employed, Du Plan emphasized that many of them faced the constant threat of deportation after the termination of their contracts. In addition to these labor problems, the panel discussed the government's failures in addressing issues of family, youth, and education in Britain's black and mixed-race communities. As a result of these racially driven oversights, the panel argued that the government had left these communities disproportionately poor and susceptible to violence and arrest by the country's predominately white police force.

The hallmark of the Manchester Conference, however, came in its discussion over the future of European rule in Africa. For most of the conference's delegates, imperialism had run its course. In panels on West, South, and East Africa, the Manchester delegates argued that imperialism had unequivocally failed to bring the widespread "progress" and "civilization" promised to the peoples of Africa through colonial rule. Instead, the delegates argued that, through colonial rule, African peoples suffered from violently enforced policies of forced labor, the systematic destruction of their precolonial political and social institutions, and widespread illiteracy and political repression. In addition to these debates, other panels focused on the continued

imperial threats to the world's three independent black states—Ethiopia, Liberia, and Haiti—and on labor issues in the Caribbean. After a week of deliberations, the conference closed on October 21, 1945 with an assertion of the rights of all African peoples to the principle of self-determination and a demand for an immediate end to colonial rule on the continent.

The aftermath of the conference thus ushered in a new era in the history of African nationalism. No longer were discussions of colonial reform sufficient. Political and labor leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, invoked the lessons of Manchester as they sharpened their attacks on the colonial system in the postwar years. For Nkrumah, this included the publication of his first book *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1947) and, with Wallace-Johnson, the founding of the West African National Secretariat (WANS). The WANS attracted the interest of other Manchester delegates such as Bankole Awooner-Renner and G. Ashie-Nikoi with its aim to create a single, socialist state uniting West Africa. Nkrumah's 1947 return to the Gold Coast resulted in the breakdown of the WANS. Yet, in the Gold Coast, he, along with fellow Manchester alumni (Joe Appiah, Awooner-Renner, Du Plan, and Ako Adjei), adopted the conference's message of self-determination as they began their nine-year struggle for independence. In other African colonies, Jomo Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 where he was imprisoned for 10 years before taking over as the country's first president in 1963. Hastings Banda and his Nyasaland African Congress led Malawi to its independence in 1964.

The legacy of the Manchester Conference and its effect on the future of Pan-African politics has long been debated among scholars. Unlike any previous conference, the Manchester Conference opened a space for young African leaders to assert themselves on an international stage. For many scholars in the 1960s and 1970s, however, the Manchester Conference also signaled the moment in which the international meaning of "Pan-Africanism" shifted from that of black solidarity to that of African continental unity. As a result, this scholarship, exemplified in the classic works of Colin Legum, Ali Mazrui, and Vincent Baketepu Thompson, understood post-Manchester Pan-Africanism in terms of the political and diplomatic processes leading to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the operations of this institution. More recently, diasporic scholars such as Penny von Eschen, James Meriwether,

and Kevin Gaines have begun to challenge this position by highlighting the roles of prominent African American and diasporic figures in postwar Africa. Even more important, these scholars have begun to explore the political, social, and cultural meanings that African achievements, such as the continent's struggle for independence, had in shaping the methods and discourse of the black freedom movement in the United States during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

In 1995, several events marked the 50th anniversary of the Manchester Conference. In October, three separate conferences met in Manchester with panels on the relationship between Pan-Africanism and labor, gender, immigration, and neocolonialism, as well as discussions on the legacy of Nkrumah and other historical figures. Furthermore, British historians Marika Sherwood and Hakim Adi used the conference's anniversary to mark the publication of their edited collection *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (1995). Adi and Sherwood's work is unparalleled by any previous research on the conference. They not only meticulously documented the events leading to the conference, but also included previously unpublished accounts of the conference by two of its lesser-known delegates, as well as brief biographies of more than 120 individuals and organizations who took part in the conference. Even more important, this collection includes a complete reprint of George Padmore's 1947 conference report titled *Colonial and Coloured Unity*.

*See also:* African Imperialism; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Gold Coast; Kenyatta, Jomo; Nkrumah, Kwame; Organization of African Unity; Pan-African Congresses; Pan-Africanism

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## Mandela, Nelson

Nelson Mandela (1918–) was the first democratically elected president of South Africa. From 1994 to 1999, Mandela led his country in its first five years of democracy and reconciliation. Before Mandela assumed this position, he was a staunch antiapartheid activist. Mandela actively participated as a card-carrying member and leader of the African National Congress (ANC). After joining the political body in 1942, he was one of the activists who advocated for the formation of an ANC Youth wing in 1944, which he, Walter Sisulu, and others succeeded in establishing. Besides working within a political organization, Mandela also challenged the state. In his quest to oppose white domination, Mandela earned the government's ire with his participation in several protest activities. Chief among them was the 1952 defiance campaign when participants burnt their passbooks. Mandela also spoke publicly. For his activism, Mandela became a government target and eventually operated underground. With the American CIA's help, the South African government arrested this trained lawyer in 1962. Mandela was ultimately convicted of high treason. Sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island, Mandela carried the struggle forward even within the prison system. There, he led protests to secure healthier food, longer trousers, and study privileges. Affectionately known as Madiba, this world-renowned leader has contributed immensely to solving problems on the African continent, to expanding South African borders to embrace other Africans, to fighting for children's causes and becoming a spokesperson on the confronting and fighting the crippling disease of AIDS. In leading the country in the forefront of struggle and global equality, Mandela has also championed human rights.

Before Mandela catapulted into international fame, he grew up in a tiny village in Umtata located in the former Transkei along South Africa's eastern coast. Born on June 18, 1918, his parents named him appropriately Rolihlahla, which "means to shake a tree" or "to stir up trouble." A Methodist teacher renamed him Nelson after the famed admiral Horatio Nelson because the pronunciation of his

real name gave the educator difficulty. Mandela's father was the principal acting chief to a paramount in Thembuland. His father, according to his biographer Tom Lodge, viewed Mandela's mother as his favorite wife. On his father's death, Mandela assumed the position of a paramount chief's ward. Although this appeared to be his destiny, Mandela chose another career path. He became a lawyer. This Wesleyan mission-educated product ultimately attended the University of Fort Hare, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree. Mandela even participated in school politics by joining the Student Representative Council (SRC). His allegiance to his fellow students landed him in trouble when he participated in a protest boycott that resulted in his suspension from the college.

After his suspension, Mandela went to Johannesburg, the fabled city of gold. There, he met Walter Sisulu who took him on as a mentee. Sisulu was also Mandela's confidant. The two remained lifelong friends (Sisulu died in 2003). Mandela used his position in Johannesburg to further his education. He received a bachelors of arts degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) by correspondence and immediately after this milestone, he began studying law at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS). There, at WITS, Mandela met future struggle colleagues, Joe Slovo, Harry Schwarz, and Ruth First. Besides the academic community that he embraced, Mandela made his home in the northeastern township of Alexandra. As a black and colored township community, Alexandra was a stronghold and leader of resistance struggles such as bus boycotts, especially during the 1940s before the Nationalist Party entrenched segregation beginning in 1948. Swept up into this political current, Mandela joined the ANC and thus continued his crusade against tyranny and oppression. Mandela credits many people for his political education. Chief among them were the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi whose ideas of Satyagraha resonated with him. Mandela engaged in many peaceful protests, and for his actions he became one of the 156 people arrested on December 5, 1956 and charged with treason. At this trial, the government allowed defendants to speak. Mandela took the opportunity to explain what actions that the ANC proposed to take to end the system of inequality that defined South Africa at the time. The treason trial took place over five years, with all of the accused acquitted.

The success, or lack thereof, with nonviolence began to change Mandela's intellectual framework. Initially a



*Nelson Mandela revisits the prison on Robben Island, South Africa, where he was incarcerated for more than two decades as a political prisoner, February 11, 1994. (Louise Gubb/The Image Works)*

proponent of nonviolence, Mandela reconsidered this strategy after the Sharpeville Massacre. On March 21, 1960, the Pan-African Congress (PAC) called for a pass protest. Instead of the peaceful demonstration that the organizers had arranged, the police opened fire, killing 69 people, and injuring other fleeing parties. After this disturbance, the government banned the ANC and PAC, and made it unlawful for these organizations to operate. Mandela, already operating underground, and considered a government threat and dubbed the “Black Pimpernel,” helped to create the Mandela or M-Plan. This strategy called for the creation of cell units having three to four people, but no more than five, who would engage in guerrilla warfare. This indoctrination included political education and military training in camouflage, reconnaissance, topography, photography, fire training, and communication.

As part of the Umkhonto weSizwe (MK or Spear of the Nation) an underground movement founded on December 16, 1961, Mandela renounced his stance on nonviolence. Besides his role as an activist, Mandela, a divorcee (his first

wife was Evelyn Mase with whom he had four children), struggled with seeing a newlywed wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, because soon after their nuptials he went underground for 17 months. The couple had two daughters, Zindzi and Zenani. While on the run, Mandela made speeches and recorded interviews. During one interview, a day after the Sharpeville massacre, Mandela donning an Afro, with a part centered in the middle, and a fully grown beard, spoke about South Africa’s political situation and the state of Africans. In responding to the question what do Africans want, Mandela told a news correspondent that Africans need the right to vote and full political equality with whites. It took 52 years before Mandela and other South Africans realized this goal. Within that time frame, the MK strategized to destroy railway lines, government installations, electrical facilities, and other hard and soft targets.

To further MK’s objectives, leaders often met at clandestine locations. One of these places was the Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia. There, insurgents met to discuss strategy in a place considered a refuge. Rivonia was a safe house

until a tip by the American Central Intelligence Agency informed the South African government of Mandela's whereabouts and the disguises that he wore. On August 5, 1962, the police arrested Mandela. The state charged him with the crimes of leaving the country illegally and inciting workers to strike in 1961. The arrests continued. On July 11, 1963, while Mandela lay in prison, his colleagues such as Ahmed Kathrada, Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki among others faced arrest. All of the accused were tried and convicted of charges of sabotage, which Mandela confessed he did, but denied a second charge of plotting a foreign invasion of South Africa. Mandela used the opportunity to convey his thoughts on the political situation under which black South Africans lived as second-class citizens. Once on the dock, Mandela recounted how he had fought against white domination and that he was prepared to die in his quest for democracy, freedom, and racial harmony. Even in the state's presence, Mandela spoke from the heart. He chose his words deliberately to convey his disdain for any forms of domination no matter what race or ethnicity.

In showing this balanced account, Mandela appealed to liberals while he also reinforced his position against apartheid. Mandela also offered his vision of a new South Africa. Similar to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech, Mandela called for equality based on people's character rather than their skin color. In sharing this ideal with King, Mandela showed how he envisioned the ANC's policy of nonracialism. Despite his appeal, Mandela faced life imprisonment on Robben Island. He remained on the isle once reputed as a bird sanctuary, a leper colony, and World War II naval base for 18 years. He spent the other nine years at Pollsmoor Prison. Unlike PAC leader Robert Sobukwe who had a house all to himself on Robben Island, Mandela served his term mixed with the general population. Younger ANC adherents or political prisoners belonging to other organizations revered Mandela and often sought his counsel. Even with his senior authority, Mandela was not above the inhumane practice of *tauza*, when inmates jumped up and down and had their private cavities searched. During his tenure, the world's most well-known prisoner barely received visits and had his mail read and doctored before he received them.

With his privacy violated on many levels, Mandela helped to remake the prison environment in which he lived. Political prisoners taught each other and received study privileges to conduct correspondence courses as part of the

reformation of the prison system. While Mandela and the others altered the political terrain within the prison by having hunger strikes and befriending the wardens, he kept up negotiations with the South African government. Former President P. W. Botha initially began talks with Mandela, but when Mandela refused to renounce violence, the white minority leader rescinded his offer. Still left to resolve this problem was the next South African President F. W. De Klerk who did decide to release Mandela on February 11, 1990. Mandela left prison donning a gray suit and holding his wife's hand and clenching his fist with the other. De Klerk not only signed for Mandela's release, he also repealed major cornerstones of apartheid such as the 1950 Group Areas Act (GAA), which required that all race groups live in their designated areas. For their efforts in ending apartheid, Mandela and De Klerk received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. Two years later in 1995, after the formation of an interim government, Mandela assumed the presidency and won 63 percent of the vote. He used his presidency to advocate for reconciliation, even dubbing the New South Africa as "the rainbow nation."

As president, Mandela was the consummate statesman. He traveled around the world on behalf of South Africa. Mandela also participated in negotiating affairs with other African nations. For example, Mandela helped to resolve the ongoing dispute between Muammar Gaddafi and the United States. With Mandela's urging, Gaddafi agreed to release the men responsible for the Lockerbie plane crash on December 21, 1988. Mandela arranged to have the trial in a third country, rather than the countries representing the plaintiffs such as the United States and Britain. He even spoke on the defendant's behalf. Mandela also stood up for his friends, such as Cuban ally Fidel Castro. Castro supported the ANC during apartheid and allowed South Africans to inhabit his country, something that, to the chagrin of the West, Mandela refused to overlook. The Xhosa leader has also shown his public admiration for Gaddafi's Libya.

Even with his high approval rating, some criticisms developed. His inability to direct more attention to the AIDS crisis earned him consternation from AIDS activist Edwin Cameron. Mandela, as well as successor Thabo Mbeki, failed to propose funding to develop AIDS research or to create some kind of plan to impede the disease's progress, which consumes hundreds of South Africans. Other criticisms are concerned with domestic policy. Some pundits believe that



Mandela's outreach globally hindered the country's development because he granted little attention to the plight of the homeless and the dire economic poverty that paralyzes portions of the nation's sector. The ANC promised homes and delivered; however, the contractors constructed them rapidly and they contained structural problems. Needless to say, Mandela was no saint, but he was a man of courage and conviction, and for that Madiba earns deep respect and reverence.

His political role continues as a retired statesman. Concerned with the problems besetting the world, his third wife Graca Machel, along with Desmond Tutu, called a special meeting with the world's leaders in Johannesburg. With projects such as these, Mandela, the retired South African president not only keeps physically busy but he also stimulates his mind. As a retiree, Mandela engages directly with the ongoing AIDS crisis. He experienced first hand the debilitating effect that the disease inflicts upon its host. His son Makgatho died of the disease on January 6, 2003. Unlike during his presidency, Mandela has given his verbal and financial support to AIDS research. He has supported an AIDS fundraising campaign. Mandela also served as a spokesperson in support of HIV/AIDS research at the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. Mandela leads by example. As a children's advocate, Mandela won the Global Friend's Award in 2005. His community outreach and support of national and international programs remains an inspiration to many leaders, the educated, and lay people.

Behind the public persona that has appeared national and international television screens is a humble and graceful man. Mandela still engages in a strict physical regime, which has him up at four in the morning for calisthenics. This former boxer has always stayed in shape even while in prison in a small prison cell, which not only confined him intellectually but also physically. His height is six feet and above. Several authors have written books about Mandela, some offering an authorized portrait, others a more critical analysis of Mandela's presidency, his role in the liberation struggle, his prison term, and his retirement. Mandela traces his life from his regal beginnings in Umtata to his imprisonment in *Long Walk to Freedom*, published in 1994. Readers learn about early South African history, especially the impact that Alexandra had on his political development. The work also deals with his relationship with Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Through his prose, readers learn

a lot about Mandela, the man, not the national and international hero that he became. Readers feel the frailty.

Besides written works penned by Mandela or scholars are cinematic reproductions. In the film *Mandela and De Klerk*, the director relayed the story of Mandela's release from prison. Sidney Poitier offered a riveting performance playing Mandela. Another cinematographic feat, *Goodbye Bafana*, a film that was screened at the Berlin Film Festival in 2007, portrays Dennis Haysbert as Mandela, and reconstructs Mandela's relationship with his prison guard James Gregory. His immortalization continues with public monuments in South Africa and abroad in such places as London. On March 31, 2004, the country witnessed the renaming of Sandton Square to Nelson Mandela Square. Three years later in 2007, in London, the city honored Mandela by unveiling a statue at Parliament Square. Mandela accepted the honor on behalf of all South Africans. This attitude attests to Mandela's humanity and graciousness. He is truly a modern hero.

*See also:* African Imperialism; African National Congress; Antiapartheid Movement; Biko, Steve; Castro, Fidel

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## March on Washington Movement, 1941

In 1941, A. Philip Randolph pushed for an all-black march on Washington to demand equal rights in government positions in the defense industry and the military. The organizers canceled the march when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802.

The onset of World War II in Europe and the subsequent enforced war preparation created millions of new

jobs, especially in the defense industry. This seemed to offer new opportunities for African Americans to improve their status and finally reach full citizenship. Hoping to take part in the economic upswing, African Americans migrated from the South to the new jobs centers; however, blacks met with racism, exclusion, and often violence. The situation was not much different in the armed forces where African Americans served in segregated units and were mostly assigned to service units. The federal government tended to ignore the issue or even supported racial discrimination.

In contrast to World War I, African Americans were no longer willing to tolerate their underprivileged and oppressed status based on the separate-but-equal premise. They demanded federal and state officials, as well as the president, to intercede and force companies to hire on an equal basis. The NAACP and the National Urban League joined a number of groups that focused on equal rights in employment. They demanded the creation of a committee to scrutinize and investigate racial discrimination. Government officials, however, did not consider it necessary to establish a separate committee to cover race issues.

A. Philip Randolph, the president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, believed a mass demonstration in Washington would be the most effective way to address the employment inequities faced by African Americans at this time. His idea for the march was strongly influenced by Gandhian concepts of nonviolent civil disobedience and his labor experience in protest marches and in rallying. Putting massive pressure on the government to demand jobs and equal participation in national defense was the only promising strategy for change. Having petitioned relentlessly, he grew frustrated with the reluctance of companies, the government, and the American president to make changes.

In January 1941, Randolph founded the March on Washington movement (MOWM) and called for 10,000 African Americans to join this protest march in Washington, D.C. scheduled for July 1, 1941. Its specific aim was the issuance of an executive order by the president to abolish racial discrimination in the government, military, and national defense industry.

The African American community foremost hailed and supported Randolph's call for an African American mass march on Washington. The MOWM made extensive use of the African American press that acted as an important information link between the organizers and the

participants in the march. Randolph used his methods of communication and the following he established during his fight for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The leading Civil Rights movements, the NAACP and the National Urban League, among others, embraced Randolph's plan and joined forces with him. Their appeals to President Roosevelt demanding a reformation of the defense program had not been crowned with success.

Initially meeting with protest, Randolph planned to exclude white supporters from the march. In an effort to build black self-esteem and community, he wanted the march to be organized, financed, and carried out solely by blacks. Furthermore, he feared that white communists would infiltrate and co-opt the march, thereby discrediting the event.

The March on Washington Committee, responsible for rallying and organizing, was made up of people from various Civil Rights movements, churches, and black organizations and acted nationally and locally. They planned for the marchers to walk silently behind muffled drums through the city to the Lincoln Memorial. The numbers of people wanting to participate rose sharply above 10,000. By June 1941, the organizers expected 100,000 African Americans to participate.

The initial reaction of the government was a demand to call off the march, arguing it would only stir racial hatred. The unwillingness of the organizers to comply with the president's request and the rising numbers of African Americans willing to participate started to concern government officials and the president. Roosevelt sent his wife Eleanor Roosevelt and Fiorello LaGuardia, the mayor of New York, to talk with and appease Randolph and White on June 13. They were unsuccessful in convincing the organizers to call off their march.

On June 19, 1941, the president finally met with Randolph and White. They informed Roosevelt that 100,000 people were planning to march and that only the passage of an executive order to ban all racial discrimination in the war industries and armed forces could prevent the march and satisfy the African American community. Despite serious reservations within the government, Roosevelt acquiesced at least partially to the demands of the MOWM. On June 25, 1941, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin in federal agencies and war-related industries. The order established the Federal Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to monitor

employment in defense industries and government agencies. Roosevelt, however, was not willing to end segregation in the military. To the dismay of many of his followers, Randolph called off the March on Washington.

Cancellation of the march notwithstanding, Randolph continued his MOWM organizing local rallies and marches to protest race discrimination. Most established Civil Rights movements, however, no longer supported Randolph, but rather criticized him for his methods. Despite this fall from grace, his MOWM and Randolph's methods were the paragon for the March on Washington in 1963.

*See also:* Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; March on Washington, 1963; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Randolph, A. Philip; Roosevelt, Eleanor; White, Walter

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## March on Washington, 1963

On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 demonstrators from all across the country descended on the nation's capital to participate in a March on Washington focusing on Jobs and Freedom. Not only was it the largest demonstration for human rights in U.S. history, but it also showcased, for the first time, unity among the various civil rights organizations. The event began with a rally at the Washington Monument featuring several celebrities and musicians. Participants then marched across the mile-long National Mall to the Memorial. The three-hour long program at the

Lincoln Memorial included speeches from prominent civil rights and religious leaders. The day ended with a meeting at the White House between the leaders and organizers of the march and President John F Kennedy.

The idea for the 1963 March on Washington was conceived by A. Philip Randolph, international president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, president of the Negro American Labor Council, and vice president of the AFL-CIO. Randolph, a long-time civil rights activist, was committed to improving the economic condition of black Americans.

In 1941, Randolph threatened to assemble 100,000 black Americans in the capital to help convince President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign an executive order banning discrimination in the armed services and creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee. As a result of this meeting with Roosevelt, Randolph postponed his idea for more than two decades. In 1962, however, the 73-year-old elder statesman of the Civil Rights movement reprised his idea with renewed motivation. With black employment at double the rate of white employment, and with civil rights for black Americans still unrealized, Randolph proposed a new march for jobs and freedom. When he first proposed the march in late 1962, he received little response from other civil rights leaders. But he knew that cooperation would be difficult because each of the civil rights organizations had their own agenda for the Civil Rights movement, and the leaders competed for funding and press coverage. Nonetheless, success of the March on Washington would depend on the participation of the "Big Six" civil rights organizations. These organizations and their leaders were Roy Wilkins of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Whitney Young Jr., of the National Urban League (NUL); Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); James Farmer of the Conference of Racial Equality (CORE); and John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

By June 1963, Dr. King had agreed to cooperate with Randolph on the march. The older, more conservative NAACP and NUL were still ambivalent. But after winning Randolph's promise that the march would be a nonviolent as well as a nonconfrontational event, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP pledged his organization's support. The promise of a nonviolent and nonconfrontational demonstration disappointed the more militant CORE and SNCC leaders who had already joined with Randolph. In addition, white

supporters such as labor leader Walter Reuther, as well as Jewish, Catholic, and Presbyterian officials offered their participation and help.

The organization and details of the march were handled by Bayard Rustin, a close associate of Randolph's. Rustin, an antiwar and civil rights activist, had extensive experience in organizing mass protests. Before the March on Washington, his most notable mass protest was organizing the first Freedom Ride in 1947. He had also participated in Randolph's plans for the 1941 march. With only two months to plan, Rustin established his headquarters in Harlem, with a smaller office in Washington. He and his core staff consisting of 200 volunteers quickly organized the largest peaceful demonstration in U.S. history. While Randolph and the NUL focused on jobs, the other civil rights groups centered on freedom. To finance the march, money was raised from the sale of buttons promoting the march at 25 cents per button. Thousands of people also sent in cash contributions.

A flyer produced by the National Office of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom articulated the six major goals of the march: meaningful civil rights laws, a massive federal works program, full and fair employment, decent housing, the right to vote, and adequate integrated education. More specifically, what was demanded in the March on Washington was passage of "meaningful" civil rights legislation at this session of Congress—no filibustering; immediate elimination of all racial segregation in public schools throughout the nation, a big program of public works to provide jobs for all the nation's unemployed including job training and a placement program, a federal law prohibiting racial discrimination in hiring workmen, either public or private, two dollars an hour minimum wage across the board nationwide; withholding of federal funds from programs that discriminate; enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment, reducing congressional representation of states where citizens are disenfranchised, a broadened Fair Labor Standards Act to include currently



*Civil rights leaders, including Roy Wilkins (bottom left) and A. Philip Randolph (bottom center), join hundreds of thousands of Americans in a march on Washington, D.C., in a multiracial demonstration for civil rights and equal opportunity in August 1963. (Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum)*

excluded employment areas, and authority for the attorney general to institute injunctive suits when any constitutional right is violated.

As plans progressed, however, the primary goal of the march turned toward passing federal civil rights legislation put forward by President Kennedy in the wake of the demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. The proposed march initially caused great concern within the Kennedy administration. From the administration's point of view, they had cause for concern. In May, massive black demonstrations in Birmingham had culminated with a night of rioting. Other parts of the country were ready to explode as well. Bob Moses, field secretary for SNCC, testifying before a House subcommittee on the president's civil rights bill to end discrimination in public places, education, and employment, warned congressmen they were facing a situation in Mississippi that had the potential to be far worse than Birmingham. With this information in hand, Kennedy believed that a mass gathering in Washington had the potential to undermine efforts being made to secure civil rights legislation and would damage the image of the United States globally. The president was also concerned that the event might intensify already heightened racial tensions across the country. Kennedy was also concerned that the march might erode the public support for the Civil Rights movement at large. Kennedy called Dr. King and other civil rights leaders to the White House in late June 1962 to try to convince them to cancel the march, but he was unable to persuade them.

Various influential organizations and individuals also opposed the march. Besides the expected, such as southern segregationists and members of the Ku Klux Klan, the black separatist group, National of Islam, and its outspoken member, Malcolm X, also opposed the march. Malcolm X referred to it as the "farce on Washington," and any member of the Nation of Islam who attended the march was subjected to a 90-day suspension from the organization. The National Council of the AFL-CIO also chose not to support the march, adopting a position of neutrality. A number of international unions, however, independently declared their support and attended the march in substantial numbers. Hundreds of local unions also fully supported the march.

On August 28, the marchers arrived in chartered buses, trains, planes, and private cars. More than 200,000 had assembled by the Washington Monument on the National Mall, where the march was to begin. It was a very diverse crowd consisting of black and white, rich and poor, young

and old, white collar, blue collar, unemployed, celebrities, and everyday people. The diversity of those in attendance was also reflected by the event's presenters and performers. Some of these included Marian Anderson, Daisy Lee Bates, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, John Lewis, Odetta, Peter, Paul, and Mary, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, A. Philip Randolph, Walter Ruther, Bayard Rustin, Josh White, Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young Jr.

Televised live to an audience of millions, the march provided numerous rhetorical moments in the form of speeches, songs, prayers, and actions (i.e., black and white people holding hands). Although the official march goals included an endorsement of Kennedy's civil rights bill—in part because the administration had officially cooperated with the march—some of the most passionate speeches criticized the bill as incomplete. John Lewis, the 23-year-old president of SNCC promised that without meaningful legislation, blacks would "march throughout the South." His speech prepared with other members of SNCC had originally suggested in the speech that they could not support the Kennedy legislation because it did not guarantee the right of black people to vote. In another part of the speech, SNCC had suggested that there was very little difference between the major political parties. They suggested that, as a movement, blacks could not wait on the president or the members of the Congress; they had to take matters into their own hands. Some people suggested that this portion of the speech was too inflammatory and that it might motivate people to riot. As a result, Lewis was forced to rewrite his original speech, which generally called the Kennedy legislative agenda for civil rights "too little, too late." Randolph and Wilkins also gave speeches. The most memorable speech of the day, however, came from Dr. King. The speech, reportedly delivered extemporaneously, would forever be known as the "I Have a Dream" speech. King's speech began with a powerful indictment of the nation's injustices against black Americans, then focused on a message of hope and determination, and a proclamation of what America could become, epitomizing the day's message of racial harmony, love, and a belief that blacks and whites could live together in peace. "I Have a Dream" is considered one of the greatest and most influential speeches in American history.

The march was an American landmark event for the early Civil Rights movement, and an overwhelming success owing to the organizers, leaders, participants, and

extensive coverage by the media. The march is partly credited with winning passage of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although there was a presigned executive order authorizing 1,000 plus military intervention in case of rioting, there were no major disturbances. The behavior of the participants and onlookers proved that the presence of the military was unnecessary. Many Americans witnessed, for the first time, black and white people united, marching and celebrating together.

After the march, King and other civil rights leaders met with President Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House. Feeling the pressure of more than 200,000 Americans, Kennedy told them that he intended to throw his whole weight behind civil rights legislation. The march had not only achieved tangible goals, but it had also brought widespread attention to the struggle for civil rights. *See also:* Abernathy, Ralph David; Anderson, Marian; Bates, Daisy; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Lewis, John; March on Washington Movement, 1941; Rustin, Bayard; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; X, Malcolm

Janice D. Hamlet

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## Marshall, Thurgood

Thurgood Marshall (1908–1993) was born Thurgood Marshall (a name he later shortened legally) to Norma and William Marshall in the age of Jim Crow. Although Thurgood Marshall is perhaps best remembered for his historic position as the first black Supreme Court Justice and other men, such as Martin Luther King Jr., have garnered more fame for their leadership in the Civil Rights movement, Marshall's

most direct and lasting contributions to the advancement of the race came in the years before the movement. Marshall, as an activist, laid the groundwork for the movement. As a direct result of Thurgood Marshall's and other civil rights leaders' efforts to uplift the race by overturning their subordinate legal status, blacks have earned political influence and arguably a stronger sense of community.

Throughout his life, Marshall was intimately and passionately involved with issues pertaining to equal rights for all men and women, regardless of race, ethnicity, or creed. Marshall's activism extended from his time at the NAACP (1932–1961) through his time as U.S. solicitor general (1965–1967). This can also be seen in the opinions and dissensions he wrote on the country's highest court (1967–1991). His NAACP tenure was a pivotal time for the organization when overturning racial segregation was one of its primary mandates. It was at the beginning of his career that Marshall began his work on his first segregation case, *Murray v. Pearson*, to open admission at the University of Maryland Law School to blacks—the same institution that denied him admittance only a few years earlier. By the time Marshall joined the bench of the Supreme Court, he had argued 32 cases before that body and won 29 of them, mostly in the name of racial desegregation and other civil rights causes.

The gains made by the *Murray* decision were small, for it only opened the law school; other graduate programs would be sued in the coming decade. Nevertheless, *Murray* was a significant step toward the larger educational accomplishments of Marshall and the NAACP. During the next two decades leading up to *Brown* (1954), which overturned *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896), Marshall's cases challenged the foundation of American law itself. His goal was not merely to remind the nation to adhere to the Fourteenth Amendment—equal protection—but to demonstrate that the rules that he fought to overturn were wrong.

Marshall challenged segregation case after case. Although most of his cases dealt with educational equality, the future Justice also fought for blacks' right to vote in Texas primaries (*Smith v. Allwright*, 1944), the right to rent or buy any place of residence, and for equality of pay. In 1954, Marshall argued *Brown v. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. The *Brown* case encompassed five school segregation cases in Virginia, South Carolina, Delaware, Kansas, and Washington, D.C. After 17 years of success in opening postsecondary and graduate education through a series of court



Thurgood Marshall, the first African American appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, built a remarkable legal career on the premise that all forms of racial segregation were unconstitutional. (Joseph Lavenburg, National Geographic Society, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States)

cases, Marshall, the Legal Defense Fund, and the NAACP were ready to take on educational segregation on a primary school level. Separate was clearly unequal. This inequality was apparent in Clarendo County, South Carolina, for example; per capita spending for white students was \$179 compared to spending for black students of \$43, and the student-to-teacher ratio in the white schools was 28:1, but in the black school system it was nearly double, 47:1.

Topeka, Kansas was different. The facilities were equal. Marshall's argument in *Brown* had to go further than the need for equal facilities; otherwise the Court could uphold *Plessy* and again rule that school segregation was permissible as long as facilities were equal. Marshall wanted educational integration. He focused on testimony presented by experts about the terrible effects of state-sponsored segregation on black children. Marshall argued "that segregated schools, perhaps more than any other single factor, are of major concern to the individual of public school age and contribute greatly to the unwholesomeness and unhappy development of the personality of Negroes which the color

caste system in the United States has produced" (*Supreme Justices*, p. 52). The case was not easily won; it was almost a year-and-a-half after the Court began hearing the case that Chief Justice Warren finally read the Court's unanimous decision "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (*Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483).

The Supreme Court extended the *Brown* decision beyond education by expanding the principle to desegregate other public facilities. Through a series of signed and *per curiam* opinions, the Court ordered equal access to public parking lots, restaurants, cemeteries, hospitals, parks, golf courses, buses, beaches, and amphitheatres.

Marshall realized the impact of the *Brown* decision. He believed that *Brown* "probably did more than anything else to awaken the Negro from his apathy to demanding his right to equality" (*A Defiant Life*, p. 147). Therefore, the 1954 decision can be seen as the foundation for the Civil Rights movement; however, Marshall did not think *Brown* alone made the movement. When reflecting on the importance of his victories in *Smith* and *Brown*, Marshall once said, "I don't know whether the voting case or the school desegregation case was more important. Without the ballot, you've got no goddamned citizenship, no status, no power, in this country. But without the chance to get an education, you have no capacity to use the ballot effectively. Hell, I don't know which case I'm proudest of" (*Supreme Justices*, p. 75). See also: *Brown v. Board of Education*; Houston, Charles Hamilton; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Thomas, Clarence

Noah D. Drezner

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## Matthews, Victoria Earle

Social reformer, journalist, and settlement house founder, Victoria Earle Matthews (1861–1907) committed her life

to service. Born May 27, 1861, as one of nine children to a Virginia-born slave in Georgia, Victoria was part of the urban migration after emancipation. First moving to Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, Victoria and her family arrived in New York City in 1873. She gained some education through the public schools, but she had to leave and find employment as a domestic to help her family. At 18, she married William Matthews, a coachman, and began to write articles and short stories for the *Waverly* magazine under the pen name, Victoria Earle. Her writings appeared in children's magazines and in both black and white newspapers as a way to earn money and as an intellectual outlet. Soon widowed and following the death of her only son, Matthews devoted her time to social welfare activities.

An admirer of Ida B. Wells, journalist and leader of the antilynching movement, Matthews joined with other black women in the New York City-Brooklyn community to honor Wells at a testimonial dinner in Lyric Hall on October 5, 1892. This event led to the formation of two important women's clubs: the Woman's Loyal Union, organized by Matthews and Maritcha Lyons later that month, and the Woman's Era Club of Boston, founded by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin in January 1893.

As founder and first president of the Woman's Loyal Union, Matthews assumed a leadership position in the emerging club movement. She attended the first conference of black women in the summer of 1895, delivering a speech, "The Value of Race Literature." She was party to the formation of the National Federation of Afro-American Women in 1895 and became a delegate to the Congress of Colored Women at the Atlanta Exposition in December 1895. Despite the racial segregation at the Exposition, Matthews attended, heard the speech of Booker T. Washington, and visited other southern cities to gather information about the condition of black women in cities. She brought back this information to the New York women. The next summer, Matthews joined these black women in Washington, D. C. to merge two national organizations into the National Association of Colored Women, for which Matthews served as the national organizer.

On the trip back from the Atlanta Exposition and her tour of southern cities, she witnessed conditions for young, black women coming from the rural South to the northern cities in search of better wages, working conditions, and opportunities. Traveler's aid was unconcerned about black women being duped by unscrupulous men at the docks.

After her return to her Brooklyn home on Poplar Street, she gathered clubwomen together to develop a protective service for young working girls. The White Rose Home opened on February 11, 1897 to shelter and protect these young migrants and train them in practical self-help. Matthews and her helpers filled the need for travelers' aid by meeting the arrivals at the boats. The service expanded by providing agents at the Norfolk docks and became the White Rose Travelers' Aid Society in 1905. In addition to temporary lodging and training, services similar to employment agencies emerged to protect the women at work and obtain fair wages. Protecting and training black domestics received the support of white benefactors Mrs. C. P. Huntington, Grace Dodge, and Mary L. Stone, who contributed money and served as volunteers.

Matthews balanced training in practical skills (cooking, laundry, sewing, chair caning, and wood burnishing) with lectures on race history and leadership. Matthews turned over her personal collection of race literature to the settlement library and encouraged the young women to read the books to establish race pride. When race leaders visited New York City, Matthews invited them to speak to the women and encourage them to achieve.

Matthews and her sister clubwomen served as administrators, fundraisers, and teachers/volunteers. Alice Moore Dunbar taught in the kindergarten. Hallie Q. Brown served as assistant superintendent. When Matthews's health declined, Frances Reynolds Keyser assumed the leadership for the White Rose Home. Matthews died of tuberculosis on March 10, 1907. Services were held at her church, St. Philips Episcopal, followed by her burial in New York City's Maple Grove Cemetery.

Her legacy lived on through the White Rose Home, which became a model settlement house. The services provided impetus for the formation of the National League for the Protection of Colored Women in 1906. Urban multi-service centers grew out of these homes or missions for the protection of young black women. The centers filled the needs for lodging, job placement, night classes, industrial training, day nurseries, kindergartens, libraries, boys and girls clubs, savings clubs, choir and music programs, and social gatherings. They became the training ground for black visiting nurses and social workers graduating from emerging educational programs in social work. The centers cooperated with the National Urban League through affiliation and laid the foundation for major social services in black communities for generations.



See also: Antilynching Campaign; National Association of Colored Women; Wells-Barnett, Ida.

Dorothy Salem

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## McKay, Claude

Poet, journalist, editor, and black radical, Claude McKay (1889–1948) is best known for the literary contributions he made to the period in African American history commonly known as the Harlem Renaissance (1920–1930). Claude McKay was born in the upper Clarendon Parish in Jamaica in 1889 to Thomas Francis McKay and Hanna Ann Elizabeth Edwards. The youngest of eight children, McKay lived a sheltered life of relative ease as a result of the hard work of his parents. The McKay family's economic circumstances situated them as members of a small elite group of black farmers, but their dark skin ensured a somewhat marginalized social status among the lighter complexioned people whose skin color granted social status. These earlier experiences greatly influenced McKay's writing.

Before leaving his homeland of Jamaica in 1912 at the age of 22, McKay wrote two volumes of poetry in dialect. These volumes established McKay as an important literary figure among his local constituency. His arrival at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama that same year marked the beginning of an important period of self-discovery. The harsh realities of southern racism in part prompted McKay to leave Tuskegee a few months later to attend Kansas State College, a decision that proved unsatisfactory socially, but was beneficial to his career and intellectual development. It was during his two year stay in Kansas that McKay first read W. E. B. Du Bois's work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). For McKay, Du Bois clearly articulated the marginalized social, political, and economic position that blacks in America occupied. Arguments made by Du Bois resonated with

McKay's own experiences, both in Jamaica and in America. His poetry and writing reflected a growing sense of racial and class consciousness that was further enhanced by his encounters with other writers, artists, and intellectuals whom he met during his years in New York.

By the summer of 1914, McKay found himself in Harlem, New York, married to Eulalie Imelda Lewars, a long-time friend from Jamaica. During his early years in New York, McKay found employment as a porter, waiter, and briefly as an unsuccessful restaurant owner. He continued honing his writing skills and incorporated bits and pieces of his employment experiences into his poetry and fiction.

New York offered ample opportunities to engage in social activities, and McKay often did so with abandon. It was also here that he began further exploring his own homosexuality, which no doubt played a role in the dissolution of his marriage after only six months. His wife returned to Jamaica where she bore McKay's only child, a daughter whom he never saw.

By 1918, New York was becoming a hot bed of social protest. McKay was able to surround himself by like-minded radicals such as black socialist, Hubert Harrison. McKay also established working relationships with prominent men and women able to advance his writing career, such as Frank Harris, publisher of *Pearson's Magazine*, and Crystal Eastman, sister of Max Eastman, chief editor of the radical magazine the *Liberator*, and scholar Arthur Schomburg. McKay's reputation as a notable writer of the Harlem Renaissance era is both national and international. During his lifetime he contributed poems, short stories, and critical essays to many of the most popular literary journals of his time. Notably, in the aftermath of the 1919 Chicago race riot, he published "If We Must Die"—a militant poem that, in many ways, was an immediate precursor to the Harlem Renaissance. Claude McKay died in 1948 of heart disease. See also: Chicago Race Riot of 1919; Harlem Renaissance; "If We Must Die"; New Negro Movement; Red Summer Race Riots

Beverly A. Bunch-Lyons

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## Media Stereotypes

The stereotyping of African Americans within American media has been occurring since before the Civil War. Scholars have noted that the most prevalent forms are the slick Zip Coon, the savage Brute, the passive Uncle Tom, and the no-nonsense Mammy. Also present were images of the young black child as Pickaninny, the dim-witted yet noble Buck, and the tragically confused biracial Mulatto. Many of these images have appeared in print (posters, advertisements), heard on radio shows (the unseen banter of white men pretending to be Black on *Amos n' Andy* from 1928 to 1937), film (since before *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915 to contemporary "urban dramas"), and television programming of all genre. In each of these depictions, African Americans are reduced to caricatures of racial representations that often misinformed popular culture. A stereotype is defined as a standardized way of perceiving members of a group. Those who often seek to stereotype various groups (in this case, African Americans) reduce a complex, multifaceted people into homogeneous groups with only a subtle degree of variation.

Exposure of these media stereotypes began early in American history. During the days of minstrelsy, images appeared on billboards advertising upcoming stage shows. Many of these posters depicted the grinning Zip Coon wearing upscale garments that were mismatched and poorly fitted. This same pretentious character represented the free black's inability to fit into white society. The Brute, however, often appeared in the popular mainstream press as a reminder of how dangerous freed blacks could be. Misshapen and hideously unattractive, the Brute evoked fear in the hearts of white Americans. The editorial pages of many early newspapers reminded readers that these men (and women) would be set free to roam among them if abolitionists had their way. In advertising, images of the older, gray-haired Uncle Tom sitting placidly on a backwoods porch often appeared, seemingly

content within his life of servitude. The Mammy was his female counterpart, often large and dark-skinned, cooking and cleaning for the master and missus, raising their children and occasionally working the fields when needed.

It has been argued by media scholars that these stereotypes are still with us today in newer, more modern guises. Many African American comedians still "skin and grin" as did Zip Coon; using comic routines that are buffoonish and self-deprecating. Young black men as brutish gang members threaten our streets while older, more conservative "Toms" supposedly support the slow, but gradual process of America society. Meanwhile, many sitcoms have featured large, mammy-like women doting after children and carrying out their expected duties.

During the 1960s and beyond, many media stereotypes of African Americans, previously coarse in their demeanor, were now transformed into articulate and highly intelligent people. For many black audiences, these countertypes attempted to send the message that they now had many of the same innate possibilities for success as did their white counterparts. For other audiences, black people had become assimilated into lifestyles that helped support the status quo of society, law, and order. Some movies and television shows featured black detectives and lawyers. Social responsibility was demonstrated by doctors and teachers working within the community, and social equality was shown through successful African American business owners. Each of these generalizations attempted to draw attention away from ongoing struggles against racial inequality and injustice.

Audiences often learn about other cultural groups from media, reinforcing cultural beliefs and subsequent values. Stereotypes have allowed writers and producers of programming and images to create shorthand versions of characters. These well-worn constructs often avoid explanations of motivations and instead use stereotypes to represent what these motivations *probably* are. Within an urban crime drama, it is not important to know the motivations of a young black man trapped within gang life. Through media stereotypes, audiences can make assumptions about criminal behavior and probable intent, allowing the hero/heroine to rescue society from the young man's criminality and chaos. These plots posit constructs and then move forward with a pretense, a problem, and the resolution. Stereotypes within narrative often take complex notions of

the real world and make them easier to understand through oversimplification.

Media stereotypes have also affected the self-definition of African Americans. These “internalized media stereotypes” cause African American audiences to alter their self-image. Young black males may behave in a more aggressive fashion because of how *their* lives are depicted in videos. Assumptions about relationships are based on televised depictions of black marriages and romances. Traditionally black neighborhoods are considered undesirable based solely on how a television show (especially news coverage) frames them. Media stereotypes have been so pervasive that many other countries have seemingly come to “understand” African Americans through what they have seen in American media.

See also: BET; Jim Crow; *The Birth of a Nation*

Darrell Newton

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## Meredith, James

James Meredith (1933–) is a civil rights activist who is best known for becoming the first African American student to attend the University of Mississippi in October 1962. Meredith's entry into the school served as a major turning point for the Civil Rights movement. James Howard Meredith was born June 25, 1933, in Kosciusko, Mississippi to farmers, Moses and Roxie Meredith. Moses Meredith was one of few African Americans in Mississippi who not only owned his own farm, but was also registered to vote, and he made a strong effort to make sure that James and his nine brothers

and sisters were sheltered from the racism of the surrounding community. After graduating high school, James Meredith immediately joined the U.S. Air Force, which he served in from 1951 to 1960. In 1956, he married Mary June Wiggins, and the pair had three sons. After his discharge from the military, Meredith enrolled at Jackson State College for two years before applying for a transfer to the University of Mississippi at Oxford. Despite his excellent grades, he was denied admission twice before finally gaining acceptance in 1962. Then-governor Ross Barnett adamantly opposed Meredith's admission to the University, and personally traveled there to prevent Meredith from registering for classes. Meredith finally gained entrance to the school on October 1, 1962, where his presence sparked riots all over the campus. In all, 5,000 federal troops and 500 U.S. marshals were needed to quell the violence, which left two people dead and hundreds injured.

Many students treated Meredith poorly during his two semesters at the university. Although some apparently accepted his presence and he made friends, some students living in his dorm would bounce basketballs on the floor directly above Meredith's room at all hours of the night to disturb him. When Meredith would go to the cafeteria, people turned their backs to him, and if he sat at a table with other students, those students, who were all white, would immediately get up and move to another table. Despite this poor treatment, Meredith graduated with a degree in political science on August 18, 1963.

Following his time at the University of Mississippi, Meredith continued his education at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria before receiving a law degree from Columbia University in 1968. In addition to continuing his studies, Meredith remained a pivotal figure in the Civil Rights movement throughout the 1960s. Most notably, he led a civil rights march from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi in the summer of 1966. Calling his march the “Walk Against Fear,” he hoped that his example would encourage the nearly half-million disenfranchised in Mississippi to overcome their fear of white retaliation and they would register to vote. Meredith did not invite any national civil rights groups to join him, instead choosing to march alone. On June 6, the day after the march started, Meredith was shot by sniper Aubrey James Norvell after walking only 28 miles. Although wounded, Meredith healed enough to finish the march two weeks later, this time joined by Dr. Martin Luther King and other nationally recognized



James Meredith (photo taken in 1966) is a civil rights activist who is best known for becoming the first African American student to attend the University of Mississippi in October 1962. (Library of Congress)

civil rights activists. A photograph of Meredith after he was wounded won a Pulitzer Prize in photography in 1967.

Meredith ceased his civil rights activism in the late 1960s and authored a memoir about his time at the University of Mississippi entitled *Three Years in Mississippi*, published in 1966. He then settled into a career as a stockbroker before running unsuccessfully for a congressional seat in 1972, and then serving as a domestic advisor on the staff of U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, a one-time segregationist, beginning in 1989. Although he received a barrage of criticism from the civil rights community, Meredith, a staunch Republican, defended his decision to work for Helms, stating that he had written letters to every member of the House of Representatives and Senate offering his services and only Helms had replied. Meredith's most recent publication a historical work, *Mississippi: A Volume of Eleven Books*, was published in 1995. He presented his papers to his alma mater, the University of Mississippi, on March 21, 1997.

In 2002, Meredith's son Joseph graduated from the University of Mississippi with a doctorate in business administration. Joseph Meredith also received honors for being the most outstanding student in the school of business administration.

Today, Meredith distances himself from the Civil Rights movement of which he was such an instrumental part, referring to himself instead as a citizen who fought to protect the rights extended to all Americans. He currently lives in Jackson, Mississippi with his second wife, journalist Judy Alsobrooks, and runs a small used-car dealership. See also: Black Conservatives; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; Republican Party; White Mob Violence

Sara K. Eskridge

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## MFDP

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), founded on April 26, 1964 in Jackson Mississippi, was organized as an alternative to the regular Mississippi Democratic Party that denied African Americans in the state their voting rights. Spurred on by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the MFDP had two objectives from the outset: to affirm black self-determination and to challenge northern-based white allies to take a stronger stance in support of the southern-based Civil Rights movement.

Building on SNCC's years of organizing around voter registration in the state, the MFDP was inspired by the 1963 "Freedom Ballot," a mock gubernatorial election in which nearly 80,000 black Mississippians cast votes. It envisioned itself as the catalyst to organizing black political participation in the state while serving as a nonexclusionary party open to both blacks and whites and running an integrated slate of candidates. Further, unlike mainstream political

parties, women occupied leadership roles in the MFDP. Two of the most noticeable women were Fannie Lou Hamer and Victoria Gray, who ran for the House and Senate, respectively, in the state primary races for Congress. Noting the danger of bucking the establishment of the racist political structure in Mississippi, Hamer, who had received many death threats for her participation in civil rights activities, stated, "But if I fall, I'll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom" (*Freedom's Daughters*, p. 315).

In addition to the central roles Hamer and Gray played, Ella Baker acted as a voluntary director of the MFDP's Washington, D.C. office and keynoted the party's convention. Displaying a keen understanding of the long-term effect of the MFDP's ability to politicize poor African Americans in the state and develop a new grassroots leadership Baker noted, "It is important that you go to the [Democratic National] convention whether you are seated or not. It is even more important that you develop a political machinery in this state. The MFDP will not end at the convention. This is only the beginning" (*Freedom's Daughters*, p. 317).

On August 21, 1964, the 68 MFDP delegates arrived in Atlantic City, New Jersey and began to lobby for support to be seated as Mississippi's official delegation for the Democratic National Convention. President Lyndon Johnson was so worried that a high-profile fight over seating the MFDP would cost him reelection by losing southern votes that he attempted to undercut support for the party. In a well-known show of insecurity and power politics, as Fannie Lou Hamer was addressing 110 members of the convention's Credentials Committee, Johnson called a press conference so that media attention would be drawn away from Hamer's compelling testimony about what it meant to be black and poor in Mississippi, which was being broadcast nationwide.

Seeing that the MFDP would not be deterred, President Johnson made an effort to placate the upstart delegation. Johnson offered a compromise; he would allow two of the party's delegates that he hand-picked to be seated as nonvoting delegates-at-large, and the rest of the MFDP's delegates would be accepted as guests of the convention. Although some MFDP delegates were initially in favor of the compromise and some heavyweight civil rights leaders such as Roy Wilkins and Martin Luther King urged the MFDP to accept the deal, the party rejected it.

Johnson was incensed by the party's refusal and had their phones tapped. Further, at Johnson's request, FBI

agents posed as NBC correspondents to try to extract information from party delegates. The most underhanded incident occurred when Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale brought the rejected compromise to the Credentials Committee as if the MFDP had accepted it. Based on the assumption that the MFDP was in favor of the compromise, both the Credentials Committee and full Democratic Convention approved the compromise without the knowledge of the MFDP. With that, the MFDP was locked out of participating in the convention the same way as Mississippi residents were barred from voting.

Although 20 MFDP delegates managed to enter the convention hall and stage a protest that was nationally televised, with credentials passes given to them by other sympathetic delegates, in the end the MFDP was unable to unseat the regular Mississippi Democratic delegation. The mainstream Democrats viewed the MFDP as a threat to business as usual and, as journalist Carl Braden noted, "They [the MFDP] were really serving notice that if [they] are going to be involved in politics, it's going to be an entirely different kind of politics and different people are going to run things... I mean this is a threat... If you're somewhere in power you don't want that happening" (*Freedom's Daughters*, pp. 323–24).

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party may not have been seated at the Democratic National Convention, but it brought the struggle and injustice that African Americans in Mississippi faced to a national spotlight, helped pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and led to an overhaul of the Democratic Party, opening it up to groups that previously had little or no representation in its councils before the MFDP's challenge. Thinking back on the MFDP, civil rights activist Bob Moses noted, "The MFDP was raising an important question with this country, and with the Democratic Party, as one of its major political institutions: Generations of Black people had been denied access to the political process; could they get it now?... We were challenging them [the Democratic Party] to recognize the existence of a whole group of people—white and Black and disenfranchised—who form the underclass of this country" (*Radical Equations*, pp. 82–83).

Although the answer to Moses's question was a resounding "NO," according to civil rights scholar Leslie McLemore, the MFDP represented, "the coming of political age of Black people in Mississippi in a way that had not been seen since Reconstruction" (Olsen, 2001, 324).

Further, John Lewis, a SNCC chairman during the 1960s, indicates that the MFDP's challenge was the turning point of the Civil Rights movement, noting that until the Democratic Convention failed to seat the MFDP, most civil rights activists held on to the belief that the democratic system would eventually work. After the Atlantic City debacle, however, such faith in the system was lost and people now saw that if change was going to happen, they were going to have to make it happen.

*See also:* Baker, Ella; Disfranchisement; Hamer, Fannie Lou; Lowndes County Freedom Organization; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; Moses, Robert; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Voting Rights Act of 1965

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## Million Man March

On October 16, 1995, an estimated 850,000 African American men gathered on Washington, D.C.'s National Mall for one of the largest political rallies in U.S. history. By comparison, 250,000 people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds gathered for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom to hear Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. The so-called Million Man March was organized principally by the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan, and was meant to generate discussions about self-help and to engage African American men to commit to their families and to help stop drug use, violence, and other vices in their communities. These themes were repeated in the speeches delivered by more than 60 African American and diasporic African dignitaries including Maya Angelou, Reverend Jeremiah

Wright, Martin Luther King III, Rosa Parks, Reverend Jesse Jackson, Reverend Benjamin Chavis, Minister Rasul Muhammad, Dick Gregory, and Senator Aldebert Bryan of the Virgin Islands. Concentrated on the themes of atonement, reconciliation, and responsibility, the Million Man March was not—as projected in the media—another frustrated attempt to uncover racism and the hands of white America in the plight of African Americans.

The march was organized in the context of troubling political trends showing that African American concerns were being pushed to the periphery of the political landscape. In 1994, sweeping Republican Party victories in congressional elections—based in part on the positive reception of the Contact with America—led to Republicans becoming the majority party in the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. Republicans, like Minority Whip Newt Gingrich and Tom DeLay, played active roles in setting political agendas for President Bill Clinton, particularly on issues like law enforcement and welfare reform, which concerned African Americans. In many ways, the Million Man March can be seen as a direct reaction to two Republican-led initiatives in mid- to late-1995—the Taking Back Our Streets Act (which called for the building of new prisons and tougher sentencing) and the Personal Responsibility Act (which called for significant reforms in welfare programs).

On the same day as the Million Man March, female leaders associated with the march organizers called for the National Day of Absence, which would be observed by those who could not be in attendance in Washington, D.C. On the National Day of Absence, African Americans were encouraged to be absent from school and work and to attend either teach-ins or worship services, which would facilitate discussions and contemplation on the livelihood and self-sufficiency of African American communities across the country. Organizers of both the march and the Day of Absence hoped to move the movements beyond political discourse and sought to engage the issues plaguing African American communities on a spiritual level. Given the role played by ministers of the Nation of Islam and Christian religious leaders in both movements, the fact that they emphasized spiritual healing as the foundation for solutions to various social ills makes sense.

The various themes of spiritual healing, atonement, reconciliation, and responsibility were highlighted in the Million Man March Pledge. After the speech delivered by

Minister Louis Farrakhan, he asked all men in attendance to raise their right hand and to repeat the following:

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge that from this day forward, I will strive to love my brother as I love myself.

I \_\_\_\_\_ from this day forward will strive to improve myself spiritually, morally, mentally, socially, politically and economically for the benefit of myself, my family and my people.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge that I will strive to build business, build houses, build hospitals, build factories and enter into international trade for the good of myself, my family and my people.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge that from this day forward I will never raise my hand with a knife or a gun to beat, cut or shoot any member of my family or any human being except in self defense.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge from this day forward, I will never abuse my wife by striking her, disrespecting her, for she is the mother of my children and the producer of my future.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge that from this day forward, I will never engage in the abuse of children, little boys or little girls, for sexual gratification. But I will let them grow in peace to be strong men and women for the future of our people.

I \_\_\_\_\_ will never again use the "b" word to describe any female, but particularly my own Black sister.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge that from this day forward that I will not poison my body with drugs or that which is destructive to my health and my well-being.

I \_\_\_\_\_ pledge from this day forward that I will support Black newspapers, Black radio, Black television. I will support Black artists who clean up their acts and show respect for themselves and respect for their people and respect for the heirs of the human family.

I \_\_\_\_\_ will do all of this, so help me God.

After the pledge, each man in the crowd was asked to hug another. Although controversies about the lack of involvement and support by President Clinton and the actual size of the crowd during the Million Man March would shape some of the public discourse surrounding the events on October 16, 1995, the march helped initiate internal discussions and reassessments within African American communities. Moreover, it spawned a number of similar movements, including the Million Woman March (1997), the Million Youth March (1998), and the Million Family March (2000). The energy and discussions created by the movement were highlighted in Spike Lee's 1996 movie *Get on the Bus*.

See also: Clinton, William Jefferson; Farrakhan, Louis; March on Washington, 1963; Nation of Islam

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## Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964

During the summer of 1964, hundreds of black and white students volunteered to enter the Deep South to work on a program called Freedom Summer. The impetus behind Freedom Summer was to work on voter registration, establish freedom schools, and get the black community involved in local politics. Most of the volunteers were members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These groups together combined to make the Mississippi Council of Federated Organization for the sole purpose of politically organizing black communities, in Mississippi

Mississippi was an important place for civil rights work for several reasons. First, perhaps out of the entire South, blacks in Mississippi had horrible political and economic conditions, especially in the Mississippi Delta. In 1962, Mississippi only had 6.7 percent of the black population registered to vote. Despite the constitutional right for all citizens to be able to vote, black Mississippians were constantly in fear of losing their home, jobs, and lives from white retaliation. Furthermore, the white political machine continually disfranchised the black community through enforcement of poll taxes and literacy test.

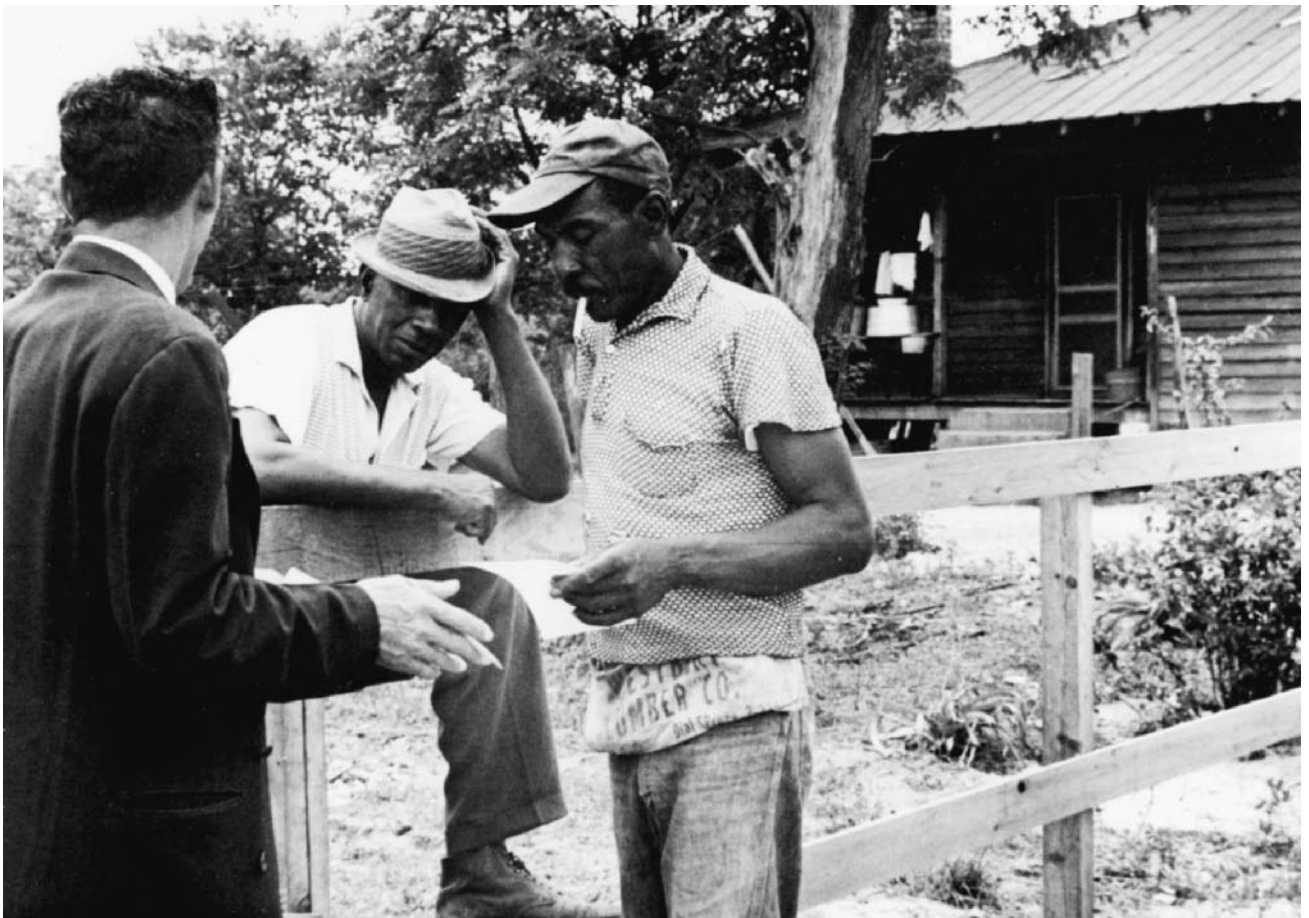
The second reason Mississippi was important was the continued economic oppression facing the black community. The Mississippi Delta was severely impoverished. Mechanization caused a lot of workers to lose their jobs, and those who still had jobs were in fear of losing them because they fought to be able to vote. Black Mississippians and SNCC organizers believed the key to a brighter economic future rested in the hands of those who ran the government. Many communities in Mississippi had a black majority, so they should not only be able to vote but also hold political office.

One of the local individuals that helped organize and galvanize a nation for political and economic improvement in Mississippi was Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer. Born in Montgomery County, Mississippi, Hamer was raised by sharecroppers and continued working as a sharecropper in the Mississippi Delta. Once SNCC became active in Mississippi during the summer of 1962, Hamer worked with them to educate and register to vote thousands of poor blacks living

in the area. Hamer was also not intimidated by the white community. When the owner of the plantation she worked for asked her not to register to vote, she did so anyway, despite the threats of being removed from the land she had worked so hard on.

Although she was Hamer continued to work for voter rights in Mississippi. One of the events that placed her into the national spotlight was her arrest in Winona, Mississippi after returning from a citizenship class in Charleston, South Carolina. She was arrested on trumped-up charges and severely beaten while in jail. There was a highly publicized court case, in which the defendants were found not guilty. After all the publicity from Hamer's beating and subsequent trial, however, her name began garnering national attention both for her personally and for the state of Mississippi.

Hamer was also a founder and organizer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in the spring of 1964. The creation and sustaining of the MFDP became one of the primary goals of Freedom Summer. Volunteers



*Volunteer worker urges Southern African Americans to register to vote in 1964. (National Archives)*



traveled from house to house in the black community urging individuals to vote and become active in the political process. The creation of the MFDP was especially important because of the upcoming presidential election. They wanted to make President Johnson realize that the needs of the black community had to be met and the Democratic Party, as it currently was, did not represent black America. The main goal of the MFDP was to unseat the all-white Mississippi Democratic regulars at the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and be recognized as the true representatives of Mississippi.

On August 20, 1964, MFDP delegates arrived, including Hamer. Upon their arrival, the convention had to decide who would represent Mississippi on the convention floor. The Credential Committee held a hearing that was broadcast live across the nation. Hamer spoke on the injustices going on in Mississippi and the political climate of the South. Just as her speech was starting to get impassioned, President Johnson interrupted the broadcast with an impromptu press conference.

Despite President Johnson's attempt to cut Hamer off, the nation had already seen enough to give national support to the MFDP. President Johnson was afraid that if he issued his support for the MFDP, he would lose the southern Democratic vote and ultimately the presidency. A compromise had to be reached. The convention decided to offer the MFDP two seats at large and bar any delegation guilty of discrimination. All but four of the regular Democrat delegates from Mississippi walked off the floor, and the MFDP tried to obtain those seats but were not allowed on the floor. Ultimately, the MFDP turned down the two seats. The MFDP did not get seated at the convention, but the creation and support of the party helped to achieve a major goal of Freedom Summer—getting the local community interested and active in local politics and garnering the nation's attention toward black voting rights in the South.

Beyond the local community, hundreds of white volunteers from the North helped spread the word and educate the black community about their voting rights. Community centers were created where children could have not only "traditional" educational classes, but also organize for political change in their communities. Before these northern volunteers went to Mississippi, they received training in Oxford, Ohio, led by Jim Forman and other SNCC members, including Fannie Lou Hammer. The purpose of training was to introduce them to nonviolence tactics and

give them an understanding of what mob violence might be like. If past events, like the Freedom Rides, were any indication of how white mobs acted on both black and white bodies, the volunteers knew that violence, if not death, was likely.

Nothing illustrated that threat better than the disappearance of a black volunteer, James Chaney, and two white volunteers, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. These three men set out on June 21 for Philadelphia, Mississippi to investigate the bombing of a black church. The men were arrested and then released that same evening, never to be seen again. Press conferences were held and the families of all three men begged the public for any information about their whereabouts. President Johnson even launched an FBI investigation into their disappearance. The wife of Michael Schwerner, Rita, publicly addressed the fact that if all the men had been black, there would be no national attention over their disappearance and that it was a shame that white men had to die before the violence in Mississippi, and the South in general, would be noticed by the American public. Eventually, the scorched remains of their car were found, leading everyone to fear they were dead. Their suspicions were confirmed on April 4 when their bodies were found buried together in a shallow grave. The FBI had offered \$30,000 to a Ku Klux Klan member for the information on where they were buried. All three were killed by gunshots to the head, and Chaney was also severely beaten. The families of the three men wanted them all to be buried together, but because of continued segregation in cemeteries, their wish could not be fulfilled.

The disappearance of the three men did have a positive impact on the events of that summer. It placed more media attention on the volunteers and perhaps resulted in less violence than normal toward the workers. Despite the media, approximately 80 volunteers were beaten and 1,000 were jailed over the course of the summer. In addition, houses, Freedom Schools, churches, and other centers of volunteer activity were burned or firebombed. Despite the fear of violence, students were eager to work in Mississippi. Although cooperation between black and white workers showed the nation how all people could work together to effect change in Mississippi, however, people began to question whether the presence of whites was actually a positive for accomplishing the goals of Freedom Summer.

For instance, local blacks could expect more harassment from local whites for just talking with the volunteers.

Immediately, white youth started driving through the black communities where white volunteers were staying and would break windows, start fires, or make other threats against the black community. The black community was inviting violence by talking to the volunteers, and this was obviously a very dangerous situation. Some white volunteers would become frustrated because any black person who was outspoken or supported the efforts of the volunteers would lose their jobs or worse. It was not uncommon for the local police or local whites to follow the volunteers into the black community and report their findings back to their employers or other members of the community.

Another issue that was debated was the role of white women. Southern attitudes about what “white womanhood” meant and how it was threatened by going into the black community did not go over very well with the southern white men. In an effort to protect volunteers and black citizens, a majority of white women were given jobs that involved the Freedom Schools instead of canvassing the black communities. Their presence became a mixed blessing because the volunteers were able to open up more schools than they originally planned. Many more students wanted to attend the schools than previously thought. Some students were so eager to learn they showed up for school as early as 6 A.M.

The schools went beyond the scope of a regular classroom. The children learned not only American and world history, but also about their culture and American politics. Children were taught why it was important to be active in their community politics and how to be activist throughout their life. This lesson was an essential goal of Freedom Summer, as the organizers wanted the black community to learn to be a social force to recognize not only in Mississippi, but also the country.

In all, Freedom Summer left behind a strong legacy. First, black disfranchisement was brought to the forefront with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The passage of the Voting Rights Act would allow federal examiners to take over voting registration in places where there was a history of discrimination and banned literacy tests as a requirement for registering to vote. The impact on voter registration in Mississippi was tremendous. The percent of blacks registered to vote rose from 6.7 percent to nearly 60 percent. There was also a substantial increase in voter registration across the country. Second, the MFDP had opened up the world of politics to black Mississippians. Black

Americans realized that they could and should have a place in American politics.

Lastly, Freedom Summer opened up Mississippi to the rest of the country. As a result, more Americans were aware of the various civil rights issues plaguing Mississippi and it was not just black Americans saying that change had to occur. White Americans were becoming just as vocal as black Americans, and this made the rest of the country stand up and take notice.

*See also:* Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture); CORE; Freedom Schools; Hamer, Fannie Lou; MFDP; Moses, Robert; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Voting Rights Act of 1965

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## **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

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The Montgomery Bus Boycott is often heralded as the beginning of the modern Civil Rights movement. Sparked by Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat for a white passenger, the bus boycott engaged all of Montgomery's African American community in a nonviolent, mass protest of Jim Crow segregation that spanned 381 days, financially crippling the Montgomery City Lines. After the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling that Alabama's segregated bus law was unconstitutional, the community boycott and segregated buses in Montgomery ended. Yet the Montgomery bus boycott by the city's black community ushered in an era of direct action by African Americans across the South against the inequities of Jim Crow.

The social, political, and economic structure of the South rested on a bifurcated racial hierarchy and institutionalized

racial segregation that permeated virtually every aspect of southern life. This Jim Crow system consistently deprived African Americans of equal opportunity, access to public spaces and facilities, and their constitutional rights. Southern white society controlled African Americans with time-worn customs and inequitable Jim Crow laws, as well as the use of intimidation and terror. Overt threats and merely the intimation of lynching kept many African Americans from challenging the status quo.

In Montgomery, as in many cities throughout the segregated South, African Americans rode in the rear of the bus. The front was reserved for white passengers. Blacks paid at the front, just as white passengers, but they then had to exit the bus and walk to the rear to board through the back door. As part of the degradation inherent in Jim Crow, bus drivers—this often depended on the capriciousness or the viciousness of the individual bus driver—sometimes drove away before they could board at the rear, leaving them stranded and out their bus fare. Although the black section was always in the rear, the color line was not static. When whites were not on the bus, blacks could sit nearer to the front. As more whites boarded, and the seats filled, the color line moved farther back. Black passengers, at that point, were expected to give their seats to the white passengers, gender notwithstanding.

The Women's Political Council (WPC), headed by Jo Ann Robinson, an English professor at Alabama State College, had been entertaining for some years the idea of a boycott of the bus system and looking for a test case to challenge Montgomery's segregation ordinances. The case of Claudette Colvin initially seemed to be the most promising. On March 2, 1955, the 15-year-old Colvin had been arrested for not giving up her seat after the bus driver ordered her to move. Colvin had been seated in a row not normally reserved for whites, which Montgomery's segregation ordinance did not specifically cover. Robinson and others in the WPC consulted with E. D. Nixon, president of the Montgomery NAACP, and Clifford Durr, a former Roosevelt New Dealer and local white attorney. In the end, they decided against using Colvin's arrest as either a test case or to rally support for a boycott. Colvin's standing in the community—she was young, unwed, and pregnant—did not bode well for its success. In all, they rejected three possible test cases before Rosa Parks's arrest.

As Rosa Parks rode home from work on the evening of December 1, 1955, she sat in the first row of seats reserved

for African Americans. When more passengers boarded bus No. 2857, and the white rows filled, the bus driver, James F. Blake, ordered Parks and three others to give their seats to the white passengers. Although the other three complied, Parks refused. Dispelling the myth that she refused to move because her feet hurt, Parks later said, "the only tired I was, was tired of giving in" (*Rosa Parks*, p. 116). Blake called the police and police officers Fletcher B. Day and Dempsey W. Mixon arrested Parks in front of the Empire Theater for violating the city's segregation ordinance. Parks had problems with Blake previously, in 1943, when he forced her off the bus for not exiting the front door after paying her fare and entering the bus from the rear. After that incident, Parks avoided Blake's bus for more than 12 years.

Nixon and Durr arranged for Parks's release on bond, and she agreed to allow her arrest to be used as a test case. Parks had a sterling reputation in the community: she was married, articulate, and held a stable job at the Montgomery fair, a popular department store. When contacted by black attorney Fred Gray (who had been contacted by Nixon) about Parks's arrest, Robinson and the WPC began circulating thousands of leaflets calling for a boycott of the city's buses. Nixon organized a meeting of black leaders for the night of December 2 at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where he challenged them to lead such an effort.

The first day of the boycott, December 5, was highly successful. More than 90 percent of the black community boycotted the buses. That same day, a Montgomery court convicted Parks and fined her \$10.00, plus \$4.00 in court costs. In an afternoon meeting at the Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, community leaders created an organization to run the boycott, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the name suggested by Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy of the black First Baptist Church of Montgomery. At this meeting, the MIA's first president, 26-year-old Martin Luther King Jr., the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, had been unanimously elected, not because of his "potential of leadership" but because of the rivalries between other black leaders in Montgomery and the fact that King had only been in the city a short time and had not yet made enemies in the community. Mount Zion AME hosted a mass meeting that night, but the boycott's initial success and Parks's conviction clearly meant that the boycott would continue until the bus line changed their policies. The African American churches played a large role in disseminating information and providing a

source of strength and support for the black community during the boycott.

The MIA demanded three things from the Montgomery City Lines: courtesy from bus drivers; the hiring of four black bus drivers; and more equitable seating on the buses, although they did not demand integrated seating. The MIA's plan called for blacks to be seated from the rear to the front and whites from the front to the rear, without any seats being reserved for a specific race. According to Jo Ann Robinson, the reason that they did not demand integration openly was that "no one was brazen enough to announce publicly that black people might boycott city buses for the specific purpose of integrating those buses. Just to say that minorities wanted 'better seating arrangements' was bad enough. . . . To admit that black Americans were seeking to integrate would have been too much; there probably would have been much bloodshed and arrests of those who dared to disclose such an idea!" (*The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*, p. 23). The bus company refused to meet any demands.

For the next 381 days, African Americans refused to ride the buses in Montgomery. They walked and they organized carpools. Those who owned their own automobiles volunteered their vehicles or drove people themselves. Black cab drivers charged only a fraction of their fares to black riders. The MIA purchased station wagons to transport people back and forth from work or the store. Donations poured in from outside the state as churches, both black and white, raised money and sent gifts such as shoes.

The bus boycott also had white support, but it was extremely limited in scope. White liberals such as Clifford and Virginia Durr and Reverend Robert Graetz, the white minister of Trinity Lutheran Church, openly supported the boycott. Others, such as Juliette Hampton Morgan, wrote letters to the newspaper praising the effort. In many cases, white employers picked up and dropped off their maids and housekeepers or paid their cab fare. In response, Montgomery police ticketed white women for transporting their maids and newly organized White Citizens' Councils used pressure and threats to stop the practice. The Montgomery City Lines, which depended heavily on black riders, suffered tremendous financial hardship without them.

During the course of the boycott, King and other black leaders became the targets of white discontent. The Montgomery police arrested King for speeding, and both his and Nixon's homes were bombed. Such harassment created

greater solidarity among the black community at large and reinforced their commitment to resist injustice and maltreatment. Other supporters of the boycott faced white violence as well. Even after the boycott ended, white extremists bombed Abernathy and Graetz's homes, as well as Bell Street Baptist Church, Hutchinson Street Baptist Church, Abernathy's First Baptist Church, and Mount Olive Baptist Church.

Montgomery's city government also tried to stop the boycott, but without such overt violence. The Alabama legislature had passed an antiboycott law in 1921 that Montgomery city officials used in an attempt to end the boycott. A Montgomery grand jury indicted 89 black leaders, 24 of them ministers, for conspiring to boycott the Montgomery City Lines. King, of all of the 89 conspirators, was the only one tried. He was found guilty and levied a \$500 fine. King's trial, far from quashing the boycott, attracted national attention and helped establish him as a national figure. In the aftermath of the trial, *Jet* magazine described King as "Alabama's Modern Moses."

Although the MIA initially wanted to use Parks's case to challenge bus segregation, it also decided to challenge segregation directly in federal court. On February 1, 1956, Attorneys Fred Gray and Charles D. Langford filed suit on behalf of four African American women, Aurelia S. Browder, Susie McDonald, Mary Louise Smith, and Claudette Colvin, who had been mistreated on Montgomery city buses. As Gray made clear, "I wanted the court to have only one issue to decide—the constitutionality of the laws requiring segregation on the buses in the city of Montgomery" (*Bus Ride to Justice*, p. 69). Gray feared that having Parks's prosecution associated with the petition might distract from that issue.

*Browder v. Gayle* (Montgomery Mayor William A. Gayle) came before the three-judge U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. On June 5, 1956, the panel, in a two-to-one decision, ruled Alabama's segregation bus laws unconstitutional. Judges Frank M. Johnson Jr. and Richard T. Rives, both white Montgomerians, courageously found for the plaintiffs at great personal cost, citing *Brown v. Board of Education* as a precedent for their decision. On November 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the judgment of the 5th Circuit, upholding the lower court decision. It rejected the city and state's appeals on December 17. The Supreme Court order to desegregate the buses arrived in Montgomery on December 20, 1956, prompting the MIA to end the bus boycott.

The Montgomery bus boycott demonstrated the power and influence of a committed African American community. Unlike subsequent civil rights campaigns, the press played a relatively minor role in the boycott's success, the credit for which should be attributed largely to Montgomery's black leadership. As historian J. Mills Thornton notes, "the participants in the demonstrations by and large derived their enthusiasm and dedication from the prospect of effecting specific changes in their own municipalities" rather than a devotion to larger, national civil rights strategies (*The Walking City*, p. xxi). In this way, the Montgomery Bus Boycott foreshadowed future civil rights campaigns.

See also: *Brown v. Board of Education*; Jim Crow; King, Coretta Scott; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Parks, Rosa; Rustin, Bayard; White Citizens' Councils

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## Moore, Queen Mother Audley

Queen Mother Audley Moore (1898–1996) was a prominent civil rights activist, an advocate of Pan-Africanism, and an active participant in a number of movements, causes, and organizations for more than eight decades. She was born in New Iberia, Louisiana in 1898, the oldest of three daughters born to Henry and St. Cyr Moore. Her father had served as a sheriff in New Iberia, and her mother died when Moore

was five years old. Having witnessed the lynching of her mother's father and her grandmother's husband, Moore gained an early understanding of racism and racial violence in the early-20th-century South. After the untimely death of Moore's mother, her father sent Moore and her two siblings to live with her maternal grandmother in New Iberia while her father moved to New Orleans. Reunited with her father a few years later, Moore and her sisters moved to New Orleans and lived with him until his death when Moore was in the fourth grade. Forced to drop out of school to care for her sisters, Moore used some of her father's assets to rent a house and earned income as a hairdresser in order to support her family.

Experiencing the sheer brutality of racism and lynch law in the South, as well as the daily injustices experienced by people of color in New Orleans, Moore was perhaps predisposed to radical political expressions later in life. In 1919, Marcus Garvey came to New Orleans to give a speech at a meeting hall and to establish a branch of his newly formed United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Although local police initially prevented Garvey from speaking, a group of armed African Americans ensured he would not be interrupted the following night. Moore, in attendance at both rallies, brought two pistols with her during the second attempt by Garvey to deliver an address. When police attempted to interrupt the rally, she was among those who waved their guns and turned away the white police in an unprecedented display of defiance. Moore immediately became a member of the UNIA and served in the organization for much of her subsequent life.

Moore and her family left the South during the Great Migration, making temporary stops in California and Chicago before settling permanently in Harlem in 1922. While in Harlem, Moore was a dedicated follower of Garvey and she began to expand her activism. Concerned with the working conditions of African American domestic workers, Moore organized the Harriet Tubman Association as a mechanism to address their particular plight. Her active interests in working class and subaltern peoples led her to become affiliated with the Communist Party by 1930. Given her dedication to Garvey, the UNIA, and—by extension—African American capitalism, this embrace of communism may seem difficult to comprehend. Although Garvey was imagining African repatriation for the African American masses, Moore understood that something had to be done to ameliorate the exploitative conditions faced by African

Americans throughout the country. This transition in her organizing activities might also be linked to the deportation of Marcus Garvey by 1925 and the resulting marginalization of the UNIA.

Initially joining the International Labor Defense (ILD), she officially joined the Communist Party in 1933. Both the ILD and the Communist Party had taken active roles in the Scottsboro case and, in the midst of the Great Depression, communism seemed to offer real answers for the exploitation of workers, white supremacy, and racism. In addition to fighting racial discrimination and the rights of African American working women, Moore also played a role in the integration of major league baseball and the Coast Guard. In the 1940s, she served as the campaign manager for Benjamin E. Davis Jr., an African American communist politician in New York who made two successful bids for the New York City Council. In the midst of the McCarthy era, Moore renounced the Communist Party and resigned her membership. In the period between the 1950s and the 1970s, she gravitated toward more mainstream political expressions and movements, including involvement with—or membership in—the National Council of Negro Women and the NAACP. Moore also greatly expanded the scope of her activism, including participation in the Pan-African Congresses and the Organization of African Unity. To this end, she founded, or was a founding member of, the University Association of Ethiopian Women, the World Federation of African People, the Congress of African People, and the Republic of New Africa. As a direct result of her international activities, in 1972 Moore received the title of “Queen Mother” of Asante in recognition of her efforts to bring about Pan-African unity. Over the last two decades of her life, Moore became increasingly involved in the reparations movement. Shortly before her death, she made her last public appearance at the Million Man March in October 1995. Queen Mother Moore died of natural causes in a Brooklyn nursing home on May 2, 1997.

See also: Black Nationalism; Garvey, Marcus; Million Man March; Universal Negro Improvement Association

Walter C. Rucker

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## Moorish Science Temple

The Moorish Science Temple was a quasi-Islamic black nationalist movement established in Newark, New Jersey, in 1913 as the Canaanite Temple. Although explicitly unorthodox, it was the first broad-based movement in America espousing any form of Islamic ideology or beliefs. The founder and initial leader of the group, Timothy Drew (1886–1929), was known by the appellation Prophet Noble Drew Ali. The group’s supposed connection to Moorish culture arose from Ali’s fundamental teaching that African Americans were Muslims of Moroccan heritage descended from the Old Testament Moabitic line of Canaanites. In this vein, the group adopted as their symbol the red banner of Morocco with its green five-pointed star, the points representing love, truth, peace, freedom, and justice. Within 10 years, the group’s membership soared to between 20,000 and 30,000 followers, claiming members in most of the leading cities of the Northeast and Midwest, as well as a handful in the South. The birth of the movement and its rapid expansion directly correlated with the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the urban centers in the North.

Factionalism split the movement several times, and, in 1925, Ali removed himself and many of his followers to Chicago, where three years later the group officially became known as The Moorish Science Temple of America. Shortly thereafter, Ali wrote the *Seven Circle Quran*, which, despite its name, bore no resemblance to the Quran of orthodox Islam. It consisted of a broad range of doctrines, beliefs, and teachings, fusing Masonic symbolism, Christian mysticism, and Rosicrucianism, with Islamic terminology and preexisting Moorish Science beliefs. Many of the book’s passages were adopted wholesale from contemporaneous works of the religious fringe. The *Seven Circle Quran* played a major role in Moorish rites and religious gatherings; it was reverently recited in whispered tones at most events.

Several hallmarks of the movement distinguished its members. They appended their names with the surname El or Bey, wore turbans or fezzes, greeted each other with

their right hand raised while saying “Peace” or “Islam,” and owing to their original beliefs, referred to black people as Asiatics. They prohibited the consumption of pork, alcohol, and tobacco, as well as dancing and attending the theater. Prayers were held three times a day, at sunrise, midday, and sunset; and they met in congregation on Fridays, strictly upholding gender separation. Furthermore, a fundamental aspect of Moorish belief was loyalty and respect for America and its laws, as well as participation in the electoral process. Ali also promoted peace and love between Asiatics, who in their totality included virtually all people of color. On the other hand, he taught that Europe and people of European descent were from the pagan, uncivilized regions of the world and therefore the mixing of Asiatic blood with Europeans was despised.

The group had many influences, including Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, Freemasonry in the form of the Mystic Shrine, Theosophy, and several others. In fact, Drew Ali’s name, Noble, is a clear claim to membership as a Shriner, and Garvey’s calls for economic self-reliance can be seen in the founding of the Moorish Science Corporation. The business ventures of the corporation included selling various herbal remedies, and the establishment of restaurants and stores. Very few of the beliefs in Moorish Science derived from orthodox Islam; nonetheless, orthodox Muslims took a dim view of Ali and the Moorish Science Temple. In 1929 and 1930, the movement was condemned in three fatwas (Islamic rulings) in Egypt and Sudan, including one from the venerable Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo.

By the late 1920s, Ali’s hold on the community was failing as further factionalism, financial impropriety, and an increasing hostility between some members and white law enforcement reached a violent crescendo. Ali was jailed under the accusation of ordering the death of a political rival, and he died a few months later on July 20, 1929, while out on bond and awaiting trial. Whether his death was caused by revenge or natural causes is unclear. Dissension within the movement increased as a battle for leadership furthered the series of violence and arrests. Kirkman Bey was eventually elected leader of the movement and held the position until his death in 1959. The group’s growth continued unabated during the 1940s, when it was estimated that at least 50 temples were active across America. The movement came under intense scrutiny by the FBI, which was convinced that the Moorish-American espousal

of Asiatic unity equaled complicity with the Japanese during World War II.

The FBI continued to monitor and actively pursue the destruction of the movement until the 1970s. The Moorish Science movement has remained intact to the present, albeit smaller and further factionalized, and has successfully extended its activities to the U.S. prison system, where it has a strong following.

*See also:* Ali, Noble Drew; Black Nationalism; Garvey, Marcus; Great Migration; Universal Negro Improvement Association

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## Morrison, Toni

Toni Morrison (Chloe Anthony Wofford) (1931–), a noted novelist, was born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio, the second of four children. Her parents, George Wofford and Ramah Willis Wofford were sharecroppers and had moved to the North to escape the rampant racism in the South. Morrison’s father worked three jobs for 17 years to provide for his family. Beginning at a young age Morrison developed an interest in reading. She was an extremely avid reader, reading authors like Jane Austin and Tolstoy among many others.

Both Morrison’s parents instilled in their children a great sense of pride in their Southern and African American heritage and let their children know that hard work and determination were the keys to success. This advice held true for Morrison who graduated high school with honors in 1949. Morrison later went on to obtain

a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in the classics from Howard University in 1953, and in 1955 Morrison obtained her master's degree from Cornell University. It was also at Howard University where Morrison started referring to herself as "Toni," a shortened version of her middle name.

Upon graduating from Howard, Morrison began teaching introductory English at Texas Southern University in Houston, returning later in 1957 to Howard as a member of the faculty. While back at Howard, Morrison fell in love with Jamaican-born architect Harold Morrison. They eventually married in 1961 and had two boys. The marriage proved to be an unhappy one ending in divorce after Morrison was pregnant with their second child. To escape the unhappiness of her union, Morrison joined a small writer's group, where she started writing a story about a girl who prayed to God for blue eyes, a girl from Morrison's childhood. After a

trip to Europe, Morrison returned to Lorain, Ohio with her sons in tow to live with her parents.

In 1964, she was hired by a textbook subsidiary of Random House in Syracuse, New York, as an associate editor. In 1967, she was transferred to New York City and became a senior editor at Random House, a job where she would stay for the next 20 years. While editing books for some of the most prominent African Americans in the country, such as Angela Davis, Muhammad Ali, and Alex Haley, Morrison was still attempting to turn her small story into a novel. While working as an editor for Random House by day, Morrison began writing at night, bringing more imagination and detail to the story, and in 1970 *The Bluest Eye* was published. Although it was not a huge commercial success right away, it has continued to garner critical acclaim.

Morrison's second novel, *Sula*, was published in 1973. Excerpts of the book were later republished in *Redbook*



American writer Toni Morrison receives the Nobel Prize in literature from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden in the Concert Hall in Stockholm, Sweden, December 10, 1993. Morrison is the first black woman to receive this prize. (AP Photo)



magazine, and in 1975, the novel was nominated for the National Book Award in Fiction. As Morrison watched her sons grow up, she began to write a novel that focused more on the lived experiences of African American males. With the publication of *Song of Solomon* in 1977, Morrison's third novel, Morrison gained national and international acclaim. The book won the National Book Critic's Circle Award and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award. *Tar Baby*, Morrison's fourth novel was published in 1981, and Morrison's picture appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine in March of that same year. Also from 1976 to 1977, Morrison worked as a visiting lecturer at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1983, Morrison left Random House as senior editor and in 1984 was named the Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities at the State University of New York in Albany. Her fifth novel, *Beloved*, was published in 1987 and was based on the true story of the enslaved woman, Margaret Garner, who escaped a plantation in Kentucky with her husband Robert. When the enslavers eventually catch Garner, Garner attempted to kill her children hoping that they would make it to heaven and not be forced to endure a life of servitude as enslaved, but she was successful in killing only one. Morrison writes the novel from Garner's point of view, making her the benevolent protagonist who is haunted by her murdered daughter. The novel gained worldwide acclaim, earning Morrison the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and was made into a film in 1998 with the aid of Oprah Winfrey. In 1987, Morrison was named the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Council of Humanities at Princeton University, where she was the only African American woman to hold a named chair at an Ivy League University.

Her sixth novel, *Jazz*, which was about how murder is shaped by love and relationships, was published in 1992, and Morrison became the eighth woman and first African American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. In 1999, Morrison published *Paradise*; her eighth novel, *Love*, was published in 2003. *A Mercy* was published in 2008, and Morrison continues to publish a plethora of short stories and plays. In June 2005, Toni Morrison received a Doctor of Letters from Barnard College.

Toni Morrison is one of America's most critically acclaimed novelist and writers of our time. Her style of writing, original in its conceptual and rhetorical patterning, has proved to be the reason why she is so beloved by many. In her interview with Nellie McKay, Morrison described how

she began the writing process with an idea and how the characters for her novels were outgrowths of such ideas. Throughout her writing career, Toni Morrison has always stressed how important African American history and African American culture are to the history of America and how her work reflects and attempts to maintain this sentiment. *See also:* Davis, Angela; Ebo Landing; Haley, Alex; Transmigration

Kaila A. Story

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## Moses, Robert

Robert Paris Moses (1935–), a noted civil rights activist, was born on January 23, 1935, in Harlem, New York. Moses's family was not well-off and he grew up in a Harlem housing project. His intellectual prowess was evident early on and, after passing a city-wide exam, he gained entrance to an elite public school, Stuyvesant High School. After graduating from high school in 1952, Moses earned a scholarship to Hamilton College in New York and later earned a master's degree from Harvard University in 1957. Although Moses specialized in mathematical logic, he studied philosophy and was greatly influenced by the work of French philosopher Albert Camus. Through reading Camus and in his travel abroad during college, Moses was exposed to the ideals of pacifism, ideals that would remain at the core of his value system for the rest of his life. In 1959, while teaching high school math at Horace Mann in Manhattan, Moses helped civil rights activist Bayard Rustin organize the second Youth March for Integrated Schools. The next spring, Moses took part in a demonstration in Newport News while visiting his uncle in Virginia. From that point forward, Bob Moses would dedicate himself to the Civil Rights movement.

Bob Moses placed a great deal of emphasis on developing local black leadership in Mississippi because these local residents not only had a vital stake in the successful outcome of civil rights projects, they could also identify with each other and help each other along. Local blacks thought about their work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in terms of making some sense out of living in Mississippi. In addition, Moses encouraged young people to enter the civil rights struggle because he felt that young blacks would not be limited as much by the economic responsibilities that faced their elders and would be free to act more assertively. Moses was also keenly aware of the necessity to face and minimize black fears while conducting the Voter Registration Project in Mississippi. In 1963 Moses stated that “You dig into yourself and the community to wage psychological warfare; you combat your own fears about beatings, shootings and possible mob violence; you stymie, by your mere physical presence, anxious fear of the Negro community (*In Struggle*, p. 78). Moses lived this philosophy, leading the way by example, quelling the fear of anxious Mississippi residents by putting himself squarely in front of danger and often beating it back. So often did he do this that one local resident once noted of Moses, “Poor Bob took a lot of beatings. . . . Sometimes I think he was Moses in the Bible. He pioneered the way for black people in McComb. . . . He had more guts than any one man I’ve ever known” (*In Struggle*, p. 78).

In 1960, after seeing the resolute and courageous faces of southern blacks taking part in the sit-in movement, Moses went to work in the Atlanta office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). There was little there for him to do but stuff SCLC fund-raising packages, however, and when Jane Stembridge, a member of SNCC who worked in the same office suggested that he assist that organization by recruiting black leaders in the South, Moses readily agreed. From Atlanta Moses traveled through Mississippi in the summer of 1960, a trip on which he met Amzie Moore, the head of the Cleveland, Mississippi NAACP. Moses recalls that “Amzie was the first one to really speak to me about the potential in Mississippi of the students’ energy to blow open the issues of racial discrimination and white supremacy” (*Radical Equations*, p. 41). In the summer of 1961, Moses headed a voting registration project in McComb, Mississippi, where he, Reginald Robinson, and John Hardy opened a school to train black residents to take Mississippi’s literacy test for voters. Moses

experienced his first confrontation with the state’s authorities on August 15 of that year when, after escorting three black residents to the courthouse in Liberty, Mississippi to register to vote, he was arrested and charged with interfering with the discharge of the arresting officers’ duties. The arresting officer, who knew exactly who Moses was and how important the voter registration project was in changing the balance of power in the state, asked, “You the nigger that came down from New York to stir up a lot of trouble?” (*Radical Equations*, p. 48). Following his own code of ethics that mandated the struggle begin with the individual, Moses stood up to the officer and subsequently spent two days in jail before allowing the NAACP to post his bond.

Almost two weeks later Moses experienced a more violent encounter after attempting to register more local blacks. Billy Jack Caston, cousin of the local sheriff, and two other white residents beat Moses nearly unconscious, a crime for which Caston was acquitted. Violence was no stranger to the South; but on September 25, 1961, an event occurred that would bring the voting rights project to a standstill for the remainder of that year. On that day, E. H. Hurst, a white state legislator, shot and killed Herbert Lee, a founding member of the Amite County NAACP. Hurst, who claimed Lee attacked him with a tire iron, was never charged with Lee’s murder. Moses recalls, “Lee’s killing paralyzed the voter registration movement, stopped it cold, with no Black person in all of rural southwest Mississippi willing to make an attempt at registering” (*Radical Equations*, p. 50). Although Moses and practically all of the local blacks who had worked closely with him had been jailed and the McComb experience acted as a temporary setback for SNCC, Moses remained determined to make progress.

In the summer of 1962, Moses went to work expanding his young SNCC staff and by spring of 1963, 6 SNCC offices and 20 black field secretaries were operating in Mississippi. In an effort to minimize conflict between the various civil rights organizations, SNCC field secretaries worked under the auspices of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) where Moses was named director of voter registration. Moses continued his efforts to the western part of the state, this time edging away from his earlier policy of relying on entirely local black leadership. SNCC organized a food drive for residents of Leflore County that involved a number of the organization’s northern branches and thus made the problems of poor rural Mississippians visible to a wider range of people. Not only did this food drive feed

people but, as Moses explained, “Whenever we were able to get a little something to give to a hungry family, we also talked about how they ought to register” (*In Struggle*, p. 80). In this way Moses and SNCC linked receiving assistance to taking personal responsibility for achieving freedom by registering to vote.

Signaling a dramatic shift in the voting rights project, in an April 1963 meeting before the SNCC general conference, Moses argued that Mississippi’s blacks were unlikely to gain the franchise quickly enough to win electoral victories before they lost their jobs to industrial automation and lack of education. He insisted that because illiterate whites were allowed to vote, and because blacks in the state were denied equal educational opportunities, blacks were owed either the right to vote irrespective of being literate or the opportunity to immediately learn to read and write. As such, Moses’s position initiated the “one man, one vote” campaign, a movement that would encourage all blacks in the state to participate in the political process.

The 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, designed specifically to expose the intolerance of racist whites to a national audience while creating the environment for a confrontation between state and federal authorities whereby federal agents would be forced to protect civil rights activists, was another turning point in the evolution of SNCC. By this time, although local blacks had worked hard and sacrificed greatly to achieve voting rights, Moses was convinced that only outside intervention and greater national publicity about the deplorable conditions in rural Mississippi would bring about the kind of large-scale change he was trying to create. This would require bringing in hundreds of whites from around the country to help with the voter registration project, a marked departure from the almost exclusive use of local blacks thus far in the voting rights campaign. The first step was for Moses and Allard Lowenstein, a white activist and friend of Moses, to organize a “Freedom Vote.” This campaign would allow local blacks to vote for their own set of candidates in their own communities, as many blacks were barred from voting in the 1963 November general election. In what was deemed as an encouraging sign, more than 80,000 local blacks voted in this symbolic election, setting the stage for the next challenge.

Building on the success of the Freedom Vote, Moses and COFO set about creating a nonracist political organization that would lay legitimate claim to the Democratic Party delegation at the Democratic National Convention in 1964. To that end, on April 26, 1964, the Mississippi

Freedom Democratic Party was formed at a rally in Jackson, Mississippi. In addition to creating a political party, COFO members established Freedom Schools to teach traditional academic subjects, as well as contemporary issues, leadership development, and political skills. Although the MFDP was unable to unseat the regular Democratic delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, it brought the issues of white supremacy and voting rights for the state’s blacks front-and-center on a national stage and forced long-term changes in the Democratic Party. As Moses recalls, “The MFDP was raising an important point with this country, and with the Democratic Party, as one of its major political institutions: Generations of Black people had been denied access to the political process; could they get it now?... We were challenging the [Democratic Party] to recognize the existence of a whole group of people—white and Black and disenfranchised—who form the underclass of this country” (*Radical Equations*, pp. 82–83). The MFDP’s challenge served notice to the nation that being black and poor was no longer going to act as a barrier in the way of the residents of Mississippi as they laid claim to their rights as U.S. citizens.

Shortly after the Summer Project concluded, SNCC arrived at a crossroads, as an ideological split between James Foreman and Bob Moses pointed in two different directions. Foreman, who viewed SNCC as a permanent organization, believed that it also needed a more centralized leadership to carry out its mission. Moses, on the other hand, was committed to SNCC’s emphasis on informal leadership and consensus building, where a broad range of voices had equal opportunities to be heard. As a result of his unwillingness to push his own agenda and his sense that large segments of SNCC and COFO had grown dependent on his leadership, Moses grew ever reluctant to express his views, and his influence on policy decisions waned through the mid-1960s.

Moses, who was conflicted by Camus’s dilemma of maintaining a balance between moral purity and political effectiveness, resigned as director of COFO in late 1964. He was discouraged with the hard-line approach SNCC had taken under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael, an approach that attempted to centralize control of the organization under a small group of people who wanted to dictate what local branches should be doing. In 1965, Moses took a leave of absence from SNCC to focus on antiwar activities. He challenged the argument made by many black leaders that civil rights activists should devote their energy to black

community organizing and not risk previous gains by involving themselves in the antiwar or other movements. He noted, “Certainly one of the most basic rights we have been seeking is the right to participate fully in the life of this country. Now if by participating—that is; taking part in the discussions of the great issues that face the country—we threaten the right to participate, we have to begin to wonder whether the right is real” (*In Struggle*, p. 185). Moses quit SNCC in 1966 and moved to Canada to avoid the Vietnam War draft.

After living in Canada and then teaching in Tanzania from 1969–1975, Moses returned the United States where he completed a doctorate and taught high school math. In 1982, he received a McArthur Foundation “Genius Grant” and started the Algebra Project, a program that teaches math literacy as a key that opens the door both higher education and thus employment opportunities for poor and minority students. According to Moses, algebra is a gatekeeper, a subject that students must master or they are effectively shut out of higher level math-based subjects such as physics, calculus, and engineering. As he sees it, math literacy is a contemporary civil rights issue much the way the right to vote was in the 1960s because proficiency in these subjects is critical for being successful in the technology-driven 21st century. The Algebra project runs in more than 25 cities and serves more than 40,000 students.

See also: Carmichael, Stokely (Kwame Ture); MFDP; Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Rustin, Bayard; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Paul T. Miller

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## MOVE Bombing

The MOVE bombing of May 13, 1985 was one of the most controversial episodes in Philadelphia's history. MOVE emerged around 1972 in Philadelphia as a small but radical

group of African Americans led by John Africa. His commune first settled at North 33rd Street near Pearl Street in the Powelton Village area of Philadelphia. There they lived according to the self-styled teachings of John Africa. He promoted a communal “back to nature” lifestyle, vegetarianism, reverence for all animal life, and scorn for “The Establishment.” From their house, MOVE members often gave public speeches denouncing Philadelphia's mayor and police department. In addition, the presence of open garbage, insects, rats, and other animals on the MOVE premises posed public health hazards for Osage Avenue residents.

Neighborhood complaints about the lifestyle of MOVE brought the radical organization into confrontation with the city of Philadelphia throughout the 1970s. On March 28, 1976, Philadelphia police confronted several MOVE members at the 33rd Street house. MOVE later claimed that Janine Africa and her baby were thrown to the floor by police and that the baby later died. Angry MOVE members stepped up criticism of Philadelphia mayor Frank Rizzo, and Rizzo reacted with a court order to demolish the MOVE compound. On August 6, 1978, a gun battle between police and MOVE erupted during which MOVE member Delbert Africa was beaten by Philadelphia police officers and one policeman was killed. Delbert Africa and eight other MOVE members were arrested and brought to trial; nine MOVE members were sentenced. In 1981, however, the three police officers accused of beating Delbert Africa were acquitted.

After the 1978 incident, MOVE went underground. It reemerged in 1982, settling in the house of John Africa's sister, Louise James, in a Philadelphia neighborhood known as Cobbs Creek. During this time, MOVE members who were frustrated about not winning the release of their jailed members stepped up their public harangues against the neighborhood and the police. On Memorial Day 1984, W. Wilson Goode, Philadelphia's first African American mayor, met with Osage Avenue residents who asserted that MOVE was infringing on their rights. Goode was advised by the FBI and other law enforcement officials that there were no grounds for action against MOVE. The neighbors of MOVE, however, formally organized themselves in February 1985 into a group called “United Residents of the 6200 Block of Osage Avenue.” On May 1, 1985, the United Residents said in a press conference that the MOVE house had become a military bunker. The next day the United Residents informed Mayor Goode that a five-gallon gasoline can was hoisted to the roof of 6221 Osage Avenue. It

was then that the mayor and Philadelphia police knew that a violent confrontation between the city and MOVE was imminent. Arrest warrants for four MOVE members were approved by a city judge.

On May 13, 1985, Mayor Goode authorized Philadelphia police to surround the house at 6221 Osage Avenue, which now had a bunker constructed on its roof as well as a gasoline can. Using a bullhorn, police asked that the four MOVE members for whom they had arrest warrants to come out and surrender. None did. Then the mayor gave permission for a pilot in a police helicopter to drop a bomb in order to dislodge the bunker. The bomb missed its target and instead hit the gasoline can, igniting the entire house. City officials decided not to put out the fire immediately but to “let the bunker burn.” Eleven MOVE members burned to death including five children. Among the dead was MOVE founder John Africa. A woman, Ramona Africa, and a boy, Birdie Africa, escaped from the house alive. Ramona Africa was arrested and taken into custody by police. In 1986, Ramona Africa was put on trial and was found guilty of riot and conspiracy charges and was given a seven-year sentence. She was released from prison in 1992.

The MOVE bombing of May 13, 1985, in Philadelphia made international headlines. Some applauded the city of Philadelphia’s handling of the crisis, but others, such as MOVE supporters, condemned it. Philadelphia African Americans in particular were critical of Mayor Goode who in response formed an investigatory commission. The Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission issued its report in 1986. The commission found the city of Philadelphia negligent in the death of the 11 people and careless in its handling of conflict resolution. It found that Mayor Goode did not negotiate with MOVE earlier and that he allowed the confrontation on May 13, 1985 to spin out of control.

But the MOVE bombing story does not end there. More than 60 houses on Osage Avenue and Pine Street also burned down, leaving 250 people homeless. Between 1985 and 1996, the city of Philadelphia rebuilt the Osage Avenue homes, but many residents were unhappy, citing various defects. Milton Street, elected mayor of Philadelphia in 1999, sympathized with their plight and offered each family \$150,000 for a new house and moving expenses. In all, 37 families on Osage Avenue and part of Pine Street took the buy-out offer, but 24 families refused. So in 2003, they went back to court. In April 2005, a United States District Court

jury awarded each homeowner a sum of \$530,000 for punitive damages against city officials, breach of contract, and damages for emotional distress. Today MOVE members are still active in Philadelphia but keep a low profile.

*See also:* Black Power

*Eric Ledell Smith*

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## **Muhammad, Elijah**

Elijah Muhammad (Elijah Poole) (1897–1975), leader of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America, was born in Sandersville, Georgia in October 1897 to William and Mariah Poole. His father was a pastor at Bold Spring and Union Baptist churches while sharecropping and working in sawmills to provide for a quickly growing family. Mariah Poole worked as a domestic for white families and, instead of earning wages, she was often paid in parts from slaughtered animals. Young Elijah Poole, like his six siblings, grew up in the black church and frequently listened to his father’s fiery sermons. In fact, Elijah became so enamored by the Bible, he began to preach and evangelize at a young age—even, at times, correcting errors in his father’s sermons. A close student of biblical scripture, Elijah joined the church at age 14, at his father’s behest, yet he struggled with what he considered inconsistencies in the Bible and Christian doctrine.

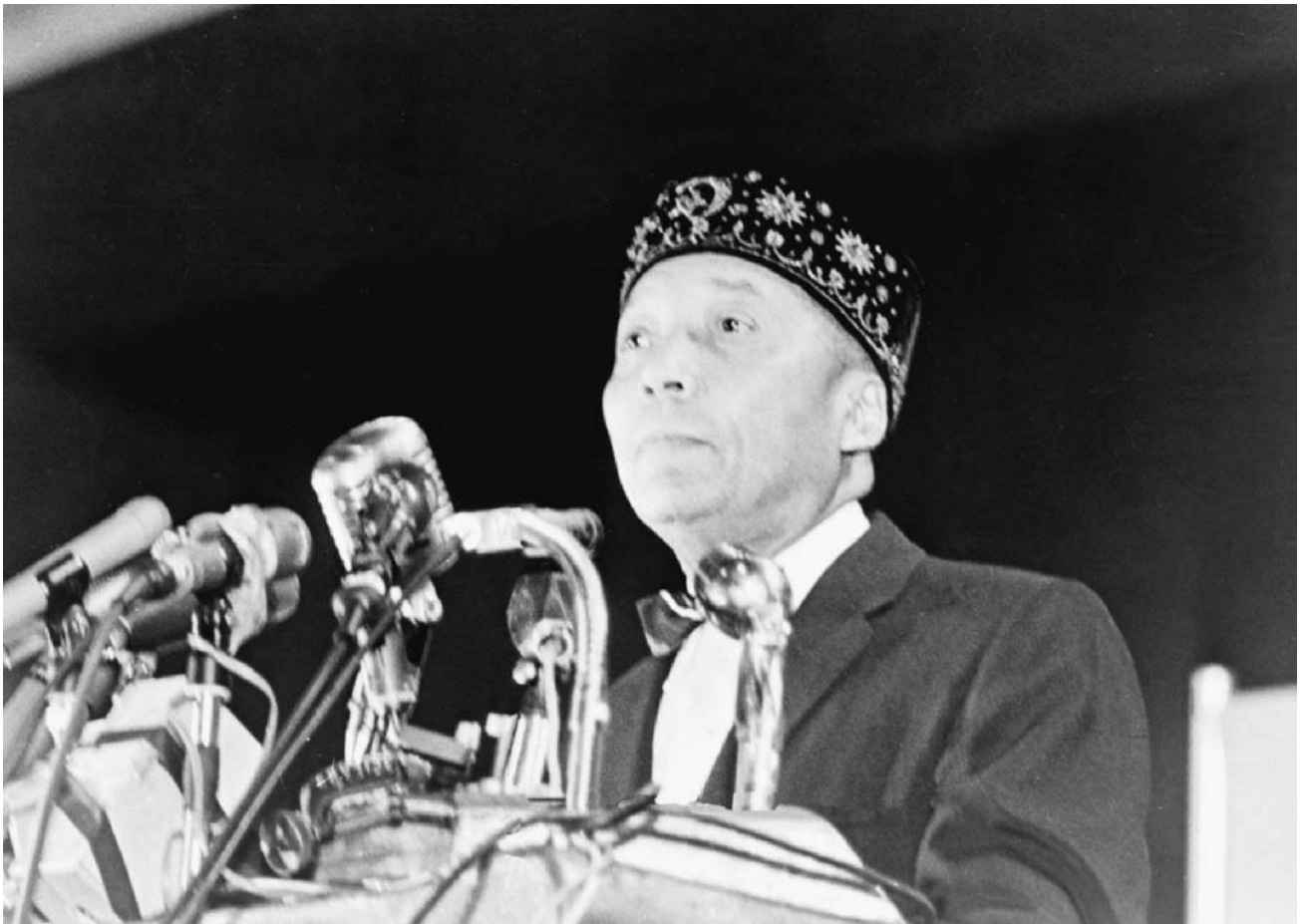
Elijah had a brief stint in school, leaving between the fourth and eighth grades, because the Poole children needed to help generate income for the family. He began working at age 10, providing firewood and other services after the family relocated from Sandersville to Cordele, Georgia. Although denied formal education, Elijah had practical and

transformative experiences with white supremacy and racial oppression during his early years, claiming later in life to have witnessed the aftermath of three lynchings in Georgia. On one occasion, a white man proudly showed him the severed ear of a lynched African American. On another occasion, in the winter of 1907, Elijah witnessed an 18-year-old African American youth hanged and his body riddled with bullets after being accused of raping a white woman. Both the mob murder and the lack of reaction by the African American community enraged the then 10-year-old Elijah and this anger would later fuel his antipathy for all whites.

In 1919, Poole married Clara Evans of Cordele and by 1922 the couple had their first two children—Emmanuel (1921) and Ethel (1922). With a growing family, Poole—an employee of the Southern Railroad Company as a gang laborer—experienced mounting levels of stress in trying to provide sufficient support for Clara and their children.

Between 1920 and 1921, Poole and one of his brothers were witnesses to the lynching of another black man, and this may have played some role in his decision to relocate his family to Detroit, Michigan in April 1923. As part of a flood of black southern migrants in the 1920s, the Poole family struggled to establish an economic foothold in Detroit. As Poole went from job to job, the family grew even larger with the addition of three more children—Lottie (1925), Nathaniel (1926), and Herbert (1929).

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, Poole was frequently unemployed, as the Great Depression ravished the labor market. In the midst of his despair, Clara Poole found the family's salvation in the most unlikely of places—in the guise of Wallace Dean (W. D.) Fard Muhammad. Influenced by the Moorish Science Temple of America and Marcus Garvey's UNIA, Fard Muhammad was preaching a fiery, black nationalists brand of Islam in Detroit in his self-proclaimed quest to wake the “dead” nation of Islam in the



*Elijah Muhammad, as spiritual leader of the Nation of Islam in the United States, established a religious organization that gave poor urban African Americans a sense of racial pride and economic and political self-sufficiency. (Library of Congress)*

West. At the insistence of Clara, Elijah Poole made a visit to one of Fard Muhammad's sermons in the fall of 1931. Later that same year, Poole met Fard Muhammad after a particular speech and was so inspired by his message that Poole asked Fard if he were the "one we read in the Bible that...would come in the last day under the name Jesus" (*An Original Man*, p. 22). To this suggestion, Fard Muhammad answered in the affirmative. Unbeknownst to either man at the time, this brief exchange would change both their lives and would lead to the creation and growth of one of the most powerful black organizations in U.S. history.

At the age of 33, Elijah Poole became a disciple of a man he variably knew as Fard (pronounced Far-ad) Muhammad, the Mahdi, Jesus, and "Allah in the Flesh." After joining Fard Muhammad's movement, Poole received a new surname—Karriem—and became the "supreme minister" of Allah's Temple of Islam as Fard Muhammad's second in command. The normally soft-spoken Karriem was not an extraordinarily effective or gifted public speaker, and this was painfully apparent during his first talks given at Detroit's Temple of Islam. Despite this seeming limitation, Karriem had a peculiar kind of charm and charisma that swayed audiences to favor and pay attention to his word.

Between 1932 and 1934, the movement began to take further shape as Fard Muhammad and his supreme minister created a fully functional organizational apparatus. Fard Muhammad changed the name of the organization from the Allah Temple of Islam to the Nation of Islam. In addition, he developed the Fruit of Islam, a security force under the command of Supreme Captain Kalot Muhammad (Elijah's younger brother), as well as the Muslim Girl's Training and General Civilization Class, which emphasized the instruction of women in the domestic realm. Finally, for the benefit of children in the movement, Fard Muhammad created the University of Islam to serve as a grade school providing instruction in history, Arabic, mathematics, and the sciences. This forward momentum was halted when a man allegedly associated with Nation of Islam committed a ritualized murder of another man named James Smith. Fard Muhammad was arrested and released on the condition that he permanently leave Detroit.

Fard Muhammad went to Chicago where he founded Temple No. 2 of the Nation of Islam. Karriem, who changed his name to Elijah Muhammad in 1933, assumed the role of leader of the Detroit Temple (No. 1). The next year, in 1934, Fard Muhammad mysteriously disappeared and Elijah

Muhammad became the "minister of Islam" and the new leader of the movement. In attempting to quell factional disputes within the Nation of Islam in the wake of Fard Muhammad's disappearance, Elijah Muhammad fought an uphill battle for several years. By 1935, he left Detroit and settled his family in Chicago, thereby establishing Chicago Mosque No. 2 as the official headquarters of the Nation of Islam. As part of a recruitment effort to generate more loyal converts, Muhammad started a newspaper called *The Final Call to Islam*. The newspaper floundered, however, and, within a year, it ceased publication. In the meantime, Muhammad was still in the midst of quelling factional disputes within the organization and received a number of personal death threats. As a result, he moved to Milwaukee to establish Temple No. 3 and, then, Washington, D.C. (Temple No. 4) where he lived, separated from his family, for the next few years.

In 1942, Muhammad was arrested for resisting the military draft. He left Washington, D.C. and relocated in Chicago to rejoin his family. In 1943, Muhammad was arrested again on eight counts of sedition for instructing members of the Nation of Islam to not register with Selective Service or serve in the U.S. Army. On those charges, he was found guilty and served three-and-a-half years of a five-year sentence in a federal prison at Milan, Michigan. Although the temples he helped to establish remained in operation, membership in the Nation of Islam fell to about 1,000 by the time of his release from prison in 1946. After his release, the Nation of Islam went through an unprecedented period of growth. Between 1946 and 1955 alone, it constructed 12 new Muslim temples in various parts of the country. By 1959, the Nation of Islam could boast 50 temples in 22 states, including the District of Columbia.

Embracing the notion of the "double-duty dollar," Muhammad encouraged the growth of black-owned businesses, particularly those owned by loyal members of the Nation of Islam. Members, barred from buying anything on credit, opened grocery stores, book stores, restaurants, barber shops, bakeries, cleaners, and other businesses across the country. With the influence of popular and charismatic figures like Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and Louis (X) Farrakhan, membership in the organization swelled to as many as 20,000 by the mid-1960s. The sizable membership was matched by the financial resources of the Nation of Islam, which were estimated at more than \$75 million by 1972.

The meteoric rise of Muhammad's version of the Nation of Islam was not without significant controversy. Despite the popularity of the charismatic Malcolm X, he and Elijah Muhammad became increasingly distant for a variety of reasons. As far back as 1955, Malcolm X had heard of rumors of Muhammad's alleged adultery. A succession of six of Muhammad's personal secretaries had become pregnant and, because of the prohibition against premarital sex in the Nation of Islam, each woman received sentences of 1 to 5 years of isolation from the Muslim community. In all, Muhammad has been accused of taking nine "wives," getting six pregnant, and fathering at least eight children out of wedlock. When two of these women filed paternity suits charging that Muhammad fathered their combined four children, they revealed that they both had sexual relations with Muhammad beginning when they were teenagers. Both women eventually approached Malcolm X who was shocked and alarmed about the allegations.

Tensions between Muhammad and Malcolm X grew between April 1963 and January 1964. In April 1963, Malcolm went to Phoenix, Arizona to confront Muhammad about his alleged adultery. Thinking of a way to explain this inconsistency in his mentor, Malcolm had already developed an excuse by referring to biblical prophecy; David had coveted another man's wife, Lot committed incest with a daughter, and Moses fornicated with Ethiopian women. Thus, many prophets had erred and committed sin before and Muhammad was no different. According to Malcolm X, Muhammad admitted to the allegations and praised him for his insight into biblical prophecy. When Malcolm X set out to inform other Muslim officials in an attempt to quash the rumors, however, many of them, including Louis X (Farrakhan), turned on him and reported to Muhammad that Malcolm was trying to undermine him.

The tensions became increasingly awkward as Malcolm's stature in the media grew and Muhammad's was consequently eclipsed. When Malcolm's picture was placed on the front cover of Louis Lomax's 1963 work *When the Word Is Given*, officials at Chicago Temple No. 2 were outraged. By 1964, Malcolm was the second most sought after speaker at American universities. He was asked to sit for magazine interviews (*Life*, *Newsweek*, and *Playboy*) and TV talk shows ("Meet the Press"), many of which he refused to avoid jealousies generated at the Chicago headquarters. The final insult for members loyal to Muhammad was the \$20,000 advance and contract from Doubleday for

an autobiography of Malcolm X. The jealousies emanating from Chicago's Temple No. 2, although not necessarily from Elijah Muhammad himself, provide the context for the series of punishments Malcolm X faced after his inflammatory comments regarding the November 22, 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In many regards, Malcolm's suspension and eventual assassination were due to the fear that he would completely eclipse Muhammad—not to statements attributed to him regarding a white president.

On February 24, 1975, Elijah Muhammad died of congestive heart failure in Chicago. At the time of his death, the Nation of Islam had 79 temples in 70 cities, but membership had been in decline since Malcolm's murder. Muhammad was succeeded by his son Wallace Dean Muhammad who changed the organization's name to the World Community of Islam in the West and altered its theology to be in accord with more orthodox interpretations of Islam. By 1978, Louis Farrakhan led a splinter group to reestablish the Lost-Found Nation of Islam based on the original teachings of Fard Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad. In 1985, the World Community of Islam in the West was disbanded, leaving Farrakhan's group as Elijah Muhammad's sole organizational legacy.

*See also:* Ali, Muhammad; Black Nationalism; Destination, Detroit, Michigan; Farrakhan, Louis; Nation of Islam; X, Malcolm

Walter C. Rucker

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## Nash, Diane

Diane Judith Nash (1938–) is a pacifist and outspoken advocate of civil rights for African Americans, women, veterans, and young people. She became the leader of the Nashville



sit-in movement in 1960 at the age of 22. Nash continued to exercise nonviolent protest for civil rights in the South during the 1960s and is one of the most iconic and well-known female leaders to emerge from the era commonly known as the Civil Rights movement.

Diane Judith Nash was born in Chicago's South Side on May 15, 1938. Nash's father, Leon Nash, migrated north from Mississippi and held a clerical job in the military during World War II. Dorothy Bolton Nash, Diane's mother, also migrated north from her Tennessee birthplace. Raised by her grandmother, Carrie Bolton, until she was seven, Nash was taught to turn a blind eye toward racial injustice and strive to be a polite and accepting girl. Growing up, she attended the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament parochial school, which was operated by nuns who taught only minority students. Later she would attend public high school and go on to Washington, D.C. to begin her college career at Howard University. Soon after, in 1959, Nash decided to transfer to Fisk University in Nashville Tennessee.

Although the racial climate in Chicago was by no means harmonious, Nash was still shocked by the severity of segregation in Nashville and throughout the South. Years later, in an interview published in the renowned Civil Rights documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, Nash stated that she understood the facts and stories surrounding segregation, but had no emotional relationship with the policy. It was only after she moved to the South and saw the signs that said "white" and "colored" and actually could not drink out of the water fountain or go to the ladies room that Nash said she had a real emotional reaction.

After a degrading encounter at the Tennessee State Fair, Nash vowed to seek out people and organizations intent on putting an end to segregation. Nash soon found that a man attending Vanderbilt Divinity School named Reverend James M. Lawson Jr. was organizing a series of workshops that added the methods of nonviolent protest to the arsenal of tactics used by young persons in their quest for equal rights.

At first, Nash was skeptical of the nonviolent approach and she later confessed that it was years before she was convinced. After taking part in the workshops held under the auspices of the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference (NCLC), Nash was elected chair of the Student Central Committee. Although the workshops involved role playing that often got rough, it was not until she and the other Nashville students staged sit-ins at the lunch counters of two of the city's department stores during November and December

1959, that she was given a chance to test the effectiveness of nonviolent protest. Nash, along with John Lewis, James Bevel, Marion Berry, and several others repeatedly bought items and attempted to sit at lunch counters. Unfortunately, the actions did not achieve the goal of desegregation. But Nash and her fellow protestors did not give in easily.

It was not until the sit-in staged in Greensboro, North Carolina, by four students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College on February 1, 1960 that the movement was launched into the national spotlight. The Nashville student group attempted to desegregate Nashville's lunch counters once again, and this time they were successful. From February 13 to May 10, 1960, the Nashville sit-in movement directed protest at Kress, Woolworths, McClellans, Walgreens, and city bus terminals. At first, there was little resistance, but after two weeks, the 81 protestors were jailed for disorderly conduct. Although the NCLC and its allies raised enough bail money to release the students, they chose to stay in jail on principal.

After escalation of white violence, the students marched to City Hall and upon reaching the steps of the building, Nash confronted Mayor Ben West asking: "Do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?" Mayor West confessed that he did. Nash and the student group she led had initiated desegregation of public places in Nashville, the first southern city to begin the departure from Jim Crow laws.

It was also during this time that Diane Nash had the opportunity to become active with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as it was beginning to take shape. From April 1960, Nash, along with James Bevel and Marion Barry, traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend a conference at Shaw University that would serve to solidify goals and unite all participants of the movement. It was here that Nash, who was one of the few young women leading the student movement, met Ella Baker who became a much needed female role model and source of confidence for Nash.

Instead of returning to Fisk to resume her traditional education, Nash devoted her time and energy to keeping the momentum of nonviolent protest going. Taking the helm of the Direct Action Committee of SNCC, Nash, along with Charles Sherrod, J. Charles Jones, and Ruby Doris Smith, traveled to Rock Hill, South Carolina in early February 1961. While rallying for support of nine students from Friendship College who had been convicted of trespassing

and sentenced to 30 days hard labor after participating in lunch counter sit-ins, Nash along with her companions were immediately arrested as well. She was sent to the York County Jail where she penned a poignant letter-to-the-editor of the Rock Hill Herald stating the intentions of the protestors who were only trying to help focus attention on a moral problem.

Nash also became involved with another sort of protest in the form of Freedom Rides. The first of the Freedom Rides began in Washington, D.C. in May 1961. Discouraged by the levels of aggression, some Freedom Riders wanted to abandon the endeavor, but Nash stepped in arguing that if they let them stop protesters with violence, then the movement would die. After this Nash coordinated Freedom Rides from Birmingham, Alabama to Jackson, Mississippi. In the end, Attorney General of the United States Robert Kennedy successfully urged the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce total desegregation of all interstate terminals.

After a second victory, Nash moved on from fighting for desegregation to advocating voting rights for blacks in the South. In 1962, Nash was sentenced to serve two years in prison for teaching lessons of nonviolent protest to children in Jackson, Mississippi where she and her husband, James Bevel, were living. This time, Nash was four months pregnant. She was released on appeal and did not serve the full term.

For her work with the Voting Rights Committee of SNCC, Nash was asked by President John F. Kennedy to serve on the committee that led to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. She also joined the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King as an organizer, strategist, field-staff person, race-relations staff person, and workshop instructor. In 1965, she and Bevel were awarded the Southern Christian Leadership Council's Rosa Parks Award for planning and carrying out the campaign for voter registration in Selma, Alabama.

Nash's lifework is to empower young people to feel that they can bring awareness to any injustice they may be experiencing in their lives through nonviolent means. She has spoken at countless college and universities, youth organizations, and human rights conferences and currently resides in Chicago where she has worked for several decades in tenant organizing, housing advocacy, and real estate.

In 2003, Nash received the "Distinguished American Award" presented by the John F. Kennedy Library

Foundation. A year later, the LBJ Award for Leadership in Civil Rights was bestowed on Nash by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. Her most recent honor was the bestowal of the National Civil Rights Museum's Freedom Award in 2008.

*See also:* Baker, Ella; Freedom Rides; Lawson, James; Lewis, John; Sit-In Movement; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Mary Jo Fairchild

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## Nation of Islam

The Nation of Islam had its beginnings in Detroit during the 1930s. In the context of both the Great Migration and the Great Depression emerged a mysterious man who called himself Wallace Dean (W. D.) Fard Muhammad. Influenced by Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple, Marcus Garvey, and the African American church, Fard Muhammad spread his unique interpretation of Islam among African Americans in Detroit. Based on police and FBI records, he was born in either New Zealand or Portland, Oregon, on February 25, 1891 to Hawaiian or British and Polynesian parents. Using a variety of aliases, Fard Muhammad had married and fathered a son before abandoning his family to move to Los Angeles by the 1920s. Between 1918 and 1929, he was in and out of jail and prison until leaving Los Angeles permanently in June 1929. Fard Muhammad relocated to Detroit, with a brief stop in Chicago, where he became a retail salesman and, in the lore of the Nation of Islam, he was a "silk peddler." While displaying and selling his wares, Fard Muhammad would discuss African American history, racial oppression, and Islam with his potential customers. By 1931, he rented public halls in order to deliver lengthy speeches, and these meetings became the actual genesis of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America.

According to Fard Muhammad—who would famously claim to be Allah in the flesh—he was sent on a mission to wake the “dead” and lost nation in the West, to teach them the truth about whites, and to prepare them for the coming Battle of Armageddon. In his unique rendition of Armageddon, when the forces of good and evil would prepare for battle at the mountain of Megiddo in the Great Plain of Esdraelon in Asia Minor, the combatants would really be black “Asiatics” and white “Devils,” and the location of the battle would be North America. For the next three years, Fard Muhammad spread his teachings until his mysterious disappearance in 1934. In the meantime, he encountered a very impressionable Elijah Poole (late Elijah Karriem and, eventually, Elijah Muhammad). During their first encounter, Fard Muhammad revealed to Poole that he was the returned redeemer—Jesus—although he would later claim to all of his followers that he was, in reality, Allah himself.

After Fard Muhammad’s disappearance in 1934, Elijah Muhammad became the “messenger” and leader of the Nation of Islam. The movement grew steadily until World War II when Muhammad and his followers refused to bear arms for the United States. In 1943, Muhammad was convicted of encouraging resistance to the draft and served 3.5 years of a 5-year sentence in a federal prison. When he was released in 1946, the Nation of Islam’s membership dropped from a high of 8,000 in the last year of Fard Muhammad’s leadership to just under 1,000 by the end of World War II. In the two decades between 1946 and 1966, however, Elijah Muhammad was to turn this situation around and make the Nation of Islam one of the strongest black organizations in North America.

Upon his release from prison in 1946, Muhammad relocated to Chicago in order to establish a foothold in the city. In 1954, Temple No. 2 on Chicago’s South Side was established and became the headquarters of the Nation of Islam. Between 1946 and 1955, a total of 12 new Muslim temples were constructed in various parts of the country. By 1959, the Nation of Islam had 50 temples in 22 states and the District of Columbia and an estimated 3,000 registered and paying Muslim members, 15,000 believers, and about 50,000 sympathizers (or people who did not attend services at a temple and who were likely Christians, but who supported the ultimate goal of the Nation). The influence of this movement spread more widely than can be readily measured. Through their newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, founded by Malcolm X in 1957, hundreds of

thousands of African Americans read and were inspired by the words of Elijah Muhammad. In July 1959, a TV documentary entitled “The Hate That Hate Produced” was aired, which introduced the Nation of Islam to white America and put Malcolm X on a national stage as the most articulate and passionate spokesman of black anger and rage. Liberal whites and moderate civil rights leaders joined in their condemnation of what they considered a black hate group that advocated black supremacy.

With charismatic and transcendent leaders and members like Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Khalid Muhammad, and Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam perfected a formula for remaining relevant to black urban communities across the United States. Oddly enough, the Nation of Islam is a politically conservative organization, influenced heavily by both Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey. Beginning with Elijah Muhammad, leaders of the organization lecture about self-reliance, hard work, and moral uplift. Members of the Nation of Islam have strictly regimented lives. They cannot drink alcohol, engage in public cursing, use drugs, fornicate or have premarital sex, carry concealed weapons, buy anything on credit, or purchase pornography. Men in the Nation of Islam are encouraged to attend Monday night training sessions Fruit of Islam, the organization’s security force. Women have specialized classes on some Wednesday and Thursday nights.

Theologically, the brand of Islam embraced by members of the Nation differs radically with what can be considered more orthodox variations of the religion. With a blend of black nationalism, a strong antipathy for whites, and some basic tenants of Islam, the “true knowledge” as members refer to it has both intriguing and problematic aspects. According to Nation of Islam doctrine, 66 trillion years ago, there were 13 black tribes of humanity (the original man) until one was destroyed in an incident that led to the creation of the moon. From that time and until 6,000 years ago, the Nation of Islam claims that 12 black tribes ruled the planet uncontested until a “big-headed” scientist named Yacub sought to create his own tribe. A master of genetics and the principles of magnetism, Yacub realized that like repels, but unlike attracts. Thus, if he could create a race so different from others, they would attract—and therefore dominate—all others. On the island of Patmos, Yacub grafted germs (genes) from the original black Asiatics to make brown people, then red people, yellow people, and finally whites. With each successive generation of lighter

peoples, the races of Yacub became more and more susceptible to wickedness and evil. Thus, whites were “grafted Devils” and, with the use of “tricknology” they conquered the world and continue to control it.

The concept of black nationalism with the Nation of Islam is wrapped around the unique theology of the organization. According to their teachings, Allah would allow the grafted white Devils to rule the world for 6,000 years before destroying these abominations. The time of the grafted Devils was to end in 1914 (the onset of World War I), but Allah issued a reprieve, for destroying the Devils in North America would also lead to the destruction of his chosen people—the lost-found Nation. Fard Muhammad was sent to awaken the lost-found Nation—the black Asiatic people—and convince them to separate from white America. Apparently, their teachings claim that the Book of Revelations includes the prediction that 1970 would be the year that Allah was to destroy the grafted Devils once and for all. If African Americans had not managed to separate from whites by then, they too would be destroyed by Allah’s wrath.

Of course 1970 came and went and neither a black nation was created nor were whites destroyed. In the last iteration of this story, Allah had issued another reprieve—this time until the year 2000. At that time, Allah would send a mothership to transport his chosen people away from North America before destroying whites. After the year 2000, the Nation of Islam has moved away from making predictions about Armageddon and the end of the reign of whites.

In terms of the more practical side of the Nation of Islam’s teachings, the organization has been key in reforming and transforming ex-convicts, with Malcolm X serving as the epitome of this phenomenon. In 1985, it began the “Dopebusters” antidrug program in Washington, D.C.’s Mayfair Mansions. In the course of a handful of months, Fruit of Islam task forces cleaned drugs and drug dealers out of an African American government project. Likewise, Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam provided the organizational apparatus for the 1995 Million Man March, the 1997 Million Woman March, and the 2000 Million Family March. Finally, Nation of Islam temples and mosques engage in community outreach and employment programs. Many of these endeavors explain why so many African Americans—fully aware of the contradictions in the Nation of Islam’s history, actions, and ideology—tend to be loyal to the organization and its leaders when the

Nation is critiqued by white liberals, politicians, or media pundits.

See also: Black Nationalism; Farrakhan, Louis; Million Man March; Muhammad, Ali; Muhammad, Elijah; X, Malcolm

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## National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Currently headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is an advocacy and civil rights organization that has fought to ensure equality, justice, and inclusion for African Americans throughout its long and distinguished history. With approximately 400,000 members as of 2007, the NAACP is the largest civil rights organization in the United States, with regional offices in California, New York, Michigan, Missouri, Georgia, and Texas, as well as local, youth, and college chapters in practically every state in the United States.

The origins of the NAACP can be found within two separate historical trajectories, both linked directly or indirectly to lynching and racial violence. First, the savage 1899 lynching of Sam Hose, in Newnan, Georgia, set into motion a series of events that would lead to the founding of the Niagara Movement. On April 23, 1899, Hose—an African American migrant farm worker who had previously killed his white employer—was tortured, dismembered, and burned alive in front of 2,000 whites. W. E. B. Du Bois, having heard about the arrest of Hose and fearing

the potential of his lynching, prepared a letter to be delivered to Joel Chandler Harris, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, which sought to provide a reasoned description of the evident facts. Before Du Bois arrived at the editorial office, news had reached him that Hose had already been lynched and that his knuckles were on display at a grocery store in downtown Atlanta. As Du Bois would later recount in his autobiography, the Hose lynching served as a “red ray,” which disrupted his goal of becoming a “scientist” who would seek to resolve issues regarding equality and justice through scholarship and his work as a professor at Atlanta University. In many ways, the Hose lynching was the genesis of Du Bois’s transformation into a scholar-activist.

In the decade leading up to Hose’s lynching, 115 black Georgians had been murdered by white mobs. Du Bois and others demanded that Governor Allen Candler actively protect the state’s black population from these frequent acts of murderous violence. This appeal fell on deaf ears and the Hose incident was linked to the tumult that surrounded the issue of black suffrage by white supremacist politicians. This was the height of the black nadir, and the white South was seemingly determined to ignore the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, using any justification available. The myth of the black murderer and rapist represented a sufficient rationalization for the continued subjugation of African Americans throughout the South. The emotion of the Hose case and the continued frustrations created by white opposition to the human rights of African Americans coalesced in the form of a political statement by Du Bois—*The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).

In attacking the problematic leadership of Booker T. Washington, Du Bois created a platform for future black activism in *The Souls of Black Folk*. He called for suffrage rights, civil rights, and the education of black youth. Although he had earlier been a strong supporter of Washington’s economic program, Du Bois grew to realize that Washington’s accommodationist doctrine had shifted the burden of resolving the racial divide squarely on the shoulders of African Americans—the victims of suffocating levels of oppression. As a direct result of Washington’s efforts to accommodate white supremacy, white southerners not only placed the blame on the victims of their deleterious policies, they also began to steadily erode the few remaining rights of African Americans. In Du Bois’s diatribe against Washington in *The Souls of Black Folk*, he rightly points out that during the years of Washington’s leadership,

the movement to disfranchise black men in the South had widened, the Supreme Court had moved to officially sanction racial segregation, and monetary aid was being steadily withdrawn from black liberal arts colleges. The specter of Sam Hose denied any attempt to blame the victims of white supremacy and, in Du Bois’s evolving world view, made necessary resistance, constant pressure, and activism.

*The Souls of Black Folk* produced a significant amount of political momentum and led to the founding of the Niagara Movement in Fort Erie, Ontario, in July 1905. A total of 32 prominent African Americans, including Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, and John Hope, met to discuss the means by which civil rights and an end to racial discrimination could be achieved. Expanding on the platform Du Bois outlined in *The Souls of Black Folk*, this organization listed a number of major objectives: voting rights, an end to discrimination in public accommodations, social integration, judicial equality, and the education of black youth. Despite Du Bois’s attempt to credit William Monroe Trotter with creating the organization’s political platform, the Niagara Movement’s goals were largely based on concepts articulated by Du Bois two years earlier. At the next meeting, scheduled for August 15, 1906, in Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia, the estimable Ida B. Wells-Barnett joined the Niagara Movement and the group incorporated her antilynching campaign into its platform. By the end of 1906, the Niagara Movement had established 30 branches and, although underfunded and understaffed, the organization had managed a handful of victories for civil rights at the local level.

The second historical trajectory that led to the founding of the NAACP was the 1908 Springfield, Illinois race riot. In a city preparing to celebrate the centennial of its most famous son in 1909, Abraham Lincoln, a race riot began on August 14, 1908, which led to seven deaths—including one lynching—and the destruction of dozens of homes and businesses. White progressives in Springfield and across the country were appalled by the details of the riot and the fact that it occurred in, of all places, the birth city of Lincoln. In response to the race riot, socialist William English Walling wrote an article entitled “Race War in the North” for the *Independent* that described, in graphic detail, the Springfield riot and called on progressive whites to come to the aid of their fellow black citizens. Among those influenced by the article was Mary White Ovington, a New York socialist and social worker. Ovington sought out Walling and, along with Jewish social worker Dr. Henry Moskowitz, the three white

progressives launched a call for a national conference on the plight of African Americans during the commemoration of Lincoln's centennial birthday on February 12, 1909. Among the 60 people attending the conference were a number of notable African American activists and intellectuals: Du Bois, Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Arthur Spingarn, among others.

During the February 12, 1909 conference, the National Negro Committee was formed to serve as the organizational apparatus that would articulate a platform for African American civil rights. In May 1910, the National Negro Committee organized a permanent body to be known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Ovington was appointed as the executive secretary. Other members of the NAACP's executive committee included Moorfield Stoery (national president), William English Walling (chair of the executive committee), John Milholland (treasurer), and Du Bois (director of publicity and research); Du Bois was the only African American in the NAACP's early leadership core. The platform and goals set forth by the NAACP were adopted from the Niagara Movement. In this way, the two historical trajectories—the Niagara Movement and progressive/radical whites—merged together to create one of the most powerful and effective civil rights organizations in U.S. history.

Notable early activities of the NAACP include the 1913 protest against segregation in the federal government sanctioned by Woodrow Wilson, the boycott of the 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*, and the 1917 Silent March against lynching and racial violence in New York City. As a result of its early emphasis on local organizing and rigorous recruitment, the NAACP's membership grew dramatically. In addition, the number of branches increased from just 50 offices and 6,000 members in 1914 to more than 300 branch offices and 90,000 members reported by 1919. With the publication of *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918*, the NAACP launched a more concerted effort to record and investigate lynchings, with the goal of encouraging legislative action to bring an end to this evil practice. Although the NAACP never successfully forced antilynching legislation at the federal or state level, the organization's commitment and efforts in this regard led to the gradual decline in the annual number of lynchings in the United States. One effective mechanism used by the NAACP to highlight lynchings was the distribution of flags to all branches the denote each time "A Black Man Was Lynched Today."

In the midst of its ever-expanding fight against lynching and racial violence, the NAACP began to address other areas of African American life that needed dire attention. By the 1930s, the NAACP began to look at education, housing, health care, public transportation, employment, and other issues that limited the life chances of African Americans. It was also during this era that the organization's hesitance to engage in mass direct action became apparent. Instead of staging mass marches, pickets, or boycotts, the organization engaged in court room battles and political lobbying as means to fight for enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In the three decades after 1936, the NAACP won or significantly contributed to a number of courtroom and legislative battles, including *Murray v. Maryland* (1936), *Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *Smith v. Allwright* (1944), *Morgan v. Virginia* (1946), *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948), *Sipuel v. University of Oklahoma* (1948), *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950), *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act (1965). The work of Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood Marshall, Walter White, and Roy Wilkins were significant in these victories.

By the 1960s, the NAACP began to expand its activism beyond the court room and state and federal law-making bodies and began to engage in direct action. In 1960, the NAACP's Youth Council began a series of lunch-counter sit-ins around the South, resulting in the desegregation of more than 60 department store lunch counters. In addition to sit-ins, NAACP organizers engaged in other forms of nonviolent social protest including marches and civil rights rallies. As a result the successes of direct action as a tactic, the NAACP named its first field director to oversee the legal and safety concerns of nonviolent protesters. Ironically, field director and highly successful organizer Medgar Evers was fatally shot outside his home in 1963.

In keeping with the constant changes occurring with the Civil Rights movement, the NAACP went through various transformations as well. By the 1970s and 1980s, the organization became a strong advocate for black political participation and actively engaged in voter registration drives, the creation of voting sites in high schools, and extending the Voting Rights Act. In addition to emphasizing political engagement and participation in the African American community, the NAACP helped increase the mounting global pressure against apartheid in South Africa by encouraging a

boycott of the nation. By 1993, the antiapartheid movement was successful owing, in part, to the concerted activities of the NAACP and allied organizations.

*See also:* Antiapartheid Movement; Antilynching Campaign; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Houston, Charles Hamilton; Jim Crow; Marshall, Thurgood; Niagara Movement; Springfield Race Riot of 1908; Terrell, Mary Church; Wells-Barnett, Ida; White, Walter; Wilkins, Roy

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## National Association of Colored Women

The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was the preeminent association of African American women from its founding in 1896 through the first decades of the 20th century. The NACW grew rapidly and, within 20 years of its founding, had 50,000 members in more than 1,000 clubs around the nation. African American women organized themselves around the need to uplift the race, better their communities, defend the morality of black women, and improve the lives of poor black women and children. Whereas other women's organizations in the late 1930s began to erode its dominance, the NACW has continued

to provide fellowship for black women and social welfare benefits to African Americans around the country.

African American women have a long tradition of self-help, benevolent associations, and social clubs. In the post-Civil War period, many women joined church women's auxiliaries, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the King's Daughters, and other associations that dispensed charity to needy blacks in their community and fought for temperance, suffrage, education, and civil rights for African Americans.

By the 1890s, women flocked to new secular women's clubs organized around social welfare and race uplift. In the summer of 1892, elite clubwomen came together in Washington, D.C. to form the Colored Woman's League of Washington, D.C. Led in part by Mary Church Terrell, a wealthy school principal, in 1894 the league began to affiliate with other women's leagues to become a national organization. The next year, Josephine Ruffin, a clubwoman from Boston and editor of the *Woman's Era* monthly journal, founded the National Federation of Afro-American Women. In 1896, to avoid competition and factionalism, the two organizations merged into the National Association of Colored Women, with Terrell as the first president. This new organization listed as its goals promoting education for African American women, raising home standards, aid to women and children, especially working women and children, political rights for African Americans, and interracial understanding.

Leaders of the NACW argued that women had to uplift the race by helping African Americans gain respectability through improved morals, especially for women. Clubwomen's emphasis on morality stemmed from the lack of respect accorded black women. Ruffin had founded the National Federation of Afro-American women partly in response to a slanderous letter sent by John Jacks, a Missouri editor, to Florence Balgarnie, a British suffragist and reformer. Jacks accused African American women of sexual immorality, as well as thievery and deceit. Clubwomen focused on proving the morality of black women; promoting middle class norms for homes, children, education; cleanliness; and improving social and economic conditions that would protect women from sexual abuse. Clubwomen sometimes caused resentment among the poor whom they were trying to aid, because their emphasis on respectability inevitably placed the burden of improvement on blacks themselves, who were often innocent victims of sexual abuse and institutional

racism. The NACW motto, "Lifting as We Climb," expresses this classism. When women in the NACW worked to aid African American women, they believed that they worked to benefit the entire race because they believed that the perceived immorality of black women held back all African Americans. Furthermore, they argued that because men had lost power through disfranchisement, women had to take the lead. Such a dominant role for women in race uplift occasionally caused tensions with black men who wanted women to yield such leadership to black men.

The NACW first convened in 1897 in Nashville, where, in addition to emphasizing women, children, and the home, they discussed the convict lease system, Jim Crow conditions, especially in railroad travel, and lynching. Many projects spearheaded by local clubs were related to education and children's issues. The kindergarten department was one of the first departments established in 1901 under president Josephine Silone-Yates. The Charleston (South Carolina) Free Kindergarten Associations, established in 1902, sold copies of a speech written by Mary Church Terrell to raise the funds needed to open two kindergartens. Clubwomen were also particularly interested in opening homes for delinquent girls in the South and for migrant girls in the North. One of the earliest efforts was the White Rose Mission in New York, founded by Victoria Mathews, which took in southern girls arriving in New York City. It aided 5,000 girls in the first 15 years. Southern state federations of women's clubs also opened homes for delinquent girls and schools offering an industrial education, often because their states refused to allocate public funding for such projects. Clubwomen also turned their attention to health care; the Neighborhood Union in Atlanta established a health clinic for children, and the Phyllis Wheatley Woman's League of Chicago sponsored talks on health and sanitation.

In addition to social welfare, the NACW also promoted black history and literature, evident in the inclusion of black literature on the program of one of the earliest conventions, in Buffalo in 1901. They made a significant contribution to public history when, in 1916, the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association (FDMHA) requested the aid of the NACW in raising funds to save the former home of civil rights leader Douglass. The NACW raised enough to burn the mortgage at the 1918 meeting in Denver, and NACW members worked through the FDMHA and the NACW to continue to raise money for the home's upkeep.

In the 1920s, NACW leadership increasingly focused on internationalism and interracial cooperation. Prominent NACW women became involved in pan-African issues and global women's organizations. Anna Julia Cooper attended the first Pan-African Conference in 1900, and Mary Church Terrell attended three international meetings, including the International Conference of Women in Paris in 1919. The most well-known clubwomen in the nation formed the International Council of Women of the Darker Races, an organization that studied conditions of women of color around the world and established correspondence with women's groups in Liberia, South Africa, Haiti, and Brazil. Clubwomen also became active in the Women's Division of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC), a regional group begun after Atlanta clubwoman Lugenia Burns Hope invited two white women to the 1920 meeting of the NACW. The CIC focused on issues such as improved working conditions for domestic servants and antilynching law. Such cooperation in the CIC followed an earlier decision of the General Federation of Women's Clubs not to seat Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin in 1900 and to exclude black women from their organization.

The NACW began to lose authority in the 1920s as the explicitly masculine UNIA and male-dominated Harlem Renaissance moved the spotlight back on men as the leaders of the race. Furthermore, the changing sexual mores of the 1920s departed from the NACW's strict emphasis on chastity. In 1928, the association started a Better Homes drive to improve dress, manners, and hygiene for black children; and two years later the NACW eliminated all other departments in order to focus exclusively on the mother, the home, and the child, as well as women in industry. African American women more interested in the political fight for civil rights increasingly turned to the National Council of Negro Women, established by former NACW president Mary McLeod Bethune. The NACW continued to organize women's clubs that focused more narrowly on their local community needs. In so doing, it has helped thousands of communities around the country, in particular in areas concerning education, children, and social welfare.

*See also:* Antilynching Campaign; Bethune, Mary McLeod; Mathews, Victoria Earle; Pan-Africanism; Terrell, Mary Church; Tubman, Harriet; Universal Negro Improvement Association; Wells-Barnett, Ida.



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## National Council for Black Studies

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Founded in 1975 by a group of academics from various disciplines concerned about the future of the emerging field of black studies, The National Council for Black Studies, Inc. (NCBS) is the premier organization for professionals committed to the development of the discipline. In its brief 30-year history, it has successfully established itself as a leader of the black studies movement in both the national and international community, and has steadfastly held to committing itself to academic excellence and social responsibility.

The birth of the black studies movement was a natural extension of the social turbulence of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements that rocked the nation in the 1960s. As noted by Karenga (2002) in *Introduction to Black Studies*, black student demand on college campuses led to the creation of academic and community-based programs that were a reflection of the history and culture of people of African descent. As college and universities struggled to fulfill student demands for a meaningful and relevant education, a cadre of black scholars and intellectuals emerged as leaders in the field.

The many ambiguities surrounding the content, structure, purpose, and nature of the discipline led Bertha Maxwell Roddey to convene and assume leadership of a new organization dedicated to strengthening and promoting

academic and community programs in the area. Under Roddey's leadership (1975–1978) and those that followed, (William King, William "Nick" Nelson, Carlene Young, Dolores P. Aldridge, Charles Henry, Selse Williams, William Little, James Stewart, Shirley Weber, and Charles Jones) NCBS successfully influenced the development of a core curriculum for the discipline, provided a base for activist scholars; challenged institutional attacks on black studies programs and faculty members who supported them; and played a vanguard role in the development and institutionalization of black studies programs on college and university campuses throughout the United States.

Among its many achievements, NCBS assumed a leadership role in the development of curriculum standards. The 1981 publication of the *Black Studies Core Curriculum*, developed by a committee chaired by Perry Hall, was a major step in this direction. The organization's ability to focus its attention on the continued development of uniform standards for the discipline was strengthened by a three-year, \$300,000 grant awarded by the Ford Foundation in 1988. In 1990, the release of the *Holistic Afrocentric Curriculum Model* report, which resulted from a collaborative effort among board members William Little, Carolyn Leonard, and Edward Cosby, was hailed as a breakthrough in the conceptualization of black studies from an Afrocentric rather than a Eurocentric worldview. In addition, the Ford Foundation grant allowed the organization to focus on professional development for new scholars and administrators entering the field. NCBS established summer institutes that allowed new scholars to study with some of the preeminent scholars in the field, and offered new administrators the opportunity to explore the challenges of leadership for chairs and program coordinators of Africana/black studies. The success of these initiatives resulted in a three-year extension and an additional \$300,000 grant from the Ford Foundation.

A recent collaboration between NCBS and the National Black United Fund Federation Charities has provided the organization with funding to support community outreach programs. This initiative, led by board member Patricia Reid-Merritt, allows federal employers to contribute to NCBS through the combined federal campaign. Affiliated institutions receive grants to support educational and service programs in the black community.

The NCBS annual conferences have consistently offered scholars the opportunity to present their research and

to partake in scholarly discourse with others in the field. Scholars from a cross section of traditional and nontraditional disciplines engage in ongoing debates about their positioning and linkages to the field of black studies. In addition, new emerging young scholars offer insights from the first generation of trained scholars with terminal degrees in the field of black studies. The growth of degree-granting programs in black studies led to the creation of the first national honor society to recognize outstanding achievement for majors and minors in Africana/black studies. Ankh Maat Wedjau was established by NCBS in 2004. Senior scholars in the field served as charter members and, in March 2005, the first class of student achievers was inducted.

Coupled with its many successes, the organization has also experienced numerous challenges from both internal and external forces. Steeped in a radical belief that promotes the primacy of African culture to African-ascendant people, NCBS has often been forced to defend its own philosophy, beliefs, and practices as it fought, publicly, against those who attacked black studies scholars, the legitimacy of the discipline, and the organization founded to define, promote, and strengthen its presence in the academy and the community. The interdisciplinary nature of black studies has often led to conflict and confusion among those who experienced difficulty in separating themselves from traditional disciplines. More specifically, NCBS has fought diligently to demonstrate the need for a collective, organized, independent body of scholars, academics, and intellectuals whose primary commitment is to the development of the field of black studies.

With a strong membership base and institutional affiliates from across the country, NCBS continues its mission to develop and promote black studies and black scholars, to engage in effective community outreach strategies, and to participate, fully, in all actions leading to the empowerment of African people.

*See also:* Afrocentricity; Asante, Molefi Kete

*Patricia Reid-Merritt*

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## **National Council of Negro Women**

The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), founded on December 5, 1935, became the first umbrella organization to consolidate the power of all black women's groups to more effectively gain action from the national government. NCNW founder, Mary McLeod Bethune, as past president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), saw women's potential for organizing and fundraising. In 1929, she invited organizations to meet and form a national council dedicated to African American women's issues as white women had earlier done through the National Council of Women. In all, 29 women representing 14 organizations attended the founding meeting at the 137th Street Branch of the YWCA in Harlem. Debate ensued, leaving the NACW leadership split on the value of the new organization. Supporters, including Mary Church Terrell, Dr. Dorothy Ferebee, and Charlotte Hawkins Brown, selected Bethune as the first president.

Bethune used her friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt to gain assistance from the federal government on race issues. As the head of the Division of Negro Affairs at the National Youth Administration (1936–1943), Bethune viewed racial inclusion as a means to influence policy. She helped organize the Federal Council on Negro Affairs (informally called the black cabinet), which brought more managers and administrators into Washington, D.C. She used this power base to advance the rights of black women. By 1937, the NCNW gained public attention from the "National Conference on the Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth" held at the Labor Department. In 1938, more recognition came with the "Conference on Governmental Cooperation in the Approach to the Problems of Negro Women and Children" held at the Department of the Interior. These conferences created public recognition of the NCNW and brought its leaders into direct discussions with government officials.

Under Bethune, the NCNW grew in members, structure, and recognition; developed a full-time paid staff; and purchased a national headquarters building in 1943. The



Mary McLeod Bethune addresses an annual meeting of the National Council of Negro Women, established in 1935. (National Park Service-Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS, Washington, D.C.)

NCNW became the clearinghouse for information related to black women and race issues and disseminated this information through its publication, *African American Woman's Journal*. During World War II, the NCNW campaigned for integration of the military and for admission of black women into the Women's Army Corps (WACS). NCNW sponsorship resulted in the *S. S. Harriet Tubman*, the first ship to honor a black woman. Bethune represented the NCNW as an advisor to the U.S. delegation at the founding conference of the United Nations in 1945. By 1949, the NCNW represented 22 national organizations including sororities, professional associations, occupational societies, women's auxiliaries, denominational groups, and clubs.

Well-qualified and dedicated women followed Bethune. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee (1949–1953) and Vivian Carter Mason (1953–1957) continued the direction of

the NCNW. Dorothy Irene Height (1957–1998) created a professional staff capable of program delivery and won tax-exempt status in 1966, enabling the NCNW to gain grants and contributions for its programs addressing youth, health, employment, hunger, civil rights, international relations, and family life. Growth in membership through affiliation progressed through the years from 500,000 in the 1930s to 4 million by the 1980s. Government agencies recognized the NCNW as the predominant national organization, hence, reinforcing the organization's representative power.

Collaboration and coalition building remain. Dorothy Height continues as president emerita and chair following her retirement in 1998. The NCNW belief in commitment, unity, and self-reliance appears in their current promotion of financial security, health issues, achievement, and recognition of African American women leaders.

See also: Bethune, Mary McLeod; Black Cabinet; National Association of Colored Women; Roosevelt, Eleanor; Terrell, Mary Church

*Dorothy Salem*

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## Negro League Baseball

Andrew “Rube” Foster formed the Negro National League in 1920, thereby establishing the most organized and stable league for black players throughout the years of segregated baseball. Earlier leagues had existed. Black men participated in the National Colored League as early as the mid-1840s, and there had been integrated teams and all-black clubs during the Civil War era, particularly in the Northern states.

In 1867, the Brooklyn Uniques challenged the Philadelphia Excelsiors to the “championship of colored clubs,” the earliest game in which scores are available for all-black teams; Philadelphia won, 37–24. That same year, the Philadelphia Pythians attempted to join the newly formed National Association of Base Ball Players, the first organized baseball league in the country, but they—along with any other team with black players—were not permitted to join this all-white league.

Nevertheless, black players did occasionally participate on teams consisting of white players. In 1878, John “Bud” Fowler pitched for the International League, breaking the minor league color barrier. In 1883, a Toledo team in the Northwestern League signed catcher Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker, a black man who had played integrated baseball for Oberlin College. The next year, Walker’s team merged with the American Association, thereby making Walker the first black player on a major league ball club roster, several decades before Jackie Robinson’s sensational signing.

Actually, Robinson was far from the first African American to play professional ball. During the 1880s, 13 black players participated on minor leagues teams populated by white players, with 1887 being their peak year. Difficulties were significant for these players, with fans threatening them, and white teammates refusing to pose for team photos if they

appeared in them. Moreover, if a black man pitched, some teammates would deliberately make errors to prevent the pitcher from winning his game.

On July 14, 1887, National League star Cap Anson refused to play against George Stovey for racial reasons; the next day, the International League agreed to ban all future contracts with players of color. Frank Grant and Bob Higgins continued to play on integrated teams through 1888, and Fleet Walker through 1889, but the ban was in full effect by then.

In 1885, Frank Thompson formed the first all-black professional team, the Cuban Giants. Other important professional teams followed, including the Philadelphia Orions, the Boston Resolutes, the Lord Baltimores, the St. Louis Black Stockings, the New York Gothams and Cuban X Giants, and the Michigan Page Fence Giants.

Challenges abounded for black players and the owners of these teams. Owners generally lacked sufficient funding, so players’ wages were uncertain. Some teams followed predetermined schedules, which assisted them in collecting greater gate fees; but they also barnstormed, traveling across parts of the country and challenging local teams to matches. The teams divided gate receipts in ways that were determined before the game.

In 1901, Baltimore Orioles manager John McGraw attempted to pass light-skinned Charlie Grant as a Native American, in hopes of circumventing the ban on black players. His ruse was uncovered, and the talented second baseman was prohibited from play.

Initially, Rube Foster’s National Negro League was formed by eight teams located in Chicago, Illinois; Dayton, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana; Kansas City, Kansas; and St. Louis, Missouri; this was named the Western League. Shortly thereafter, six more teams formed the Eastern Colored League, and the two divisions met in their own version of the World Series.

Foster became ill in 1926; the Eastern League collapsed in 1928, and the Western League folded after the 1930 season. Two leagues—the Negro Southern League and the East-West League—appeared in 1932, and then the Negro National League name was revived. With six to eight teams each year, this organization lasted through 1936. Starting in 1937, two divisions re-formed, and the league flourished until 1947, when Brooklyn Dodgers manager Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson to a contract. This began the integration of modern-day baseball in the National League, and that

year, Robinson won the Rookie of the Year Award. Also that year, Bill Veeck of the Cleveland Indians signed Larry Doby, thereby breaking the color barrier in the American League. Doby participated in All-Star games from 1949–1954.

Other players who made a successful transition from the Negro leagues to major league baseball include Leroy “Satchel” Paige who, after pitching for black teams for 22 years, joined the Cleveland Indians in 1948 and pitched well into his fifties. Another was catcher Roy Campanella, who also played for Branch Rickey’s Dodgers. Perhaps the most sensational player to cross the color line was the last to do so, Hank Aaron, who signed with the Milwaukee Braves in 1954 and went on to break the major league home run record (755) and the record for runs batted in (2,297).

Other men who played their entire careers in the Negro leagues, but who clearly had the skill to play in the all-white major leagues, include “Smokey” Joe Williams, Josh Gibson, “Buck” O’Neil, “Mule” Settles, Oscar Charleston, “Bullet” Joe Rogan, and “Cool Papa” Bell. Starting in 1971, a Negro League Committee selected nine players for Baseball National Hall of Fame and Museum induction; in the years since, the Veterans Committee has continued honoring talented men from these leagues.

*See also:* Black Athletes; Jim Crow; Robinson, Jackie

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## Negro Seamen Acts

The Negro Seamen Acts were a series of laws passed in Southern coastal states during the antebellum period intended to prevent seditious communication between slaves and foreign or Northern free blacks. Although South Carolina’s Negro

Seamen Acts were the most controversial and have received the most scholarly attention, similar laws were also passed in Georgia (1829), North Carolina (1830–1831), Florida (1832), Alabama (1839, 1841), and Louisiana (1842). These acts prompted innumerable protests from Great Britain and intensified the rising sectional tensions between Northern critics of slavery and Southern defenders of states’ rights that eventually culminated in the American Civil War.

The first Negro Seamen Acts were passed in South Carolina on December 21, 1822, five months after the discovery of an apparent slave revolt led by a Charleston free black man named Denmark Vesey. Suspicions that visiting free black seamen had encouraged and assisted Vesey in planning the rebellion prompted calls to forestall the consequences of free black seamen influencing the state’s slaves. Under the provisions of the acts, free blacks employed on board vessels docking at a South Carolina port from any other state or foreign nation were to be seized and placed in jail until the vessel was ready to depart the state. Furthermore, the captains of these vessels were required to pay for the expenses of these confinements, and if they failed either to remove the free black seamen from the port or refused to pay for their detentions, the captains could be fined at least \$1,000 or imprisoned for two months, and the free black seamen could be sold as slaves.

Almost immediately the acts were greeted with widespread opposition and nearly endless controversy. In February 1823, captains of American vessels argued that the acts subjected their ships to considerable expense, inconvenience, and delay. And members of Charleston’s Chamber of Commerce complained in 1826 and 1830 that the laws not only drove away commerce and thus impoverished the city, but also that the acts were regularly evaded and failed to prevent interactions between free black seamen and slaves. But the most steady and fervent salvos were launched from representatives of the British government, who decried the treatment of free British subjects and argued that the acts violated the free trade provisions of the 1815 Commercial Convention between the United States and Great Britain.

Not confining their discontent to petitions and protests, however, opponents of the Negro Seamen Acts also questioned and challenged their constitutionality. Only weeks after the acts’ passage, a lower court in South Carolina upheld their constitutionality. Then in August 1823, the U.S. Circuit Court ruled that the laws violated the exclusive right of the federal government to regulate commerce

and was therefore unconstitutional. Defenders of the Negro Seamen Acts responded that South Carolina had a right to protect its citizens from “moral pestilence,” and compared the laws to maritime quarantine regulations enacted to prevent the importation of deadly infectious diseases. But proponents more generally argued that the court’s decision violated the state’s sovereignty and independence, thus placing the emerging doctrine of states’ rights at the heart of the defense of the Negro Seamen Acts.

Officials in South Carolina accordingly disregarded the ruling and continued to imprison free black seamen, igniting what some historians consider the first nullification crisis between the state and federal governments. Despite this consistent and fervent defense of the Negro Seamen Acts and the principle of states’ rights, the acts did undergo several alterations. The South Carolina legislature passed the first modifications to the acts in December 1823, repealing the enslavement provision and exempting free black sailors on naval vessels contingent on their remaining on board their ships while in port. But at the urging of the South Carolina Association—a group of prominent Charlestonians formed after the Vesey conspiracy to preserve order and implement stricter controls over the city’s black population—the 1823 law also enacted more severe penalties for free black offenders, and, in 1835, the enslavement provision was reinstated. In 1856, the Negro Seamen Acts were again amended, allowing free black seamen to remain on board their vessels rather than being removed to the jail after captains provided bonds to ensure that their colored mariners would not go ashore. Like previous versions of the law, however, this provision produced unintended consequences. One ship captain petitioned the Charleston City Council in March 1858 asking to be relieved from a fine, claiming that his free black crewmen had been lured ashore by persons desiring to collect the portion of the fine given to informants.

Protests and legal battles over the Negro Seamen Acts persisted throughout the remainder of the antebellum period, and champions of the acts and the principle of states’ rights consistently came to their defense, sometimes using violent or extralegal means. For instance, when Massachusetts agent Samuel Hoar arrived in Charleston in late 1844 to initiate legal suits again challenging the arrest of free black citizens of the Bay State, the South Carolina legislature condemned him as a seditious danger to public safety, and Hoar was compelled to flee under the threat of mob violence. Similarly, South Carolina authorities derided the

Massachusetts legislature in 1845 for its increasing hostility toward the institution of slavery. White Southerners were thus increasingly suspicious of any action that challenged their peculiar institution or the laws enacted to police the South’s considerable slave population. Before long this sectional rift would boil over into a Civil War that would abolish slavery and the Negro Seamen Acts.

*See also:* Vesey, Denmark

*Michael D. Thompson*

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## **New Negro Movement**

The New Negro movement was a bold effort to transform American images of African Americans through art and literature, while instilling race pride within the black community itself. Pursuing racial renewal through cultural diplomacy, the new Negro movement gave birth to the Harlem Renaissance (1919–1934), a period of black artistic efflorescence. A golden age of black cultural nationalism, the Harlem Renaissance was a grand response to the call of W. E. B. Du Bois, who, in November 1920, wrote that an age of black literature was due. The literati of the Harlem Renaissance—Alain Locke, James Weldon Johnson, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and others—were the vanguard of the new Negro movement, fulfilling their roles as part of what W. E. B. Du Bois called “the talented tenth.” Graphic artists, such as Aaron Douglas, William H. Johnson, and Miguel Covarrubias, complemented their verbal genius with visual forms. Collectively, the writers, artists, intellectuals, and performers were known as the “new Negroes,” and their era would be called the Harlem Renaissance. For the first time in American history, African Americans could rightfully

claim to have produced a distinctive culture and to have contributed significantly to the American experience.

The term “new Negro” actually predates the “new Negro movement” itself. Henry Louis Gates has traced the use of this metaphor back to its origins. The term “new Negro” had been variously used to refer to transplanted Africans as slaves in the New World, then to newly emancipated slaves, and then to politically activist African Americans. In 1900, Booker T. Washington wrote *A New Negro for A New Century*. From 1905 to 1910, the Niagara Movement, an organization founded by W. E. B. Du Bois, became the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an interracial organization founded in Springfield, Illinois in 1909. The New Negro movement should be distinguished from Hubert Harrison’s radicalist “new Negro manhood” movement. From August–October 1919, Harrison (d. 1927) edited the ephemeral *New Negro* magazine, but stood outside the mainstream new Negro movement. Although it championed many of the political ideals of black activists of the time, the new Negro movement itself was not political.

The term “new Negro” was already a social reality, and the new Negro movement simply solidified the emergent and robust self-consciousness of that new reality. The “new Negro” was really the product of the Great Migration (1915–1920) of more than a million blacks who moved from the rural South to the urban North in search of prosperity. In Harlem, a black middle class emerged, and a convergence of social forces made Harlem the cultural capital of African Americans from the 1920s to the mid-1930s. The new Negro movement stood in tense counterpoise with separatist Jim Crow laws—America’s apartheid.

Meanwhile, in December 1924, *Vanity Fair* heralded the advent of the “new Negro” in a two-page feature, “Enter, The New Negro, a Distinctive Type Recently Created by the Coloured Cabaret Belt in New York.” Mexican caricaturist Miguel Covarrubias drew striking images of African Americans that radically departed from the old stereotypes, and African American writer Eric Walrond, future author of *Tropic Death* (1926), wrote the captions. In the *Vanity Fair* feature, Walrond proclaimed the demise of artistic stereotypes of the “old Negro.” At a time when African Americans had virtually no political recourse, their voice could best be heard through their distinctive music, poetry and art—a creative and humanistic effort to achieve the goal of civil rights by producing positive images of African Americans and promoting activism through art.

In its heyday, the effective leader of the new Negro movement was philosopher Alain Locke (1885–1954), whose roles as both race leader and cultural pluralist proved a rare combination. As the first African American Rhodes Scholar, his exquisite education abroad in Oxford and Germany—culminating in his Harvard doctorate in philosophy—prepared Locke to become the most important African American intellectual between the great W. E. B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King Jr. As the spokesman and chief strategist of the new Negro movement during the Harlem Renaissance period and beyond, Locke resolved to sweep away the pejorative stereotypes of the “old Negro” through the transformative ideas and visual rhetoric of art, music, drama, and literature.

The most spectacular cultural product of the new Negro movement was the Harlem Renaissance. The ideology of the new Negro movement expressed itself through the Harlem Renaissance, which sparked a new pride in everything African American, and presented, to both white and black audiences, the artistic and literary gifts of the “talented tenth”—the vanguard of that African American elite who could best represent the new image of African Americans to America at large. This was a watershed period in African American history for psychological revalorization and race vindication. Although blacks were being objectified as icons of exotic, African-rooted primitivism, the Harlem Renaissance achieved a major objective of the new Negro movement, which was to instill a race pride in blacks and a corresponding respect for blacks by mainstream America.

Locke’s cultural pluralism was a novel strategy: Launch a cultural movement that would enrich America and gain the respect of the white majority, and the masks of black stereotypes (which were nonthreatening because they reinforced black inferiority in the eyes of whites) would disappear, revealing the true humanity of African Americans beneath the façade. Although its success was short-lived, the new Negro movement was brilliantly conceived and masterfully promoted.

The Harlem Renaissance presented itself as a microcosm or “self-portraiture” of black culture to America and to the world. For Locke, art ought to contribute to the improvement of life—a pragmatist aesthetic principle that may be characterized as “meliorism.” The new Negro movement transfused black consciousness by shaping a new self-image through powerful literary and artistic images. Although the movement is frozen in history, Locke’s ideology is very much alive. In 2004, philosopher José Medina

transposed Locke's "new Negro" ideology and applied it to the concept of the "new Hispanic." As for reliving the experience of the Harlem Renaissance, which is the legacy of the new Negro movement, this can be experienced in a new way today, thanks to the Virtual Harlem Project, developed by the Electronic Visualization Laboratory of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The new Negro movement also had a transformative effect on America at large. The writers of the new Negro movement fundamentally altered the way in which America views itself, although that change has been slow in coming. The changes in race relations today are partly the delayed impact of the new Negro movement, which advocated what Alain Locke would later call, "a new Americanism." See also: Du Bois, W. E. B.; Harlem Renaissance; Hughes, Langston; Locke, Alain; McKay, Claude; Negritude

Christopher George Buck

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## New Orleans Riot of 1900

The week of July 23, 1900, proved to be one of the bloodiest weeks in the Crescent City's history. Police went on a manhunt for Robert Charles (1865–1900), a biracial man who shot 24 whites including seven police officers, even

as a mob composed primarily of white men and boys thronged the streets inflicting random acts of violence on blacks who were routinely chased, beaten, and shot.

The events began in New Orleans on Monday evening, while the 34-year-old Charles and his 19-year-old roommate, Lenard Pierce, sat quietly on the doorsteps of a white family's house at 2815 Dryades Street. According to historian William Ivy Hair, the two men were awaiting the return of Charles' girlfriend, Virginia Banks, who lived nearby in a back room of 2849 Dryades Street when three New Orleans policemen, Sergeant Jules C. Aucoin, Patrolman August T. Mora, and Officer Joseph D. Cantrelle, approached the two men claiming that they looked suspicious. When the officers approached Robert Charles, he did not have a previous criminal record in New Orleans, although he had once been arrested in Mississippi in 1894 for peddling alcohol in a dry county. Charles moved to New Orleans shortly after his brush with the law, but voluntarily returned to Mississippi in October 1896 to stand trial for the charge, and received a verdict of not guilty.

The exchange between Charles, Pierce, and the three officers is sketchy, with conflicting accounts of the ensuing gunfire that erupted between Officer Mora and Robert Charles. Reverend D. A. Graham of the A.M.E. Church in New Orleans reported to the Indianapolis newspaper, *The Freeman*, that when the policemen began clubbing Charles, he drew the Colt revolver he was carrying in an inside coat pocket. Afterwards, Officer Mora admitted to using his billet and drawing his gun before Charles drew his pistol. Both men were shot in the exchange, although Charles escaped with a bullet wound in his leg.

Seven white police officers and a civilian arrived at Charles's one-room home at 2023 Fourth Street sometime during the early morning hours of July 24, precisely the location where Charles had fled to dress his wound. The officers intended to kill him on sight. Instead, another gun battle ensued with Charles killing Captain John T. Day and Patrolman Peter J. Lamb. Charles fled and took refuge at the home of acquaintances Silas and Martha Jackson. He remained hidden in the Jackson's home located at 1208 Saratoga Street for the week, even as violence raged on in a city boiling with racial conflict.

By Wednesday, July 25, a white mob estimated in the thousands began a tragic reign of lawlessness in which numerous black men and women were assaulted and killed, including a newsboy who was knifed, a man who was dragged from a car and beaten to death, and a 75-year-old



man on his way to work in the French Market. On Friday, July 27, a black informant led police to Saratoga Street where Charles was cornered inside an upstairs bedroom. The mob remained outside the two-story house during the standoff in which Charles refused to surrender.

Eventually Charles, armed with a Winchester rifle and home-made bullets, was shot multiple times while exiting the house after a mattress was set ablaze and thrown inside the house producing a cloud of black smoke. Charles continued to fire his weapon as his body was riddled with bullets. A Tulane medical student on the scene, Charles A. Noiret, fired the bullet that killed Charles. After his death, the mob dragged Charles's body into the street where it was repeatedly shot, punched, kicked, and mutilated. That night the rioting continued, and an African American public school named for philanthropist Thomy Lafon was burned.

In her pamphlet "Mob Rule in New Orleans," civil rights activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett described the mob that roamed the streets throughout the week as completely lawless. She went on to say that the mob was in the streets daily, beating, shooting, and killing African Americans at will.

Robert Charles (also known as Curtis Robertson or Robinson) migrated to New Orleans from Copiah County, Mississippi, only six years before the fateful drama. Charles maintained a membership in the International Migration Society, an organization promoting a Back-to-Africa Movement, and sold Bishop Henry M. Turner's publication, *Voices of Missions*, which advocated African American rights to fight in self-defense. He worked as a laborer and was described by those who knew him as an intelligent man who dressed well. He also wrote prolifically, having filled scores of composition books with unknown content that were removed from his home after his death and subsequently lost. Charles owned several "well-worn text-books" that were removed by police and souvenir seekers. Notwithstanding the murders that Charles unquestionably committed and journalist labels such as "fiend" and "Negro desperado," evidence suggests that Charles was a thinker and a writer who lacked formal education, yet possessed an interest in the complexity of race relations and a predilection toward intellectual improvement.

A month after the rioting had quieted, Reverend Graham noted in a letter to *The Freeman* that never before had African Americans been as victimized and terrorized by whites in the South. Still, numerous people who knew

or were in the vicinity where Charles hid on Saratoga Street were arrested and incarcerated for at least a year. Charles was buried in an unmarked grave in Holt's Cemetery in New Orleans.

*See also:* Jim Crow; Lynching; Turner, Henry McNeal; Wells-Barnett, Ida; White Mob Violence

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## New York Silent March of 1917

The New York "Silent March" of 1917 is considered one of the first mass demonstrations by African Americans in the 20th century. On July 28, 1917, an estimated 10,000 African American men, women, and children marched silently down Fifth Avenue in New York City to the sound only of muffled drums. The demonstration served as a response to an eruption of racially motivated violent attacks on the black community. James Weldon Johnson, at that time field secretary for the NAACP, served as the principal organizer of the New York "Silent March," also known as "The Negro Silent Protest Parade." The East St. Louis riots of 1917 emerged as the central motivating factor for the protest.

The racial tension in East St. Louis, Illinois increased during the early months of 1917, as a result of African Americans replacing white workers in the city's industrial factories. The tension began to boil over on July 1, 1917, when members of the white community drove into a black residential area and began firing guns. Moments later, two white out-of-uniform police officers drove into the area and were subsequently shot and killed. On July 2, 1917, East St. Louis's white residents retaliated against the African American community and began shooting at black men, women, and children. They also burned their houses, lynched men from streetlamps, destroyed their businesses, and beat people to death. The East St. Louis massacre left 39 African Americans dead and 8 white fatalities. The rioters destroyed more than \$400,000 worth of property and

nearly 6,000 African Americans were driven from their homes and forced to seek refuge.

At a meeting of the NAACP's Harlem branch, the East St. Louis riot served as its primary topic. The executive committee initially planned to organize a mass meeting at Carnegie Hall to discuss the massacre and voice their concerns. James Weldon Johnson recalled a conversation he had with Oswald Garrison Villiard, journalist and NAACP treasurer, and suggested a silent protest parade. He called for the participation of all classes of African Americans in the Greater New York area to join this effort. A planning committee of pastors from leading churches and other influential African American men and women made preparations for the march.

Although the East St. Louis riots served as the primary motivator for the march, the memories of numerous

lynchings, most notable the lynchings of Ell Persons in Memphis, Tennessee, and Jesse Washington in Waco Texas, also inspired the black community to organize and demonstrate their frustrations to the nation. Members of the African American community assembled at 59th Street and Fifth Avenue in New York and marched into the center of Manhattan on July 28, 1917. The procession was headed by children, some as young as six years old, wearing white. They were followed by the women also dressed in white and men in the rear dressed in dark clothes. W. E. B. Du Bois was among the many prominent marchers. A banner that stretched half the width of the street read, "Your Hands Are Full of Blood," immediately followed by a marcher carrying an American flag.

As planned, no one in the demonstration spoke a word. An apathetic crowd of approximately 20,000 spectators



*Silent March in New York City on July 28, 1917. The parade was organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and religious leaders in Harlem to protest violence against African Americans throughout the United States. (Library of Congress)*

consisting of blacks, as well as whites, lined the streets as they, too, abided by the code of silence. There were no bands, cheering, or hand clapping to break the monotony. Although no one spoke a word, the demonstrators conveyed their messages to the nation through numerous signs that read: “Mother, Do Lynchers Go To Heaven?”; “Mr. President, Why Not Make America Safe for Democracy”; “Maligned As Lazy, Murdered When We Work”; “Race Prejudice Is the Offspring of Ignorance, and the Mother is Lynching.”

The New York “Silent March” of 1917 created a model for future public demonstrations. The event succeeded as a result of the efforts from nearly 100 churches, fraternal lodges, and civil rights organizations. The NAACP held the most prominent role in the protest and launched its crusade against lynching and other forms of racial injustice.

See also: Antilynching Campaign; Du Bois, W. E. B.; East St. Louis, Illinois, Riot of 1917; Lynching; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## Newton, Huey P.

Huey Pierce Newton (1942–1989) was a leader and co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Named after Louisiana senator Huey Long, Newton was the seventh child of Armelia and Walter Newton in Monroe, Louisiana. At age three, Huey Newton migrated to Oakland, California, with his family, searching for economic opportunity and a better quality of life. During the years following World War II, Oakland boasted a burgeoning African American population and a busy port that promised more possibilities than Louisiana ever could. For the Newton family and other black families like them, however, Oakland was not the Promised Land: schools were substandard,

living accommodations were meager, at best, and jobs were ephemeral.

Melvin Newton and Walter “Sonny Man” Newton Jr., Newton’s two older brothers, and Walter Newton Sr., Newton’s father, were most influential in Newton’s childhood development. Melvin epitomized the potential of pursuing a life of ideas. He attended San Jose State College and taught his brother Huey the value of learning. “Sonny Man,” leaving home as a teenager, thrived in the illegal economy and showed Newton the allure of street life. Huey Newton would later recall that while Sonny Man appeared to live freely, this freedom was only an illusion. Despite the illusion, Walter provided Huey Newton with lessons to negotiate life on Oakland’s streets. To Huey, Newton Sr. was the glue that held their family together. Holding multiple jobs and performing the duties of a Christian minister, Walter Newton Sr. combined spirituality with pragmatism and taught his sons the necessity of opposing white racism.

Never feeling at home in structured classrooms, Newton received his education during his formative years on the streets of Oakland. There he and his friends experimented with, acted out, and constantly engaged the politics of masculinity and found the hustler’s life appealing. In the 10th grade at Oakland Technical High School, Newton was expelled for his behavior and he transferred to Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California. Newton’s experience at Berkeley High School was only a little better. In fact, it was at Berkeley High School that Newton’s trouble with the law began, forcing him to go to juvenile hall. Unable to attend Berkeley High School upon leaving juvenile hall, Newton returned to Oakland Technical High School and graduated in 1959.

Social promotion and the politics of bureaucratic public high schools allowed Newton to graduate without possessing requisite scholastic aptitude. After a period of self-directed study under the tutelage of his brother Melvin, however, Newton entered Oakland City College in the autumn of 1959. It was at Oakland City College from 1959 to 1966 that Newton began actively seeking answers to the problems plaguing African American communities nationwide. Reading radical theorists like Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Franz Fanon, Karl Marx, and Mao Zedong, and participating in black cultural and political organizations, Newton began to develop his own theoretical framework. The first organizations he joined were the Afro-American Association and the Soul Students Advisory Council, student

groups devoted to studying African American history, political thought, and cultural production, and creating a black studies curriculum on campus. Disappointed with the presence of political consciousness but lack of political activity in the two organizations, especially the two groups' dismissal of black working poor men, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, a friend and student at Oakland City College, created the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

The Black Panthers were initially organized in 1966 as an armed police patrol to protect black community residents from brutal police violence. By 1969, with Bobby Seale as its chairman and Huey P. Newton as its minister of self-defense, the organization went nationwide, with more than 40 chapters devoted to the daily concerns of black urban communities.

In autumn 1967, Newton's life took a dramatic turn when a police traffic stop turned deadly. Newton had been a victim of police harassment since his days of police patrols in 1967. After being pulled over for unknown circumstances in the early morning hours of October 28, 1967, an altercation with the police left Patrolman John Frey dead, Patrolman Herbert Heanes wounded, and Newton near death with a bullet in his stomach. Treated for his bullet wounds at Kaiser Hospital, Newton was interrogated, brutalized, and chained to a gurney by police. Newton retained the services of Charles Garry, a prominent lawyer known for working with leftist causes. Accused of murder, felonious assault, and kidnapping, Newton awaited trial in San Quentin Prison and the Oakland County Jail. After months on trial, on September 8, 1968, Newton was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to a 2- to-15-year sentence at the California Men's Colony, East Facility, in San Luis Obispo, California. Most of Newton's 22 months at the penal colony were spent in isolation. While Newton was imprisoned, Charles Garry feverishly worked to obtain an appeal. On May 29, 1970, the California Appellate Court announced that Newton's conviction was reversed and determined that, because the jury had been denied critical information in determining Newton's fate, a new trial was ordered. In August 1970, Newton was released on bail. In the early 1970s, Newton's defense team participated in two more trials to save him from imprisonment. Both ended in a mistrial. Cleared of all charges, Newton set out to rebuild the party.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) from 1970–1974, however,

made bolstering the party difficult. Also, Newton's move to possess absolute authority in the party, going by names like the supreme commander, the servant of the people, and the supreme servant of the people, made strengthening the party difficult. Furthermore, Newton's stardom among the country's celebrities, who provided him with luxury items, drugs, and alcohol, compromised his position among those individuals the party purported to serve.

Newton's drug abuse and alcoholism may have contributed to his fleeing the country in 1974 and further estranged the Black Panther Party from black communities. In late 1973, Newton allegedly shot a prostitute, Kathleen Smith, and brutalized a tailor, Preston Callins, for calling him "baby." Shortly after being arrested and posting bail for assaulting Callins, Newton fled the United States and obtained asylum in Cuba where he remained until 1977, relinquishing control of the declining Black Panther Party to Elaine Brown. Upon his return to the United States, Newton was imprisoned, released on bail, and eventually acquitted for the murder of Smith. Callin's case was dropped after he declared that he could not remember his assaulter. Newton also resumed control of the party after Elaine Brown resigned her post, citing irreconcilable differences with Newton.

After the Black Panther Party officially disbanded in 1982, Newton's wife, Fredericka, left him, and his drug and alcohol abuse, as well his problems with law enforcement, continued. In 1985, he was suspected but never indicted for burglary. In 1986, he was cleared of possessing illegal firearms. In 1988, Newton served time in prison for parole violation. On August 22, 1989, Newton was fatally wounded after being shot three times in what seems to have been a drug deal gone awry.

Despite COINTELPRO initiatives created by the Federal Bureau of investigation to discredit Huey Newton, Newton's involvement with the criminal justice system, his authoritarianism within the party, and his drug problems, especially during the last decade of his life, Huey P. Newton was a scholar and the Black Panther Party's chief theoretician. In 1966, after six years of study, Newton received his associate's degree, was awarded a bachelor's degree in education and politics from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1974, and won his doctorate from the History of Consciousness Program at the University of Santa Cruz in 1980 by successfully defending his dissertation "War Against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America."

Interestingly, although graduating high school with substandard educational skills, Newton was a prolific writer who (co)authored five books and scores of articles, essays, and position papers. These writings are indicative of Newton's openness to ideas, his ability to synthesize political theories, and a willingness to develop his own understanding of the oppressive forces and strategies to eliminate structural inequalities that jeopardized African American's social, political, and economic well-being.

In 1966, when the party was initially organized, Newton was a black nationalist and posited that only black people's control of capitalists' institutions in their community could bring about African American empowerment. In 1969, Newton's understanding of marxism led him to embrace revolutionary socialism as an ideology necessary to seize economic and political power from the elite ruling class and end the exploitation of the poor and working classes. By 1970, Newton hypothesized that only an internationalist struggle linking radical and progressive forces in different countries could bring about fundamental change. In 1971, Newton's intercommunalism combined ideas of empire and imperialism to articulate an understanding of social movements that transcended the confines of national boundaries.

Newton's political growth and demise was symptomatic of the shifts in the U.S. post-Civil Rights era political economy. In the 1970s, the most ostensible constraints on African Americans' well-being were apparently removed with 1960s civil rights legislation, the end of white mob rule, and the ascendance of neoconservative ideologists who coopted notions of equal protection. Heterogeneous black working class communities that had been created only decades before were floundering under burdens of northern racism, capitalist exploitation, and black people's search for cultural and political identity. Newton's ideological and political development and ultimate ruin is indicative of the hope, potential, and reality of progressive factions in American society who challenged systems of oppression and exploitation. Huey P. Newton may not fit the American fantasy of a spotless, pure hero, but he does epitomize the complex nature of the radical liberation movements in a global age.

See also: Black Panther Party; Black Power; Brown, Elaine; Cleaver, Eldridge; COINTELPRO; Seale, Bobby

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## Niagara Movement

In response to Booker T. Washington's cautious approach to social justice, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frederick McGhee, and Monroe Trotter agreed that something had to be done. Du Bois suggested that they convene a meeting of the talented

tenth who were interested in creating an organization dedicated to the freedom and growth of the Negro. The name, Niagara Movement, was derived from their vision and because Niagara Falls was where the meeting took place.

Du Bois sent invitations to 60 African American leaders who were secure in their profession and principles to resist any backlash from Booker T. Washington to meet in Buffalo, New York, to organize an organization dedicated to the freedom and growth of the Negro and for racial equality. On July 9, 1905, 29 black intellectuals and professionals and Iteenager, met in Buffalo. Because of racial prejudice at the hotel in Buffalo, the meeting moved to the Eric Beach Hotel, Fort Erie, Ontario, July 10. Those in attendance included Du Bois, Trotter, Fred L. McGhee, Reverdy Ransom, Charles B. Purvis, Lafayette Hershey, Freeman H. M. Murray, J. Max Barber, Edwin Jourdain, Rev. Bryron Gunner, Alonzo F. Herndon, Henry L. Bailey, W. H. H. Hart, George Jackson, and William H. Richards, who were known as the Niagarites.

The structure of the movement reflected what Du Bois had suggested to Washington during the meetings for the Committee of Twelve. The structure included an executive committee, several committees, and a chairman for each Niagara state chapter, which were to be organized immediately after the meeting. Membership dues were \$5 annually. Du Bois was elected as secretary; Jackson was elected treasurer; Trotter served as chair of the Press and Public Opinion committee, which Du Bois also served on; and the Constitution and By-Laws of the Niagara Movement was voted on. The Niagara Movement was officially formed and incorporated in January 1906.

The Declaration of Principles, drafted by Du Bois and Trotter, was signed by all those who were in attendance. The declaration recognized the progress within the African American communities—buying of property, uplift in home life, the advance in education, literature and art, crime prevention, and the constructive and executive ability of religious, economic, and educational institutions. The principles called for suffrage for men and women, civil liberty, economic opportunities, quality education, equal justice within the court system, better health care, permanent employment and membership into labor unions, removal “Jim Crow” cars, and rewarding soldiers for their service with promotions and the opportunity to be admitted to the military academy. Finally, the principles stated duties that every person should adhere to. More important,

the Niagarites called on the government to enforce the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

The second meeting, held August 15, 1906, at Storer College, Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia, occurred during the 100th anniversary of John Brown’s birth and the 50th anniversary of the battle of Osawatomie. More than 150 people, representing 34 state chapters, including the Massachusetts Niagara Women’s Auxiliary, were in attendance. Speeches by Reverdy Ransom and Du Bois spoke straight to the heart of the Niagara movement. Ransom addressed the significance of John Brown’s anniversary, calling him a man true to the slave. Ransom also spoke of the two classes of African Americans and their opposing perspectives. In his speech “Address to the Country,” Du Bois presented a five-point resolution calling for quality education, enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment and the reduction of congressional seats for states where African Americans could not vote, justice, and jobs. He ended his speech by urging young people to stand up for their rights, to prove themselves worthy of their heritage, to treat men as men, and to have courage.

Unlike the first meeting, a number of women traveled to Harper’s Ferry with their husbands and fathers. Mrs. Gertrude Wright Morgan, Mss. O. M. Walker, Mrs. H. F. M. Murray, Mrs. Mollie Lewis Kelan, Ms. Ida D. Bailey, Miss Sadie Shorter, and Mrs. Charlotte Hershaw were only a few of the women who attended the meeting in 1906. Even though they could not attend any of the sessions, they participated in the program, attended the opening and closing sessions, had a women’s meeting, and attended the celebration for John Brown. Mrs. Mary Ovington, a reporter for the New York Evening Post, also attended the meeting and, later in 1908, became the first white member of the Niagara movement.

The 1907 Niagara movement meeting was held at Boston’s Faneuil Hall, with 800 people in attendance. At this meeting that Trotter resigned as chairmen of the press and public opinion committee and a disagreement between Trotter and Clement Morgan had a major impact on the meeting. By 1908, strife and conflict, lack of funding and central leadership, and the pressure from the Tuskegee machine began to take its toll on the organization. Thus attendance at both the 1908 and 1909 annual meeting, which was held in Oberlin, Ohio and Sea Isle City, respectively, was low. The 1910 meeting was cancelled.

Du Bois let it be known that African Americans would not cease protesting for their rights, but it would be by voting, persistent hammering at the truth, sacrifice, and work that they would get their rights as freeborn Americans. This was the mission and purpose of the Niagara movement.

*See also:* Du Bois, W. E. B.; Jim Crow; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Springfield Race Riot of 1908; Trotter, William Monroe

*LaVerne Gyant*

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## Nicodemus, Kansas

Nicodemus, Kansas, was a town settled by and for African Americans from Kentucky and Tennessee who were seeking a better life in the American West in 1877. It derived its name from an enslaved African who was believed to be the first to purchase his own freedom in America. Many of the settlers of Nicodemus were enslaved before the American Civil War. They were seeking a new life in Kansas in response to escalating racism in the American South by white politicians and their constituencies, angered over what they perceived as unfair gains by blacks during Reconstruction.

The town itself was a planned community devised by a small committee of seven known as the Nicodemus Town Company. Simon P. Roundtree, a black preacher, and W. R. Hill, a white planner, led the group's efforts. The wide circulation of a document created by Roundtree spurred the growth of the settlement. This flier warmly invited African Americans to settle in the new community. The Nicodemus Town Company created a supporting flier repeating the invitation. An early resident of the town, Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, was instrumental in spreading the word through

his own personal distribution of these invitations to black communities outside the state of Kansas.

The first winter in the settlement was difficult for its new arrivals. There had not been enough time to plant and harvest crops before the weather grew bitterly cold. Food and supplies were scarce. The new settlers were greatly aided by their Native American neighbors in the Osage Nation who supplied them with food and other necessities. The next year settlers saw success in farming and in finding employment with the local railroads.

By 1879, the population of Nicodemus was close to 600 residents. As the town continued to grow, several of its inhabitants became successful. Anderson Boles was the owner of a hotel and also a prominent local farmer. Z. T. Fletcher was the town's first postmaster and also owned a hotel. A. T. Hall and E. P. McCabe made their fortunes in real estate. The latter became the first African American politician elected to statewide office in Kansas when he became state auditor.

The residents of Nicodemus believed that the presence of a railway line through the town would attract new businesses and more residents to the growing community. In 1887, town residents voted in favor of issuing \$16,000 in bonds to persuade the Missouri Pacific Railroad to offer service through the town. The community also courted another rail company, the Union Pacific. The promise of a rail line excited residents, creating a great deal of optimism about the future of the settlement; however, neither of the railroad companies pursued by the town decided to lay tracks in Nicodemus. The Union Pacific Railroad determined that a location to the south of the settlement was the best place for their operation.

Nicodemus-based business owners, seeing the location of a rail line as the lifeblood of a new settlement, followed the railroad to the nearby area that later came to be known as the city of Bogue, Kansas. This loss of business was gradual but irreversible, leading to rapid population decline in the early half of the 20th century. Only 16 people were listed as residents of the town by 1950, rebounding slightly to about 80 in the 1980s.

In 1976, the town was selected as a National Historic Landmark and in 1996 a National Site. The last designation provided funds for preservation of various town landmarks and the creation of public programs detailing the history of the settlement.

See also: Black Nationalism; Exoduster Movement; Singleton, Benjamin “Pap”

*Christopher Keith Johnson*

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## Nkrumah, Kwame

Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) was an African activist, intellectual, and statesman, and the first prime minister and later president of Ghana, the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence. He played a pivotal role in developing the concept of Pan-Africanism.

Kwame Nkrumah was born on September 18, 1909, and baptized as “Francis” a few days later in the local Roman Catholic Church in Nkroful, a village located in what was then called the British-ruled Gold Coast Colony and today called Ghana. His father, a goldsmith, gave him the name Nwia Kofi Ngonloma, but Nkrumah often used this as well as his day-name Kwame (for Saturday) on many instances throughout his life. Nkrumah, a gifted student, was schooled in Africa, America, and England where he would subsequently earn several degrees in various subjects. He attended the Roman Catholic elementary school in his father’s town Half Assini where he became a pupil teacher by the age of 14. From there, he would attend a government training college in Accra that was eventually merged with the Prince of Wales College at Achimota. Upon graduation, Nkrumah became employed as a teacher at the Roman Catholic junior school at Elmina but eventually received a position as headmaster of a Catholic junior school at Axim within a year. While also considering a career as a priest, two years after teaching at Axim, Nkrumah accepted a teaching post at the Catholic seminary in Amissano.

Kwame Nkrumah was influenced by Kwegyir Aggrey, African vice principal of Achimota, who was educated in America to study abroad. He was accepted and attended

Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, a university for black men supported by the Presbyterian Church, on a modest scholarship between 1935 and 1939. He earned a BA degree in economics and sociology from Lincoln in 1939 and also secured a degree in sacred theology. Nkrumah earned a master of science in education in 1942 from the University of Pennsylvania while teaching at his alma mater.

As a student, Nkrumah became increasingly interested in issues related to African and African American liberation. At this time that he began to associate with black student organizations and radical ideologies. Kwame Nkrumah became radicalized in Jim Crow America while reading Karl Marx, Marcus Garvey, and W. E. B. Du Bois and associating with radical black student organizations. He pledged the all-black fraternity Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and began to write essays detailing his anticolonial ideas. Nkrumah was elected president of the African Students Organization of America and Canada while teaching at Lincoln. His first major publication, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, published in 1947, was written between 1942 and 1945. It was also during this time that Nkrumah met the Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James in 1943. He left America for England in 1945 where he registered to study at the London School of Economics in the doctoral program in anthropology and a degree in philosophy at University College, London where he worked with A. J. Ayer. While in England, he also met and assisted the West Indian activist George Padmore in organizing the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945. He also created the West African National Secretariat to support the end of colonialism in Africa and became vice president of the West African Student Union (WASU) while in England.

In 1947, he returned to Ghana to serve as general secretary of the newly created African nationalist party the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). As a consummate organizer, Nkrumah was able to transform the UGCC into a mass movement by linking it with numerous local affiliate groups disenchanted with colonial rule. In February 1948, a series of riots took place in Accra and other towns involving disgruntled veterans and workers (the veterans having been initially fired upon). The British jailed several members of the UGCC, including Nkrumah, suspecting that they instigated the riots. The members of the UGCC were eventually released and Nkrumah was subsequently catapulted to national leadership as he traveled throughout the country



calling for “self-government.” The Watson Commission of Enquiry was set up to investigate the riots. This commission would ultimately recommend a greater role for Africans in the governance of the country, echoing the pattern set by the Burns Constitution (1946) that granted Africans a greater role in the legislative council. The commission would go further in that a new Constitution was established by an all-African Committee and open elections were to be held. Nkrumah was disenchanted with the gradualist approach adopted by the British and would proactively continue to support self-governance for Africans.

The UGCC included a network of associations with youth groups, organized labor, and host of local interest cliques. Nkrumah used his personal contacts within the larger framework of the UGCC to establish a base of support within a vanguard party that eventually broke away from the UGCC. As a result of this split with the UGCC,

Nkrumah formed the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in 1949. Nkrumah, having gained popular support at the grassroots level, began his “self-government NOW” campaign that included a general strike. Kwame Nkrumah was jailed for his activities in 1950 but after the CPP captured nearly all of the elective seats in the legislative assembly (22, 780 of 23, 122 votes) in the elections of 1951, he was released. Nkrumah was able to develop a working relationship with the British Governor Sir Charles Arden Clarke between 1951 and 1954 that developed from a diarchy of leadership between Africans and the British to internal self-government under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah as prime minister of Ghana by 1952. The CPP was able to gain 72 of 104 available seats in the legislature by 1954 and nearly 70 percent of the seats by 1956. Ghana became an independent republic after 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African



*Kwame Nkrumah was the first prime minister and later president of Ghana, the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence in 1957. (Library of Congress)*

state to achieve independence. Nkrumah married an Egyptian, Fathia Halen Ritz, in 1957, with whom he had three children. Nkrumah would come to play an integral role in the development of Pan-Africanism after 1957 as the leader of the first independent sub-Saharan African country and come to influence other African leaders in the region. In April 1958, Nkrumah came to host the All African People's Convention, and this organization was the precursor to the creation of the Organization of African Unity. Kwame Nkrumah was declared the first president of an independent Ghana in 1960.

Kwame Nkrumah made a series of attempts to improve Ghana while serving as president. These activities included attempts to industrialize Ghana's economy, the development of an Africanized civil service, and the Volta River project created to use hydroelectric power resources. He also developed a modern military by implementing conscription and the acquisition of ships and aircraft. As a result of increased revenue from Ghana's major export crop, cocoa (world price of cocoa increased dramatically in 1954), Nkrumah moved to improve education and health services. This consisted of the building of a new university and a deep water port. Domestic tensions in Ghana did not dissipate with the leadership of Nkrumah. He introduced restrictions on civil liberties and all political opposition was severely curtailed. He used the profits from the rising cocoa prices, not to benefit the farmers, but to build up the country's infrastructure. This fostered hostilities among his former constituents. Strikes were outlawed and political opponents were jailed under the Nkrumah regime. The internal improvement projects orchestrated by Nkrumah were partially financed through foreign loans catapulting the country into great debt. Despite these internal problems, Nkrumah remained largely popular on the world stage among African people worldwide that eventually led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. He remained committed to the idea of a united Africa throughout much of his life, as evidenced with the 16 books he wrote on the subject of African liberation.

Kwame Nkrumah played a fundamental role in shaping the independence of Ghana, West African independence movements, and in the development of Pan-African ideologies worldwide. He was not only a symbol to Africans but to African Americans as well struggling for freedom in the United States through the 1950s and 1960s. Nkrumah had significant intellectual exchanges with people of

African descent interested in black liberation throughout his life across the African Diaspora from the Americas to Africa including C. L. R. James, George Padmore, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Du Bois was invited to Ghana to complete a comprehensive volume of peoples of African descent before his death in 1963. Nkrumah's reading of Marx made him a committed socialist as reflected with such works written by him as *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) and *African Socialism Revisited* (1967). Nkrumah occupies a place in world history as an important proponent of both Pan-Africanism and African socialism. The people of West Africa were galvanized by the activism of Nkrumah, and this inspired a proliferation of liberation movements throughout Africa. In 1960s America, civil rights activists such as Stokely Carmichael were also inspired by Nkrumah as well. Carmichael changed his name to Kwame Ture (combining the name Kwame with that of Sekou Toure, president of Guinea at the time). Upon Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966, it was Sekou Toure who gave him sanctuary.

As Kwame Nkrumah adopted increasingly restrictive measures of governance; he engendered many internal and external enemies. These enemies, when apprehended, were often detained without trials. During Nkrumah's presidency, trade unions lost their autonomy, political parties organized around regional or ethnic identities were outlawed, and laws such as the Preventive Detention Act made it possible to arrest political opponents on the charge of treason without trial. The Nkrumah administration became rife with nepotism and corruption as the country fell into heavy debt. In 1964, Nkrumah declared himself life president as all political opposition was suppressed. Although the Volta Dam project opened to much fanfare in January 1966, while on a visit to Vietnam a month later, Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup. He was exiled in Conakry, Guinea as the guest of President Sekou Toure. Toure honored Nkrumah with the title of co-president during his stay. Nkrumah continued to write while in exile completing such works as *Voice from Conakry* (1967) and *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare* (1968). When London-based publishers refused to print his works, Nkrumah created Panaf Books in 1968. Kwame Nkrumah died of cancer on April 27, 1972 in Bucharest, Romania. Several works written by Nkrumah were published posthumously including *The Struggle Continues* (1973), *I Speak of Freedom* (1973), and *Revolutionary Path* (1973).

The idea of African liberation as fostered by Kwame Nkrumah has had a profound impact on the development of black-nationalist ideologies worldwide. Nkrumah was both statesman and intellectual in terms of his enduring political and intellectual contributions. His writings are seminal when considering the intellectual history of modern African resistance movements and the impact of these movements on black freedom struggles in the African Diaspora. The connections he fostered with black intellectuals were a part of a long history of exchanges across the African Diaspora in reaction to a common historicocultural experience of oppression. While the methods he used as president of Ghana will remain in great debate, his importance in the history of black liberation is not in great dispute. Several sub-Saharan African nations moved swiftly toward independence on the liberation of Ghana after 1957.

*See also:* African Imperialism; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Manchester Conference, 1945; Pan-African Congresses; Pan-Africanism

Hettie V. Williams

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## Norton, Eleanor Holmes

Eleanor Holmes Norton (1937–), civil rights activist, lawyer, and U.S. Congresswoman, was born into an industrious educated family who instilled in her a drive for self-reliance and success. Her father, Coleman Sterling Holmes, was a member of the first graduating class of the Washington's Cardozo Business High School, the first of its kind for African Americans. His father was a firefighter and his

grandfather was a fugitive slave who escaped from Virginia. Vela Lynch, her mother, was from a hard working family in North Carolina. She received a BA from Howard University in 1947 and became an educator, teaching in the D.C. public school system. Eleanor Holmes, named for first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, was born in June 13, 1937, in segregated Washington, D.C.

In 1942, Norton entered kindergarten at Bruce Monroe Elementary then attended Banneker Junior High School (now senior high school) before entering Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in 1952, the first public high school for African Americans in the country. Her leadership skills, praised throughout her adult career, were predetermined at an early age. In elementary school, she was president of the school glee club and treasurer of the student council. She was president of her class at Banneker, graduating in 1952 with honors, and with the Danforth Foundation Award, given to a junior high school graduating student with outstanding qualities. One year after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ended separate educational facilities, Norton graduated from Dunbar's last segregated class in 1955 with a Ford Foundation scholarship.

She entered Antioch College in 1957, with plans to become a doctor. Although medical school proved difficult, it was her participation in socially conscious school organizations and an observation of mounting racial protests around the country that determined a switch from pre-med to a pre-law and history academic program. As president of the college's NAACP chapter, she organized the trip to Washington, D.C. for the Pilgrimage of Prayer and spent a summer at the Encampment for Citizenship in New York. In February 1960, the year she graduated from Antioch, the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-in at the Woolworth lunch counter by four North Carolina A&T university students prompted her participation in the picketing of segregated Geyer's restaurant and the bowling alley in nearby Xenia.

She continued to be socially active after entering law school at Yale University during the social intensity of the 1960s. While studying law and history, and teaching English and Speech at New Haven College, she helped to start a student chapter of Congress on Racial Equality (CORE). During the summer of 1963, while a member of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), she negotiated the release of Fannie Lou Hamer and Lawrence Guyot who had been beaten and jailed in Winona, Mississippi.

While at Yale, she established lifelong relationships with other activists including feminist lawyer Pauli Murray. Norton received her law degree in 1964 and later that year, a friend introduced her to Edward Worthington Norton, who would later become her husband.

Having no interest in electoral politics at this point in her career, Norton's social activism of her college years carried over into her professional career. She lobbied for a black voice in the traditionally all-white Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) state delegation national convention. In October of 1964, she was a clerk for Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Jr., the first black district court job in Philadelphia. During the spring of 1965, she was reacquainted with Edward Norton and they married in October of that year. At the time of their marriage, he was in his final year at Columbia University Law School, so the couple made their home in New York City where she worked as a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In the beginning, her cases dealt with antiwar and civil rights, but as the scope of civil liberties broadened with the unrest of the 1960s, her defense of First Amendment violations increased. One of her most controversial cases was the successful representation of segregationist George Wallace in his bid to speak at New York City's Shea Stadium during his run for president in 1968. It was her successful argument before the Supreme Court in 1966, which overturned a judgment that prevented the National States Rights Party from organizing a protest in Princess Ann County, Maryland, however, that brought her national attention.

In the 1970s, Norton's personal and professional life underwent several changes. On July 8, 1970, she gave birth to a daughter Katherine Felicia and to her son John Holmes on March 17, 1972. She added another specialty to her legal expertise when she began teaching one of the first women-and-the-law courses at New York University's law school. She also argued an ACLU discrimination class action suit filed by women researchers at *Newsweek* magazine, which broke new ground in the area of women's rights. She also coauthored with 30 other women lawyers *Sex, Discrimination and the Law: Causes and Remedies* (1975), the first case book on women. President Jimmy Carter appointed her the first female chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1977, which brought her back to a very changed Washington, D.C.

Rotating directors and a critical backlog of cases had labeled the EEOC as ineffective. For the next 10 years, Norton

worked to turn its reputation around by first reorganizing staff and then attacking the case backlog. Civil rights issues were no longer at the forefront. In a transitional era of stiff competition for jobs by blacks and women, Norton focused her legal skills on Affirmative Action. By the time she resigned in 1981, after Carter's defeat by Ronald Reagan, she was considered one of the most influential women in America.

Norton remained busy as a lecturer and visiting professor at Berkeley and the Boalt Law School. She was later appointed professor at Georgetown University Law Center where she taught labor law, employment law, and negotiations and set up a fellowship program on women's law and public policy. She also became the voice of the Free South African Movement, participating in the sit-in at the South African Embassy. Friends encouraged her to run for the district's lone congressional seat following Walter Fauntroy's decision not to run another term. In 1990, Norton was elected along with Sharon Pratt Kelly as mayor. Her many accomplishments include the restructuring of the financial



*Eleanor Holmes Norton has served five terms in the House of Representatives as the elected delegate from Washington, D.C. (U.S. House of Representatives)*

relationship between Washington and Congress, the first vote on DC statehood, and negotiating the continued residency of major government employers such as the Department of Transportation. She currently is in her eighth term as Congresswoman and continues to be awarded for her contributions to the field of law and politics.

*See also:* Congressional Black Caucus; MFDP; Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

Donna M. Wells

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## Obama, Barack

Barack Hussein Obama is the first African American to hold the highest office in the government and was elected 44th president of the United States of America on November 4, 2008. He was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to his white mother, Stanley Ann Dunham from Wichita, Kansas, and his black father Barack Obama Sr. of Luo ethnicity from the Nyanza province of Kenya. They met at the University of Hawaii where they were both students and married in 1961 at a time when miscegenation was still considered illegal in many states. They divorced in 1964 after Obama Sr. left to attend Harvard. Upon graduation, he went back to Kenya and came back to visit again only once in 1971. Barack Obama Sr. died in a car accident in 1982 in Kenya.

In 1966, his mother remarried Indonesian Lolo Soetoro, whom she met as a student in Hawaii, and the family moved to Jakarta, Indonesia. After the birth of their daughter, Maya Cassandra Soetoro on August 15, 1970, Ann and Lolo separated. They divorced in 1980. In 1971, at age 10, Barack Obama returned to Hawaii and stayed with his maternal grandparents, Madelyn and Stanley Armour Dunham. His mother also moved to Hawaii from 1972 to 1975, earned her PhD, and returned to Indonesia to undertake fieldwork. She later became a program officer at the Ford Foundation. Obama decided to stay in Hawaii, where he lived with his grandparents and entered Punahou Academy from which he graduated in 1979. His mother came back to the United States in 1994, but died one year later, on November 7, 1995, at 52 from ovarian cancer.

In 1979, Barack Obama attended Occidental College in Los Angeles and after two years, transferred to Columbia University in New York where he received a BA in political science in 1983. After working at the Business International Corporation and the New York Public Interest Research Group, he moved to Chicago where he became a community organizer and worked for a church-based organization for three years with low-income residents in Roseland community and the Altgeld Gardens public housing development on the city's South Side.

Although he did not receive a religious education, in 1988 Barack Obama joined Trinity United Church of Christ and was an active member for two decades until a controversy broke out during the 2008 presidential campaign over Reverend Jeremiah Wright's sermons and comments. In 1986, he met two of his Kenyan siblings, his sister Auma, who was visiting, and later his brother Roy, who lived in the United States. In 1988, Obama went to Kenya to meet the rest of his paternal relatives in Alego, north-western Kenya.

After this trip he entered Harvard Law School and became an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. He was the first African American to become president of the journal two years later, which got him a contract to write a book on race relations, published in 1995 under the title *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. The audio version earned him the Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album in 2006. He graduated with a JD magna cum laude from Harvard in 1991. He met his wife, Michelle Robinson, in June 1989 as they were both working for the same law firm. They married on October, 3, 1992. Their first daughter, Malia Ann, was born in 1998 and the second daughter, Natasha, in 2001. He then returned to Chicago where he worked as a civil rights lawyer. In 1992, under his leadership Project Vote helped register 150,000 of 400,000 unregistered African Americans during Bill Clinton's presidential campaign. From 1992 to 2004, he taught Constitutional Law at the University of Chicago. During the same period he also worked as an attorney for a law firm specializing in civil rights litigations and neighborhood development.

He ran for the Illinois State Senate as a Democrat and was elected in 1996 from the south side neighborhood of Hyde Park and served for eight years. He served as chairman of the Public Health and Welfare Committee. He worked on a bipartisan platform to draft legislation on ethics, health care, and childhood education for the poor. He



*Barack Obama speaks at a town hall meeting in Texas during his campaign for president in 2008. Obama, the first black man to serve as president, was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States in January 2009. (Star Image/Dreamstime)*

also worked on creating a state earned-income tax credit for the working poor.

In 1999, after three years in the Illinois State Senate, he tried to run for the First Congressional District of Illinois, challenging Bobby Rush, cofounder of the Illinois Black Panther Party and longtime congressional representative, but lost 30 percent to 61 percent in the Democratic primary in 2000. He won the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate in 2004 with 52 percent of the vote. On July 26, 2004, he delivered the keynote at the Democratic National Convention in Boston. In November he was elected to the U.S. Senate with a landslide vote of 70 percent against 27 percent for Alan Keyes, an African American candidate. Barack Obama was the fifth African American senator and the third to be popularly elected. He sat on the Foreign Relations, Environment and Veteran Committees

and opposed the war in Iraq as early as 2002. He resigned from his Senate seat on November 13, 2008.

On February 10, 2007, he announced his candidacy to the election of President of the United States of America in Springfield, Illinois, where Abraham Lincoln had delivered his “House Divided” speech in 1858. After a long race against Hillary Rodham Clinton—who endorsed him on June 7—he was the designated candidate of the Democratic party for the election of President of the United States, with Delaware Senator, Joseph Biden, as his running mate. He then started campaigning against John McCain, the Republican nominee. He was the first major candidate to turn down public financing since the creation of the system in 1976. Barack Obama won the presidency against John McCain, with 52.9 percent of the popular vote against 45.7 percent and 365 electoral votes to 173.

In 2004, he signed a contract to write three books. The first, *The Audacity of Hope*, published in 2006, has been at the top of the *New York Times* Best Seller list ever since. The second will be a children's book to be coauthored with his wife Michelle and their two daughters.

See also: Clinton, William Jefferson; Congressional Black Caucus

Veronique Helenon

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## Operation PUSH

Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) was founded in 1971 by Reverend Jesse Jackson to serve as a vehicle for the promotion of progressive civil rights and political activism. The organization specifically arose out of an internal dispute within the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) between Jackson and Reverend Ralph David Abernathy. Under the auspices of SCLC, Operation Breadbasket—the predecessor to Operation Push—was founded in 1962 to address the economic struggles within African American communities. Jackson had been selected by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to head the Chicago chapter of SCLC's Operation Breadbasket in 1966. Within Chicago's South Side, Operation Breadbasket—under Jackson's leadership—worked to boycott white-owned businesses in order to secure jobs for African Americans and to facilitate the purchase of goods and services for African American contractors. The underlining operating principle within Operation Breadbasket and, later, Operation PUSH was black self-sufficiency and community self-determination—two seemingly black nationalists themes.

After King's assassination in 1968, Abernathy succeeded him as head of the national SCLC. Almost immediately, Abernathy and Jackson began to clash, culminating

in the December 1971 suspension of Jackson from his administrative duties. Shortly after the suspension, Jackson officially broke away from SCLC—and thus Operation Breadbasket—and started Operation PUSH. Despite early financial struggles, Operation PUSH outlasted and exceeded Operation Breadbasket. By 1976, the organization launched PUSH-Excel, which was a program aimed at urban minority teenagers, emphasizing education and job placement as measures against youth violence and criminality. In addition, the organization engaged in direct-action campaigns, encouraging minority youth reading, and job creation and placement programs throughout the 1970s. Perhaps the organization's most successful campaign was encouraging major corporations in Chicago to adopt affirmative action programs that would focus on hiring more black executives and would purchase from minority businesses. By the 1980s, several highly publicized boycotts against corporations like Coca Cola, CBS, Nike, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Budweiser, and Anheuser Busch were organized in order to secure affirmative action hires and patronage for minority businesses. Operation PUSH began a slow decline, largely in connection to Jackson's bids for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

Directly after his stint as shadow senator from 1991 to 1996, Jackson moved to merge Operation PUSH with the National Rainbow Coalition and the resulting entity—Rainbow/PUSH—combined the goals of the two organizations he previously founded. Whereas Operation PUSH focused on education, economic uplift, self-sufficiency, and job placement, the National Rainbow Coalition was a purely political organization that grew initially out of Jackson's presidential bid in 1984. During the campaign, Jackson called for a "Rainbow Coalition" of various disadvantaged peoples from a wide array of racial and ethnic backgrounds to advocate for voting rights, affirmative action, and the Great Society-type social engineering that had largely been relegated to the periphery during the Reagan years.

From 1998 to 2009, Rainbow/PUSH has been involved in a number of endeavors, from trying to increase minority involvement in NASCAR to forcing Freddie Mac to earmark more than \$1 billion in mortgage loans specifically for minority home buyers. Perhaps the most significant and successful work by Rainbow/PUSH was the organization's investigations of hate crimes and its outcry and relief efforts

during Hurricane Katrina and the widespread devastation it caused along the Gulf Coast.

See also: Abernathy, Ralph David; Jackson, Jesse; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Walter C. Rucker

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## Organization of African Unity

Founded on May 25, 1963, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) ushered in a new way of addressing problems besetting the African continent. Member states, which numbered 54 until Morocco renounced its allegiance in 1984, pledged to honor each country's sovereignty and to fight for Zimbabwe's and other countries' liberation, still under colonialist rule at the time of the OAU's founding. Besides being dedicated to eradicating colonialism, the OAU's paramount objective was to obtain unity among Africa's ethnically and linguistically diverse nations. The problem was that African leaders had different strategies for obtaining this goal. Three opposing groups formed: the Casablanca group, the Monrovia group, and the Brazzaville group. Led by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, the Casablanca Bloc, which consisted of Ghana, Algeria, Guinea, Morocco, Egypt, Mali and Libya, called for a federation of African states; the Monrovia Bloc led by Senegal's Leopold Senghor, which comprised Nigeria, Liberia, and Ethiopia, advocated for unity through economic cooperation. Lacking the power to challenge these dominating groups, the Brazzaville bloc of former French colonies, such as Senegal, Tunisia, and Algeria, acquiesced. Even with this concession, a debate still raged regarding the best strategy for obtaining African unity. To resolve the quandary, Emperor Haile Selassie I, who became the OAU's first chairperson, invited the factions to Addis Ababa, where the OAU ultimately established its headquarters and celebrated the diplomatic unification of 32 of Africa's 54 states. Despite its lack of authority, its inability to enforce

decisions, plus create an armed military unit, the OAU represented a major symbolic force on Africa's vast continent.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the OAU had laudable goals. OAU members wanted to ensure that all African nations received equal treatment. The body wanted all of its citizens to have proper representation before the OAU. Human rights were another issue that the OAU addressed. Violations of human rights was an issue that developed because of the myriad ways that colonial powers or the apartheid regime had infringed on the liberties of African citizens. Torture, police brutality, and draconian legislation represent some of the human rights violations that Africans endured while under the yoke of colonialism or apartheid. By resolving the human rights issues, Africans faced the possibility of lessening the economic and diplomatic stranglehold that colonial authorities or African dictatorships had over Africa's heterogeneous population. To ensure a better quality of life by obliterating poverty, the OAU wanted to raise the living standards of African nations. This included better sewage facilities, education, infrastructure improvements, food sustainability, and development. In the diplomatic arena, the OAU sought to provide its member states with a forum to settle disputes. The problem was that its members vowed not to interfere in the policymaking decisions of its sister states, creating further discord especially when civil wars erupted or ethnic genocide occurred.

Lack of enforcement coupled with a noninterference policy left Africa's contestations in the hands of outsiders, such as the United Nations (UN), which tried to resolve the refugee problem in 1964 when it established a commission on refugees. It was only four years later in 1968 that the UN achieved success, when OAU members signed an agreement to help refugees. Members also agreed to limit interstate conflicts by containing problems stemming from the refugee issue within the borders of origination. This system worked for a while. Africa's refugee problems continued to flourish as a result of ethnic wars in the Sudan and Rwanda among other places. Other problems also existed. Nigeria's Ogoni people faced neocolonialism as foreign companies, such as Shell, drilled for oil, causing environmental damage with pipes above ground and flames burning 24 hours. As leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ken Saro-Wiwa pleaded before his death in 1995 for OAU and UN intervention. Adherence to noninterference crippled the OAU by rendering it ineffective



in resolving this ongoing dispute and extreme violation of human rights.

Throughout its 39 years of existence, the OAU also achieved some successes. It stood at the forefront of ending colonial and white minority rule. By supplying liberation movements such as South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) and Zimbabwe's African Union (ZANU) with weaponry and military training, the OAU took an active role in fulfilling one of its goals, the liberation of countries under systems of racism and oppression. As an antiapartheid activist, the OAU prevented South African planes from flying over the rest of the continent. That was not all. At the OAU's behest, South Africa was prevented from using African harbors and was expelled from the United Nations. Furthermore, in an attempt to foster economic growth and a sustainable future, the OAU established the African Development Bank in 1964. Despite these achievements, the OAU came under fierce scrutiny and criticism. OAU critics asserted that the body represented a dictator's club and that it did little to ensure the rights and liberties of its citizens. This presented a problem for a lot of reasons, namely that the OAU failed to fulfill its predetermined objectives, the unity of the continent. Seeing the inherent problems within the OAU, its last chairperson South African President Thabo Mbeki disbanded the body on July 9, 2002 and replaced it with the African Union (AU). Unlike the OAU, the AU has the authorization to engage indirect interventions into member states to help resolve conflicts and to eventually create a peacekeeping force to regulate ethnogenocide, modern slavery, and other problems that Africa faces.

*See also:* African Imperialism; African National Congress; Antiapartheid Movement; Nkrumah, Kwame; Pan-Africanism

Dawne Y. Curry

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## Organization of Afro-American Unity

The Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) was founded by Malcolm X on June 28, 1964, in Harlem, New York. It was a black nationalist organization that hoped to unite African Americans to defend their civil and human rights. The OAAU advocated self-determination, self-defense, and a number of political, economic, and educational initiatives aimed at empowering African Americans. Inspired by the Organization of African Unity (which sought unity among recently decolonized African nations), the OAAU promoted Pan-African unity and viewed the U.S. black freedom struggle in a global context.

In March 1964, Malcolm X officially broke with the Nation of Islam (NOI). Personal tensions with the NOI contributed to the split, but Malcolm also wanted to take bolder action on civil rights issues. Although he started his own separate religious organization, the Muslim Mosque Inc., the formation of the OAAU represented his decisive shift toward secular political organizing. Malcolm's 1964 travels in Africa and the Middle East also shaped the OAAU. He was exposed firsthand to the anticolonial struggle and to nationalist ideology and practice. He came to view recently decolonized nations and their leaders as potential allies, and he began perceiving the African American struggle in an international framework.

The OAAU was a "nonsectarian" and "nonreligious" organization that sought unity among all African Americans fighting for civil rights. It supported the self-determination and cultural uplift of black urban communities and advocated self-defense, education, and the mobilization of African Americans' internal resources. It sponsored or planned to sponsor a wide range of activities. These included the formation of "defense units" and "rifle clubs," and political initiatives such as voter registration and the formation of political clubs. Malcolm X advocated such tactics as rent strikes and called for community control of black schools. The OAAU stressed the need for education and established a Liberation School that offered classes on history and politics, as well as consumer education, child care, and other spheres of private life. Malcolm X proposed a number of OAAU activities, including a drug rehabilitation program, a "Guardian system" for youth, and community anticrime initiatives.

The OAAU viewed the African American struggle in global terms. It saw black people in the United States as part of a global majority rather than a domestic minority, and it viewed African governments and the African Diaspora as allies. This “internationalizing” of the Civil Rights movement presented new strategic openings for the OAAU. Malcolm X began referring to “human rights” instead of “civil rights” as a goal, and he announced plans to bring the United States before the United Nations on charges of racism. He also became more critical of capitalism and began calling for a new political, economic, and social system.

During its brief existence, the OAAU held rallies in Harlem, with attendance typically between 250 and 800 when Malcolm spoke. It had a headquarters in Harlem and started a short-run newsletter, *The Blacklash*, with an average circulation between 200 and 300. Its membership was never more than several hundred, with a few dozen dedicated people at its core. Dues were \$1, with a \$2 initiation fee to join. The OAAU also established international branches in London, Paris, Ghana, Kenya, and Egypt, and it founded an Information Bureau in Ghana to exchange news on African and African American struggles.

Malcolm X was the indispensable leader of the OAAU, but he had a circle of intellectuals and professionals around him who played secondary leadership roles. Malcolm was not able to fully devote himself to the OAAU while he was alive, and his assassination undercut his plan to spend more time building the group. The OAAU was an all-black organization, although Malcolm X’s views on white alliances had shifted since his NOI days. Although still skeptical of whites and still insistent on an all-black organization that could achieve independent black power, he was more open to forming alliances with anyone who shared the OAAU’s goals.

Throughout its existence, the OAAU faced obstacles. It was under constant surveillance by the FBI and other intelligence organizations, and a leading member turned out to be a police infiltrator. Malcolm X wanted the group to be a collectively run organization, but this desire clashed with the OAAU’s dependence on Malcolm’s prestige, charisma, and leadership. Furthermore, traditional black Muslims were skeptical of the OAAU’s secular orientation, whereas some members thought Malcolm was becoming “soft” on white racism with his increased openness to working with whites. Malcolm consciously included women in leadership

roles, but they still struggled with male chauvinism within the OAAU.

Malcolm X’s sister, Ella Collins, assumed control of the OAAU shortly after Malcolm’s assassination on February 21, 1965. Without Malcolm’s leadership, however, the organization quickly withered away. Still, the legacy of the OAAU as an embodiment of Malcolm X’s political and organizational thinking persisted. The OAAU offered the seeds of a radical black urban political program and international vision that African American activists in the following years would draw from.

See also: Black Nationalism; Organization of African Unity; Pan-Africanism; X, Malcolm

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## Owens, Jesse

James Cleveland “Jesse” Owens (1913–1980) was the first American track-and-field athlete to win four gold medals in a single Olympic competition. In three events, he also set records. Yet, he is best remembered as the black athlete who triumphed in Berlin in 1936, while Nazi Chancellor Adolf Hitler, who believed in the irrefutable superiority of the Aryan nation, looked on.

Owens was born on September 12, 1913, in Oakville, Alabama, the youngest child of Henry Cleveland Owens, a sharecropper, and Mary Emma (née Fitzpatrick). The family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, most likely in 1922; one story says that, when Owens started school there, he introduced himself as J. C. (James Cleveland). His teacher, though, heard those sounds as “Jesse.”

After Charles Riley, his gym teacher at Fairmount Junior High, watched Owens run, he invited him to train with the track team; Owens quickly began breaking records. As a senior at Cleveland East Technical High School, he tied the 100-yard dash world record (9.4 seconds) at the Interscholastic Championships in Chicago. He set other records there,

including in the 220-yard dash (20.7 seconds), and the long jump (24 feet, 9-5/8 inches). Reports of his success nearly always mentioned his race; he was called, among other descriptors, “saddle-colored,” or the “streak of ebony.”

Owens was recruited by several colleges, but he chose Ohio State University. Because scholarships were not available, he worked part-time jobs to pay for his tuition. Because of the segregated nature of American society, he stayed in housing apart from white teammates and ate in different places. They also traveled separately.

On May 25, 1935, Owens broke three world records and tied another, all within the span of one hour: 220-yard sprint (20.3 seconds), long jump (26 feet, 8-1/4 inches), 220-yard low hurdles (22.6 seconds), and the 100-yard dash (9.4 seconds). On July 5, 1935, he married Minnie Ruth Solomon, the mother of his three-year-old daughter, Gloria. They later had two more daughters: Beverly and Marlene. A year later, Owens qualified for the Olympic team, but because Hitler had revoked the citizenship of German Jews, the American Olympic Committee considered boycotting the 1936 Olympiad XI. Meanwhile, the Negro press was comparing Hitler’s treatment of Jews to how blacks were treated in the United States; these journalists debated whether a black person should refuse to compete, regardless of official decisions.

The Olympic boycott, however, did not happen, and Owens did compete, tying the world record in the 100-meter dash (10.3 seconds), setting an Olympic record in the long jump (26 feet 5-1/4 inches) and in the 200-meter sprint (20.7 seconds), and participating in the world record-setting 400-meter relay (39.8 seconds). All of these records remained unbroken until the late 1940s; the long jump record was held until 1960.

Hitler did not shake Owens’s hand after his victories; it was later described as a snub, but German officials claimed that a decision was made to stop congratulating athletes, for fear of missing someone. Hitler had particular reason to despise Owens; the runner scored 40 points, about two-thirds of the score of the entire male track team from Germany.

After the games, Owens decided not to return to Ohio State. He wanted to race professionally and make public appearances. After opportunities became less available, though, he could not return to amateur racing status, being suspended after choosing professional venues. He therefore participated in more moneymaking ventures, one of which



*Jesse Owens at the start of his record-breaking 200 meter race at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. The grandson of a slave, Owens won four gold medals in track and field at the summer games. (Library of Congress)*

led him to bankruptcy court. He also raced against horses before Negro League baseball games.

In 1953, Owens was appointed secretary of the Illinois State Athletic Commission. He formed his own public relations agency and presented lectures to schools and other groups. He toured India, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines for the U.S. Department of State; and, in 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower asked him to serve as one of the country’s representatives at the Olympic Games in Australia. During the 1960s, he endorsed products and worked as running coach for the New York Mets.

Ohio State awarded Owens an honorary Doctorate of Athletic Arts degree in 1972. In 1976, President Gerald Ford honored him with the Medal of Freedom, the highest honor an American civilian can receive. In 1979, Jimmy Carter decorated him with the Living Legend Award. Carter also offered a tribute when Jesse Owens died from cancer on March 31, 1980, at the age of 66: “Perhaps,” Carter

said, “no athlete better symbolized the human struggle against tyranny, poverty and racial bigotry. His personal triumphs as a world-class athlete and record holder were the prelude to a career devoted to helping others. His work with young athletes, as an unofficial ambassador overseas, and a spokesman for freedom are a rich legacy to his fellow Americans.”

After his death, his widow continued to operate the Jesse Owens Foundation, which provides financial assistance to youth. In 1982, the road leading to the Berlin stadium where Owens ran was renamed “Jesse Owens Allee;” members of his family attended the ceremony. In 1990, George Bush presented Ruth Owens with the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of her husband’s accomplishments; in 2001, Ohio State University completed the Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium.

*See also:* 1936 Summer Olympics, Berlin; Black Athletes

*Kelly Boyer Sagert*

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## **Pan-African Congresses**

The Pan-African Congresses were a series of five international conferences that took place between 1919 and 1945. These meetings contributed to the articulation of Pan-African ideas and represented an important part of the Pan-African movement. The congresses offered a forum for the discussion of Pan-Africanism. Their objectives were to foster unity among peoples of African descent and to encourage the creation of an institutional framework that could support the development of a strong Pan-African movement. Despite many attempts to establish a stable organizational apparatus, the different congresses reflect a failure to coordinate the goals and ideals of a diverse group of peoples. Lacking an institutionalized tradition, many of the shortcomings and achievements of the congresses were dependent on individual figures. The most important was W. E. B. Du Bois who provided intellectual continuity and

logistical support to the first four congresses, and contributed to the establishment of a tradition that would serve as a model for the fifth Pan-African Congress.

During the 19th century, African peoples faced the threat of the growing colonial ambitions of European nations, and black peoples in the United States and the West Indies had to deal with discrimination and economic exploitation. These circumstances contributed to the growth of Pan-African ideas. These generally stated that peoples of African descent throughout the world shared a common cultural heritage and the historical experience of exploitation and inequality. Pan-Africanism developed as a body of ideas and movements that advocated for solidarity among peoples of African descent and asserted their rights for social, political, and economic equality.

Before 1919, there were meetings that already announced the emergence of different Pan-African ideologies. In 1893, there was a Congress on Africa in Chicago. At this meeting representatives from Africa and the Americas discussed issues related to the political rights of black peoples. In 1900, the recently created African Association sponsored the organization of a Pan-African Conference in London. Thirty-two delegates from Africa, the United States, and the West Indies attended this event. The Conference produced a document called “To the Nations of the World” that condemned racism and the exploitation of peoples of African descent. As a result of the conference, the African Association became the first Pan-African Association. The association planned to organize a meeting every two years; its purpose was to provide continuity to the movement and promote its growth. The association, however, was short-lived. Plagued with internal conflicts and financial instability, it would soon disappear. Despite these shortcomings, this first Pan-African Conference and the Pan-African Association were important on a symbolic level. They contributed to the articulation of a notion of Pan-Africanism that would influence future generations of activists and intellectuals.

Between 1900 and 1919, social and political changes affected the development of the Pan-African movement. The ideals of democracy and equality started to become popular among peoples throughout the globe, and the educated elements of societies that lived under oppressive conditions started to achieve economic and political strength. These changes were evident in the emergence of nationalist ideas in parts of West Africa and South Africa, and in the tensions

that developed in the United States that would later result in the Civil Rights movement. An important result of these changes was the emergence of W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the most important ideologues of the Pan-African movement.

Among many other things, W. E. B. Du Bois was a pioneer in the study of the history and sociology of African Americans in the United States, and one of the most articulate critics of racial inequality. Although the origins of Pan-African ideas go back to the 18th and 19th century, Du Bois has been credited with the articulation of the notion of Pan-Africanism as the belief that all peoples of African descent share a common heritage and should unite to fight against discrimination and racial injustice. He contributed to the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a group that supported the organization of the first two Pan-African Congresses.

It was the NAACP that sent Du Bois to Paris in 1919. He was sent to investigate allegations of mistreatment of black soldiers in the U.S. Army who were stationed in France. He was also charged with representing African interests in the peace conference that was about to take place. While in Paris, Du Bois organized the first Pan-African Congress with the objective of voicing the needs of African peoples on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference.

A total of 57 delegates representing 15 countries attended the Congress. Du Bois outlined an agenda that included an assessment of the conditions that affected black peoples and the articulation of their demands. Among the requests of the Congress were the administration by the Allies of the former German colonies in Africa as a condominium, the improvement of living conditions (abolition of slavery, corporal punishment and forced labor, general access to education), the inclusion of Africans in the government of their own countries as soon as their level of development allowed for it, and the granting of self-rule to Africa at some point in the future.

When compared with the demands of the 1900 London Congress, the requests of the Paris Congress were relatively moderate. From an organizational point of view, the achievements of the Paris Conference were also modest compared with those of London, as no permanent organization was created as a result of the Congress.

The second Pan-African Congress took place at different sessions in London, Paris, and Brussels in 1921. In total, 110 delegates attended the Congress and more than

1,000 visitors were present at the event. There were 41 delegates from the United States, 7 from the West Indies, and 24 from Africa and Afro-Americans living in Europe. The resolutions passed at this congress were more radical than those approved in Paris. The congress produced a document entitled "Declaration to the World," which is also known as the London Manifesto. The final resolutions fully supported the principles of racial equality and self-government, without taking into consideration differences in the level of development of various societies. In this regard, the 1921 congress returned to the tradition initiated in 1900. More specifically, the manifesto was divided in four parts. The first one was a general critique of the relations between black and white peoples. The second part focused primarily on condemning the policies of the major colonial powers. The third section demanded that the sovereignty of the governments of Abyssinia, Liberia, and Haiti was respected. Finally, the congress issued a general challenge to the rest of the world.

During the second congress, differences started to emerge among various groups that represented diverse approaches to Pan-African ideas. Some delegates from the French-speaking African territories disagreed with the hard criticism levied against French and Belgian colonial policy. Blaise Diagne, who had been instrumental in the organization of the first Pan-African Congress, was among those who thought that the language of the resolutions was too radical. Even though he was African, he was in effect a French politician as a representative of Senegal in the French Chamber of Deputies. He found the declaration too extreme and abandoned the movement.

Another conflict emerged between the followers of Marcus Garvey and Du Bois. Garvey was a Jamaican activist who traveled in South America and Europe and was in contact with important African American activists such as Booker T. Washington. Washington himself had been in conflict with Du Bois over their different views about education for African Americans. Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, better known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914. The objectives of this association included the creation of a confraternity among black peoples, the promotion of race pride, and the development of independent Negro nations. Garvey traveled to the United States in 1916, when Harlem was in the process of becoming an important African

American area. There he found fertile ground for his ideas. In New York, Garvey started a New York branch of the UNIA and founded a number of short-lived publications of which the *Negro World* became the most important vehicle for spreading his ideas.

Garvey created a number of subordinate organizations geared at putting in practice his Pan-African ideas. UNIA organized annual conventions that were celebrated in Harlem. These meetings were well attended and rivaled the congresses organized by Du Bois. They openly demanded the liberation of African peoples. This direct approach conflicted with the more gradualist attitude that characterized the Pan-African congresses, and became the main reason for the strong clash between Garvey and Du Bois.

Du Bois agreed with the aims of Garvey; however, he did not approve of his methods. Garvey's approach, together with his slogan "Africa for the Africans" was condemned in Brussels and Paris. After bitter discussion it was decided that Garvey would not be invited to the next congress.

Despite the problems that plagued the second congress, delegates agreed to create a second Pan-African Association. The presidency was given to Gratien Candace, a Guadeloupe-born intellectual and politician, and the general secretary was Isaac Béton, a young schoolmaster from Martinique. In practice, the association was in the hands of the individual figures of Du Bois and Béton, which undermined its capacity to achieve institutional strength. It was poorly financed and the tensions between the Anglophone and Francophone sections of the organization were a continuous obstacle. Despite the many disputes that plagued the association, a third Pan-African Congress was organized, mostly as a result of the efforts of Du Bois.

The third Pan-African Congress met in 1923 in London and Lisbon. It was badly organized and poorly attended. Only 11 countries were represented and the majority of the delegates were from the United States. As a consequence, the activities of the congress were more modest than the previous ones. Delegates decided to promote the creation of Pan-African committees, and they issued a statement in which they identified some fundamental needs of peoples of African descent. Among the things discussed were the right of Africans to participate in their own government, the need to make education available at all levels, access to land and other economic resources, and the abolition of slave trade. The resolutions also mentioned more specific demands such as home rule and responsible government

for West Africa and British West Indies; the abolition of white minority rule in Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa; and the elimination of lynching and mob laws in the United States.

The limitations of the Pan-African Association prevented it from organizing a Pan-African meeting in 1925. Despite the many difficulties, Du Bois continued to work for the growth and development of the Pan-African movement. His efforts resulted in the organization of the fourth Pan-African Congress in New York in 1927. The congress took place from August 21–24. It was attended by 208 delegates from 11 countries. The American contingent was the largest; Africans were scarcely represented, with a few delegates from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gold Coast. Other countries represented were Haiti, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Barbados, and South America. There were also some non-African attendees, including the renowned anthropologist Melville Herskovits. The resolutions of this congress echoed the ones agreed on at the previous congress.

After the fourth congress, Du Bois decided that it was time to take the Pan-African congress to the African continent. Given the logistical problems of the movement and the economic crisis that surged in 1929, however, these plans were thwarted. The economic and political problems that affected most of the world during the 1930s interrupted the development of the Pan-African congresses. The movement, however, continued to evolve.

The congresses that took place between 1919 and 1927 were unsuccessful in achieving the goals of African liberation and racial equality. They also failed to provide a strong organizational framework for the development of the Pan-African movement. Du Bois had provided the intellectual foundations to the movement and much of the logistical work. Despite these limitations, these congresses were important in sowing the seeds of Pan-Africanism. They introduced Pan-African ideas to an international audience and fostered both debate and unity among peoples of African descent on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In doing this they provided direction and guidance to those who revitalized the Pan-African movement after World War II.

The Abyssinian crisis of 1935 and the end of World War II contributed to the reemergence of the Pan-African movement. Numerous organizations were created to condemn the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and to offer support

to the Ethiopian peoples and royal family. The crisis raised serious questions about the ability of the League of Nations to safeguard the rights of African peoples. Moreover, it cast serious doubts on the commitment of European states to protect African interests.

The end of World War II brought to the front difficult questions for European colonial powers. Having fought in the name of freedom and equality, Allies would face growing discontent in their colonies and increasing demands for political participation and social and economic development. The Atlantic Charter signed in 1941 stated the right to self-determination and gave legitimacy to the aspirations of millions of peoples throughout the world who lived under colonial control. European powers, however, were unwilling to extend these rights to their colonial subjects, at least not before they had been properly prepared. This was an unacceptable state of affairs for people who had contributed heavily to the cause of the Allies during the war and whose ambitions for independence had become quite evident in the growth of mass nationalist movements in many parts of Africa.

The hypocritical attitude of colonial governments strengthened the conviction of many organizations that had emerged in Europe and Africa, and the quest for the political liberation of Africa became the galvanizing force behind the creation of the Pan-African Federation (PAF) in 1944. This organization was composed of numerous political and labor groups. It served to canalize their demands and helped articulate their objectives. Their goals were to promote the well-being and unity of African peoples and to foster collaboration with peoples who share the aspirations of peoples of African descent. The organization was located in Manchester. It planned to fulfill its mission by creating centers devoted to the study of African history and culture, by sponsoring the publication of materials about Africa, and by organizing international conferences to promote the ideals of African freedom. The PAF proved to be an effective platform for the opposition to colonial rule in that it allowed member organizations to communicate more effectively with other groups and organize demonstrations, approve resolutions, and collect financial aid more efficiently.

The PAF was behind the organization of the fifth Pan-African congress that took place in Manchester in 1945. It had been originally proposed by in a meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions that met in London earlier that year. The interest shown by various organizations allowed

the PAF to make quick arrangements. Some of the organizers were Peter Milliard, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and Peter Abrahams. The Congress opened on October 15. For the first time Africa was adequately represented. Many of those who attended went on to become important figures in their countries such as Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Hastings Banda, and Joe Appiah. All the organizations that formed the PAF were represented, as well as numerous political and cultural organizations and trade unions. Other groups represented were the Federation of Indian Organizations and the Independent Labor Party of Britain. Despite the large attendance there were significant absences. There were no representatives from Haiti, the French Caribbean, Francophone Africa, Ethiopia, Portuguese Africa, the Belgian Congo, and Muslim North Africa.

The Manchester congress issued an unequivocal condemnation of colonialism and racial discrimination. Among the specific demands were immediate independence for African colonies, removal of British armed forces from Egypt, support for the struggle of African peoples in South Africa, full citizenship for peoples of African descent in the United States, and equal access to social and economic opportunity to all African peoples. The Manchester congress represented a comprehensive challenge to colonial ideology and racist practices founded in the principles presented in the Atlantic Charter.

This fifth Congress also marked a significant shift in the focus and direction of the Pan-African movement. Although it followed the intellectual tradition instituted by previous congresses, this meeting was clearly dominated by the issue of African political liberation. For the first time, Africans took center stage and adopted positions of leadership. Most important, the congress became a true vehicle for political pressure, as it incorporated trade unions and other popular organizations that provided added strength to their demands. In the end the congress combined the intellectual traditions of the past with the force of the masses.

The congress was instrumental in bringing together the ideas of Pan-Africanism and the strength of African nationalisms. It set the foundations for further cooperation among African states. The independence of Ghana helped pave the way for this collaboration. After the congress the PAF set up a committee presided by Du Bois and Kwame Nkrumah and it was decided that the headquarters of the Pan-African Congress would stay in London.

Although the values and ideas of Pan-Africanism continued to be important in the postindependence period, no more congresses were organized. The Pan-African movement became more focused on the issue of political and economic unity between African states, and the emphasis on solidarity with peoples of African descent became secondary.

See also: African Imperialism; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Kenyatta, Jomo; Manchester Conference, 1945; Nkrumah, Kwame; Pan-Africanism

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## Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism is an ideology that states that peoples of African descent share a common cultural and historical heritage. Pan-African ideas have been the foundation of political and intellectual movements that historically have advocated for one or more of the following principles: Africa as the homeland of all peoples of African descent, the existence of a distinct African personality, the assertion of Africa's pride in its past as well as its culture, the right of all peoples of African descent to self-determination and economic advancement, political and economic unity.

Pan-African ideas first originated among African Americans in North America and the West Indies. The lack of political freedoms and economic opportunities that characterized the life of blacks in much of the Americas contributed to the emergence of ideas of unity, solidarity, and resistance among African American peoples.

During the 18th and 19th centuries people of African descent took different actions to assert their rights and improve their quality of life. These responses were important factors that influenced the emergence of Pan-African movements. Among the most important were movements that promoted the return of free blacks to Africa. The best example of this was the emigration schemes organized by the American Colonization Society that relocated 13,000 Africans in Liberia between 1817 and 1857.

During the 19th century the contacts between Europeans and Africans increased. Debates over the abolition of the slave trade and slavery revealed a widely held racist attitude toward people of African descent. This became the justification of European nations for their growing intervention in African affairs, as well as for the mistreatment of blacks in the Americas. Faced with these situations, African, African American, and West Indian intellectuals started to formulate ideas that asserted the value of African cultures and societies. Among those who produced early writings were J. A. B. Horton, Edward W. Blyden, and the Reverend James Johnson.

In 1897, Sylvester Williams, a barrister from Trinidad, created the African Association. The objectives of the organization were to lobby the British parliament and government and to inform the public about the issues that affected the lives of African peoples. The headquarters for the association were in London, and membership was restricted to Africans and African Americans. From its inception, Williams hoped the association would sponsor international conferences where delegates from different areas of the world could discuss the issues that affected black peoples.

The first Pan-African Conference took place in 1900. In all 32 delegates from the United States, the West Indies, and Africa attended it. During the conference the delegates petitioned for the improvement of the political and social conditions that affected the lives of Africans living under colonial regimes. They also produced a document called "To the Nations of the World" in which they condemned the use of racist ideas to justify the exploitation of African people.

The first Pan-African Conference provided a formal forum for the discussion of Pan-African ideas and marked the beginning of a more distinct, if yet diverse, Pan-African movement. An example of this was the transformation of the African Association into the Pan-African Association.



The original plans were to organize a meeting every two years to provide continuity and growth to the Pan-African movement. The first meetings were to take place in the United States in 1902 and in Haiti in 1904. The association also published a newspaper, *Pan-African*. This was edited by Sylvester Williams and was published monthly.

The association was short-lived because of internal conflicts and financial instability. The next Pan-African Conference took place in 1919. The years that led to it were marked by social, political, and economic changes that had a significant impact on the ideology and movement of Pan-Africanism. The spread of democratic ideas had started to reach people who lived under all kinds of oppressive conditions, and the educated elites in many of these societies were becoming economically and sometimes even politically powerful. These changes can be appreciated in the emergence of nationalist ideas in areas of West Africa and South Africa. This period also saw the emergence of tensions in the United States that would give way to the Civil Rights movement years later. From these emerged one of the most important ideologues of the Pan-African movement, W. E. B. Du Bois.

Among many other things, W. E. B. Du Bois was a pioneer in the study of history and sociology of African Americans in the United States, and one of the most articulate critics of racial inequality. He had attended the 1900 London Conference and has been credited as the first to articulate some of the fundamental principles of Pan-Africanism.

Before 1919, Pan-African ideas continued to be discussed in different forums. For example, in 1911 there was a Universal Races Congress that was aimed at improving relationships among people of different races. The congress was organized by the International Union of Ethical Societies and attracted a significant number of participants from different areas of the world. In 1912, the ideological rival of Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, organized the International Conference on the Negro. This conference was aimed at examining the education methods that were being used in the United States to improve the lives of black people and to explore the possibility of applying such methods in Africa and the West Indies.

These meetings helped promote Pan-African ideas and influenced individuals who made significant contributions to the growth of the movement. A good example of this was Mohamed Ali Duse, an Egyptian man who lived in England

and attended the Universal Races Congress. He launched the *African Times and Orient Review*, a publication aimed at providing accurate information about Africans and peoples of African descent. This journal contributed to the dissemination of Pan-African ideas that would become important in the definition of the Pan-African movement after World War I.

The Pan-African movement was reinvigorated after World War I when Du Bois called for a meeting in Paris in 1919. The objectives of this Pan-African Congress were to examine the situation of black people; identify their social, political, and economic needs; and articulate their demands of development and equality. A total of 57 delegates representing 15 countries attended the Congress. The resolutions passed demanded that the recently created League of Nations looked after the welfare of African peoples and requested that Africans be allowed to participate in their own government.

The Second Pan-African Congress was celebrated in London, Paris, and Brussels in 1921. A total of 110 delegates attended. The resolutions passed at this congress may be found in the document "Declaration to the World," which came to be known as the "London Manifesto." The resolutions called for racial equality and self-government. The radical tone of the document caused debates among the delegates, some of whom were in favor of a less confrontational approach to the issue of decolonization.

The congress also succeeded in creating a new Pan-African Association. The leaders of this organization were Du Bois and Isaac Béton, a schoolmaster from Martinique. The association was poorly financed and deeply divided, however, and it failed to provide continuity to the Pan-African movement.

A third Pan-African Congress was organized despite the problems of the Pan-African Association and thanks to the indefatigable work of Du Bois. It met in 1923 in Lisbon and London; however, the organization and the attendance were poor. Only 11 countries were represented and, as usual, African Americans dominated the congress.

The activities of this congress were more modest than previous ones. Delegates issued a statement in which they identified some fundamental needs of African peoples such as political participation, access to land and other economic resources, and education at all levels. They also demanded home rule and responsible government for West Africa and British West India; the abolition of white minority rule in

Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa; and the suppression of lynching and mob laws in the United States.

Because of the failure of the Pan-African Association to resolve its internal conflicts and establish a strong organizational structure, no congress was held in 1925. Despite these difficulties Du Bois continued to push for the growth of the Pan-African movement. He managed to organize a fourth Pan-African congress in New York, in 1927. A total of 208 delegates from 11 countries participated in this meeting. African Americans continued to dominate the event. Africans were scarcely represented, with a few delegates from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gold Coast. The resolutions of this congress echoed those formulated in the previous meeting.

After the fourth congress, Du Bois decided to hold the next congress on African soil. Given the organizational weakness of the movement and the economic crisis that developed in 1929, however, it became impossible to organize this event. The next Pan-African Congress would have to wait until the end of World War II.

While Du Bois promoted his views on Pan-Africanism through these congresses, other important movements were also influenced by Pan-African ideas. Marcus Aurelius Garvey, a Jamaican-born activist, developed an alternative approach to Pan-Africanism. Garvey traveled in South America and Europe, was in contact with Mohammed Ali Duse, and was influenced by the writings of authors such as Booker T. Washington. In 1914, he created the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, generally known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The objectives of this association included the creation of a confraternity among black peoples, the promotion of race pride, and the development of independent Negro nations. Garvey traveled to the United States in 1916 when Harlem was in the process of becoming an important African American area. There he found fertile ground for his ideas. In New York Garvey started a branch of the UNIA and founded a number of short-lived publications, of which the *Negro World* became the most important vehicle for spreading his ideas.

Garvey created a number of subordinate organizations geared at putting in practice his Pan-African ideas. UNIA organized annual conventions that were celebrated in Harlem. These meetings were well attended and rivaled the congresses organized by Du Bois. They openly demanded

the liberation of African peoples. This direct approach conflicted with the more gradualist attitude that characterized the Pan-African congresses and became the main reason for the strong clash between Garvey and Du Bois.

Garvey's quest for the liberation of Africa encouraged him to establish concrete connections to the continent. In 1920, he sent a delegation to Liberia to explore the possibilities of settling Afro-Americans in that country. The plan seemed to be well received at first, but soon conflicts with the local Liberian authorities and the opposition of colonial powers, as well as the United States, prevented Garvey from settling in Liberia.

Garvey also faced a crisis back in the United States where he was accused of mismanagement and fraud. Garvey was arrested and later sent to prison. His wife continued with the organization of UNIA as much as she could and the conventions continued to be held. In 1927, Garvey was pardoned and expelled from the United States after which he returned to Jamaica and tried to reorganize his movement. He traveled to the West Indies and Europe where he had mixed receptions. In 1930, the section of UNIA in the United States finally collapsed. The *Negro World* continued to be published until 1933. He died in 1940 after multiple and failed attempts to reorganize his movement and clear his name.

Garvey represented a radical approach to Pan-Africanism. His unequivocal demands for African liberation injected his views on racial equality and pride with new energy and made them more appealing to a large number of black people.

Between the two wars, there were other organizations that promoted Pan-African ideas. Among the most important were the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) and the West African Students Union (WASU), both based in London. Some pressure groups were also formed by exiles in France. Some were the *Ligue Universelle pour la défense de la race noire*, the *Comité de la défense de la Race Negre*, and the *Ligue de la défense de la Race Negre*. Most of these advocated for the rights of black people to education and economic development and challenged the notions of inferiority of the black race.

Between 1934 and 1945, several Pan-African groups in England started to move closer together and become better defined and organized. Two wings became dominant: a "conservative Pan-Africanism represented by the Jamaican Harold Moody and his organization, the League of Colored

Peoples (LCP), and a more radical Pan-Africanism represented by George Padmore.

The LCP was created in 1931. Moody arrived in Britain in 1904 and developed an ideology of Pan-Africanism that was mitigated by his strong Christian beliefs. Moody believed in the importance of working with Europeans to improve the lives of Africans and West Indians. He worked mainly with religious groups. At first the LCP was not a political organization; however, the Abyssinian invasion and German aspirations to regain control of their lost colonies turned the meetings of the LCP into forums for the discussion of such issues.

At the other end of the spectrum was George Padmore, whose real name was Malcolm Ivan Nurse. He was born in Trinidad to a middle class family and claimed to be the nephew of Sylvester Williams. He had studied in the United States and had been a member of the Communist Party. His approach to the issue of African liberation was more radical than that of Moody. He actively participated in the creation and running of several organizations that advocated for the political rights of African peoples and helped reinvigorate and redefine the postwar Pan-African movement.

The Abyssinian crisis (1935) was a galvanizing moment for the Pan-African movement. It called into question the ability of the League of Nations and the commitment of European powers to safeguard the interests of African peoples. The end of World War II and the signing of the Atlantic Charter in 1941 marked the beginning of a new understanding of the right to freedom and self-determination. African people were aware of the significance of this moment and increased their demands for independence. This culminated in the creation, in 1944, of the Pan-African Federation (PAF) under the initiative of a number of African organizations.

The PAF, with its headquarters in Manchester, served to articulate the demands of the various groups that composed it. It advocated for the welfare and unity of African people and people of African descent. It planned to fulfill its mission by promoting the study of Africa and organizing conferences. The PAF proved to be an effective platform for the opposition to colonial rule, as it enabled member organizations to operate more efficiently.

The PAF organized the fifth Pan-African Congress, which took place in Manchester in 1945. For the first time Africa was adequately represented, and many of those who

attended became political leaders in their own soon-to-be-independent nations. All the organizations that formed PAF were represented, as well as numerous political and cultural organizations and trade unions.

Delegates at the Manchester Congress unequivocally condemned colonialism and racial discrimination. Among other things they demanded immediate independence for African territories, removal of British armed forces from Egypt, support for the struggle of African people in South Africa, and full citizenship for the people of African descent in the Americas. The congress successfully articulated the political aspirations of African people and served as a catalyst for the growth of the nationalist movements that achieved independence for many African states.

African nationalist leaders took center stage at the Manchester Congress. They reinforced the Pan-African movement by combining the influence of elites and intellectuals with the strength of the masses. In doing so they produced a shift in the focus and nature of the Pan-African movement.

The focus of the Pan-African movement after the Manchester Congress gave great importance to the issue of African unity. In 1958, Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of Ghana, organized a meeting of independent African states in the Ghanaian capital of Accra. The countries represented were Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia. This was the first step in a process toward African unity that would be plagued with problems and controversy. Some nations favored immediate political unity, but others advocated for a more gradual approach. This resulted in the creation of two camps, the Casablanca group and the Monrovia Group.

After numerous meetings where the differences between the two groups were further debated, the Pan-African ideals took the form of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in May 1963 in Addis Ababa. The organization was originally formed by 32 governments. Gradually, 21 more states joined this group. South Africa became the 53rd member in 1994. The objectives of the OAU were to promote solidarity and unity among African people; coordinate cooperation; improve the lives of common people; defend sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence; eradicate colonialism; and promote international cooperation. The OAU has faced the numerous political and economic crises that have affected the African continent in the postcolonial era. After many failures to pursue the

objectives for which it was created, it was agreed that a new organization was needed.

In a meeting in 1999 called to amend the OAU charter, the delegates in attendance decided to establish the African Union. Among the objectives of the new organization are to accelerate the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent; promote peace, security, and stability; promote democratic principles and institutions; and foster sustainable development in all areas of human endeavor. The objectives of the African Union reflect the social and political changes experienced by African people in the postcolonial period. To that extent, this new organization reflects the evolving values of modern Pan-Africanism.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Manchester Conference, 1945; Nkrumah, Kwame; Organization of African Unity; Pan-African Congresses

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## Parks, Rosa

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Louise Parks (1913–2005) refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus for a white passenger. This act of defiance against Jim Crow segregation sparked the Montgomery bus boycott—often heralded as the beginning of the modern Civil Rights movement—a nonviolent economic boycott of Montgomery's bus system by the black community that successfully ended racial segregation on the city's public transit. For her

courage and actions, Parks is widely considered the mother of the Civil Rights movement.

Rosa Louise McCauley was born on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama, to James and Leona McCauley. After James and Leona separated, Leona moved with her children, Rosa and Sylvester, to Pine Level, Alabama, a town on the outskirts of Montgomery where they lived with Leona's parents. By the age of 11, Rosa attended the Montgomery Industrial School for Girls, and a few years later, she attended the laboratory school at Alabama State Teacher's College for Negroes in Montgomery. Family illnesses forced Rosa to abandon her education to support her family.

While living in Montgomery, 18-year-old Rosa met Raymond Parks, a barber. The self-educated Parks had been one of the charter members of Montgomery's NAACP and had been actively involved in supporting the Scottsboro Boys' defense in the early 1930s. Parks's courage, at a time when black activism was extremely dangerous, deeply impressed Rosa. They were married on December 18, 1932, in Pine Level. Historian and Parks's biographer Douglas Brinkley has noted that her husband was a significant factor in her radicalization during the Great Depression, as he would discuss the NAACP and its strategies for encouraging African American suffrage and integration with Parks. Encouraged by her husband, Rosa Parks returned to school and earned her high school diploma in 1933.

Until World War II, Parks had not been involved in the black civil rights struggle. This changed after she took a job at Maxwell Field in Montgomery in 1941. By 1943, all military bases, Maxwell Field included, had been desegregated. Unlike Montgomery's city buses, she rode integrated trolleys on base and her experience at desegregated Maxwell prompted her to join the Montgomery NAACP. At her first meeting, Parks was elected secretary of the organization. In this capacity, she helped lead a voter registration drive, although white registrars worked diligently to keep African Americans off the voter rolls. It took until April 1945 for Parks to finally be registered to vote.

After the war, Parks continued as secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, but she also worked as a housekeeper and seamstress, most notably for the liberal white activists Clifford and Virginia Durr. In July 1955, Virginia Durr arranged for Parks to attend a two-week session on

racial desegregation at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. The experience at Highlander, and her exposure to individuals such as civil rights pioneer Septima Clark, strengthened her desire to work for civil rights.

Just months after her return from Highlander, on the evening of December 1, 1955, Parks violated segregation laws by refusing to give her seat to a white passenger on a city bus. Parks initially had been seated in the first row of the black section, but as more whites boarded the bus, the color line moved farther back. When this occurred, African Americans were expected to relinquish their seats to make room for the white passengers. Parks refused. The bus driver, James F. Blake, called the police and had Parks arrested. As she recounted in her autobiography, she was not physically tired. A few days later, Parks was found guilty of

disorderly conduct and violating a Montgomery ordinance and fined \$10, plus \$4 in court costs.

In response to Parks's arrest, E. D. Nixon and Jo Ann Robinson, a professor at Alabama State College, met to discuss a boycott of the bus system by Montgomery's African Americans. At a subsequent mass meeting, Martin Luther King Jr., the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was chosen to lead the effort. The entire African American community supported the Montgomery bus boycott, refusing to ride the city's buses for 381 days, placing a tremendous financial strain on the bus company. On May 11, 1956, a federal court decision in *Browder v. Gayle* ruled Alabama's bus segregation laws unconstitutional, upheld by the United States Supreme Court on November 13, 1956. The boycott came to an end on December 20, 1956, after the city passed



*Rosa Parks, whose refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and fueled the Civil Rights movement, sits in the front of a bus on December 1, 1955. (Library of Congress)*

a desegregation ordinance for the city's buses. Whereas the boycott propelled King into national prominence as the leader of the Civil Rights movement, Rosa Parks's courageous refusal to give in to the inequities of the Jim Crow system made her a symbolic figure whose inspiration reached well beyond the borders of the United States.

Hounded by death threats and at odds with the local leaders of the Civil Rights movement, Rosa and Raymond Parks, along with Leona McCauley, moved to Detroit, Michigan, in July 1957, to live with family members. In Detroit, Parks worked as a seamstress but continued to be involved in the Civil Rights movement, lecturing widely to diverse groups. Her interest in politics led to a job with U.S. Representative John Conyers in 1965, for whom she worked until she retired in 1988. In honor of her husband Raymond, who died in 1977, she founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in February 1987, to mentor youths to achieve their full potential.

Although Parks was a symbol of the Civil Rights movement and an inspiration to millions because of her courage and quiet dignity, official recognition of her contributions to American history came late in her life. On September 9, 1996, President William J. Clinton presented her with a Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award given to a civilian. A few years later, on May 3, 1999, she received a Congressional Gold Medal. *Time* magazine also recognized her as one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century. Rosa Parks died on October 24, 2005, in Detroit at the age of 92. In striking contrast to her notoriety as one of the most detested figures in the United States after the boycott, Rosa Park became the first woman in American history to lie in state in the United States Capitol. It is estimated that 50,000 people paid their respects to the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement."

See also: King, Coretta Scott; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Robinson, Jo Ann

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## Plan de San Diego

The 1915 Plan de San Diego was intended to be a multi-racial militant coalition involving Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans against whites in South Texas. A number of forces led to the planning of this rebellion, but more than two decades of abject racial violence in the form of lynchings and beatings were perhaps most important. In January 1896, Aureliano Castelon was shot eight times and his body was burned in San Antonio by a white mob. In response, 25 Mexicans drafted a notice entitled "Slaughter the Gringo," which called for the death of all *gringos* and Germans, excluding African Americans, Italians, and Cubans. The "Slaughter the Gringo" notice served as an important precursor to events occurring in southern Texas between 1915 and 1917.

South Texas became the site of a massive shift to commercialized farming after 1900 that had social and economic reverberations for decades thereafter. Before this period, this region was primarily a ranch society and the economy revolved around livestock raising. By 1904, technological advances such as dry farming techniques, irrigation systems, and refrigerated railcars made intensive farming possible in this semiarid region. As a result, land prices sky-rocketed and many struggling Mexican ranchers sold their lands to primarily white farmers. Before this agricultural revolution, Mexican workers were employed as *vaqueros*, or cowboys. After 1904, the only work for Mexican laborers in South Texas was as migrant farm workers, tenant farmers, or sharecroppers.

The growth of commercial agriculture in South Texas had other implications for Mexican workers. Many Mexicans coming to Texas after 1910 were from northern Mexico, a region primarily dominated by mining and ranching interests. The mines paid relatively high wages because of their remote location, the various dangers involved with mining, and the fact that North Mexico was sparsely populated. The Mexican Revolution, however, led to the physical destruction of many of the mines, forcing mine workers to find work elsewhere. The mine workers were soon followed by *vaqueros* in their exodus to Texas because the entire ranching economy was symbiotically linked to mining; essentially, the ranches of North Mexico provided food and leather goods for the mining operations. Both the miners and *vaqueros* could have chosen to go south, but then they

would have likely become debt peons on the numerous *haciendas*, or landed estates, which predominated in Central and South Mexico. This was a fate that many Mexican workers had sought to avoid in the first place by relocating to North Mexico. Their only other option was to cross the northern border where they thought a thriving ranching society was to be found. Instead they were to become a landless peasantry in a system far worse than the Mexican *hacienda*.

*Haciendas* in South Mexico and Mexican-owned ranches in North Mexico and South Texas had one thing in common—paternalistic work arrangements that somewhat mitigated the conditions faced by peons and *vaqueros*. The agricultural revolution beginning in Texas created a decided shift away from paternalistic relations. The introduction of transplanted farm societies from the Midwest and North led to massive dislocations, and Mexican laborers in Texas effectively transformed into a proletariat. Paternalism would no longer be a mitigating factor in their lives; instead the cold and calculating science of capitalism would dictate their existence. In addition, this massive transformation had a racial character that inevitably drove an even deeper social wedge between Mexicans and whites.

It is in this context that the events occurring in Texas between 1915 and 1917 can be best understood. During this time period, the valley and border regions of southern Texas became a virtual combat zone. In January 1915, Basilio Ramos Jr. was captured and subsequently charged with conspiracy to levy war against the United States. On his person was found a document that is now known as the “Plan de San Diego.” Similar in language to the “Slaughter the Gringo” notice, this plan called for the death of all white males over the age of 16 and the creation of the “Liberating Army for Races and Peoples,” which was to be composed of Latinos, African Americans, and Japanese. The plan is considered irredentist by many historians because it called for the independence of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Upper California, the same regions that the drafters of the plan stated were robbed during the 1836 Texas Revolution and the 1846–1848 Mexican War.

This movement was far beyond simple irredentism, however, because another provision of the plan called for the distribution of land to Native Americans and African Americans upon successful completion of the revolution. These lands would be set up as independent republics that

would be annexed by Mexico only if it was expedient. The plan was to begin on February 20, 1915, but nothing of note happened until July. Between July and October 1915, the entire Lower Rio Grande Valley region was disrupted by a series of raids and attacks. The attackers burned bridges, derailed trains, cut telegraph and phone lines, sabotaged irrigation pumping plants, and attacked Texas Rangers and U.S. Army personnel stationed throughout the region. By August 1915, this primarily rural struggle was beginning to gain support among Mexicans in urban areas. In San Antonio, for example, 28 Mexicans were arrested after showing sympathy for the rebellion.

White backlash to the plan resulted in even more racial violence in 1915. Mexicans suspected of engaging in raids were executed without due process and lynchings became an everyday occurrence. In July 1915, two Mexicans were shot to death by law enforcement agents in Mercedes. In August, a Mexican man was lynched near San Benito. In September, 14 Mexicans were shot and their bodies were publicly displayed as a warning to sympathizers of the “Plan de San Diego.” This backlash resulted in the exodus of thousands of Mexicans from the border area. Many were forced to leave because Texas Rangers and white vigilante groups confiscated their weapons and ordered them to move to towns where they could be better controlled. It is estimated that well over a hundred Mexicans were killed in 1915 alone. As a result of the white backlash, the hostilities intensified again by May 1916, as sympathizers of the plan engaged in more disruptive and destructive activities. In response to the 1916 raids, the U.S. government ordered virtually all armed forces ready for combat duty to be stationed along the Lower Rio Grande. This act brought an end to the raids, but similar hostilities persisted in southern Texas throughout much of the 20th century.

*See also:* Lynching; Mexican War; White Mob Violence

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## Plessy v. Ferguson

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W. E. B. Du Bois wrote that the principle problem of the 20th century will be that of the color line. Being black was “strange” largely because of the estrangement between the races in America. The “color line” was drawn in bold by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). By keeping the Jim Crow status quo, *Plessy* deepened the racial divide. This is the notorious “separate but equal” case. Although not part of the decision *verbatim*, these three words, which accurately express the legal fiction of the Supreme Court’s ruling, gave legal sanction to Jim Crow segregation. Thus “separate but equal” equals “Jim Crow affirmed.”

This opinion is couched in legal language that requires an understanding of constitutional law to decode. The high court held that the separation of the races within states does not violate the Fourteenth Amendment, which had previously granted African Americans equal protection under the laws. The technical terms notwithstanding, the Court’s purport was patent. In black and white, Justice Henry Billings Brown kept blacks from whites. This bad result was “good law” for nearly six decades. It would take *Brown v. the Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) to overrule Justice Brown. If, except for the *Dred Scott* case, *Plessy* was the worst Supreme Court ruling ever handed down, as Justice Harlan indicated in his dissent, then the *Brown* decision may rank as the greatest Supreme Court decision. To appreciate the greatness of *Brown v. Board of Education*, it is necessary to understand *Plessy* first.

Democracy is a process of progressive equalizing. It is a matter of degree. Mollified by democratic language and reasoning, nevertheless *Plessy* is a harsh and fundamentally undemocratic decision. More than undemocratic, it was antidemocratic because *Plessy* may be characterized as an antidemocratic reaction to the then-recent democratic reforms of Reconstruction (1865–1877).

Reconstruction was the nation’s first experiment in economic emancipation and interracial democracy. The three Reconstruction Amendments—the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments (1865, 1868, and 1870, respectively) established (legally but not factually) civil rights for all Americans. But the experiment failed; or rather, America failed the experiment. The reforms introduced by Reconstruction were being systematically

dismantled in the South. For instance, the promise of “forty acres and a mule” was proclaimed by General William T. Sherman but never delivered by Congress. Reconstruction was progressive; *Plessy* was regressive. *Plessy*, in fact, was the ultimate deconstruction of Reconstruction—the final judicial nail in its historical coffin. Far worse were its social and historical consequences, for the decision legitimized legal segregation. *Plessy* was a pact with the devil of Jim Crow, and it legitimized the American apartheid of systemic segregation. *Plessy*’s “separate but equal” doctrine was an oxymoron. Yet, as the supreme law of the law, it held sway for well over a half-century. It would take the *Brown* decision to successfully overturn it. *Brown v. Board of Education* exposed the *Plessy* decision as a contradiction, ruling that “separate but equal” is inherently unequal.

The 1890 Louisiana Separate Car Act provided that railway companies in Louisiana would have equal but separate accommodations and facilities for whites and nonwhites. Violation of this act triggered a fine and imprisonment. The local, activist *Comité des Citoyens* (Citizens’ Committee) decided to challenge the constitutionality of this law. On June 7, 1892, Homer Adolph Plessy (1863–1925), a “Creole of Color,” bought a first-class ticket at the Press Street Depot in New Orleans. This shoemaker, a man in his late twenties, was about to board a train on the East Louisiana Railroad for passage to the city of Covington, which was in St. Tammany Parish (county) in Louisiana. His ticket was for a seat in the first-class carriage, on a train scheduled to depart at 4:15 P.M. The trip was to have taken around two hours in its traverse to Covington, which was 30 miles to the north, on the other side of Lake Pontchartrain, near the Mississippi border. Plessy never reached his physical destination because he had a legal destination in mind. A dignified gentleman donning suit and hat, he quietly took his seat in a compartment reserved for whites only. Upon collecting his ticket, the conductor asked if Plessy were a “colored man.” To this query, Plessy answered in the affirmative and the conductor instructed him to go to the coach reserved for nonwhites.

This unruffled admission was not inevitable; it was planned in advance, for Plessy could easily have passed as white. Thus the conductor would probably have believed Plessy had he answered in the negative. Was Plessy white or black? To use the inartful slang of the day, Plessy was an “octoroon” (a person of one-eighth black blood), an accident of “hypodescent” (a peculiar American doctrine that classifies



anyone with the least trace of African ancestry as “colored,” with all of the legal and social stigmas that would attach to that pejorative classification). Phenotypically, Plessy exhibited none of the physical features associated with his race. There are no extant photographs of Homer Plessy, but the record is clear: he was identifiably a “bi- multi-racial” man, as the Supreme Court acknowledged in its decision. Facially, Plessy was white; racially he was black by the standards of that day. He was the perfect man to challenge the constitutionality of the Louisiana Separate Car Act.

Needless to say, both the conductor and passengers were taken aback. Pursuant to Louisiana law, Conductor J. J. Dowling informed Plessy that he had to move to the “colored car.” Reeking of soot and smoke, this Jim Crow car was typically hitched right behind the locomotive. Its seats were wooden, while the first-class seats were cushioned. With adamantine equipoise, Plessy refused. Law enforcement was summoned, and “Detective” Chris C. Cain appeared on the scene. Identifying himself as a private detective, he evidently was deputized and held police rank. In any event, Plessy did not question “Captain” Cain’s authority. When directed to leave with Cain, Plessy did so, without incident. Plessy complied with the officer of the law in order to challenge the law itself.

Captain Cain took Plessy to the Fifth Precinct police station on Elysian Fields Avenue. There he was booked for violating the Separate Car Act. His hearing took place on the morning of June 8. Waiving his right to a hearing, Plessy was released on \$500 bail, a tidy sum in those days, paid by Paul Bonseigneur, treasurer of the *Comité des Citoyens*. Plessy returned to his home on brick-paved 244 1/2 North Clairborne Avenue in the integrated, middle-class Faubourg Tremé district, where his wife Louise was waiting for him. Plessy resumed his respectable trade of making leather shoes and boots to order in Patricio Brito’s shoemaking business in the French Quarter.

The arraignment was set for October 13, nearly five months later. Plessy was to appear before John H. Ferguson, judge of Section “A” of the Criminal District Court, Parish of Orleans. In the case filed as *19117 The State of Louisiana v. Homer Adolph Plessy*, Judge Ferguson heard arguments by 55-year-old James Campbell Walker, a local Creole attorney, and Assistant District Attorney Lionel Adams, who was reputed to be a “crack trial lawyer.” Walker had agreed to defend Plessy and took the case for \$1,000. Ironically, Homer Plessy and Judge Ferguson had the very same skin

color. After failing in his motion to have the case dismissed, Walker filed a motion to stay the proceedings so that arguments on the constitutionality of the Separate Car Act could be heard. Judge Ferguson then set a date for October 28.

Meanwhile, in his October 14 brief, Walker had argued that the Louisiana statute violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. By requiring him to sit in a Jim Crow car, the state was branding Plessy with a “badge of slavery,” although proscribed by the Thirteenth Amendment (1865). The Separate Car Act also offended the Fourteenth Amendment (1868), which forbade any state’s abridging the rights of U.S. citizens. The judge then congratulated Walker for the work that was evident in his brief. Judge Ferguson rendered his decision on November 18, finding that there was no evidence that Plessy was not to be provided with equal accommodations and that he was simply denied the freedom of violating a state law. On November 22, Plessy appealed to the Louisiana Supreme Court, which was docketed as case number 11134.

Albion Winegar Tourgée (1838–1905) took over as lead attorney for Plessy, although Walker remained as part of Plessy’s legal team. Tourgée argued as before, and with the same result. The brief challenging the constitutionality of the Separate Car Act (collaboratively written by Tourgée and Walker) had 14 paragraphs. After reviewing the statutory language of the Separate Car Act, the Louisiana high court noted a recent decision regarding the act’s constitutionality in which they held that the act would be unconstitutional because it ceded too much power and authority to Congress in its duties to regulate commerce and travel between the states. Because Plessy’s destination was intrastate, however, the Commerce Clause was not implicated. The court then cited a Supreme Court case known as *Civil Rights Cases*, 109 U.S. 3, in order to dismiss Plessy’s Thirteenth Amendment claim.

His Thirteenth Amendment claim having failed, the court then addressed Plessy’s alternative pleading—his challenge of the Separate Car Act as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Having cited a number of precedents on which it relied, the court held that the accommodations were, indeed, equal and thus a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment did not occur. Then, in a prescient, almost prophetic pronouncement, the court went on to say that to hold that the requirement of separate, though equal, accommodations in public conveyances violated the Fourteenth Amendment would nullify the statutes establishing

separate schools or those prohibiting interracial marriage. All are laws based on difference of race, and if such difference cannot furnish a basis for such legislation in one of these cases it can not in any case. Clearly, had *Plessy* gone the other way, school segregation might have been struck down as unconstitutional far in advance of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Needless to say, Homer Plessy did not prevail before the Louisiana high court. But that was as it should have been. That way, the case could be appealed all the way to the Supreme Court, which was Plessy's real goal in challenging the constitutionality of the Separate Car Act in the first place. Although the necessary court documents were filed by the end of February 1893, it took more than three years until the matter came before the Court. The case was argued on April 13, 1896, and the Court handed down its decision on May 18, 1896. Albion Winegar Tourgée represented Homer Plessy, with former Solicitor General Samuel F. Phillips serving as co-counsel. (James C. Walker's health prevented him from making the trip to Washington.) Tourgée and Walker had filed one of the two briefs on Plessy's behalf (argued in 23 numbered paragraphs), and Phillips submitted the other. Alexander Porter Morse defended Judge Ferguson against a charge of judicial error, and M. J. Cunningham, attorney general of the State of Louisiana, and Lionel Adams prepared the legal brief on Ferguson's behalf.

"The gist of our case," Tourgée declared in his opening statement, "is the unconstitutionality of the assortment [racial discrimination]; *not* the question of equal accommodation." Space does not permit a detailed analysis of Tourgée's and Walker's constitutional arguments as laid out in their brief, which Charles A. Lofgren analyzes as (1) the Restrictive Rights Argument, and (2) the Affirmative Rights Argument (*The Plessy Case*, pp. 152–64). Nor does space allow for an epitome of Samuel Phillips's three-page brief, which focused solely on the Fourteenth Amendment issue. These briefs, however persuasive, were not determinative.

Justice Henry Billings Brown delivered the opinion of the Court. In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), Justice Brown dismissed Plessy's Thirteenth Amendment argument in short order by noting that legal equality and social equality are two distinct issues. The role of the Court was to rule on the former and decline from deciding on the latter, as the question of social equality was clearly outside its purview. The Fourteenth Amendment implicated a different,

albeit related, set of issues. Justice Brown assessed that the main objective of the Fourteenth Amendment was to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law. In his view, however, it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based on color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races on terms unsatisfactory to either. Thus Brown contended that laws permitting or requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power.

The Court concluded that the enforced separation of the races, as applied to the internal commerce of the Louisiana, neither abridges the privileges or immunities of African Americans and other people of color, deprives them of their property without due process of law, nor denies them the equal protection of the laws, within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment. Nothing could be further from the truth, of course. The Deep South, for all practical purposes, became a dual society. Like oil and water, black and white were not supposed to mix. Yet the metaphor falls short in its symbolic power, for oil and water do not combust, but racial tensions do. The *Plessy* decision could only exacerbate those social tensions. Legal questions aside, social issues had to be addressed. The Court perforce had to speak to the issue of racial prejudice and the role of the law in promoting social equality beyond legal equality (or the fiction of such equality).

Here, besides discounting the Thirteenth Amendment challenge entirely (finding that forced segregation is not a vestige or "badge of servitude"), the Supreme Court completely disavows any social responsibility for the public's general welfare in terms of race relations. By giving legal sanction to Jim Crow laws, the high court was on low moral grounds. Even on purely legal grounds, the decision applies a mere test of reasonableness to the Separate Car Act. Constitutional scholars call the reasonableness standard the "rational basis test" or "rational scrutiny." This is the way that the Supreme Court has typically deferred to "states' rights" in constitutional controversies. Yet this same legal tradition has produced powerful dissenting opinions. Such was the case in *Plessy*.

Justice Harlan's Sidelined: In one of the most celebrated dissents in Supreme Court history, Justice Harlan

eloquently took his fellow justices to task for a fundamentally flawed decision. His dissent is all the more remarkable considering the fact that Justice John Marshall Harlan (1833–1911) was “a former slaveholder” from Kentucky (Lofgren 3). Harlan’s “color-blind” rhetoric echoes in court chambers, classrooms, and in civic spheres to this very day. But there was simply no jurisprudential framework at that time for asserting an individual’s “fundamental rights” over “states’ rights.”

By modern legal standards, the *Plessy* case should have triggered “strict scrutiny,” but, historically, that would be a gross anachronism. Under current equal protection theory, the Supreme Court holds all racial classifications to be constitutionally suspect and subject to strict scrutiny, which is the most stringent form of judicial review. Under strict scrutiny, a race-based law cannot pass constitutional muster absent a compelling state interest that cannot be protected by any less drastic means. But the idea that gave rise to strict scrutiny did not appear until 1938 in *U.S. v. Carolene Products Co.*, 304 U.S. 144, 153 n.4 (1938), where the Supreme Court called for a “more exacting judicial scrutiny” in certain circumstances or cases. Four years later, in *Skinner v. Oklahoma*, 316 U.S. 535 (1942), the Supreme Court coined the term “strict scrutiny” for the first time, to define the new judicial standard that the Court would apply to laws that deprive individuals of their civil rights.

**Hardening of the Color Line:** On January 11, 1897, more than four-and-a-half years after his arrest, Homer Adolph Plessy found himself before Orleans Parish Criminal District Court once more. On the charge of having violated Section 2 of Act 111 of the Separate Car Act, Plessy pled guilty. He duly paid his fine of \$25. Nationally, his case was met with apathy; privately, Plessy faded into obscurity. On Sunday, March 1, 1925 at 5:10 A.M., Plessy died. A local paper reported a two-line notice of his death. But Homer Adolph Plessy is immortal as a symbol of the struggle for equality and racial justice.

W. E. B. Du Bois was right. The color line would be the central problem of the 20th century. *Plessy v. Ferguson* reinforced that color line in stark black and white, even though Homer Plessy and Judge Ferguson each had the same skin color—light brown. In causing racial and legal status to converge, *Plessy*’s “separate but equal” was a “bright line” rule. First, the rule of hypodescent sustains a binary opposition between black and white and defines anyone with a perceptible trace of African ancestry as black. Based on this

simple classification scheme, all blacks must be segregated from whites where Jim Crow laws demand it. Homer Plessy was thus the perfect man to put the Separate Car Act to test, for he exposed the absurdity of hypodescent and its legal consequences. Although he was, by legal fiat, black, his skin color was as white as Judge Ferguson, who sat in initial judgment of him. Added to this irony is the fact that, as a gentleman who comported himself with the utmost dignity by aristocratic Southern standards, Homer Plessy exploded the negative stereotype of the “Negro” that the Jim Crow laws were meant to protect against.

Although the Louisiana courts differentiated between racial segregation and racial discrimination, the bottom line remains the same: race segregation is race subordination. History proves this to be true. In a certain sense, historian David Brion Davis was right: the Confederacy won the Civil War ideologically, at least insofar as civil rights were concerned. *Plessy* calcified entrenched Jim Crow laws and gave them Supreme Court sanction. “Rather, whatever the realities of the hardening color line in America,” Lofgren concludes, “the formula associated with *Plessy* [separate but equal] could be invoked against the worst deprivations” (*The Plessy Case*, p. 201). Like cracks in glass, the “separate but equal doctrine” spread throughout the Jim Crow states, as transportation segregation reinforced education segregation. Thus it took 58 years before the *Brown* decision overruled Justice Brown’s 1896 ruling to erase the color line legally, although not socially. *Plessy v. Ferguson* did not justly resolve the America dilemma of racism, but it did focus legal attention on it. In that sense, *Plessy* was as much of a milestone as it was a setback.

*See also: Brown v. Board of Education; Fourteenth Amendment; Jim Crow*

Christopher George Buck

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## Poitier, Sidney

Sidney Poitier (1927–) was born prematurely in Miami, Florida. His parents, Reginald James and Evelyn Outten Poitier, were impoverished Bahamian tomato farmers. Three months after his birth, Poitier and his family moved to Cat Island in the Bahamas. Because of the family's poverty, Poitier's formal education did not begin until he was 11. By age 12, he had finished his education to help his father work on the fruit farm. Hoping Poitier would have more opportunities, his father sent him to Miami to live with his brother Cyril in 1943. He worked several jobs until the Ku Klux Klan threatened him for failing to deliver a package to the rear door. In fear, he fled to New York and worked as a dishwasher. Unable to pay for housing, Poitier was jailed for vagrancy and eventually found shelter at an orphanage. Looking for a change, he joined the army at age 16 and pretended to be the required age of 18.

A year later, Poitier was discharged and found a job as a dishwasher and janitor in New York. Upon seeing an advertisement for black actors in Harlem's *Amsterdam News*, he auditioned for a role. Because of his thick West Indian accent and poor reading skills, Poitier was rejected. After learning how to read and working on his accent, Poitier reauditioned and was accepted into the American Negro Theater. In 1945, he earned his first role with the American Negro Theater as the understudy of Harry Belafonte in the *Days of Our Youth*. A year later, he made his first starring appearance on Broadway in *Lysistrata*. Poitier stumbled through his lines, but the critics found his foibles humorous. This performance then led to a role in *Anna Lucasta* in 1947 and a tour of the play in 1948.

Poitier took his success on the stage to acting in films in 1949. He started with an appearance in an army documentary called *From Whom Cometh My Help*. A year later, Poitier starred in his first Hollywood production titled *No Way Out*. He expanded his acting credits to include the films *Red*

*Ball Express* (1952), *Go, Man, Go* (1954), and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). Critics took notice of Poitier and praised his emotional range, especially in his performance of *Cry, the Beloved Country* in 1955. Poitier's acting accomplishments then led to a host of laudable performances in *Goodbye, My Lady* (1956), *Band of Angels* (1957), *Something of Value* (1957), *Edge of the City* (1957), *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *Mark of the Hawk* (1958), *Virgin Island* (1958), and *Porgy and Bess* (1959).

In-between acting, Poitier found time to marry Juanita Marie Hardy, a dancer, in 1950. After having four children, they divorced in 1965. In 1976, Poitier married Joanna Shimkus, an actress, and they later had two daughters. Poitier returned to the theater in 1959 and played the lead role in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. In 1960, he appeared in the acclaimed film version. Poitier continued his notable roles in *All the Young Men* (1960), *Paris Blues* (1961), and *Pressure Point* (1962). In 1963, he won an Academy Award for his performance in *Lilies of the Field* and became the first African American actor to win in the category of leading actor. He followed this performance with impressive work in *The Long Ships* (1964), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), *A Patch of Blue* (1965), and *To Sir, With Love* (1967). Poitier's most significant roles came with his next two films *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) and *In the Heat of the Night* (1967). Both roles promoted equal treatment of blacks and social integration. He later turned to television movies and played Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in *Separate but Equal* in 1991 and Nelson Mandela in *Mandela and de Klerk* in 1997.

After finding success in acting, Poitier turned his attention to directing. His debut came with *Buck and the Preacher* in 1972. This western movie showed the significance of African Americans in the West's development and featured black heroes. Poitier's second directorial film, *A Warm December* (1973), had nominal success. He rebounded in 1974 with *Uptown Saturday Night*. The popular film showcased the talents of Bill Cosby, Harry Belafonte, Flip Wilson, and Richard Pryor. He later reteamed with Bill Cosby in *A Piece of Action* (1977) and *Ghost Dad* (1990). In 1980, he directed Richard Pryor in the hit *Stir Crazy*. His later directing projects, *Shoot to Kill* (1998) and *Little Nikita* (1988), also received some praise.

Poitier reflected on his successful career in his 1980 autobiography *This Life*. He wrote another memoir in 2000 titled *The Measure of a Man: A Spiritual Autobiography* and

won a Grammy Award for the text's reading in 2001. Poitier has also been the recipient of several other accolades, including the Kennedy Center Honors Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995, the NAACP's Hall of Fame Award in 2001, and the Academy of Motion Pictures Honorary Award in 2002. He continues to be a revered figure in the acting community and participant in the NAACP and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

*See also:* Belafonte, Harry; Cosby, Bill; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Marshall, Thurgood; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Pryor; Richard

*Dorsia Smith Silva*

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## Poor People's Campaign

The Poor People's Campaign was a movement organized and led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and its director, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was intended to dramatize the plight of the nation's poor and address economic injustice. The plan was to bring thousands of poor people of all races to Washington, D.C., where they would engage in radical nonviolent direct action in order to convince Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson to make eliminating poverty the number one goal of the nation.

The masses of African Americans appeared to be untouched by the most sweeping legislation guaranteeing civil rights since Reconstruction. In 1965, almost one-third of African Americans lived below the poverty line, and half of all black households lived in substandard dwellings. Indeed, the percentage of poor blacks had actually increased between 1959 and 1965. The unemployment rate for blacks was almost double that of whites; for black teenagers, it was more than twice that for white teens. The crumbling infrastructure of inner-city neighborhoods was further eroded by so-called urban renewal; the employment situation was exacerbated by the movement of jobs

to the suburbs. The high school dropout rate soared, drug abuse became rampant, and fragile families were further strained.

Northern urban communities with thousands of poor, black residents were also fertile ground for the nascent Black Power movement. The nonviolent direct action that had been so successful in the past held no appeal for the hundreds of thousands of blacks who were trapped there with little to no opportunity for improvement. Nor had the War on Poverty, developed by the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson to eradicate poverty in America, been much help. Although noble, its efforts were too little, and it was opposed by powerful politicians at the local level and whites who felt Johnson was giving handouts to the undeserving poor. The poor, their hopes raised by community action programs and maximum feasible participation, again found their hopes unanswered. As such, the cities became simmering cauldrons of frustration, alienation, and hopelessness that exploded in 1965.

Every summer from 1965 through 1969, northern cities were visited by urban rebellions, sometimes referred to as race riots. The Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts was the first of these on August 11, 1965. Six days of rioting reduced Watts to rubble, claimed 34 lives, and recorded property damage of \$35 million. Urban rebellions also occurred in 1966, but arguably the worst year of the phenomenon was 1967. A total of 59 riots occurred, the deadliest being in Newark, New Jersey and Detroit, Michigan. The Newark rebellion left 27 dead, including children, a police officer, and a fire fighter, and caused millions of dollars in damage. Conditions in Detroit were so bad that 43 blacks were killed. Not even 800 state and city police and the National Guard could restore order. President Lyndon Johnson was forced to send in the 82nd and 101st Airborne to restore order.

After the Newark and Detroit riots, Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, commonly known as the Kerner Commission after its leader, Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois. Johnson recognized that the only way to end the despair of the masses of blacks was a sustained government program designed to end joblessness, substandard housing, poverty, and disease. The Kerner Commission report surprisingly blamed white racism as the chief cause of the riots and warned that America was once again becoming a dual society, one black and one white.



*Poor People's March in Washington, D.C., on June 18, 1968. (Library of Congress)*

King and the SCLC were keenly aware that the times called for bold measures. He recognized that the campaign would be different from those implemented during the Civil Rights movement; it was demanding nothing less than a wholesale transformation of American capitalism. Moreover, King intended to force the nation to choose between eliminating poverty, which he saw as a moral issue, and continuing an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam, against which he had become a vocal critic. To him the two were inextricably linked.

The Poor People's Campaign had three stages. First, it would crisscross the nation putting together a group of several thousand black, Latino, Native American, and white Appalachian poor people who would travel to Washington to live in a shanty town much like that erected by the Bonus Army of the early 20th century. They would participate in daily demonstrations in the capital and be joined by parallel demonstrations in cities across the country. These would be crowned by a mass march echoing the 1963 March on Washington. Second, the demonstrations

would engender mass arrests as they had in the South, further dramatizing the plight of the poor. Finally, there would be an economic boycott of the most powerful businesses in America. The Poor People's Campaign would show that all the gains of the Civil Rights movement were hollow without economic parity and opportunity. It would either be a brilliant success or a humiliating failure.

King and the SCLC were instantly attacked by the media, the political Left, and white Americans who were weary of the struggle for equality. Leaders of the other civil rights organizations also criticized King, not only for the campaign, but for his stinging and public rebuke of the Vietnam War. Most of organized labor refused to support the effort. Finally, President Lyndon Johnson turned against King, too, and he lost the warm working relationship they had developed. But King pressed on.

His empathy for and support of the poor took him to Memphis, Tennessee, where he marched in solidarity with city garbage collectors who were seeking a living wage and better working conditions. On April 4, he was assassinated.

Coretta Scott King, his widow, and the SCLC decided to continue the Poor People's Campaign under the leadership of the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, the close friend and confidant of King. From May 14 to June 24, more than 2,500 poor people lived in a shanty town they had erected and named Resurrection City. The camp boasted a city hall, cultural capital, a medical facility, dining hall, psychiatrist, a university, and zip code. It fanned out across the Reflecting Pool to the base of the Lincoln Memorial. Residents policed themselves and provided a model for interracial cooperation. Thousands of them fanned out daily across locations in the capital to shame the U.S. government into significant action against poverty.

Unfortunately, conditions in the camp quickly turned miserable. Washington was unusually cool that year in May and June, and it rained 28 of the 42 days of the operation. Residents were soon knee deep in mud, trash, and rotting food. On June 4, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who had become a champion of the poor and was running for the Democratic nomination for president, was assassinated. Finally, it was clear that the leadership of Dr. King was sorely missed; Reverend Ralph Abernathy lacked the charisma and contacts of Dr. King, and he spent little time at the camp, appearing to prefer the comfort of the black-owned Pitts Hotel to the muddy squalor of Resurrection City. By the middle of June, fewer than 300 people remained in the camp.

Fighting and near-riots broke out in the camp on June 22. Police were called in, but police dogs and more than a thousand tear gas grenades failed to stem the trouble. On June 24, about 1,000 police closed Resurrection City, arresting Reverend Abernathy and 175 people. Charges of assault against police officers, disorderly conduct, curfew violations, and public drunkenness were levied against those arrested. The Poor People's Campaign failed to persuade public officials to pour more resources into eliminating poverty, and it was deemed a failure and the end of the Civil Rights movement.

Recent scholarship, however, has reevaluated the campaign and somewhat redeemed its reputation. The Poor People's Campaign ignited the third wave of the Civil Rights movement: economic empowerment. The interracial structure of the effort showed that a strong alliance based on class was not only important but necessary. Indeed, the Reverend Jesse Jackson would bring this alliance to fruition with his emphasis on a Rainbow Coalition during his 1988 presidential campaign. The Poor People's Campaign highlighted

the weaknesses of runaway capitalism and consumerism in a manner not seen since the Great Depression.

*See also:* Abernathy, Ralph David; Jackson, Jesse; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; War on Poverty

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## Populist Party

The populist movement was a revolt by farmers in the South and Midwest against the Democrats and Republicans for ignoring their interests and difficulties. In the 1880s, a drought had caused the farmers to experience crop failures, falling prices, debt, and lack of credit facilities. The farmers organized the National Farmers' Alliance and the Colored Farmers' Alliance in an attempt to remedy their problems. They achieved regional victories but were of little influence nationally. In the 1890s, the agrarian interests refocused their energies and reorganized their efforts by forming the Populist Party. The Populist Party, also known as the People's Party, evolved from the Grange, Greenback Party, and Farmers' Alliances and campaigned to have the federal government buffer economic depressions, regulate banking and corporations, and provide assistance to the suffering farmers.

In 1892, the Populist Party held its first national convention. Delegates met in Omaha, Nebraska and nominated James B. Weaver as its presidential candidate and James G. Field as its vice presidential candidate. The Omaha Platform endorsed free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, the secret (Australian) ballot, direct election of senators, a single term for the president and vice president, government ownership and operation of railroads, and an eight-hour working day. Weaver, a former Union army general and Iowa congressman, and Field, a Virginia ex-Confederate general, collected more than 1 million popular votes. The voters also elected several Populist Party congressmen,

three governors, and hundreds of minor officials and legislators. Most of the party's strength came from the agrarian areas of the Midwest, but poor Southerners also showed a strong support for the party.

Poverty was a common denominator among blacks and whites, and the party leaders envisioned a program that would benefit both races and be injurious to neither. The party's success had depended on black cooperation, and party leaders made concessions to gain the support it needed. In some ways the party broke down racial barriers. In the South, the populist movement approached the blacks for support and forged a common cause between poor whites and blacks. In Georgia, Tom Watson led the Populist Party revolt against the Democrats by promising black voters that the party would respect their civil and political rights. Blacks participated in the party, not just as figure-head appointments but at the innermost levels. They were elected to local and national party committees and served as delegates to the national conventions. They campaigned to mixed audiences and spoke from the same platforms as white campaigners. Populist Party sheriffs made sure blacks were represented on jury duty and populist newspapers praised the achievements of black citizens. In Texas, the party tried to build a coalition of black and white voters but was unable to persuade the majority of Texas blacks to abandon the Republican Party. Throughout the South, conservatives dominated politics and feared Negro domination. The conservatives began making efforts to defeat the populists by buying black votes and intimidating black voters. Eventually the Black Populists became apathetic and factionalized.

In 1896, the Populist Party fused with the Democrats after William Jennings Bryan, a free-silver candidate, was defeated in his bid for the presidency. The Populist Party gradually disappeared as a political force. By 1900, the party was no longer politically effective, and by 1908, it had ceased to exist.

*See also:* Colored Farmers Alliance

Nancy A. McCaslin

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## Powell, Adam Clayton Jr.

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (1908–1972) was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on November 29, 1908. He rose to prominence in the early 1930s and 1940s as a preacher, civil rights activist, and national politician. Powell's family moved to New York City, where his father, Adam Clayton Powell Sr., served as the 17th pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. As a child, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., attended New York City public schools. He earned a BA in 1930 from Colgate University, and in 1932 he received an MA in religious education from Columbia University Teachers College. The next year Powell married Harlem's Cotton Club chorus line dancer, Isabel Washington.

Shortly after graduating from Columbia, Powell served as an associate pastor at his father's church, where he developed a charismatic preaching style. He assisted his father in alleviating the economic strain of the Great Depression on the black community in Harlem by organizing soup kitchens, distributing clothing to the poor, and finding jobs for the unemployed. On November 1, 1937, Powell succeeded his father as pastor of Abyssinian. During his early tenure as pastor, Powell substantially increased the size of the congregation through community outreach and inspired preaching.

During the New Deal, Powell used his status to improve the employment situation of African Americans in New York City. In the late 1930s, he cofounded the Greater New York Coordinating Committee for Fair Employment. This organization consisted of various professional groups, including black fraternities and sororities, black nationalists, and Communists. Powell's organization protested against antiblack hiring practices throughout the city in public utilities, such as the electric and telephone companies.

In the 1930s, Powell also helped organize rent strikes and public boycotts led to the hiring and promotion of African American employees in restaurants and department stores in Harlem, the New York City bus company, the public utilities, Harlem Hospital, and officials at the 1939 World's Fair. Along with his community activism, from 1936 to 1944, Powell cofounded and published the radical weekly newspaper, *The People's Voice*. The paper served as a platform for Powell to inform the African American community about his crusade for better housing, schools, and employment opportunities.



In the early 1940s, Powell became a professional politician and represented Harlem by winning a seat in 1941 on the New York City Council. While serving on the council, Powell continued his campaign against racial discrimination, bringing attention to employment discrimination at the telephone company and city colleges. Between 1942 and 1944, he also served as a member of the New York State, Consumer Division, Office of Price Administration. From 1942–1945, he was a member of the Manhattan Civilian Defense. He used his growing political clout to speak at rallies, in support of World War II and use those speaking opportunities to denounce racial segregation in the military.

In 1945, Powell was elected on the Democratic ticket to serve in the House of Representatives, representing Harlem's 22nd Congressional district. Powell became the first black congressman from New York. In the same year, he divorced Isabel and married popular pianist and actress, Hazel Scott, who gave birth to his first child, Adam Clayton Powell III, in 1946.



*A prominent civil rights spokesman, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from New York in 1945 and became chair of the Education and Labor Committee in 1961. (Library of Congress)*

On his arrival in Washington, Powell continued his civil rights campaign. Although Powell was only one of two African American congressional representatives, he successfully challenged de facto segregation on Capitol Hill. Black representatives were then prohibited from using Capitol dining areas, which were reserved only for the white Congressional leaders. Powell, however, would bring Harlem residents to eat with him in these restaurants. Powell also confronted the racial bigotry of staunch segregationists like John E. Rankin of Mississippi on the floor of the House of Representatives.

In the House, Powell would attach an antidiscrimination clause to significant pieces of legislation. His clause eventually became referred to as the Powell Amendment. In 1955, he attended the historic Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations in Bandung, Indonesia. These formerly colonized countries met to discuss ways in which to promote cultural and economic cooperation and to oppose U.S. and European colonialism. On Powell's return to the United States, he urged President Dwight D. Eisenhower to support the emerging, but less developed, countries. During the same decade, Powell began to experience legal problems and in the mid-1950s, he stood trial for tax evasion and fraud. After a hung jury, the Department of Justice decided not to retry the case.

In 1960, Powell divorced and married for the final time. This time he wed Yvette Diago, and she bore him a second son, Adam Clayton Diago Powell. In addition to a new marriage, Powell became chairman of the prestigious and powerful Labor and Education Committee in 1961. During that decade, as a supporter of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program, Powell's committee passed dozens of measures that authorized federal programs to improve education and training for the deaf, provide college student loans and public school lunches, and increase the minimum wage, thus expanding opportunities for all Americans, including African Americans.

Powell's legal and professional troubles continued into the 1960s. Colleagues accused him of misappropriating his committee's budget, taking trips overseas at tax payers' expense, and missing congressional sessions and committee meetings. He was also criticized for refusing to pay a slander judgment to a Harlem constituent, Ester James. In 1967, the House Democratic Caucus removed Powell as committee chairman. The House also declined to return him to his seat until the federal government investigated the allegations against him.

In June 1969, the Supreme Court ruled that the House had unconstitutionally excluded Powell from Congress, and he returned to his seat in the 90th Congress, but without any seniority or back pay. In the summer of 1970, Charles B. Rangel defeated Powell in the Democratic primary in Powell's district in New York City. Powell then tried and failed to make the November ballot as an independent candidate. In 1971, he resigned as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist and permanently retired to the Bahamian island of Bimini. On April 4, 1972, he died at the age of 63 of complications from prostate cancer at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida. His body was cremated and his ashes scattered over the Caribbean around Bimini.

See also: Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; Rustin, Bayard

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## Powell, Colin

Colin Powell (1937–) is a distinguished black military and political luminary and a prominent Republican, whose commitment to help his community and to serve his country make him one of the most respected public figures in the annals of American and African American history. Powell was born in South Bronx, New York City. His parents, Luther and Maud Powell, migrated from Jamaica and worked in the Manhattan garment industry. Growing up in a multicultural social environment, Powell attended local public schools and the City College of New York.

Powell joined the army in 1959 as a second lieutenant. After his training at second infantry school, he commanded a platoon at Fulda Gap, West Germany. At Fort Devens, Alabama, Powell met Alma Johnson, whom he married in 1962. In the same year he went to South Vietnam for his

first tour as a military adviser and earned his first Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for his distinguished service.

As a young black captain in Georgia, Powell was insulted because of his race and for being a serviceman in Vietnam. He was refused services at a hotdog stand. He had a similar experience at a restaurant in Birmingham, Alabama. He had to go to the back door where African Americans came to place their order. In 1966, Powell went for his second tour in South Vietnam. He was stationed at Chu Lui and then assigned as a military planner under General Charles M. Gettys. In this tour he was injured in a helicopter crash. Despite his broken ankle, Powell saved the entire crew from the wreckage. For this heroic act in a noncombat situation, he received the second Purple Heart and the Soldier's Medal for bravery.

After he returned from Vietnam, he earned his masters degree in business administration in 1971 from George Washington University. The next year he worked for the Office of Management and Budget at the White House. In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan appointed him to his cabinet as the national security adviser. His biggest moment came when he was appointed the chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff in 1989, the very year in which he conducted an invasion of Panama. Two years later, Powell was given a second term as the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff. During this time he directed Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Powell split openly with the Congressional Black Caucus over the use of force during the Persian Gulf War.

Along the lines of these black representatives in Congress, Reverend Jesse Jackson believed that Powell was guilty of associating with the Reagan and Bush administration even though he was aware that their policies impeded African Americans' social and economic progress. Because of Powell's association with the Republican Party, Joseph Lowery, the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) protested against Powell's presence at the King Week parade in Atlanta that celebrated the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1993, Powell retired from army after 35 years of distinguished service. Remembering his segregated past in the army, two years before his retirement, in his address to the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Tuskegee Airmen in Detroit, he expressed his gratitude to those black men and women who served under the racially separated system.

Powell's failure to criticize Washington's policy of putting disproportionate numbers of black men and women in

harm's way and his reconciliation in the Los Angeles Riots in 1992, after the beating of Rodney King, infuriated the NAACP and civil rights leaders. They blamed him for siding with the white community. Even though he was not forthcoming in criticizing the racial atmosphere in the army, Powell, in his capacity as a military leader, demonstrated his commitment to help young black men and women succeed in the armed forces.

Powell was well respected in the black community for his philanthropic activities as the chairman of the non-profit America's Promise foundation and for his fight for active government involvement in protecting the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensuring constitutional protection for all Americans. On December 16, 2001, the Bush administration nominated Powell secretary of state. He was the first African American to hold the highest position in the state department and the highest-ranking black official in any U.S. administration. He was regarded as a moderate voice on several issues in the Bush administration, notably on Iraq. Powell urged caution and at times seemed at odds with his cabinet colleagues. His views in favor of involving the UN and giving Iraq a last chance to disarm eventually prevailed.

Even though a loyal Republican, Powell was extremely critical of the party's record on racism, and he advised Republicans to get rid of its southern strategy of pandering to certain constituencies at the expense of black voters. In the 2000 Republican Convention, he challenged the party to live up to the language of reconciliation, to adopt policies that lead to inclusiveness, and to provide minorities the opportunity to rise up the social ladder. In 2008, Powell openly supported and voted for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, and, for this decision, he has been criticized by conservatives like Rush Limbaugh and Dick Cheney. Powell's passionate beliefs in family and his heartfelt love for the country made him a shining star in the galaxy of prominent Americans. Whether it was the humiliation inflicted on him as a black serviceman traveling in the Deep South or as an African American in the dangerous thickets of Vietnam, Powell survived the challenges. He stands as an inspiring example for future generations of Americans and more importantly for African Americans and immigrants. *See also:* Clinton, William Jefferson; Congressional Black Caucus; Obama, Barack

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## Pratt, Geronimo Ji Jaga

Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, former deputy minister of the Los Angeles branch of the Black Panther Party, spent 27 years in jail for the alleged murder of Caroline Olsen and the shooting of her husband, Kenneth, in 1968. Two black men allegedly attacked Caroline and Kenneth Olsen on a tennis court in December 1968. Three years later, Kenneth Olsen positively identified Geronimo Pratt as one of the assailants, from a photo given to him by the Los Angeles Police Department. Pratt was the fourth black man whom Olsen had identified.

Ji Jaga maintained his innocence throughout his incarceration. He always proclaimed that he was 400 miles away at a Black Panther Party meeting in Oakland at the time of the murder. Ji Jaga was apprehended in 1970 and charged with kidnapping and murder.

Ji Jaga was raised in Louisiana where he claimed to have witnessed lynchings and intimidation by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. He later joined the army and was a highly decorated Vietnam veteran who served two combat tours in Vietnam. In total he earned 18 medals including two Purple Hearts.

On leaving the army he moved to Los Angeles and enrolled at UCLA. Within months of his arrival, Ji Jaga met Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter who was the founder of the local Black Panther Party (BPP) branch. In 1969, Carter and fellow BPP member John Huggins were murdered at Campbell Hall at UCLA in a dispute with US Organization members. George and Ali Stiner along with Claude Hubert of the US Organization were arrested, convicted, and sent to San Quentin prison for their involvement.

After Carter's death, BPP members found a tape Carter had previously recorded that instructed the Los Angeles

BPP to make Ji Jaga minister of defense. This made Ji Jaga a key member of the organization. Ji Jaga's combat experience and skills also became crucial as federal agencies led by the FBI targeted the BPP.

In the 1960s, the BPP and other revolutionary, leftist, and progressive organizations and individuals were targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program). Operations against the Panthers included continuing harassment by police agencies, misinformation supplied to Panthers to encourage tension among the ranks, and also deadly assaults like the 1969 December 4 raid in Chicago that killed Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Four days later, the LAPD SWAT squad invaded the Los Angeles Panthers headquarters; however, the building had been fortified under the instructions of Ji Jaga, which prevented the police from gaining full access to the building.

As the Panthers held out inside the building, masses gathered around the police line, forcing the police to retreat. Six Panthers were wounded, 13 were arrested, but because of their successful self-defense, no Panthers were killed that night. The arrested Panthers were charged with assaulting the police and Ji Jaga spent two months in jail. All charges against the Panthers were later dropped.

When news of this event broke out, the FBI set out to "neutralize" Ji Jaga. On a nationwide tour, Ji Jaga was hounded by police surveillance and COINTELPRO disinformation designed to foster distrust against him within the BPP. In June 1970, the FBI sent out a memorandum on Ji Jaga along with his picture to FBI offices in New York, New Haven, Atlanta, Chicago, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco.

This plot would result in his conviction for the robbery and murder of Caroline Olsen. The murder case was based on three primary contingencies. First was the ability of the key prosecution witness (Julius Butler) to convince the jury that he had heard Ji Jaga confess to the crime despite being a paid informant for the FBI and the LAPD. The district attorney convinced the jury that he was not simply a "snitch" or a paid informant. Second was the ability of the key prosecutor to conceal facts from the jury proved pivotal. On this note, the jury was never informed about the facts that Butler was a paid informant and that Kenneth Olsen had identified someone else as his wife's killer in a lineup. Third was the ability of the FBI to suppress any evidence in its possession that would support Ji Jaga's alibi that he was in Oakland at the time of the murder. All of this combined led to Ji Jaga spending 27 years in jail.



*Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt (photo taken in 1971) was a member of the Black Panther Party in Los Angeles. (AP Photo)*

Ji Jaga was designated a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. Amnesty International first called for a full federal inquiry into Pratt's case in a report published in October 1981. The organization also called on the governor of California to conduct an inquiry into the case in 1988. Over the years Ji Jaga and his defense team led by Johnnie Cochran filed a series of unsuccessful appeals against his conviction. In 1996, the defense was eventually allowed an evidentiary hearing based on new evidence that included information showing that Julius Butler was listed as a confidential informant in the state prosecutor's files at the time of Ji Jaga's initial trial.

Even after revelations about the FBI's COINTELPRO program in the late 1970s confirmed that Butler had been a police spy, Los Angeles authorities continued to oppose any retrial of Ji Jaga. According to the memoirs of former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen, the FBI also had a wiretap of the BPP headquarters in Los Angeles during the period that Caroline Olsen was killed. These wiretap logs showed that Ji Jaga was in San Francisco at the time of the murder, not in Los Angeles where the murder occurred.

Ji Jaga's alibi for the initial conviction was further undermined because the COINTELPRO operation had also succeeded in driving a wedge between different factions of the Panthers, and leading Panthers were discouraged from testifying in Ji Jaga's defense. At the initial trial, only Kathleen Cleaver testified in Ji Jaga's behalf. In 1996, however, six former BPP members testified that Ji Jaga was in San Francisco at the time of the murder.

In 1997, Orange County Court Judge Evertt Dickey, a conservative Republican, ruled that that Ji Jaga's 1972 conviction on murder and kidnapping charges should be overturned because of misconduct by the Los Angeles district attorney's office. In June 1997, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt was released from prison after spending 27 years in jail. In 1999, the Los Angeles district attorney's office noted that they would not seek a retrial. In 1997, the key witness against Ji Jaga, Julius Butler, resigned from the board of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Ji Jaga considers himself to have been a political prisoner and still fights for the freedom of other inmates who he says have been repressed because of their political views, including Leonard Peltier, the American Indian advocate, and Mumia Abu Jamal, another ex-Black Panther. In April 2005, Ji Jaag also spoke at the funeral of his late lawyer, Johnnie Cochran.

See also: Black Panther Party; BPP, Los Angeles Branch; Cleaver, Kathleen Neal; COINTELPRO; Abu Jamal, Mumia

*James Thomas Jones III*

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## **Racial Profiling**

In spite of the significant legacy of the civil rights and due process movements on American public institutions, African Americans still face persisting problems of racial prejudice. Along with discrimination in education,

employment, or housing, the salience of race in American contemporary society is particularly exemplified through racial profiling. Most commonly known as "Driving While Black" or "Driving While Brown" (D.W.B.), this highly controversial law enforcement practice refers to police-initiated stops that appear to target disproportionately African American and Hispanic drivers compared to their number on the highways. Minor traffic violations are used as a pretext to stop and interrogate motorists and look for drugs or weapons. For the African American collective memory, these much debated practices are reminiscent of the former slave patrols apprehending runaways in the antebellum South or of the traffic stops designed to arrest black political activists in the 1960s. Part of the American criminal justice history, they perpetuate the lasting mistrust between police and minorities and contribute to the widespread feeling among black citizens that they are excluded from the public space and alienated from their national citizenship.

These law enforcement procedures have increasingly been deployed since the War on Drugs, which was launched under the Nixon Administration. Created in 1973, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) elaborated in the 1970s a "drug courier profile" in order to identify narcotics smugglers in the airports. Along with various behavioral predictive characteristics (e.g., cash payment of airline tickets, evidence of nervousness, use of an alias), the ethnic factor was an important component of these new criminal identification techniques. The law and order agenda that surfaced in the 1980s and festered in the 1990s paved the way for new coercive social control frameworks that led to a major political shift in state power conception. In a context of moral panic about violence and lawlessness, stringent law enforcement and massive penal containment were voiced by opinion-formers and policymakers as the only efficient solutions for the expansion of crack markets and for the rise of the youth gun violence. Under the "Operation Pipeline," a training program set off by the DEA, police officers multiplied from the mid-1980s on pretextual traffic stops on the highways of all 50 states.

With the support of civil rights advocates and organizations, African Americans have criticized the legitimacy of these proactive devices, which undermine their confidence in the police at the local and national levels. Even if law enforcement agencies have long denied the use of racial profiling, several statistical analyses have firmly established, as a result of court actions, the ordinary and

arbitrary nature of these police practices. As part of the settlement of *Wilkins v. Maryland State Police* (1993), a civil lawsuit filed by a black Harvard Law School graduate, data analyzed by expert John Lamberth from Temple University showed that if African Americans represented 72 percent of the traffic stops initiated by the Maryland State Police, they only committed 17 percent of the traffic violations. In *State of New Jersey v. Soto* (1996), the same expert called by the defense in this criminal case found out that if blacks constituted 13 percent of the driving population, 73 percent of the arrested motorists by the New Jersey State Troopers were black. In 1999, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office acknowledged in an official report that African Americans were twice as likely to be the target of police stops.

Exacerbated by prevalent stereotypes of a violent and criminal black lower class, the high rates of homicide suffered by African Americans and their overrepresentation in the official arrest statistics enabled police organizations to give tacit support to racial profiling. Building on a "statistical discrimination" theory, economists have actually argued that these law enforcement procedures were not an accurate testimony of intentional racial discrimination but an effective method for maximizing "hit rates," namely the successful arrests of drug traffickers and seizures of narcotics contraband. Conversely, legal scholars, as well as social scientists, have pointed out that those investigation techniques had a fateful consequence on the racial demographics of the prison population, which saw for the last two decades a dramatic increase in the incarceration rate of young black males. By disproportionately scrutinizing minorities, racial profiling mechanically contributes to the racialization of criminal justice.

In spite of multiple legal challenges to those police procedures, American judicial institutions have supported these investigation techniques, which have been extensively deployed since the 1980s by law enforcement agents. On the one hand, plaintiffs in civil cases have met tremendous difficulties to prove that police officers were motivated by an intentional racial discrimination and violated the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment. On the other hand, the United States Supreme Court has given over the years increasing power to law enforcement agents in order to effect search and seizure. As early as 1968, the Supreme Court articulated in *Terry v. Ohio* the first legal principle according to which investigative stops were not

a constitutional violation of the unreasonable search and seizure clause of the Fourth Amendment. In 1996, this ruling was notably reinforced in *Whren v. United States*. Dismissing the racial argument, the Court asserted that the traffic violation can be considered by itself a probable cause or a reasonable suspicion for a police-initiated stop even if this offense rationale is only an excuse for a drug investigation. In 1997, the Supreme Court went even further; in *Maryland v. Wilson* it stated that police officers may command the driver or any passenger out of the vehicle during a lawful stop and search. These successive decisions were deeply criticized by legal scholars and civil liberties organizations, as law enforcement agents were given significant latitude in making searches and seizures that could lead to police misconduct and brutality against law-abiding and minority citizens.

As racial profiling is strongly embedded in social practices and legal mechanisms, it deeply influences African Americans' perceptions of the legitimacy of democratic institutions. These investigation devices broaden the racial cleavage, as they are considered very differently by blacks and whites. According to a December 1999 Gallup Poll, if 77 percent of blacks and 56 percent of whites believed that racial profiling was widespread, 42 percent of blacks compared to only 6 percent of whites felt that police-initiated stops were motivated by their racial or ethnic background. The survey also underlined the unequal confidence in the criminal justice system fairness, as 58 percent of blacks compared to 85 percent of whites had a favorable opinion of their local police. Regardless of their law obedience and social status, black motorists driving on the highway and black pedestrians walking in white neighborhoods feel particularly humiliated to be stopped, interrogated, and searched disproportionately by police officers. African Americans have to adjust their daily behaviors to these law enforcement practices by avoiding lavish cars and certain racially identified places and also by training their children to react properly to police-initiated stops. In this respect, these investigation devices contribute objectively to the perpetuation of residential segregation, as African Americans may prefer to live in a black neighborhood where they feel they will be less subject to police stops. Enacted primarily for criminal purposes, profiling techniques not only perpetuates the persistent beliefs about inequality within minority communities but also maintain racial hierarchy in American society.

Political leaders took stock in the late 1990s of the impact of racial profiling on civil liberties and race relations. In 1997, Representative John Conyers of Michigan introduced the Traffic Stops Statistics Act, which passed in March 1998 by a unanimous vote the House of Representatives, but not the Senate. Its purpose was to enhance the accountability and strengthen the control of these investigation techniques. The bill required that data on each police-initiated traffic stops should be collected on a nationwide basis and analyzed by the attorney general. It addresses the need for consistency in reporting data such as the date and location of the stop, the ethnicity and age of the motorist, the alleged traffic offense, as well the rationale for the search. Supporting this legislative initiative, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) launched a campaign in 1999 to end to the use of pretext stops and to pass the Traffic Stops Statistics Act. It also called on the U.S. Justice Department to ensure that racial profiling was not used in federally funded drug interdiction programs. With other civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the ACLU also filed lawsuits against several states such as Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania. Even though this bill has not since become a federal law, some states have passed legislation and adopted written guidelines on traffic stops. During the 2000 presidential debates, the two candidates asserted that racial profiling was damaging for minority communities.

The September 11 terrorist attacks brought to an end the uneasy consensus that was emerging across the national political spectrum in the late 1990s on the inappropriateness of racial profiling. The U.S. Patriot Act of 2001 authorized police to search for any property and seize any material pursuant to a search warrant that represents evidence of a criminal offence in violation of the laws of the United States. Arab Americans, Middle Easterners, South Asians, and Muslims have since been the prime target of these provisions. Recalling the detainment of Japanese Americans during World War II, which was authorized in 1942 by President Roosevelt and endorsed in 1944 by the U.S. Supreme Court (*Korematsu v. United States*), the ACLU, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the NAACP questioned, among other organizations, the legitimacy of the antiterrorist laws regarding the protection of civil liberties. They also pointed out how these provisions might roll back the minor improvements realized in matters of racial

profiling for an African American population that has increasingly been embracing Islam. Revealing how much the debate is far from closed, a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the House of Representatives and Senate introduced the End Racial Profiling Act in 2004.

Part of African American history, the changing racial profiling patterns demonstrate the flexibility of a social control technique that can be deployed by law enforcement agencies to address tragic historical situations but also maneuvered to a large extent by policymakers and opinion-formers to answer moral panic that they themselves helped to create.

*See also:* Fourteenth Amendment

Jean-Philippe Dedieu

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## Radical Republicans

The Radical Republicans were a faction of the Republican Party during Reconstruction who wanted to punish the South and completely uproot its feudal race-based society and replace it with an egalitarian and democratic system.

During the Civil War, the radicals opposed President Abraham Lincoln's call for a quick and lenient readmission of Southern states into the Union. They wanted tougher restrictions against former Confederates and greater civil rights protections for the freedmen, as well as ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment and repudiation of the Confederate war debt. Lincoln used a pocket veto to prevent the radical Wade-Davis bill from becoming law in 1864. Congress retaliated by refusing to seat delegations from three Southern states who met Lincoln's less stringent qualifications.

After Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson adopted a reconstruction policy that greatly restricted the rights of the former slaves, and he freely pardoned former Confederate officers. These policies outraged the radical Republicans who had after the war become an alliance of the prewar abolition movement and the newly freed slaves. To undo Johnson, the radicals in Congress passed the Civil Rights Bill of 1866, a Southern Homestead Act, the Fourteenth Amendment, and extension of the Freedmen's Bureau. Johnson vetoed all of these bills, but Congress easily overrode the president. In 1867, the conflict between Johnson and the radicals led Congress to a failed attempt to remove the president from office.

The Radical Republican agenda reached its zenith with the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. These acts divided the South into five military districts. Congress entrusted the army to guarantee that African Americans had the ability to exercise their civil and suffrage rights. The acts further stipulated that Southern states must ratify the Fourteenth Amendment (and later the Fifteenth Amendment) in order to be readmitted to the Union.

The alliance between black and white Republicans in the South was often contentious. African Americans were concerned that they did not get their due share of patronage and offices, considering that they made up the overwhelming majority of Republican voters in the South. Increasingly, however, they became more assertive in their demands as they gained political power and experience. During Reconstruction, 16 Radical black Republicans served in Congress, including two United States senators. Blacks held one governorship and many other higher state offices throughout the South. More than 600 African Americans served in Southern state legislatures.

The Southern state governments established by the Radical Republicans after 1867 had to carry most of the

burden of Reconstruction without financial assistance from Congress or the moral support of the Northern electorate. Radical state governments throughout the South supported a program of wide sweeping reforms as revolutionary as those of 1776. These reforms bettered the interests not only of the freedmen, but also the poor whites. Reforms included subsidization of railway construction, which provided both jobs and access to markets for the poorer agricultural areas; a system of free public education; regulations curbing abuses in the tenant farming system; purchase of land for redistribution; a liberalized penal code; and bans on discriminatory election laws.

By 1870, the influence of Radical Republicans in Washington was in sharp decline. The Ku Klux Klan Act of 1870 and a watered down Civil Rights Act in 1875 were the last dying gasp of radicalism. In a series of important decisions handed down in the 1870s and 1880s, the United States Supreme Court weakened the provisions of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, undermining the efforts of the radicals to gain African American equality. The death of Representative Thaddeus Stevens in 1868 and Senator Charles Sumner in 1874 deprived the radicals of their strongest leaders. Economic issues arising from industrial society and mass immigration attracted the attention of the Northern voters, as they deemed conditions in the South inconsequential to their interests.

At the state level, following readmission of the Southern states, conservative white Democrats used violence and intimidation to frighten African Americans from the polls. The Achilles heel of the radical program had been the necessity to borrow heavily and raise taxes in order to finance their reforms. As conservative whites used race as a wedge issue to divide poor and middle class whites from the Radical African American Republicans, they leveled a series of volatile accusations against the radicals, including financial mismanagement, corruption, and race baiting. Although examples of corruption abound, they were neither more numerous, nor more egregious than they were at contemporary Northern state or the national legislatures. Moreover, native Southern whites showed no scruples when it came to overcharging the radical state governments for services such as bond sales.

One by one as conservative white Democrats captured state governments, they implemented grandfather clauses, literacy tests, and other means to restrict black suffrage. When President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the last of



the federal troops from the South in 1877, Radical Republicanism ceased to exist. Gains made by African Americans in civil and political rights during Radical Reconstruction were lost by the end of the 19th century.

See also: Civil Rights Act of 1866; Civil Rights Act of 1875; Fifteenth Amendment; Fourteenth Amendment; Hayes, Rutherford B.; Johnson, Andrew; Joint Committee of Fifteen; Lincoln, Abraham; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Republican Party; Stevens, Thaddeus; Sumner, Charles

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## Randolph, A. Philip

Asa Philip Randolph (1889–1979) was an African American trade union and civil rights leader who advocated the use of labor movements as a promising tool in the African American struggle for civil rights. He founded the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters and organized mass protests to end segregation and discrimination in employment and the army.

Randolph was born to an African Methodist Episcopal minister and a seamstress in Crescent, Florida. Although Randolph grew up in a very religious environment, he later became an atheist, but always maintained his strong belief in nonviolence. In 1891, his family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, a city with a thriving African American community. His parents wanted to provide a good education to Randolph and his brother and sent them to Cookman Institute, a superior black school. Randolph was an excellent student and was the valedictorian of his class. After high school, he experienced employment discrimination

and segregation firsthand, in that he could find only low-paying manual labor jobs. During this time, he gained his first experience in organizing black workers to protest against their bad situation.

Part of the first wave of African American migration from the Deep South to Northern cities in search for a better future, Randolph moved to New York City and settled down in Harlem with plans to become an actor. Working again in menial jobs during the day, he took classes at the City College of New York and New York University at night. He soon realized that the employment opportunities and conditions of blacks in the North were not as different from the Deep South as he had hoped. After his parents forbid him to pursue an acting career, he switched majors from drama to politics and economics, but never graduated.

In 1914, he married Lucille Green, a widow six years his senior, who operated a beauty shop and was able to finance them both. Through his wife, Randolph met Chandler Owen, a Columbia University student, who shared his ideas and socialist convictions. They both joined the Socialist Party and dispersed their ideas as soapbox orators in Harlem. Both men considered socialism the remedy for the social and political problems of America and the route to promote social justice and political equality for African Americans.

As the majority of African Americans were part of the labor force, Randolph believed organizing and mobilizing black workers in labor movements was the way to eventually achieve civil rights. He fused labor rights with civil rights. Although never opposing racial integration, Randolph oscillated between all-black activism and interracial cooperation. Throughout his life, Randolph was convinced that change had to come from within the black community. Blacks should no longer beg for improvement. Randolph believed that only the pressure of black mass movement and nonviolent civil disobedience could change politics and public opinion and improve the position of African Americans.

In November 1917, Randolph and Owen began publishing *The Messenger*, a socialist monthly magazine that gained an excellent reputation in the African American community. As an intellectual voice for the Harlem community, *The Messenger* advocated socialism and unionism among blacks. Through the magazine, Randolph opposed World War I and African American participation in it and protested racism and racial violence in the United States.

Although treasuring racial pride, Randolph rejected racial separatism and became one of Marcus Garvey's most forthright opponents. For Randolph, racial pride and racial integration were compatible. With the help of George Schuyler, the two managed to continue publishing the financially variable magazine.

Between 1917 and 1923, Randolph and Owen independently founded numerous labor unions to include blacks in the labor movement. Randolph continuously fought unions and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) for their racism and exclusion of black workers. Although Randolph was initially a staunch advocate of socialism, he was to remain an fervent anticommunist throughout his life.

In 1925, knowing Randolph's support of black workers' rights, the Pullman porters, an all-black service staff of the Pullman sleeping cars, asked him to help them found and

lead a trade union to fight for their rights. Underpaid and exploited, they wanted better employment and working conditions. Randolph met with the porters and on August 25, 1925, they founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP). For the next 10 years, under Randolph's leadership and using *The Messenger* and later his magazine *Black Worker* as a medium, the union struggled to reach their goals. The Pullman company defamed Randolph and continuously refused to negotiate with the union. In 1935, the union finally forced the company to negotiate. After two years of bargaining, the company agreed to a contract that included wage increases and work-hour reduction. With the signing of the contract, the Brotherhood became the officially accepted representative of the Pullman porters. It was the first victory of an all-black union over an American company. Randolph remained the president of the BSCP until 1968. In 1978, the union dissolved and its remaining members merged with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks.

Through his efforts for economic improvement combined with civil rights, Randolph gained a respected status in the African American community. In 1936, during his struggle for the BSCP, Randolph became president of the newly founded National Negro Congress (NNC). The NNC was a loose association of African American groups and white supporters. It was especially committed to the labor movement and cooperated closely with trade unions to create a blacks mass movement. Randolph left the NNC when he thought it to be increasingly influenced by Communists and white labor movements.

With the rising number of job opportunities in the defense industry in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the second wave of black migration from South to North took place. African Americans, however, often met with racial discrimination when searching for work in the defense industry. Despite serious efforts and pleas, the White House did not help improve the situation of African Americans who became increasingly frustrated and angry. Basing his activism on this anger, Randolph called for a march of 100,000 African Americans on Washington to protest discrimination in defense industry and the armed forces. He launched the March on Washington Movement (MOWM), demanding an executive order to abolish discrimination in the defense industry and the military. With his plan for mass mobilization, Randolph became the advocate of a new approach in the Civil Rights movement. The date for the all-black



*A. Philip Randolph won respect for his quiet dignity and his firmness in a life-long commitment to racial justice. A union organizer and socialist early in life, he became the country's best-known African American trade unionist and a nationally prominent leader in the struggle for civil rights during the early to mid-20th century. (Library of Congress)*

march was set for July 1, 1941. Initially hesitant to submit to the pressure, Roosevelt gave in due to the mere threat of a protest march of tens of thousands of African American in Washington. On June 25, 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 that forbade government contractors to practice employment discrimination based on race, creed, color, or national origin and included the creation of a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to enforce the order. Randolph canceled the march. After the political success of the planned march, he continued the MOWM. The all-black mass movement that stood for non-violent civil disobedience acted locally and organized rallies against discrimination.

After the war, Randolph turned his attention to an issue that he had failed to attain with his March on Washington in 1941—the integration of the armed forces. In 1947, the Congress and the American public discussed a Selective Service Act and Universal Military Training without considering the abolishment of segregation. To fight military segregation, Randolph and Grant Reynolds founded the Committee against Jim Crow in the Military Service and later the League of Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Against Military Service. Initially, the committee used traditional means of communication and publishing, but soon it stepped up pressure by threatening that African Americans would no longer bear arms for the United States if the armed forces did not integrate and ban discrimination. It urged black youth to resist induction and military service. In a meeting with President Truman and a speech before the Senate Armed Service Committee, Randolph laid out his position and could not be dissuaded from his militant plans to launch a mass movement boycotting the military. Needing the black vote in the upcoming presidential election and fearing Randolph's civil unrest, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948. It ordered the equal treatment and opportunity for all and the formation of an advisory committee. Randolph was pleased and called off the civil disobedience campaign in August 1948.

After the end of the League of Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Against Military Service in 1948 and of the Committee Against Jim Crow in the Military Service with the beginning of the Korean War, Randolph worked again more powerfully for an end to labor discrimination and trade union segregation. In 1955, he was elected vice president of the newly merged AFL-CIO's Executive Council.

To pressure trade unions and the AFL-CIO to improve the position of African Americans in unions, Randolph founded the Negro American Labor Council (NALC) over which he presided from 1960 to 1966.

Randolph cooperated more closely with the NAACP and other civil rights groups and gave up his idea of establishing his own Civil Rights movement. With his trade union activism, he also supported the fight and organized protest marches for the integration of American schools. He continued to organize marches, pressuring the administration for change. In cooperation with the NAACP and Martin Luther King Jr., he organized, for example, The Prayer Pilgrimage on May 17, 1957, where about 50,000 people protested and prayed for freedom in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Randolph's belief in the effectiveness of mass movements influenced the development of the new generation of Civil Rights movements and their strategies to attain full civil rights.

In March 1962, Randolph conceived a plan for a new march on Washington protesting the slow economic progress, especially of black youth. Randolph worked with Martin Luther King Jr., and his planned Jobs Rights March and Mobilization became the March on Washington for Jobs and Opportunities. The movement was an interracial project that, in contrast to Randolph's initial plans, was a protest for new civil rights acts rather than only economic improvement. Randolph became the director of the march and cooperated closely with Bayard Rustin whom he considered the best organizer and logistician. On August 28, 1963, a march on Washington conceived by Randolph finally materialized. Though broadened in its aims and modernized, it was based on his earlier March on Washington Movement and the fulfillment of his long-held dream. After the 1963 March on Washington, black protest radicalized and often rebutted nonviolent civil disobedience. Randolph rejected these developments and stood for more traditional and less militant methods of activism. The new movements often castigated him for his opinion.

In 1964, Randolph received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1968, he retired as the President of the BSCP and became president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a national organization of black trade unionists, founded by Randolph and Bayard Rustin in 1965. Supported by the AFL-CIO, the institute pledged to bridge the gap between the African American community and the trade unions. In 1979, A. Philip

Randolph died at the age of 90. He is well remembered in the African American community for his struggle for black workers and civil rights.

*See also:* Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Jim Crow; March on Washington Movement, 1941; March on Washington, 1963; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## Ray, James Earl

James Earl Ray (1928–1998) was a career criminal who confessed to the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. Despite his admission of guilt in open court the next year, Ray's ambiguous statements before, during, and after his trial raised serious questions about what had motivated him and whether or not he had acted alone. The entire truth about the assassination may never be known.

Born in Alton, Illinois, on March 10, 1928, Ray was the oldest of the nine children of George (Speedy) and Lucille Maher Ray. Raised in extreme poverty in the country town of Ewing, Missouri, Ray dropped out of school and left home at the age of 16. After enlisting in the U.S. Army just before his 18th birthday, he served in Germany for almost three years until December 1948, when he was given

a general discharge for ineptness and lack of adaptability for military service.

Within a year of his dismissal from the army, Ray began a life of crime and punishment. He committed a number of armed robberies, and from October 1949 until his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary in April 1967, Ray spent more than 14 years behind bars. While a fugitive, he traveled extensively using money most likely accumulated from dealing contraband in prison. After visiting New Orleans in December 1967, he apparently began to stalk Dr. King for the purpose of killing him. Ray's racism had been obvious to many people who came in contact with him, and his intolerance of African Americans had festered for years.

Ray purchased a high-powered rifle, scope, and ammunition in Alabama at the end of March and drove to Memphis a few days later. He checked into a rooming house across the street from the Lorraine Motel where King and other members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were staying. They had come to support black sanitation workers in their strike against the city and planned to lead a march downtown on the following day. As the group prepared to leave the motel for dinner at about 6:00 P.M., a single gunshot rang out, fatally wounding King.

Ray left the scene immediately, narrowly avoiding a police dragnet. Investigators recovered a rifle with Ray's fingerprints on it almost immediately. The assassin drove to Atlanta, got on a northbound bus, and slipped across the border to Canada less than 40 hours after the murder. Two months later, immigration officers at Heathrow Airport in London apprehended Ray when he attempted to board a plane for Brussels. The British government quickly extradited him to the United States.

After Ray fired his first lawyer, Judge Preston Battle reset the legal proceedings for April 7, 1969. Instead of standing trial, Ray took his attorney's advice and pled guilty to murder in exchange for a 99 year sentence. Within days, he changed his mind, dismissed his counsel, and petitioned the judge for a reversal of his sentence. From that time until his death from liver disease in 1998, Ray proclaimed his innocence and insisted that an elaborate conspiracy lay behind the assassination of King. Despite his constant agitation, the state of Tennessee never granted him a new trial. *See also:* King, Martin Luther Jr.; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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**Reagon, Bernice Johnson**

Bernice Johnson Reagon (1942–), a musician, writer, activist, educator, cultural historian, and curator, devoted her entire career to weaving her life experiences into the study of African American history. She was born on October 4, 1942 in Albany, Georgia to Beatrice Wise and Reverend Jessie Johnson. The third of eight children, she was exposed at an early age to the challenges facing blacks living in the South and learned the value of struggle and protest in facing those challenges.

Reagon grew up with music as the cornerstone of her professional career. From her father, also a singer, she learned the basics and began singing in his Baptist church at the age of five. In the fall of 1959, she entered Albany State College in Albany, Georgia where she majored in music and also studied German lieder and Italian arias.

While at Albany, she was secretary of the local Youth Chapter of the NAACP but found she preferred the more confrontational style of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and participated in a march in her hometown protesting the arrest of two students in 1961. She was arrested along with other members of SNCC and was suspended from school for her involvement. It was her attraction to the protest songs sung by the marchers and the songs sung by fellow incarcerated women that moved her to join SNCC's Freedom Singers in 1962, and to enter Spelman College in Atlanta that same year as a history major. She left within a year, however, to join SNCC's Freedom Singers, performing at mass meetings, fundraisers, and voter registration drives. During this time, she met and married Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field worker and Freedom Singer from Tennessee. She left the Freedom Singers to give birth to her first child, Toshi, in 1964; she later gave birth to a son, Kwan Tauna, in 1965. She was the founder of the a capella group, the Harambee Singers in 1966 and recorded her first solo album, *Songs of the South* in 1966 followed by *Sound*

of Thunder in 1967. For several years, following her divorce from Cordell also in 1967, Reagon pursued her study of traditional African American music.

Reagon left Atlanta in 1968 to perform during the Poor People's Campaign on the Washington Mall where she was first exposed to the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife, an annual event that presents American culture in a festival-type setting. After completing her studies at Spelman in 1970, she moved to Washington, D.C. permanently to work as a field researcher for the Folklife Festival. She began working full-time at the Smithsonian Institution in 1974 as the founder and cultural historian in the African Diaspora Project of the Division of Performing Arts where she conducted extensive research on the relationship between black cultural expression throughout Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. The project later evolved into the Program in African American Culture.

In 1973, she founded Sweet Honey in the Rock, an internationally renowned a capella group of women that performs a broad repertoire of music ranging from traditional blues and spiritual music to modern folk and protest songs. Sweet Honey evolved from Reagon's continued interest in merging education and music with social and political issues. Sweet Honey has performed all over the world, not only in festivals and concerts, but in significant political and cultural venues such as the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985.

While working at the Smithsonian and performing with Sweet Honey during its infancy, Reagon pursued a doctorate degree in history at Howard University, which she was awarded in 1975. Her dissertation, *Songs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1955–1965: A Study in Culture History*, explores oral traditions and examines both freedom protests songs of the 1960s and popular commercial protest songs as oral history sources for reconstructing historical periods. When Smithsonian's Performing Arts Division was dismantled, Reagon was transferred to the Public Programs Division of the National Museum of American History in 1983 where she continued to direct the Program in African American Culture until she was promoted to curator of the Division of Community Life in 1988.

While at the Smithsonian, Reagon was instrumental as a contributor and consultant to the award-winning *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960–1966*, a collection of freedom songs documented within the context of African American musical culture. In

1993, she retired from the Smithsonian and was made Curator Emeritus of the National Museum of American History. Also that year, she was appointed Distinguished Professor of history at American University where she taught until 2002.

Throughout retirement, Reagon has remained active, serving as scholar, producer, and host of the groundbreaking radio series *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions*, a collaborative production of National Public Radio and the Smithsonian Institution, which began broadcasting in 1994, for which she received the Peabody Award for Significant and Meritorious Achievement in Broadcasting in 1994. She was a contributor author and editor of *We'll Understand it Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers* (1992) and *We Who Believe in Freedom: Sweet Honey in the Rock Still on the Journey* (1993). In 1998 she served as composer and compiler of the sound score for the award-winning documentary film *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery*. Reagon composed and produced much of Sweet Honey's repertoire, but in 1996, she retired as artistic director, participating instead as part of a collective artistic directorship. After more than 30 years of performing with the group, she fully retired from Sweet Honey in 2004.

Throughout her career, Reagon has been recognized for her artistry and scholarship in African American history and culture. She was awarded the genius award from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1989 and received the Presidential Medal for her contributions to public understanding of the humanities in 1995. In 2003, she received the Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities. She returned to Spelman as the William and Camille Cosby Endowed Professor in the Fine Arts for the 2002–2003 academic year. For more than 40 years, Reagon has contributed to the study of African American culture and history as a scholar, educator, artist, and activist. She continues to lecture on the evolution of cultural history.

See also: Albany, Georgia Movement; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Poor People's Campaign; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Donna M. Wells

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## Reconstruction Era Black Politicians

After the American Civil War and the implementation of the Reconstruction Acts, African Americans for the first time in U.S. history had the opportunity to take part in the political process. Among those who tried to implement social, political, and economic reform during Reconstruction were a small percentage of African American politicians.

Approximately 2,000 African Americans held political office at the local, state, and national level during Reconstruction (1865–1877). These individuals who had been disenfranchised now stood at the center of power. They came from diverse backgrounds. Nearly half had been free before the Civil War while the other half had experienced the horrors of slavery and acquired their freedom through manumission, running away, or simply purchasing themselves. Approximately 100 of the nearly 2,000 African American politicians during Reconstruction in the South were Northern blacks who migrated to the South after the war to assist in securing the rights of millions of former slaves.

The professional training that African American politicians possessed varied as much as their origins. Individuals who held local political office—sheriffs, tax collectors, town councilmen, etc.—generally had limited education and some were illiterate. They depended on others for help in conducting business. African American politicians who held state and national office were usually educated and many had extensive formal education. For example, Hiram Revels, who was elected to the U.S. Senate from Mississippi in 1870, was an ordained minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and received formal training at a Quaker seminary in Indiana and at Illinois's Knox College. The first major foray for many African Americans into politics after the Civil War was in the state constitutional conventions held throughout the former Confederate states. Although each state had constitutional conventions with African American members, the number and influence of those members varied from state to state. For example, South Carolina's 1868 state constitutional convention was

composed of a majority of African Americans. By contrast, Alabama's constitutional convention was composed of only a small minority of African Americans and therefore they wielded less influence.

The states where African Americans had a major presence in the state constitutional conventions usually translated into a major presence in a state's legislature. In the first South Carolina legislature, there were a total of 127 members; 87 were African Americans. Where they had a majority in state legislatures, African Americans were able to bring about major changes to protect the rights of the newly freed people. African American politicians were also concerned with providing education and a way for all

African Americans to pursue the American dream of land ownership.

Despite the tenacity of many African American politicians at the state level, they faced constant opposition. In Georgia in September 1868, for example, the white members of the state legislature refused to seat all of the African American members. The white legislators simply declared that the African American members were ineligible. One year later Georgia's Supreme Court ruled that African Americans were eligible to serve in the Georgia legislature and were allowed to assume their seats; however, they continued to face opposition to any legislation they proposed.



*The first African American congressmembers of the United States (from left to right): Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi, Representatives Benjamin Turner of Alabama, Robert C. De Large of South Carolina, Josiah Walls of Florida, Jefferson Long of Georgia, Joseph Rainy of South Carolina, and R. Brown Elliott of South Carolina. (Library of Congress)*

African American politicians confronted animosity not only from their counterparts in state assemblies, but from hate groups as well, most notably the Ku Klux Klan. Between 1867 and 1868 approximately 10 percent of African Americans who served as delegates at constitutional conventions had become victims of Klan violence.

Regardless of the animosity exhibited toward many African American politicians at the state level, some were able to build a strong base of support and enact reform, at least on the local level, in favor of African Americans. For example, Blanche K. Bruce (who would become the first African American to win a full six-year term in the U.S. Senate) created a strong political machine in Bolivar County, Mississippi. At one point during Reconstruction he held three offices—sheriff, tax collector, and superintendent of education.

Even though many African American politicians were able to have some influence locally in voting rights and education, their influence was limited because at no time during Reconstruction was there a complete African American rule in the South. The only African American who came closest to controlling the governorship in any former Confederate state was Pickney B. S. Pinchback, the lieutenant governor of Louisiana. After the impeachment of the state's governor, Henry Wormoth, in December 1872, Pinchback served as governor for 41 days. There would not be another African American governor in the United States until 1990.

A handful of African American politicians at the state level used their positions for personal gain. For example, Thomas W. Cardozo, who served as Mississippi's superintendent of education, was convicted of embezzling funds marked for Tugaloo College.

At the national level African American politicians held seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. Although small in number—only 18 African Americans served in the U.S. Congress from 1868–1877, they fought not only for the rights of African Americans, but pushed for improvements to local infrastructure, protective tariffs, and relief for Native Americans.

Despite the presence of African American politicians at the national, state, and local level, the steps they had taken toward true equality were thwarted by the mid-1870s as whites and former Confederate officials began to “redeem” their governments and implement repressive measures that excluded African Americans from the political

process. Although African American politicians may not have accomplished all they had hoped, they proved that they were as worthy of political office as much as any white politician. Furthermore, it gave many African Americans hope that one day they would be treated as equals in all levels of society.

*See also:* Bruce, Blanche K.; Disfranchisement; Fifteenth Amendment; Ku Klux Klan; Republican Party; Revels, Hiram; White Supremacy

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## Red Summer Race Riots

The year 1919 marked a turbulent era in American history. The country experienced economic instability, labor strife, and a xenophobic tide of hatred under the banner of the “Red Scare” in the wake of World War I. Entwined in this postwar turmoil, clashes between the races intensified. James Weldon Johnson dubbed this period the “Red Summer” for the blood that flowed in the streets as a result of white-on-black violence. Between the tumultuous months of April and October, at least 26 race riots erupted across the country. Although these acts of brutality had occurred before and would endure for some years to come, the Red Summer of 1919 represents a particularly dismal chapter in race relations in the United States.

Overarching structural factors—demographic, economic, and political conditions—stirred racial animosities during the Red Summer. Beginning in the 1890s, African Americans left the rural South for better prospects in southern cities, the North, and the West. This “Great Migration” saw an exodus of 500,000 black southerners between 1916 and 1919. World War I particularly prompted this migration, as people of color found more opportunities outside of the South as foreign immigration dwindled and the



military draft created labor shortages on the home front. The influx of people, especially in northern cities, often resulted in strains on housing, food, and public transportation, contributing to already tense race relations. Economic conditions and labor strife also fed into the violence. Adding to this racial resentment, businesses also used blacks as strikebreakers. Furthermore, authorities often ignored or displayed open hostility toward people of color. Some policemen and militia members turned a blind eye toward rioters or even actively participated in the violence themselves.

These structural concerns reinforced the cultural mindset that flourished after World War I. The radical ideology that emerged in the late 19th century, which incorporated Social Darwinism and scientific racism, continued to feed whites' views of supremacy, and these beliefs led to a paranoid fear of sexual attacks on the sanctity of white women. White newspapers fed this cultural consensus that allowed white-on-black riots to thrive during the Red Summer. They not only provided the fuel before race riots—running stories and rumors of alleged black crimes and atrocities while downplaying white infractions—but also generated the “official” version of events afterward.

Although structural factors and cultural attitudes set the scene for violence, precipitating events—alleged or real attacks, murders, or other infractions—created the immediate spark that prompted whites to act. Moreover, as people of color continued to assert their rights as citizens, whites strove to hold them back. World War I only heightened these tendencies. As the black population increased, and when whites believed that blacks encroached into their spheres of work, neighborhoods, and recreation, violence often resulted.

Not solely centered in one geographical locale, race riots appeared across the United States in 1919. Places as varied as Bisbee, Arizona; New London, Connecticut; New Orleans; Omaha, Nebraska; New York City; and Longview, Texas experienced white-on-black riots during the Red Summer. Riots in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Phillips County, Arkansas, stand out as particularly brutal. After weeks of lurid and sensationalized news stories in Washington, D.C.'s newspapers about white women allegedly suffering attacks by black men, white soldiers, sailors, and marines invaded streetcars and African American neighborhoods for three days starting on July 19, after a white woman contended that two black men attacked her.

Although newspapers reported that 15 people died in the violence, actual numbers may have been two to three times that many. In Chicago, white and black gangs squared off for 13 days beginning July 27, after a black youth accidentally swam across the “color line” in Lake Michigan and drowned after being met with rocks from the white beachgoers. African Americans identified the white culprits, but authorities instead focused on one of the black accusers. When the violence subsided, 23 blacks and 15 whites had died, more than 500 people suffered injuries, and 1,000 black families had no homes. In Phillips County, Arkansas, hundreds of whites from surrounding counties and states arrived after a shootout occurred on September 30 between two white law enforcement officials and a group of African Americans meeting to organize a sharecroppers and tenant farmers union. By October 3, the violence had subsided after nearby federal troops patrolled the area. At least 25 blacks and 5 whites died, but many observers believed that as many as 200 people of color perished during the riot.

People of color responded to violence and ideology by creating newspapers, organizations, and literature to assert that they would not assume a subordinate position in society. The NAACP, for example, focused its efforts on exposing and putting a stop to white brutality. Through its newspaper, *The Crisis*, it provided detailed statistics, and in 1919, it published the book *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States* to highlight the causes and atrocities of this type of violence. Black newspapers, especially the *Chicago Defender*, also became outspoken critics of black America's plight. Moreover, this era proved a rich and powerful time for African American inspiration, producing the new Negro movement and the Harlem Renaissance, which stressed a sense of worth and boldness.

Out of these forces emerged the horrors of the Red Summer. National conditions and local circumstances built an environment that allowed race riots to flourish throughout the country. These months marked both the apex of white violence against African Americans and the beginning of a heightened black response.

*See also:* Chicago Race Riot of 1919; Elaine, Arkansas, Riot of 1919; Great Migration; “If We Must Die”; Jim Crow; Lynching; McKay, Claude; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; New Negro Movement; White Mob Violence

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## Redlining

Redlining is a practice whereby companies or institutions deny goods and services to certain groups on the basis of race or where they live. Mortgage and car insurance industries are widely known to engage in the practice. Key stakeholders in redlining are borrowers, lenders, government regulators, realtors, and fair housing advocates. African Americans living in highly populated urban areas tend to experience the worst impacts of redlining. Redlining was historically supported by a combination of government policies and private-sector practices.

In the 1930s, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) lending guidelines provided a critical policy basis for redlining in the housing industry. When deciding to grant or deny mortgages and mortgage insurance, FHA regulators relied on underwriting guidelines. One reason the FHA put forth to justify its redlining policy was to prevent inharmonious racial groups from mixing. The FHA also argued that separating homeowners by race would prevent property values from declining. These policies resulted in limited housing opportunities for African Americans who increasingly lived in racially segregated neighborhoods. The housing available to African Americans had lower assessed property value, was substandard in quality, and was more overcrowded than housing available to whites.

The federal government created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1933. The HOLC introduced the practice of amortizing, or paying off mortgage loans over time at agreed upon interest rates, as well as a color-coded rating system to appraise property values. Amortizing made loans widely available and affordable. The color-coded rating system mostly benefited white buyers entering the housing market after the Great Depression. It included a red-colored designation for undesirable properties and is credited as the basis for the term “redlining.”

Areas with significant African American populations tended to fall into this category.

Realtors used restrictive covenants to carry out redlining. A restrictive covenant is language included in housing-related legal documents, usually deeds, to prevent homes from being sold to, or purchased by, certain racial groups. The existence of restrictive covenants helped to perpetuate the segregated neighborhoods caused by redlining and provided a convenient rationale for denying loans to African Americans. It was not until the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the power to enforce restrictive covenants in the *Shelley v. Kraemer* case of 1948, that African Americans gained some relief from the most adverse effects of redlining. One drawback to the decision is that, although it became illegal for the government to enforce restrictive covenants, the decision did not outlaw the housing industry practice.

The laws and public policies supporting redlining have changed in recent decades. The most significant government legislation enacted to expand housing access, and limit exclusionary practices like redlining, was the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Lenders could no longer use race as a factor to determine credit worthiness. Over the next several years, government regulators were lax in enforcing the law. Fair housing advocates engaged in various protests to resist bank redlining and bring to light the injury caused to African Americans by banks and lenders who practiced redlining. Their actions successfully brought attention to the practice and influenced Congress to pass further anti-redlining legislation.

When Congress passed the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) in 1975 and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in 1977, fair housing advocates tackled redlining head-on through protests, lawsuits, and consumer education in the community reinvestment movement. Throughout the 1980s, government regulators enforced HMDA by requiring banks to collect data about where they made housing loans and to document efforts to make loans in previously underserved communities. Despite these advances, lenders continued to deny loans to African Americans into the 1990s at rates that were about twice that of white borrowers.

A turning point in the fight against redlining occurred in the 1990s with more aggressive government support for programs to expand African American homeownership. Lenders in the private sector simultaneously developed loan products that made it easier for African Americans

to qualify for home mortgages. The drawback to these increased opportunities was high interest rates and confusing repayment terms. Fair housing advocates soon after introduced a new term, “reverse redlining,” to explain troubling new lending practices.

Reverse redlining is a process in modern credit markets that makes it easier for lenders to exploit African American borrowers. Predatory lending and subprime loans are key components to the new approach. Lenders target African Americans to purchase or refinance mortgages at high interest rates in the subprime market, rather than qualify them for low interest rates in the prime market. Reverse redlining practices contributed to record home ownership levels among African Americans in the early 2000s, but gave way to unprecedented default and foreclosure rates near the end of the decade. Fair housing advocates urge the government and private companies to combat reverse redlining by using objective criteria and fair terms when lending to African American borrowers.

*See also:* Urban Ghetto; Urbanization

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## Reparations

The idea that African Americans are owed reparations for their ancestors' labor as slaves has captured public attention at many times since the Civil War and is now in a period of resurgence. That resurgence is a result of several factors. First, some other groups have received limited reparations. Most notably, 82,000 Japanese Americans interned during World War II received \$20,000 each in 1988. And there have been limited cases where Native Americans received

compensation, such as the 1972 Native Alaska Claims Settlement Act, which provided nearly \$1 billion to settle Native American claims to land in Alaska. Second, there is increasing concern that the Civil Rights movement's agenda of bringing about equality is unfulfilled and the affirmative action movement is declining.

Much of the modern reparations movement traces its origins to 1969, when James Forman interrupted Sunday morning services at the Riverside Church in Harlem and delivered the black manifesto. But reparations are also highly controversial. According to a recent poll by the *Mobile* [Alabama] *Register*, 5 percent of whites support reparations, whereas 66 percent of blacks support them. The controversy results from vastly different ways of viewing our history and its impact on the present.

Reparations proponents (who are often called reparatonists) begin their case with talk about centuries of injustice—the violence of beatings, torture, psychological brutalization that lay at the heart of slavery. Slavery began with trafficking in human beings, kidnapping people from Africa, unspeakable conditions on transatlantic ships to the Americas, and then generations of slavery in North America. Slavery in North America entailed the destruction of families, statutes prohibiting education or marriage, random beatings, lack of opportunity to advance economically, and generations of forced labor that made their owners wealthy.

There was some opportunity when slavery ended in 1865 to give the recently freed slaves the opportunity to realize the promise of America that whites held. There was much talk about 40 acres and a mule, a phrase taken from General William Sherman's Field Order No. 15, which promised to use property confiscated from Confederate supporters to provide land to newly freed slaves. But those promises were not fulfilled. A primary role of the federal government after the war was to oust newly freed slaves from their land and return it to the prior white owners. Instead of assistance, newly freed slaves were greeted with harsh Black Codes and long-term labor contracts.

The problems continued during the era of Jim Crow—the period of segregation and legalized discrimination, including limited voting, schooling, housing, and employment rights, that ran from the end of Reconstruction in 1877 until the modern Civil Rights era. It was not until the civil rights revolution of the 1950s that there was anything approaching equal treatment of African Americans by law.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited private discrimination in employment.

According to reparationists, the problems of slavery and Jim Crow are continuing. According to recent census data, nearly one in four (25%) African Americans live in poverty, compared with 8 percent of non-Hispanic, white Americans; 30 percent of African American children live in poverty, compared with 9 percent of non-Hispanic white children. Median income for African American families is less than \$31,000 and for white non-Hispanic families it is nearly \$46,000. The case for reparations is built on such inequalities. If there were no inequalities in income today, there would be little reason to talk about reparations. We might then conclude that slavery and the Jim Crow era had little continuing effect.

Reparationists seek to make the lives of African Americans better and to make opportunities more available. Thus, they propose a series of actions for reparations. Those actions begin with relatively modest proposals, like a national truth commission, to study the effects of slavery and Jim Crow and its effects on the present. Representative John Conyers has lobbied since 1989 for a national commission to study the history and legacy of slavery. A study might also include a national slavery museum and a national apology. Reparationists see those kinds of actions as a way of changing how we think about our history of racism. They optimistically think that it might be possible to educate about the multiple connections between past harm and present inequality and in that way remake social policy. They seek more talk of what President George Bush said in 2003 while visiting Goree Island, that the slave trade was “one of the greatest crimes of history.”

Reparationists also seek local action, such as truth commissions, to investigate individual localized crimes such as the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, the Rosewood Massacre, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, the sterilization of welfare recipients in North Carolina, the Wilmington, North Carolina, riot of 1898, and the Greensboro, North Carolina, massacre of 1979. Institutions are also investigating their culpability in slavery. In 2000, the Aetna Insurance Company apologized for writing life insurance policies on slaves and the *Hartford Courant* apologized for printing ads for runaway slaves. Many schools that date back to the era of slavery, like the University of Alabama and Brown and Yale Universities, are also investigating their past.

Most reparationists want much more than truth commissions and apologies. They want money in some form. They typically ask for funding for community-building programs, which will fund primary education, health care, and business development. Reparationists commonly propose the use of trust funds to administer the programs. Some of the most radical reparationists even propose payments to individuals, but those are rare. And in a few extreme cases, reparationists draw on black nationalist thinking, and they request a separate black state.

Central and as yet unanswered question, is how would one measure reparations payments and how much would they likely cost? There are two basic ways of measuring the amount owed. The more modest measure is known as the unjust enrichment measure. It measures the amount that African Americans have contributed through their labor, which they have not been paid for. That involves estimating the value of African American contributions. The second, larger measure is known as the tort measure. It measures the harm to slaves (in terms of stolen labor, physical and emotional abuse, loss to families) and to their descendants (in terms of lost educational and business opportunities). Here the harm is enormous, for slavery’s crimes continue to replicate victims for generations. Reparations is aimed at changing all this—redistributing property and correcting for generations of violence and lack of opportunity.

There are two primary means by which reparations are sought. One is through lawsuits. That method is difficult, because lawsuits are not well suited to deal with large-scale societal problems. They are best able to handle discrete disputes between individuals and corporations. And the few lawsuits filed for reparations have proven relatively unsuccessful. A series of lawsuits filed in 2002 against corporations that benefited from slavery were consolidated under the titled, *In re African American Slave Descendants Litigation*, and were dismissed in January 2004. A major lawsuit for victims of the Tulsa, Oklahoma race riot of 1921 was dismissed in March 2004. It was filed by the Reparations Coordinating Committee (RCC), a group of lawyers, social scientists, and activists dedicated to pursuing the cause of reparations. The RCC is led by Adjoa Aiyetoro, Charles Ogletree, and Randall Robinson.

There have been a few successful lawsuits. One, *Pigford v. Glickman*, settled claims by African American farmers denied loans by the Department of Agriculture in the 1980s.

By late 2004, farmers had received approximately \$660 million in settlement. Another case settled for \$20 million is a class action lawsuit against New York Life Insurance Company for life insurance policies for people who were killed by the Turkish government during the Armenian genocide in 1915. Individual lawsuits might be the basis for limited reparations; they might also raise public consciousness. But for the great crimes in American history, reparations are going to have to come through legislation in Congress and in state legislatures.

Reparationists face a significant uphill struggle. Opponents advance a series of arguments. Some deny any liability for slavery. They say that the evils of slavery and Jim Crow were committed by others and that current taxpayers should not have to pay. Although the innocence argument is powerful, many taxpayers are beneficiaries of a system in which some people have an easier time advancing economically than others; many of those taxpayers are beneficiaries of a system that involved oppression of African Americans. But many are innocent (and probably have little or no benefit). The nature of social legislation, however, is that taxpayers are often asked to pay to improve the lives of people who have been injured. The sad fact, of course, is that it takes generations to eradicate the effects of slavery and Jim Crow. And the sad fact is that slavery and Jim Crow produced more harm than the benefits they conferred. Thus, there are probably people who will be asked to pay—taxpayers—who are in some sense innocent. That is the unfortunate part of being part of American society. We have obligations that must be paid independent of fault. That is particularly clear after 9/11, when the Airline Stabilization Act provided millions of dollars to the families of 9/11 victims, even though no one thought the United States was at fault for the attacks.

A second objection states that slavery is the cause of current problems. The income differential between blacks and whites is often attributed to factors such as single parenthood. There is room for additional research on the role of slavery and Jim Crow, as well as black culture in determining the current chasm between black and white wealth. Reparationists attribute single parenthood to welfare policy, which is in some ways yet another consequence of slavery.

A third objection is that reparations does not make sense as social policy. They are too backward-looking, too divisive between blacks and whites, and are not the best way to redistribute property. One should ask whether there

are other programs that are better suited to closing the income gap. Reparations talk is, indeed, divisive, for it uses a sordid history to challenge the distribution of wealth in the present. Reparations holds out the promise, when used in conjunction with other programs, of resolving conflict and overcoming the past.

A fourth objection is that the debt has already been paid through the people who died during the Civil War and through welfare programs like the Great Society. Finally, some say, with indignant nobility, that we cannot put a price on the legacy of slavery. But we miss the chance to revisit our history. And the way to repair damage is to pay for some of it. Of course we cannot repair all the past damage to everyone. Reparations skeptics often ask about Egypt paying the Jews or the Babylonians paying people they oppressed. But reparations for slavery and Jim Crow present a different kind of claim for harms that are very alive and leading to differential impacts right now.

Despite recent setbacks in the courts, reparations action continues. Recently, the Chicago City Council has required that companies that do business with the city disclose any connections they have to slavery. The California legislature required insurance companies to disclose any insurance policies they wrote on slaves' lives. As the collection of information grows and as people see the many ways that slavery contributed to economic growth and continues to affect Americans today, it is likely that reparations talk will continue.

*See also:* Field Order No. 15; Forty Acres and a Mule; Jim Crow; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; Rosewood, Florida, Riot of 1923; Stevens, Thaddeus; Tulsa, Oklahoma, Race Riot of 1921; Tuskegee Experiment; X, Malcolm

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## Republic of New Afrika

The Republic of New Afrika (RNA) is the name given to the proposed independent African American nation within the borders of the United States that consist of the southern states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. These “Black Belt” states were chosen because of their large black populations and their historical significance as states where African Americans worked, tilled, and lived on the land—first as slaves, then as freedpersons—for centuries. The Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PG-RNA), a black nationalist organization created during a conference held in Detroit, Michigan, in 1968, proposed the independent nation as an example of black self-determination, believing that African Americans will never enjoy full freedom, justice, and equality under the U.S. government and constituted a “nation within a nation,” that laid rightful claim to the proposed territory as just compensation for centuries of oppression. The PG-RNA also supports reparations for African Americans as compensation for forced enslavement, Jim Crow segregation, racial violence, and continued forms of racism.

On March 31, 1968, the Malcolm X Society and the Group on Advance Leadership (GOAL), two Detroit-based organizations involving the Obadele brothers, Gaidi (Milton Henry, 1920–2006) and Imari Obadele (Richard Henry, 1930–), close associates of Malcolm X, called together 500 black nationalists in Detroit, Michigan to discuss the political situation of African Americans. Building on Malcolm’s call for black self-determination and his admonition that land is the basis of independence, the 500 nationalists called for the formation of the independent Republic of New Afrika. The original demands of the PG-RNA called for a negotiated cessation by the United States of the five southern states based on the results of a national plebiscite of black folks; the establishment of a sovereign and independent government to be eligible for membership in the United Nations; and for reparations as compensation for injustices perpetuated against African Americans by the

United States government for the past 300 years. Finally, the conferees produced a Black Declaration of Independence drafted and signed by 100 delegates, a constitution, and the framework of a provisional government.

Robert F. Williams, a human rights advocate most famously known for his stand against Klan terrorism in Monroe, North Carolina, in the late 1950s, and subsequent flight from the United States on false charges of kidnapping, was elected president while living in China; Gaidi Obadele was elected first vice president; Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X, was elected second vice president; Imari Obadele I served as minister of information; and Obaboa Olono, was treasurer. The governing body of the PG-RNA is the People’s Center Council, which combined legislative and judicial power and supervised industries and land, and the president served as chair of the council. The PG-RNA based its political philosophy on the principles of Ujamaa—cooperative economics and community self-sufficiency—promoted by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

For the next several years, the PG-RNA set about achieving several goals, including negotiating with the U.S. Congress over reparations and land; building consulates in cities such as New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and San Francisco; calling for the formation of local “People’s Militias” and developing a standing army to defend the territory; and meeting with representatives from countries such as China, Vietnam, the USSR, Sudan, and Tanzania to gain international recognition for the proposed Republic. By 1970, the organization would concentrate much of its activities in Mississippi, specifically the capital of Jackson, where the PG-RNA established its headquarters and began the work of organizing the plebiscite and garnering the support of black Mississippians, particularly black college students at Tougaloo College. Also in 1970, Imari Obadele was elected president. Robert F. Williams had resigned the presidency after returning to the United States, prompting an interim government administered by the Obadele brothers. A Ujamaa Committee headed by Hekima Ana (Thomas Norman) replaced it before electing Obadele. A new constitution, the Code of Umoja, was also adopted. In 1971, the RNA began efforts to acquire land in Mississippi to establish El Malik as the capital of the nation.

Because of its political philosophy and black nationalist orientation, the RNA has had several confrontations with local, state, and federal police, prompting the Federal

Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to designate it as a subversive organization. This made the RNA a target of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) and subjected to numerous raids and arrests. The most well-known confrontation came on August 28, 1971, when 11 members (RNA-11), including Obadele, were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, and charged with various crimes including murder and waging war on the state. All were eventually acquitted.

The PG-RNA still exists and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The official slogan is "Free the Land." It is a leading organization within the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA) along with other progressive organizations.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; COINTELPRO; Shabazz, Beatty X; Williams, Robert F.

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## Revels, Hiram

Hiram Revels (1822–1901) was the first African American to serve in the legislative branch after the Civil War. He was a prominent civil rights activist who struggled in the aftermath of Reconstruction. Born in 1822 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Hiram Revels was the free son of a mixed marriage between African and Croatan/Indian parents. Details of his early life are sketchy. At the age of 16, Hiram became apprenticed to his brother, Elias P. Revels, as a barber in Lincolnton, North Carolina. In 1841, his brother died in an unfortunate accident, leaving Hiram to manage the barber-shop. Over the next three years, he managed the barber-shop with minimal results. In 1844, clamoring to expand his education, Hiram became a student at an abolitionist

Quaker School in Liberty, Indiana, which was the center of abolitionist activism in the state. Revels continued his education when he attended school in Ohio and eventually attended Knox College in Illinois. Revels's matriculation at the school was a logical choice for the aspiring young abolitionist African American.

After his brief stint as a student at Knox College, Revels started a career as an evangelist. He became an ordained minister in the African Methodist Church. As a young minister, he traveled throughout the Midwest, specifically to African American congregations in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Kansas. After his career as an itinerant preacher, Revels settled in Baltimore, Maryland. While there he became the principal of a school geared for African American students. He also became the pastor of a local church. He continued in this capacity until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

In 1861, South Carolina, along with six other Southern states, seceded from the Union. The disgruntled states protested the victory of Republican Abraham Lincoln in the election of 1860. In the first year of the conflict, the state of Maryland, despite the presence of slavery within its borders, remained loyal to the Union.

The status of Maryland as a border Union state provided Revels with an opportunity to prove his status as a patriotic American. Revels was a firm believer in the necessity to maintain the Union, at whatever costs. To a certain degree, Revels had a personal stake in the Civil War. If the Union was dismantled, Revels, as an African American, was in danger of losing his personal liberties. He decided to become actively involved in the war. In 1861, Revels organized two regiments of African American troops to fight against the Confederates. Over the next year, he traveled extensively, ending up in St. Louis, Missouri. St. Louis, with a population of 115,000 slaves, afforded Revels the opportunity to form a sizable regimental group. In 1863, Revels was able to recruit enough men to create one African American regiment. In addition to his recruiting talents, Revels also joined in active service. In 1863, he became Union chaplain with a Mississippi regiment of free blacks. He also became the provost marshal of Vicksburg, Mississippi, the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. As provost in Vicksburg, Revels handled the affairs of ex-slaves living in the city. After the war, Revels returned to the ministry. He settled in Natchez, Mississippi, where he participated in the local chapter of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.



Hiram Revels was the first African American to serve as a U.S. senator. In January 1870, he was elected to the U.S. Senate seat once occupied by Confederate president Jefferson Davis. (Library of Congress)

In his years at Natchez, Revels assumed a position of leadership among the newly freed African American population. He specifically had to handle the relations between the Reconstruction Act of 1867 and the newly created state government. In late 1868, the military governor of Mississippi, Adelbert Ames, appointed Revels to the Natchez City Board of Aldermen where he gained valuable experience in municipal politics. In 1869, John Lynch, a prominent local African American leader in Natchez, encouraged Revels to become a candidate for the state legislature. Over the next few months, Revels introduced numerous local bills in the legislature. In December 1869, the Mississippi Republican caucus, wishing to push the civil rights of African Americans in the South, nominated Revels to become a U.S. Senator from Mississippi, essentially filling a void left when Jefferson Davis vacated his seat to become president of the Confederacy in 1861. After a delay from many Southern Senators, on February 23, 1870, Hiram Rhodes Revels was accepted into the Senate by a vote of 48 to 8. Two days later, Revels was seated in the Senate, becoming

the first African American to gain admission as a senator and congressman.

Over the course of his brief stint, Revels dealt with significant issues. Among the most important issues were the debate over the readmission of Georgia into the Union without civil rights protections for African American. In 1870, Revels was the first African American to give an official speech on the floor of the Senate over the issue of Georgia. On March 4, 1871, he vacated his seat. In the years after his congressional career, Revels acted as president of Alcorn College. He died on January 16, 1901 and was the first African American to serve in the U.S. Senate.

*See also:* African Methodist Episcopal Church; Lincoln, Abraham; Reconstruction Era Black Politicians; Southern Free Blacks; Union Army

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## Revolutionary Action Movement

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) founded in 1962 was one of the first revolutionary nationalist formations of the 1960s created in response to the oppression of people of African descent living in America. Blacks were being oppressed politically, economically, socially, and physically, and this became the impetus for the creation of a number of groups to respond and counter these actions. These individuals and groups who desired to be self-determined and free from the hegemonic actions widely practiced throughout the United States became participants in what became known as the Black Power movement. Although there were many perspectives on how to gain liberation from oppression, simplistically put, there were two major ideological camps involved in the Black Power movement. There were those who advocated for integration and a demand for the American government to live up to the promises of citizenship and equality and those who believed chances were slim that America would recognize blacks as equal and therefore advocated for black separatism. RAM's ideology favored



the latter and consisted of ideals around blacks constituting a separate nation within America, although not all of their members agreed with this. Their ideals of black separatism influenced many of the other black power groups in the 1960s who were advocating for radical change in relation to the treatment of blacks.

This organization existed primarily underground, resulting in details about them being more limited than other black revolutionary nationalist groups. Those included in the formation of this group were college students, the working class, and some intellectuals who identified themselves as New Afrikan nationalists. New Afrikan nationalists adhere to the idea that people of African descent are a distinct nation within the United States and should have sovereignty. Students played a large role in the formation of RAM. During the 1960s, many groups fighting race-based oppression were either started or comprised mainly of students on college campuses throughout the United States, and RAM was no exception.

This organization was composed of individuals commonly defined as black revolutionary nationalists and they used a motto of “One Purpose, One Aim, One Destiny,” with theoretical underpinnings much like that of Marcus Garvey. The organization produced two publications, the bimonthly *Black America* and the weekly *RAM Speaks*. In addition to educating black communities using this literature, this grassroots organization had “street meetings” consisting of informal gatherings targeting inner-city youth to inform them about the ideals RAM espoused and as a means of recruitment.

Max Stanford, aka Akbar Muhammad Ahmad, the first field chairman, articulated a number of objectives for the organization including giving black people a sense of racial pride, solidarity, dignity, unity, and commitment to the struggle for independence. Another of RAM’s objectives was for people of African descent everywhere to be free of colonial and imperialist rule. Also, those of African descent in America should demand sovereign nationhood and reparations and take the U.S. government to the World Court and the United Nations for human rights violations and genocidal treatment of this group. To reach these objectives, members of RAM believed they must engage in guerilla warfare. Because of their decision to operate underground, members of this group often conducted their work through other established groups such as Malcolm X’s Organization for African American Unity (OAAU),

Afro-American Association, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Conference of Racial Equality (CORE), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM), and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) in Detroit, Michigan. Their primary objective was to make these groups more militant, often resulting in a revolutionary faction within the respective groups. RAM was also successful at organizing black youth into a paramilitary force called the Black Guards in 1967.

RAM’s ideals of separatism did not stop with blacks in America but encompassed a Pan-African stance, with some members identifying as black internationalists. RAM’s internationalist ideals aligned with beliefs that non-European people throughout the world should seek to free themselves from imperialist domination through revolution. Because no black person is free until all black people are free, organizing for the liberation of people of African descent globally became an important aspect of their platform.

The organization’s life was relatively short, ending in 1968 as a result of the FBI counterinsurgency program COINTELPRO, as well as internal issues. RAM, among other black nationalist groups, was identified and targeted as a threat to America by then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and consequently came under attack. Although the individuals who made up the various black nationalist groups were under constant assault and scrutiny, as one group disbanded another was in its formative stages. For instance, former RAM members created the Black Liberation Party, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Black Power; COINTELPRO; Republic of New Afrika; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Williams, Robert F.; X, Malcolm

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## Robeson, Paul

Paul LeRoy Bustill Robeson (1898–1976), a truly multi-talented genius, was a singer, actor, linguist, amateur and professional athlete, and an ardent advocate of African American civil rights and anti-imperialism. He was born on April 9, 1898, in Princeton, New Jersey, to Reverend William Drew Robeson and Maria Louisa Bustill Robeson. In 1860, Paul's father—likely a descendant of Igbo-speaking people from the Niger River Delta—had escaped from a North Carolina plantation at age 15, graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and eventually became a pastor of Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. Robeson's mother was a school teacher who came from an abolitionist Quaker family. Although his mother died in a fire by the time Robeson turned six, both his parents instilled in him the importance of education and sharpening his considerable mental abilities.

During his senior year at Somerville High School, Robeson won a statewide scholarship competition and entered Rutgers College in 1915. He was only the third African American to be admitted to Rutgers and was the only student of color on campus during his four years there. During freshmen tryouts for the Rutgers football team, Robeson was savagely beaten by several white players, leaving him with a broken nose and a dislocated shoulder. After recovering from his injuries, Robeson made a second attempt at tryouts in which a future teammate stepped on his hand with a cleated foot, ripping away several of Robeson's fingernails. After Robeson literally lifted the player over his head, in an attempt to injure him, the coaches of the football team informed him that he had made the varsity squad. An imposing 6'2", 210-pound player at defensive end, Robeson's athletic prowess was certainly a factor in Rutgers's average margin of victory of 41 points during the 1915 season. His freshman campaign was followed by two consecutive seasons as a first-team football All-American. In addition to football, Robeson also played varsity

basketball and baseball and ran track. In total, he accumulated 15 varsity letters before his graduation.

Robeson's athletic prowess was matched, or surpassed, by his abilities in the classroom. After maintaining a 3.8 GPA during his freshman year, Robeson was only one of three students at Rutgers accepted into Phi Beta Kappa and was one of four students selected in 1919 to Cap and Skull, the honors society at Rutgers. That same year he delivered the valedictory speech in which he predicted that he would be governor of New Jersey by 1940 and a prominent African American leader. After graduation, Robeson entered Columbia Law School in 1920 and moved to Harlem. While a full-time law student, he began playing professional football for the Akron Pros and the Milwaukee Badgers in the American Professional Football Association, which later became the National Football League. In addition to his professional football career, Robeson also began performing as a singer and stage actor to pay his way through Columbia.

While maintaining a busy career, Robeson married Eslanda Cardozo Goode, head of the pathology laboratory at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and daughter of a prominent mixed-race family in New York, in August 1921. Despite Paul's extramarital affairs, the two stayed married until Eslanda's death in 1965. In 1923, Robeson graduated from Columbia Law School and accepted a job at Stotesbury and Miner in New York City while singing part-time at Harlem's world-famous Cotton Club. His interest in law soon faded after a white secretary refused to dictate from him. Robeson soon quit the firm and became a full-time performer and part-time student at the School of Oriental Languages at the University of London. In 1924, he played two leading roles in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* and Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. By 1925, Robeson's professional singing career reached a new height as he began to sing Negro spirituals at concert halls throughout the United States and Europe.

At the age of 29, Robeson was already considered one of the most famous and recognizable Americans in the world. He was voted into the "All Time All-American College Eleven," the first college football Hall of Fame, in 1927. His deep bass voice, chiseled face, and imposing physique were iconic hallmarks. In 1928, he sang "Ol' Man River" for the first time while playing Joe in the London production of *Show Boat*. In many ways, this song became his personal signature. Not only is his rendition of "Ol' Man River"



Paul Robeson as Othello in the Theatre Guild Production of *Othello*, Broadway, 1943–1944. (Library of Congress)

considered definitive, but Robeson would consciously change the lyrics over time, rendering the once southern lament into a song of social change and revolution. If “Ol’ Man River” was the song that became his signature, then his 1930 role as *Othello* in England held a similar stature. Although no U.S. production company would employ Robeson to play Othello, given his close physical interactions, on stage, with a white Desdemona, he reprised the role in New York in 1943 and toured the United States until 1945. Robeson was a 1945 winner of the NAACP’s Spingarn for his role as Othello, and his Broadway run of the play was the longest of any Shakespeare play in history.

In 1933, Robeson starred in the movie version of *Emperor Jones* and began intensive language training at the School of Oriental Languages. Over the course of several years of formal and self-study, he learned to read and sing in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, French, German, Swahili, and several other African languages. In sum, Robeson mastered as many as 20 languages. In the 1930s alone,

Robeson starred in four movies, three plays, and sang internationally all while taking language courses in London.

Although Robeson was one of the most famous Americans in the 1930s and early 1940s, from the late-1940s until his death in 1976, he almost completely disappeared from public view, and specific efforts were made to erase him from history and public record. Robeson was retroactively removed from the 1918 All-American first team. Likewise, Rutgers University systematically removed his name from sports records, a move that was not reversed until 1995. As a result of his political affiliations and public pronouncements, the U.S. government moved to undercut his influence abroad and his ability to earn income at home. Robeson was essentially blacklisted. Prevented from movie and stage roles, singing in concert halls, or appearing on radio or TV, his income went from more than \$100,000 per year in the 1930s to less than \$6,000 year in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

With his facility for the languages of the world community and his fame as a performer, Robeson used his stage to combat Jim Crow in the United States, fascism and Nazism in Europe, and imperialism in Africa and Asia. Moreover, at the height of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and red baiting in the United States, Robeson embraced communism and the Soviet Union. This culminated in the 1949 Peekskill, New York riot in which anticommunist (and largely antiblack and anti-Semitic) protesters violently disrupted a Robeson concert in the weeks after a controversial statement he made at the World Peace Conference in Paris about African Americans not wanting war against the Soviets. In 1950, the State Department revoked his passport and, during an appeals hearing in February 1952, the State Department issued a brief citing Robeson’s political activity on behalf of the colonial peoples of Africa as a reason why he should be denied the right to travel beyond the borders of the United States.

Investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and publicly criticized by Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Robinson, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and just about every other African American leader, with the exception of W. E. B. Du Bois, Robeson was increasingly isolated as a result of his unwavering political stances. In 1958, he published his only book entitled *Here I Stand*, which was a detailed articulation of his political ideology. Later that same year, his passport was restored and Robeson returned to the international stage as a performer

and political activist. His last two decades were fraught with poor health, exhaustion, and rumors of CIA and MI5 surveillance. After retiring from the public eye to live a relatively quiet life in Philadelphia, Robeson died on January 23, 1976. Since 1995, Robeson has been the posthumous recipient of a number of awards and honors in an attempt to rewrite his important legacy back into history and public memory.

See also: African Imperialism; Black Athletes; Black Folk Culture; Cold War and Civil Rights; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Harlem Renaissance; Robinson, Jackie

Walter C. Rucker

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## Robinson, Jackie

The Negro Leagues showcased some of the greatest players in the history of baseball. Although perhaps not the greatest player in Negro League baseball history, Jackie Robinson (1919–1972) is certainly the most famous. Robinson is well known for breaking the color barrier in white professional baseball. Born January 31, 1919, in Cairo, Georgia to sharecroppers Millie and Jerry Robinson, Jackie Roosevelt Robinson grew up in Pasadena, California. Of the five Robinson children, Jackie was the youngest. His mother taught him at a young age to combat racism by using his talents. Jackie's means of showcasing his talents became sports.

After a stint at Pasadena Community College, Robinson attended UCLA in 1939. While there he excelled in the classroom and in football, track, and baseball. He earned varsity letters in all four sports, the first to do so at UCLA. After college, Robinson played semiprofessional football in Hawaii. He also worked for a few months as an athletic director in the National Youth Administration. He was

drafted by the United States Army in 1942 to fight in World War II. He was sent to Fort Riley, Kansas, where he became an officer and was part of a segregated unit there.

In 1943 in Fort Hood, Texas, he was involved in a racial incident when a bus driver tried to make him go to the back of a bus. His refusal to give up his seat led to his being charged with conduct unbecoming an officer and willful disobedience. This experience sharpened his sense of racial injustice, so he spoke assertively about the unjust conditions that African Americans were subjected to. With the help of the black press, fellow service men, and the NAACP, the court martial was dropped and he was later acquitted and honorably discharged in 1944. Thus, his spirit of activism became evident before he embarked on the famous "experiment."

By 1945, Robinson joined the famous Kansas City Monarchs where he played with the great Satchel Paige. In 1946, Branch Rickey signed Robinson to play with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson became the player to end segregation in Major League baseball. While stoically enduring incredible racial abuse such as name calling and foul play during games from players on both sides, fans, and umpires, he led his team to the league title, won Major League Rookie of the Year, and finished with a .297 batting average and a league-leading 29 stolen bases.

After three years of silence, he began to speak up when pitchers narrowly missed his head, fans shouted epithets, or obscene mail came to his home. He fought the denial of equal service in eating and sleeping quarters, or wherever he faced discrimination. Finally, the curative effects of time and recognition of Robinson's value to the team caused the majority of players to settle into the spirit of cooperation.

Before the Dodgers came calling, Robinson coached a basketball team in Austin, Texas. He later signed to play second base with the famous Kansas City Monarchs in 1945, where he performed admirably on a team of talented veterans like Satchel Paige. A primary reason Branch Rickey chose Robinson instead of one of the more talented, established Negro League stars was Robinson's stamina and tolerance, extreme patience, and forbearance.

Jackie Robinson's performance made the world recognize that black people and especially, Negro League players, could perform exceptionally well. In fact, with Robinson on the roster, the Dodgers won National League pennants in 1947, 1949, 1952, 1953, 1955, and 1956. In



Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play Major League Baseball. (Library of Congress)

1955 they defeated the New York Yankees in the World Series. Robinson is remembered not just for his enormous talents on the field, but for his inner resolve and human character that allowed him to restrain himself from retaliating to severe racist abuses with so much at stake. Throughout Robinson's career, he was able to persevere and achieve at high levels despite the overt racism in American sports and society. In his later years Robinson was attacked for being conservative, particularly as a result of his well-publicized criticisms of Paul Robeson and other African American leaders. During the McCarthy era, Robinson was called before the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC) to denounce Robeson as a communist sympathizer. Despite the criticism regarding Robinson's political stances, none can deny the radical statement his integration of major league baseball made in 1947.

See also: Black Athletes; Negro League Baseball; Robeson, Paul; World War II (Black Participation in)

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## Robinson, Jo Ann

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (1912–1992) was born April 17, 1912 in rural Georgia, the youngest of 12 children. She played an instrumental, although often overlooked, role in the events leading up to the Montgomery bus boycott, as well as in the boycott itself. An educator throughout her life, she acquired a master's degree in English from Atlanta University, which led her to accept a professorship at Alabama State College in 1949.

There she joined the Women's Political Council (WPC). After Robinson experienced a humiliating experience on a bus at the hands of a racist driver who objected to her sitting in the fifth row on a nearly empty bus, she decided to convince the other WPC women to focus on segregation in public transportation.

Segregation on the Montgomery City Lines was similar to that in public transportation in most southern cities and towns. The first five rows of seats were reserved for white patrons, and African Americans were to use the back four rows, which meant that African Americans had to stand beside empty whites-only seats if the rest of the seats were full. In addition, if the first five rows were full and a white rider boarded and all other seats were occupied, four African American riders would be forced to give up their seats so the white rider could sit, as African Americans were barred from sitting in the same row as a white. These rules resulted in situations such as Robinson experienced, when she was asked to vacate a seat regardless of the lack of other passengers, and that Rosa Parks experienced, when she refused to give up her seat on a full bus.

For the next six years, the WPC, along with other groups, complained to Montgomery's city commissioners about how badly bus drivers and white riders treated African American bus patrons, and they prepared for a boycott. Contrary to the narrative many learn about the Montgomery movement, it did not spontaneously erupt in the wake of Rosa Parks's arrest. In fact, Robinson wrote a letter to Montgomery's mayor in which she spoke of a potential bus

boycott by African Americans, making it clear that they comprised the majority of the bus system's patrons and thus could take away its profits. She wrote this letter shortly after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) decision declared school segregation unconstitutional.

Following Rosa Parks's arrest on December 1, 1955, Robinson and other African American leaders decided that the perfect time had come to execute their one-day boycott plans. Others had been arrested that year as well, but Robinson and others felt that their cases would not be as sympathetic; one of those arrested was a teenage girl who was a few months pregnant. Parks, on the other hand, was well respected, and she was an officer of the NAACP. Robinson, two fellow faculty members, and two students stayed up all that night copying and bundling notices announcing the boycott, set to begin December 5, the day of Parks's trial. Members of the WPC distributed tens of thousands of flyers the next day, and by the end of that Friday, almost all Montgomery African Americans knew of the plans.

The boycott proved so successful that boycotters decided to continue it. Robinson and others organized the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), and Robinson served on its executive board and edited its newsletter, which eventually expanded to four pages. The MIA handled donations, organized car pools and taxis to transport boycotters to work, and served as a liaison between the mass movement and white bus and city officials. Robinson was selected to be a member of this latter delegation.

The MIA delegation's initial proposals included the following: bus drivers should be courteous to African American passengers; African Americans would take seats from the back to the front of the bus and whites from front to back, and once the bus was full, no one would have to give up a seat; and African American drivers should be hired on predominantly African American routes. In a series of meetings, white officials continued to reject these proposals, so the boycott continued. In late January, white officials announced they would no longer meet with the African American contingent to discuss options, and police harassed boycotters; Robinson herself got 17 unjustified traffic tickets. By February, pro-boycott attorneys filed suit against the city, and this suit eventually made its way to the Supreme Court, which struck down segregation. Meanwhile, a grand jury in Montgomery declared the boycott illegal and ordered the arrest of leaders, including Robinson. On December 20, 1956, however, the marshals served the Supreme Court

order on Montgomery's city officials; the next day, African Americans again rode the buses, this time integrated ones.

Several years after the boycott was over, Robinson and other teachers left Alabama State in the wake of investigations by a state committee into those faculty members it suspected of organizing the boycotts. These investigations intensified because of a 1960 sit-in some of the college's students organized. Robinson resigned after the spring semester in 1960. She took a position at Grambling College in Louisiana but left the next year, leaving the South to teach high school in Los Angeles until retiring in 1976. Her memoir about her Montgomery years was published in 1987, and the Southern Association for Women Historians gave it a publication prize. Robinson died in 1992.

*See also:* Jim Crow; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Parks, Rosa

Erin Boade

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## Robinson, Ruby Doris Smith

Ruby Doris Smith Robinson (1942–1967) was a civil rights activist, a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and one of the organization's most important leaders and organizers before her untimely death at the age of 25. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 25, 1942, Ruby Doris Smith was the second oldest of seven children. From their family home, both her mother and father ran separate business enterprises. Her mother, Alice Smith, was a beautician operating a beauty shop out of rooms attached to the house. Her father, J. T. Smith, owned and operated a

store and also drove a cab and operated a local restaurant. After Robinson entered high school, her father founded a Baptists church and became its principal pastor. The social elevation experienced through her parents' hard work meant that Robinson was among the burgeoning African American middle class in Atlanta. She was a debutante as a high school senior and, after high school, in the fall of 1959, she entered Spelman College, a prestigious historically African American college for women.

Although Spelman, Morehouse, and other Atlanta University Center (AUC) schools were symbols of the African American elite, these institutions were also known for the progressive administrators, faculty, and students of their past and present including W. E. B. Du Bois, Benjamin E. Mays, Martin Luther King Jr., Howard Zinn, Gwen Robinson, and Julian Bond, among many others. Given someone of Robinson's social standing, background, and skin color, Spelman seemed to be a perfect fit for her. With the activist tradition of the AUC and recent events in the United States and the world—Ghana's independent in 1957, simultaneous calls by Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams for armed self-defense in 1959, and the early successes of the Civil Rights movement—Robinson's matriculation at Spelman served as a catalyst to her radicalization. By 1960, Robinson joined the Atlanta Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, which held a demonstration at the State Capitol.

As an actively involved member of the Atlanta Student Movement, Robinson worked with others to help desegregate Grady Memorial Hospital and, in 1961, she heeded Ella Baker's call to attend an organizing conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. This conference, which led to the launching of SNCC as a student-oriented civil rights organization, is where Robinson began to expand her activism. She joined the May 1961 Freedom Rides. After serving a 60-day jail sentence, Robinson became involved in voter registration in McComb, Mississippi. During this phase of her involvement in SNCC, many took note of her leadership and organizing abilities. Known for a sharp mind, a quick wit, and a steady determination, Robinson quickly gained the respect of her colleagues in SNCC—male and female, white and black alike. She often volunteered for some of the most dangerous assignments in SNCC, and her courage, assertiveness, and bold action were a source of inspiration for her peers.

By late 1962, Robinson was less active in the field and began to focus more of her energies on organizational administration and leadership. Indeed, she was one of the

key members of a small cadre of leaders within SNCC and perhaps the most respected female in the entire organization. After her marriage to Clifford Robinson in 1963 and the birth of their son, Robinson found it difficult to juggle the demands of commitment to SNC and her new family. As the stress mounted, Robinson's health began to falter as early as 1964. In spring 1965, she earned her BA in physical education from Spelman College and became a member of SNCC's Personnel Committee after her election as executive secretary. After the organization moved to open calls for black power the next year, Robinson embraced the change and even gravitated more toward black nationalism and Pan-Africanism. She provided critical logistical support for initiatives in both the North and South during the early months of SNCC's black power phase. Despite her continued radicalization, Robinson likely voted against or abstained from voting on the measure that led to the ouster of whites from SNCC. Soon after the December 1, 1966 vote, Robinson fell ill and, by April 1967, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. On October 7, 1967, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson died at the age of 25.

*See also:* Black Power; Freedom Rides; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Walter C. Rucker

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## Roosevelt, Eleanor

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962), human rights activist, was born Anna Eleanor Roosevelt into a prominent New York City family. A niece of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and the wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Roosevelt

became a force for social change in American society. An influential First Lady, she integrated the White House and advised the president on the country's economic and social problems, including civil rights of African Americans. Roosevelt served as a United States Delegate to the United Nations (1945–1952; 1961–1962) and as a chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights (1947–1948). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established under her leadership.

Eleanor Roosevelt was the daughter of Elliott Roosevelt and Anna Hall. Roosevelt's father was the godfather of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (who was Eleanor's fifth cousin). Despite her family's wealth, Roosevelt had an unhappy childhood. Her father was an alcoholic and her mother was aloof; both died before Eleanor's 10th birthday. While at a boarding school in England, Roosevelt was mentored by the schoolmistress who recognized her student's desire to help the oppressed. After returning to New York City (1902), Roosevelt taught dancing to immigrants and investigated laborer conditions. Eleanor Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt married in New York City where President Theodore Roosevelt gave his niece away (1905). Six children were born thereafter: a daughter and five sons. Busy with her growing family, Roosevelt dealt with an interfering mother-in-law while her husband became active in politics. After love letters between her husband and social secretary were discovered in 1918, Eleanor Roosevelt left Franklin Roosevelt and offered him a divorce, which he refused. After he promised fidelity, they reconciled. Thereafter, Eleanor Roosevelt pursued her own interests with the suffrage movement and the League of Women Voters. She taught history and government at Todhunter School in New York City. After Franklin Roosevelt nearly died from polio (1921), Eleanor Roosevelt persuaded her husband to continue with his life and political career, despite his disability.

Eleanor Roosevelt immersed herself with African American issues. She befriended Mary McLeod Bethune, president of Bethune-Cookson College. The FBI started a file on Roosevelt in 1924. After Franklin Roosevelt's election as president (1933), the First Lady encouraged Americans to contact her for concerns. A popular First Lady, she received many letters, traveled to investigate concerns locally, and reported back to the president. She advised her husband to establish the National Youth Administration (NYA), where Mary McLeod Bethune was later appointed as chief of NYA's Division of Negro Affairs. Roosevelt

prompted her husband to start discussions with African American leaders on antilynching legislation and desegregation of the armed forces. She agreed with the NAACP's opposition to wage differences based on race.

The president sometimes listened to his wife: he halted the firing of African American women in the Census Bureau, but he would not support the Senate antilynching bill (1937). Sharecroppers were invited to the White House to meet with the President and First Lady, who later visited their homes in the South. The First Lady defied Alabama's segregation laws by joining her African American colleagues at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (1938). She resigned from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) when it refused to allow an African American singer, Marian Anderson, to perform at Constitution Hall (1939). In 1942, Roosevelt gave the Tuskegee Airmen her support in their request to join the United States Air Force pilots in the war against Nazi Germany. She also pushed for the Army Nurses Corps to admit African American nurses. She joined the NAACP board of directors and the National Council of Negro Women. White southerners who opposed the First Lady's human rights agenda complained to the president, but Franklin Roosevelt quietly supported his wife, as he preserved her letters.

Eleanor Roosevelt's activism continued after her husband's death (1945). She hosted events to honor her husband's memory and legacy while serving as U.S. Delegate to the United Nations and later as goodwill ambassador. After supporting the integration of the public schools, Roosevelt received death threats and the Ku Klux Klan placed a bounty on her head. She persevered by traveling worldwide, giving speeches, and hosting a radio program. Roosevelt's "My Day" columns were popular, appearing in newspapers across America (1935–1962). Her columns reflected her varied interests on human rights, children issues, parenting, and politics. Despite failing health, she was on the President's Commission on the Status of Women in her final year. She died on Nov. 7, 1962, in New York City. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was buried beside her husband in the Rose Garden of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York.

*See also:* Anderson, Marian; Bethune, Mary McLeod; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; National Council of Negro Women; Tuskegee Airmen



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**Rosewood, Florida, Riot of 1923**

Beginning on New Year's Day 1923 and lasting for a week, a series of white attacks on the black residents of Rosewood, an unincorporated community in Levy County inside Florida's Panhandle, resulted in the documented deaths of six blacks and two whites and the complete destruction of the mostly black populated village. The events of the Rosewood riot or massacre were forgotten by history until Gary Moore, a Florida journalist, rediscovered and reported on them in the 1980s. In 1994, Florida legislators, after a state investigation and report, passed a claims bill that provided compensation for survivors and descendants of the victims. Rosewood remains one of the worst episodes of racial violence in Florida and one of many violent clashes between whites and blacks in the United States during the early 20th century.

Rosewood's nightmare began on the morning of January 1, 1923, when Fannie Taylor, a white woman in nearby Sumner, claimed that an unidentified black man had assaulted her. Some Rosewood survivors reported that

Taylor's assailant was not a black man, but her white lover, who was in her home while her husband was away at work. On that January morning, however, most of Sumner's white residents accepted her story and formed a posse to begin the manhunt. The posse believed that the assailant was Jessie Hunter, a black convict who had recently escaped from a local work crew. Hunter was supposedly hiding out around Rosewood after securing help from Sam Carter, a black man who lived between Sumner and Rosewood. The posse captured Carter, who confessed to hiding and taking Hunter away by wagon. Now a vengeful mob, the posse tortured and killed Carter and then moved on to Rosewood. There it confronted another black man, Aaron Carrier, whom the whites believed had also aided Hunter's escape. Before the mob could lynch Carrier, Edward Pillsbury, a sympathetic white man, managed to hide Carrier and remove him to safety.

Unfortunately, Sylvester Carrier, another member of the Carrier clan, was not so lucky. Two days after Carter's murder, a reduced white posse was still in search of Jessie Hunter (he was never found) when they heard news of a gathering of blacks at Sylvester Carrier's house in Rosewood. Sylvester Carrier had a reputation for standing up to whites and had made it known that he would not allow whites to bully him or members of his family. The white posse returned to Rosewood to investigate the reported black meeting at Carrier's house. Because of the recent violence, about two dozen members of Carrier's extended family had sought refuge inside Carrier's house, where they prepared to defend themselves.

When the posse arrived on the evening of January 4, Sylvester Carrier refused to allow any of the white men to enter his home. When two posse members, Harry Andrews and C. P. Wilkerson, attempted to force their way into the house, the blacks opened fire, killing Andrews and Wilkerson and wounding several other posse members, who returned fire against the house. Reports of the fight spread rapidly through Levy and neighboring Alachua County, where a white posse formed and moved on to Rosewood to reinforce the white men besieging Carrier's house.

Fighting at the house raged into the early morning of January 5. By then, several whites and blacks had been wounded and Sylvester Carrier and his mother, Sarah Carrier, lay dead inside the house; the rest of Carrier's family managed to escape during a lull in the shooting before dawn. News of the battle soon reached the other black residents of



*An African American home in flames, the work of a white mob during the burning of Rosewood in 1923. (UPI-Bettmann/Corbis)*

Rosewood. Many of them fled into the nearby woods and swamps, where they joined the Carrier refugees in hiding. After the fight, the enraged white posse burned down the Carrier house and a dozen other black homes in Rosewood. The whites also killed 50-year-old Lexie Gordon, a black woman, while she was trying to flee her burning home.

The violence at Rosewood continued for two more days. During that time, the white mob killed two more blacks, Mingo Williams and James Carrier, Sylvester's brother, who had been among the family members that escaped the Carrier house on January 5. On Sunday, January 7, the white mob celebrated the Sabbath by burning down the rest of the black homes and buildings in Rosewood. After a week of killings, two whites and at least six blacks were dead (undocumented reports claim many more blacks died), and the Rosewood community lay in ruins. The surviving black residents never returned. Rosewood disappeared from history.

Almost 60 years passed before Rosewood reclaimed public attention. In 1982, Gary Moore, a reporter for the *St. Petersburg Times*, published an article on Rosewood based on his reading of contemporary newspaper accounts and interviews with white and black witnesses. Moore continued to report on Rosewood but despite substantial initial public interest and a highly acclaimed segment on Rosewood on CBS News's *60 Minutes* in 1983, national awareness of the massacre largely receded.

Ten years later, however, Rosewood regained state and national attention when the Florida legislature brought up a claims bill to compensate Rosewood survivors and descendants who claimed that the State of Florida had failed to protect the black residents of Rosewood because of their race. After a tough legislative battle, the Florida House and Senate passed the Rosewood bill, which Governor Lawton Chiles signed into law in 1994. The bill provided

proven survivors \$150,000 each in compensation, created a \$500,000 fund to reimburse the Rosewood families who had lost property during the riot, funded 25 annual college scholarships for minority students (the scholarships gave preference to descendants of Rosewood survivors), and allowed the state to begin a criminal investigation of the violence. Renewed interest in Rosewood led to Director John Singleton's 1997 film, *Rosewood*, which dramatized the 1923 massacre.

See also: Jim Crow; Lynching; White Mob Violence; White Supremacy

*Ridgeway Boyd Murphree*

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## Rustin, Bayard

Bayard Rustin (1912–1987) was born on March 17, 1912, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, the illegitimate son of Florence Rustin. Florence's parents, Janifer and Julia, raised Bayard in West Chester. Julia Rustin was raised as a member of the Society of Friends or Quakers. Her belief in the Quaker doctrine of pacifism and her social activism in organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) helped Rustin become a social activist.

While in high school, Rustin began to protest racism. He refused to leave a West Chester restaurant that denied him service. He defiantly sat in the all-white section of the local theater. When traveling as a member of the West Chester High School track team, Rustin threatened not to run unless he and his black teammates were given integrated housing. After high school graduation in 1932, Rustin studied at Wilberforce University and Cheyney State University, but did not graduate. Bored with school, Rustin went to New York City to live with a relative in 1937. He

found temporary employment in New York through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1938, he enrolled at the City College of New York but again did not graduate because he was performing with the folk group Josh White Singers and folk singer Huddie Ledbetter. Furthermore, Rustin had become a youth organizer for the Young Communist League (YCL). In June 1941, however, after the YCL declared that the fight against fascism was more important than fighting racism, Rustin resigned. He had met the socialist labor union leader A. Philip Randolph while with the YCL, and, when he left the YCL, Rustin went to work for him. Randolph planned a "March on Washington" by thousands of African Americans if President Franklin Roosevelt did not end Jim Crow in the defense industries. Roosevelt gave in to Randolph's demand, issuing an executive order banning discrimination practices by federal defense contractors. Randolph cancelled the march, but Rustin disagreed. It was the first of several rifts between Randolph and Rustin.

In the late summer of 1941, Rustin was hired as race relations secretary for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), a religious pacifist organization. In FOR, Rustin came under the mentorship of the pacifist A. J. Muste. Muste introduced him to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and taught him how to weld Gandhi's philosophy, the organizational skills of the Communist Party, and the pacifism of his Quaker religion into his future life work: civil rights. In 1942, Rustin and others cofounded the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE). Unlike FOR, which emphasized pacifism, CORE focused on race relations. While still at FOR, Rustin took an additional job as a CORE field secretary. On a bus trip to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1942, Rustin defied the law by sitting in the "whites only" section. He was arrested but later released. He faced a longer period of incarceration, however, for being a pacifist during World War II. In 1944, Rustin registered as a conscientious objector but refused to report for a physical examination for assignment to a camp for conscientious objectors. As a result, Rustin served 28 months in a federal penitentiary for draft evasion.

After his release from prison in 1946, Rustin worked again with A. Philip Randolph, this time with his Committee against Discrimination in the Armed Forces. Randolph opposed a new federal law requiring universal military training because it sanctioned racial segregation. He put pressure on President Harry Truman to issue an executive order revising the law. Facing reelection in 1948 and desiring

to keep the black vote, Truman succumbed to Randolph's demand. He issued Executive Order 9981 outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin in the American military. Having succeeded, Randolph wished to disband the committee; however, Rustin and others expressed dissent with Randolph in a national press conference, an action Rustin later regretted.

In 1947, Rustin was part of a group of 16 CORE and FOR activists participating in what may be the earliest known "freedom ride" in the South. The bus trip was officially known as the "Journey of Reconciliation." The purpose of the journey was to test enforcement of the 1946 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Morgan v. Virginia* outlawing discrimination in interstate travel. CORE and FOR riders deliberately sat in segregated sections of buses and trains while traveling through the South. In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Rustin and three others were arrested and charged with violation of the state's segregation laws. Rustin was sentenced to 30 days of hard labor on a chain gang, but he was released because of good behavior after 22 days. Afterwards Rustin lectured and wrote about his chain gang experience. Several years later the state of North Carolina abolished chain gangs.

Rustin's work with FOR took on an international dimension in 1951 when he helped organize the Committee to Support South African Resistance, which later became the American Committee on Africa. In 1952, FOR sent Rustin to Africa to meet with two of the leaders of the African independence movement: Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria. Back in the United States, Rustin was touring to raise money for another African trip when disaster struck. Openly gay, Rustin was arrested on a "moral charge" in Pasadena, California, in 1953 and was sentenced to 60 days in jail. His arrest made national news. In disgrace, Rustin resigned from FOR. He soon found a job with a secular pacifist group: the War Resisters League (WRL). During Rustin's 12 years at WRL, he served as executive director, co-editor of the magazine *Liberation*, and spokesperson for the WRL at international pacifist meetings.

A. Philip Randolph helped Rustin obtain a leave of absence from WRL to assist the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956. Dr. King knew of Gandhi's writings but was unclear about how a nonviolent protest should be carried out. Rustin's involvement in the Montgomery bus boycott ended when other

boycott leaders asked Rustin to leave town for fear that publicity about his past would harm the boycott. Yet Dr. King continued to call on Rustin. In 1957, he asked Rustin to help organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)'s Prayer Pilgrimage to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Rustin also organized the National Youth Marches of 1958 and 1959. He was set to organize a SCLC demonstration at the 1960 Democratic Convention until Congressman Adam Clayton Powell threatened to expose him as gay unless he quit the project.

When a March on Washington was proposed in 1963, Rustin and A. Philip Randolph saw an opportunity to do what they dreamed of. Because he originated the idea of a march back in 1942, A. Philip Randolph was selected by the major civil rights leader to be executive director of the march. Randolph, in turn, selected as his deputy director, Bayard Rustin, and it was Rustin who actually coordinated the planning of the event. Planning was going smoothly until South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond took the floor of the U.S. Senate and denounced Rustin as a Communist, a draft dodger, and a homosexual. Although Thurmond's tirade triggered a call by some civil rights leaders for Rustin's resignation, Randolph and Dr. King continued to back Rustin as the march strategist. Rustin's job was anticipating the marchers' needs for housing and transportation, reconciling differences between civil rights and labor groups, lining up speakers and performers, and working with law enforcement officials to ensure a peaceful march. More than 200,000 whites and blacks attended the historic event on August 28, 1963. At the end of the day, the major civil rights leaders met with President John F. Kennedy at the White House. But Rustin was not among them because the other leaders said his presence would embarrass them. Nevertheless, Rustin's accomplishment as strategist of the 1963 March on Washington was the high point of his life.

Rustin and Randolph believed that the 1963 march owed its success to an alliance between organized labor and civil rights groups. Therefore Rustin and Randolph cofounded the A. Philip Randolph Institute, an organization funded by the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). The Randolph Institute gave Rustin a formal leadership role in the Civil Rights movement and an organization promoting the coalition politics Rustin believed in. The Randolph Institute promoted the Recruitment and Training Program designed to increase minority participation in the building

and construction trades. It also fostered voter registration and lobbied for labor interests in Congress. Rustin was president of the Institute from 1966 to 1979, and co-chairman from 1979 until his death. When he began working at the Randolph Institute, Rustin resigned from his job at the WRL and left the pacifist group, the Committee for Nonviolent Action.

With no time available for the peace movement, Rustin refused to participate in antiwar demonstrations during the 1960s and 1970s. He ridiculed civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who condemned the Vietnam War, arguing that civil rights and pacifism do not mix. Rustin held this position despite the fact that early in his career he himself was part of both movements. During this period, Rustin adopted opinions that were controversial in the black community. He opposed black studies and black power because he thought coalition building rather than separatism was the way to gain racial justice. Rustin promoted the tactics of nonviolence while there were riots in many American cities. He urged African Americans to support Israel rather than the Palestinians. Rustin's alienation from other civil rights leaders, the Black Power movement, and the antiwar movement caused one publication to call Rustin "the lone wolf of civil rights." After the 1940s, Rustin wrote many essays, speeches, and editorials that were published in newspapers and magazines. In 1971, Rustin published a number of these writings in a book entitled *Down the Line*. A second book followed in 1976: *Strategies for Freedom: The Changing Patterns of Black Protest*.

During the final decades of his life, Rustin worked with the A. Philip Randolph Institute as well as two international organizations. He was active in the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a group devoted to dealing with refugee problems around the world. With IRC, Rustin traveled to places like Southeast Asia espousing refugee relief in Cambodia, for instance. He was also a representative for Freedom House, traveling to places like Chile, El Salvador, Grenada, Dominican Republic, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Haiti to monitor elections, protest dictatorships, and promote human rights.

Rustin was in Haiti assisting in setting up democratic elections in 1987 when he suddenly became ill and was rushed back to the United States. He died in New York City on August 24, 1987. His legacy grew after his death and books on his life and work appeared. On January 20, 2003, a documentary entitled *Brother Outsider: The Life of*

*Bayard Rustin* was first broadcasted on educational television. Formerly relegated to the background of the civil rights struggle by his peers and historians, Bayard Rustin is now being recognized as an important figure in the Civil Rights movement.

*See also:* CORE; King, Martin Luther Jr.; March on Washington, 1963; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Randolph, A. Philip; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Scottsboro, Alabama Case

Eric Ledell Smith

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## Scottsboro, Alabama Case

On March 25, 1931, nine young African Americans boarded a Southern Railroad freight train traveling from Chattanooga to Memphis, Tennessee. After an altercation between the nine African Americans and a group of white youths, and the subsequent ejection of the white youths from the train, authorities stopped the train in Paint Rock, Alabama, and arrested the nine African Americans. On the train, the authorities also found two white women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, both disguised as boys. After being arrested and taken to jail in nearby Scottsboro, Alabama, Victoria Price claimed she had been raped by several of the African Americans. To ward off possible lynch mobs, Alabama Governor Benjamin Meek Miller ordered the Alabama National Guard to protect the jail and promised a speedy trial for the accused black men. The nine African Americans—Haywood Patterson, Clarence Norris, Willie Robertson, Andy Wright, Eugene Williams, Ozie Powell,

Roy Wright, Charles Weems, and Olen Montgomery—collectively became known as the Scottsboro Boys.

The trials of the Scottsboro Boys, which began 12 days after their arrest, prompted one of the most infamous examples of racial injustice in Alabama's history. As was the custom in the Jim Crow South, an all-white jury heard the case, presided over by Judge A. E. Hawkins. The Scottsboro Boys' attorneys, Stephen Roddy and Milo Moody, provided an incompetent defense. When the trials ended, eight of the nine defendants had been found guilty of rape and sentenced to death. A mistrial was declared in the case against Roy Wright, who was only 12 years old. The prosecution had sought a life sentence because of Wright's age, but 11 of 12 jurors held out for the death penalty.

After their initial convictions, the International Labor Defense (ILD), the legal arm of the American Communist Party, assumed the Boys' defense and brought national attention to the case. The Communist Party campaigned to defend the Scottsboro Boys, not only as a way to fight blatant injustice, but also because the publicity surrounding the case offered a tremendous recruiting opportunity among northern liberals and African Americans. Upon appeal, the Alabama Supreme Court upheld all but one of the convictions, when it ruled that Eugene Williams should not

have been tried as an adult because he was only 13 years old. On November 7, 1932, however, the United States Supreme Court, in *Powell v. Alabama*, overturned the Scottsboro Boys' convictions. The Court determined that the defendants' right to competent legal council under the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause had been violated by the state and remanded the case to the lower court.

The Scottsboro Boys' new legal team consisted of Samuel S. Leibowitz, a defense lawyer from New York, and Joseph Brodsky, the lead attorney for the ILD. The ILD brought in the flamboyant and highly successful Leibowitz, a non-Communist, to head the defense team, but the combination of Leibowitz, a New York Jew, and the communist ILD defending accused black rapists outraged southern whites and helped the Scottsboro case to become a *cause célèbre*, unleashing a torrent of suspicion, racism, and anti-Semitism in Alabama and throughout the South. It also galvanized the northern critics of Jim Crow society.

The second round of trials began on March 30, 1933, in Decatur, Alabama, presided over by Judge James E. Horton Jr. After Leibowitz unsuccessfully challenged Alabama's practice of excluding African Americans from its jury rolls, Haywood Patterson's trial began, as each of the Scottsboro Boys had to be tried separately. The trial was tension-filled



These nine African American youths, known as the Scottsboro Boys, were imprisoned in Scottsboro, Alabama, after being falsely accused of raping two white women in a freight car. Here, the young men are pictured conferring with civil rights activist Juanita Jackson Mitchell in 1937. (Library of Congress)

as Leibowitz and prosecutor Thomas G. Knight Jr., attempted to discredit the other's witnesses. Leibowitz had a measure of success poking holes in the testimony of the prosecution's main witness, Victoria Price. He also secured the surprise appearance of Ruby Bates, who recanted her earlier statement that she had been raped, but Bates's evasions on the witness stand made the prosecution's charge that she had been bribed by the defense more believable. Dr. Marvin H. Lynch, one of the doctors who initially examined Price and Bates, spoke with Judge Horton behind closed doors and told him that he was convinced the girls had not been raped, but he refused to testify because he feared his practiced in Scottsboro would be ruined.

In the closing remarks, Wade Wright, the Morgan County solicitor, emphasized both Leibowitz and the communists' participation in the trial and charged the jury to show them that justice in Alabama could not be bought by "Jew money" from New York. Wright's inflammatory speech had the desired effect. On April 9, 1933, the jury, which had deliberated for only five minutes, found Patterson guilty of rape and sentenced him to death. Disappointed with the jury's verdict and convinced of the Scottsboro Boys' innocence, Judge Horton, on June 22, courageously set aside the jury verdict and ordered a new trial. His decision to overturn the verdict cost Horton his political career. In the 1934 Democratic primary election—the election in the South—Horton was defeated and returned to private practice. In a clear rebuke of Horton's decision, Alabamians overwhelmingly elected Thomas Knight as lieutenant governor.

Despite Horton's belief in the Scottsboro Boys' innocence, Knight pressed ahead with another round of trials in late November 1933. A new judge, William W. Callahan, ruthlessly favored the prosecution, going as far as to instruct the jury that a white woman would not voluntarily have sex with a black man. Juries found both Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris guilty of rape and sentenced them to death. Leibowitz wasted no time in filing their appeals. Judge Callahan postponed the remaining trials until the appeals process was completed.

As before, the Alabama Supreme Court refused to overturn the verdicts. And as before, the Scottsboro Case went to the United States Supreme Court, which heard arguments on February 15, 1935, on both the Patterson and Norris cases. Leibowitz argued that the verdicts should be overturned because the state excluded blacks from juries,

in violation of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Forged jury rolls during the Patterson and Norris trials showed African Americans on the rolls, and this attempt at subterfuge outraged the justices. On April 1, 1935, the Court, in *Norris v. Alabama*, unanimously held Alabama's system of jury selection to exclude African Americans unconstitutional and overturned the convictions of Norris and Patterson.

Because public opinion in Alabama remained steadfastly in favor of prosecuting the accused Scottsboro Boys, the state went forward with another round of trials. Haywood Patterson's fourth trial opened on January 6, 1936, with Judge Callahan presiding once again. With this round of trials, the ILD withdrew from the case, and Leibowitz, profoundly unpopular in Alabama, allowed Clarence Watts, a Huntsville attorney, to take the lead. Although Leibowitz stayed in the background, he remained thoroughly involved in Patterson's defense. Lieutenant Governor Knight returned as the lead prosecutor. Patterson's conviction by another all white jury came as no surprise, but instead of giving him death as expected, the jury sentenced him to only 75 years.

Between Patterson's conviction in January 1936 and the Norris trial that opened on July 15, 1937, prosecutor and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Knight died, leaving the prosecution in the hands of Thomas Lawson, the assistant attorney general. Judge Callahan, determined to move quickly and bring the Scottsboro Case to an end, scheduled subsequent trials one after the other. In a trial that lasted only two days, another all white jury found Norris guilty of rape and sentenced him to death. After this conviction, Clarence Watts withdrew from the Scottsboro Boys' cases, leaving Leibowitz again to lead their defense. Lawson waived the death penalty in the following trials. In rapid succession, other all-white juries quickly convicted Andy Wright and sentenced him to 99 years, and Charley Weems received 75 years. Ozie Powell pleaded guilty to assaulting a deputy, but the state dropped rape charges against him. All charges were dropped against the remaining four Scottsboro Boys, Robertson, Montgomery, Williams, and Roy Wright.

In October 1937, the United States Supreme Court refused to review Patterson's conviction. Alabama Governor Bibb Graves commuted Norris's death sentence to life imprisonment after the Alabama Supreme Court affirmed the death sentence of Norris and the prison sentences of

Wright and Weems. By this time, the Scottsboro Case had severely tarnished Alabama's image worldwide and Alabamians grew weary of the drawn-out spectacle. A number of prominent Alabama attorneys and newspapermen lobbied Graves to parole the imprisoned Scottsboro Boys, and Graves personally interviewed the remaining five. Whether incensed by their malevolence toward him or as a result of political cowardice, Graves refused to grant any pardons before he left office in 1939. He even refused to meet with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to discuss the matter.

It took until November 17, 1943, for the Alabama's Pardons and Parole Board to release Charlie Weems. In January 1944, it paroled both Norris and Wright. They both broke parole and were imprisoned once again. In late 1946, the board released Powell and paroled Norris once again. Norris broke his parole and left Alabama never to return. He lived as a fugitive until Governor George C. Wallace granted him a full and unconditional pardon in October 1976. As for Haywood Patterson, the board would not grant a parole, as they considered him the most dangerous and incorrigible of all the Scottsboro Boys. Nevertheless, Patterson managed to escape prison in the summer of 1948 and, after avoiding a large police manhunt, eventually reached his sister's home in Detroit. Patterson hid there for two years until his arrest by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but Michigan Governor G. Mennen Williams refused his extradition to Alabama. Alabama officials let the matter die. While Patterson hid from authorities in Detroit, he wrote an account of his experiences, *Scottsboro Boy*, which appeared in 1950. Although he was not returned to Alabama, he remained troubled. After stabbing a man in a barroom fight on December 18, 1950, a jury in Detroit convicted Patterson of manslaughter and sentenced him to 15 to 20 years in prison. He died of cancer only two years later.

On June 9, 1950, Andy Wright left Kilby prison, the last of the Scottsboro Boys to be set free. The other Scottsboro Boys, as well as most of the other figures associated with the Scottsboro Case, remained out of the public eye. Only Samuel Leibowitz achieved notable success. After the Scottsboro Case ended, he returned to his highly successful law practice in New York City and later became a justice of the New York Supreme Court in 1962.

*See also:* Jim Crow; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Dan J. Puckett

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## Seale, Bobby

Bobby Seale (1936–) is a prominent civil rights advocate and cofounder of the Black Panther Party. Seale and the Black Panthers advocated a militant approach to civil rights. The organization in general and Seale, in particular, strongly opposed the nonviolent and integrationist stances of Martin Luther King and other moderate civil rights leaders. Seale and the Panthers, furthermore, advocated militancy when necessary in order to acquire black liberation.

Robert George Seale was born October 22, 1936, in Dallas, Texas. Bobby and his family resided in Texas until World War II, and then moved to Oakland, California. Seale attended Berkeley High School until his senior year. Right before graduation Seale was informed that he would not graduate owing to poor grades in the last term. In anger he tried to enter both the Army and Air Force. Seale was turned down by both organizations because of an injury he received years earlier when a car ran over his foot. Angered by his failure, Seale returned to the Air Force recruitment center and tried to plead his case. After convincing doctors and recruiters that his foot injury would not inhibit his ability to perform, the Air Force inducted him into their program. After completing basic training, Seale went to Amarillo, Texas, to train as an aircraft sheet metal mechanic. After six months in Texas, Seale chose to go to



Rapid City, South Dakota. Seale's specialties were needed at the Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City. After almost four years in the Air Force, Seale was discharged for disorderly conduct.

Seale's discharge came after a battle between him and his commander. When the commander ordered Seale to hand in his drums, Seale refused, and was discharged. Seale's discharge was only one example of many when his temper and rage overcame him. Seale was known for having an uncontrollable temper and built up rage. While in the Air Force he beat a fellow troop member with a bed-adaptor.

After his discharge, Seale returned to Oakland to work as a sheet metal mechanic at various plants. He simultaneously worked to earn his high school diploma while attending night school. He finally received his diploma and, in 1962, began school at Merritt College, the city college of Oakland. At Merritt, Seale took classes in engineering and drafting. To make money on the side he was a bartender and stand-up comedian. While attending Merritt, Seale joined the Afro-American Association. Through this organization Seale met

Huey Newton. Within a few years, Newton and Seale became frustrated with the Afro-American Association. To Newton and Seale the association was not going far enough. Both men believed strongly in Malcolm X and the black power that he professed. In place of the Afro-American Association, Newton and Seale created the Soul Students Advisory Counsel.

Around this time, Seale married and on July 9, 1965, he and his wife Artie had a son, Malik Nkrumah Stagolee Seale. While Seale had started a family, he continued his fight for black liberation. In October 1966, Seale and Newton organized the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Fellow classmate and friend, Bobby Hutton was enlisted as the first member and became the treasurer of the party. The goal of the Black Panther Party (BPP) was set forth in their famous ten point program. The program advocated self-defense and militancy to bring black liberation. The Black Panthers, however, did not necessarily advocate separatism. The organization frequently worked with whites, if they too wished to advance the black race. The Panthers also set up a number of community programs, such as their infamous free breakfast program.

Although the BPP started out as an Oakland organization, it quickly gained national attention. The BPP adopted uniforms that contained black berets, black pants, black leather jackets, black shoes, and powder blue shirts. By 1968, BPP offices were opening up nationwide. The militancy of the Black Panthers quickly gained the attention of the national government. The Black Panthers often carried guns, which furthered concerned and drew the attention of the government. In 1968, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), ordered an investigation into the BPP.

Seale and many other Black Panthers gained additional national attention after protesting at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. Seale's involvement in Chicago, however, landed him in significant trouble with the government. In September 1969, Seale and seven white radicals were indicted under the antiriot provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The provision forbids anyone from crossing state lines to riot.

When Seale came to trial, the judge of the case declared him bound and gagged after numerous outbursts in court. Seale consequently was sentenced to four years in jail for contempt of court. While in jail, Seale was charged for ordering the execution of Alex Rackley, a former Black



*Bobby Seale (left) and Huey Newton cofounded the Black Panther Party, which advocated black power and black opposition to the Vietnam War. (AP/Wide World Photos)*

Panther who was suspected of being a government informer. In May 1971, Seale was cleared of all charges when a hung jury could not reach a decision. The following year Seale was released from prison and the contempt charges were dropped.

When Seale returned to Oakland, he found a decimated Black Panther Party from the one he had left. The violence and militancy that the BPP advocated had left many members dead. Internal strife also had led to a decrease in popularity and membership. In 1973, Seale ran for mayor of Oakland but came in second out of nine candidates. He left the Black Panthers in 1974 but continued to fight against social and political injustices. Today, Seale continues to support various organizations that fight injustices in the world. His own organization, REACH, is dedicated to youth education and advancement.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Civil Rights Act of 1968; Cleaver, Eldridge; COINTELPRO; Newton, Huey P.

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## Selassie, Haile

Born Lij Tafari Makonnen in the village of Ejersa Goro (then Abyssinia), Haile Selassie (1892–1975) was the emperor of Ethiopia (1930–1936; 1941–1974) and became a powerful Pan-African figure and religious symbol for the Rastafarian movement. As the son of a prominent governor and grandnephew of Emperor Menelik II, the young Tafari excelled in school and soon caught the attention of his great uncle, who appointed him governor over portions of Sidamo province at the tender age of 14. After the death of Menelik four years later, Tafari took the same post his father had held and became governor of Harar. In April 1911, he formally entered the city and took the name Ras Tafari. (*Ras* is an Amharic term meaning *Duke*) On August 3, 1911, Tafari married Menen Asfaw, niece of Empress Lij Iyasu, whom he helped depose in September 1916. As a Coptic Christian,

Tafari opposed Menelik's Muslim grandson and successor, Lij Yasu. Menelik's daughter Zauditu became empress in 1916, with Tafari named as regent to the throne. Upon Zauditu's death on April 2, 1930, Tafari became Emperor Haile Selassie I (meaning "Holy Trinity") and claimed that his imperial lineage ran deep into Ethiopia's past. Selassie maintained that he was a direct descendent of Makeda (the Queen of Sheba) and King Solomon of Israel, and at his coronation in Addis Ababa on November 21, 1930, he took the full title His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God.

Selassie had played a crucial role in outlining Menelik's modernizing reforms throughout the 1920s, including the formal abolishment of slavery in 1924 and calling for Ethiopia's admission to the League of Nations in 1923. As emperor, he continued to stress internal reforms, introducing the country's first written constitution in 1931. The new constitution established a bicameral legislature and helped facilitate a degree of popular political representation unknown in the region's history. It was Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, however, that introduced Selassie to most of the world. On June 30, 1936, he traveled to Geneva and delivered an impassioned speech to the League of Nations asking for global support against fascist aggression. Selassie's contention—that World War II would be imminent if the League of Nations did not collectively come to the aid of nations like Ethiopia—would prove to be prophetic, and his stirring delivery helped solidify his place in the world's spotlight. After the League failed to take action, Italy invaded Ethiopia during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War and occupied the country for six years. Selassie fled to Europe in exile during this period until Italy's defeat at the hands of United Kingdom, and Ethiopian forces liberated the country in 1941.

Upon his return to power, Selassie continued to stress internal reform and the importance of Ethiopia's role in the emerging global community. Ethiopia became a charter member of the United Nations (UN), and Selassie introduced a revised constitution in 1955 that further extended political representation through the establishment of a lower house of parliament. In addition, he helped the country embark on a plan of massive educational reform and initiated a number of large-scale development projects aimed at modernizing Ethiopia's infrastructure. During the 1960s, Selassie began to champion Pan-Africanism while

simultaneously aligning Ethiopia with the West. In 1963, he presided over the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), headquartered in Addis Ababa, and traveled internationally throughout the decade and into the 1970s. As the head of state with the longest tenure in office, the emperor continued to garner respect and accolades at international events around the world. He was given precedence over all other leaders at the state funerals of President John F. Kennedy and Charles de Gaulle.

In 1972, severe drought caused a famine to spread in the Wollo province while Selassie celebrated his 80th birthday. The Imperial government kept many of the facts surrounding the scope of the famine from both Selassie and the rest of the world. When news of its existence finally reached the international community, Selassie suffered a serious drop in popularity, both within and outside Ethiopia. Wracked by his ill health and fledgling popularity, he was further weakened by economic disruption and a military coup deposed him on September 12, 1974. On August 28, 1975, state media reported that Selassie had died of complications following prostate surgery. Many, including his doctor, denied the government's version of events and charged that the ex-emperor had been murdered while under house arrest following his removal from power. Others believed that Selassie never passed away at all, including many within the Rastafari movement.

Beginning in the 1930s on the island of Jamaica, a growing movement based on Marcus Mosiah Garvey's "Back to Africa" campaign began to take hold among the more impoverished descendents of slaves imported to the island from West Africa. Based on a syncretic blend of Christianity and West African ritual, the Rastafarian movement was a particular form of Ethiopianism—a theology that posits the black race as the original Israelites of the Old Testament and interprets that the returned Messiah of the New Testament will be a redeemer for all African people. For many followers of the Rastafari movement, Garvey's writings and comments were prophecies fulfilled by the reign of Selassie and embodied in the emperor himself. Most within the movement see Selassie as God incarnate, a black Messiah who will unite the African Diaspora and lead the black race to freedom.

Selassie did not claim to be a deity, although he never denounced the Rastafari movement and its contention that he was the Redeemer prophesized in the New Testament Book of Revelation. In addition, his claim to the line of King Solomon and the titles he took on becoming emperor were

direct references to the Book of Revelation and the Messiah. Selassie's defiance and eloquence before the League of Nations—and later, the United Nations—solidified his popularity throughout the African Diaspora. In addition, Ethiopia's defeat of Italy in 1941 and Selassie's subsequent return to power further enhanced the Rastafari contention that Ethiopia was a spiritually significant land, a pure and unfettered Africa that had remained free from colonial oppression. Selassie's call for Pan-African solidarity also indicated to many followers his status as a redemptive figure for the black race and helped fuel the growing messianic cult surrounding him.

On April 21, 1966, more than 100,000 Rastafarians gathered in Kingston when Selassie paid his first visit to Jamaica. Many came to view the man whom they believed to be God, and Selassie appeared frightened and surprised by the crowd. Nevertheless, Selassie left the airport at the behest of prominent Rasta leader Mortimer Planner and successfully toured Kingston amidst a throng of followers. It was here that Rita Marley, wife of musician Bob Marley, first viewed Selassie and converted to Rastafarianism. Her influence would later draw Marley himself into the faith, and the growing globalization of roots reggae music became a powerful conduit for Rastafarian ideals beginning in the late 1960s. One of Marley's most popular songs, titled "War," included lyrics drawn directly from Selassie's influential antiracism speech before the United Nations in 1963. Marley also wrote the prominent Rasta-infused song "Jah Live" as a reaction to Selassie's purported death in 1975.

Early influential Rastas, like Leonard Percival Howell, faced a fierce backlash from the Jamaican state. The government charged Howell with sedition after the leader refused to declare himself a loyal subject of King George V of England, instead pledging himself to Emperor Selassie. The earliest Rastas most likely considered Selassie a king for all African people and a symbol of black pride and unity; however, his status as a spiritual figure developed quite quickly. In 1963, Jamaica achieved its independence from England. Coupled with the growing popularity of roots reggae and Rasta culture, the faith began to spread and flourish worldwide. Fueled by emigration from the West Indies, a growing number of religious Rastas appeared in the United States and flourished in small communities, most commonly in urban areas. In addition, cultural Rastafarianism flourished to a greater degree as the popularity of Jamaican music continued to rise throughout the 1970s.

Rastafarian words and symbols directly reference Selassie as a prophet of the black race. Rastas pronounce the Roman numeral in “Haile Selassie I” as the first person pronoun “I” and commonly repeat the refrain “I-in-I” to signify their individual attachment to Selassie and the greater African race. Rastas also speak of Selassie as “Jah Rastafari Selassie,” and believe that marijuana (*ganja*) helps facilitate a deeper spiritual connection with both Selassie and each other. Some Rastafarians believe that Selassie is still alive; others insist that he will return to earth one day to facilitate a judgment of all peoples, calling the faithful to reside forever in Holy Mount Zion, a mythical place in Africa.

Selassie did not publicly denounce the Rastafari, but he did become more conservative in his rhetoric later in life and tried at times to redirect the movement. Despite his goal of Pan-African unity, he called on Planner, Howell, and other early Rasta leaders to encourage liberation and racial uplift in Jamaica itself, instead of outright emigration to Ethiopia. He also remained committed to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and is said to have confided in Orthodox leaders his frustration with the course of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica. In the face of Italian aggression, his impassioned request for support from the League of Nations actually drew criticism from some black nationalists, including Marcus Garvey. In a 1967 interview, Selassie appeared to rebuff his status as a supernatural figure and denied being a divinity. Nevertheless, Selassie sympathized with the movement and its followers, donating a piece of land south of Addis Ababa for use by Jamaican Rastafarians in 1948. Called *Shashamane*, a small Jamaican community with a number of devout Rastas still inhabits the colony to this day.

*See also:* African Diaspora; African Imperialism; Ethiopian Peace Movement; Garvey, Marcus; Organization of African Unity; Pan-Africanism

Lane Demas

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## Self-Segregation

Self-segregation, a concept rearticulated in the late 20th century as “community-control black nationalism,” was embraced by a number of African American intellectuals and activists at the turn of the 20th century. In particular, this concept was given voice in the literary work of Sutton Griggs (*Imperium in Imperio*) and in the polemical writings of W. E. B. Du Bois. By the late 1960s, the term “black power” captured much of the essence of self-segregation as articulated by Griggs and Du Bois. In essence, self-segregation was a call to create autonomous and self-sufficient black communities in Jim Crow America.

As one of the principal advocates of self-segregation, Du Bois witnessed a remarkable ideological transformation between the publication of *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903 and his resignation as the editor of *Crisis* and his first resignation from the NAACP on June, 26 1934. In the months leading up to his eventual resignation, Du Bois—apparently disenchanted with the prospects of defeating Jim Crow segregation—began to advocate for independence from white communities and reliance on black institutions and organizations. In a series editorials published in *Crisis*, the national organ of the NAACP, Du Bois began to articulate and give shape to his plan for self-segregation. In the April 1934 edition, he wrote that blacks should organize their strength as consumers, learn to cooperate and become producers, and create and run their own institutions. When Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, criticized Du Bois for this controversial stance, he responded by reminding readers that the light-complexioned spokesperson of the organization could pass for white and did not have to suffer the daily indignities of blackness and Jim Crow segregation. This war of words between editor and executive secretary would leave Du Bois no other choice but to tender his resignation from the newsletter he founded a quarter-century earlier.

After he left the editorial office of the *Crisis*, Du Bois gave a number of speeches that fleshed out, more fully, his idea of self-segregation. These efforts culminated in the publication of “A Negro Nation within the Nation” in June 1935. This article would be the most sustained treatment on the issue offered by Du Bois to date. He began the article with a discussion of the social, economic, and political problems facing blacks in the Depression-era South and North. Evoking concepts once championed by his arch rival, Booker T. Washington, Du Bois noted that African Americans had not successfully created a sound economic foundation in the aftermath of emancipation. The failure of Radical Reconstruction was the failure to provide freed people with land on which they could base an independent existence in America. Because he saw few available allies and no forthcoming changes in American society, Du Bois concluded the article by stating that the only plausible solution was racial separation and black community autonomy.

This call for “self-segregation” closely mirrors community-control black nationalism espoused by black power advocates. Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Huey P. Newton would have found a great degree of resonance with Du Bois’s suggestion that African Americans could be self-sufficient through the creation of consumer cooperatives in which farmers sold their produce to black-owned grocers and technicians trained at Hampton and Tuskegee could guide black industry. What is startling about this change in Du Bois’s worldview is not only that it embraced Washington’s ideas about the utility of vocational training but it also incorporated some of the structural concepts operationalized by another one of his chief rivals—Marcus Garvey. *See also:* A Negro Nation Within the Nation; Black Nationalism; Black Power; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Garvey, Marcus; Griggs, Sutton

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## Selma March

The Selma march was a five-day event in 1965 during which an interracial group of protestors traveled more than 50 miles on foot from Selma, Alabama, to the state capital of Montgomery. It culminated in a mass rally on the steps of Alabama’s capitol building where a crowd of 25,000 people, including civil rights activists, religious leaders, and everyday people from across the United States, heard one of Martin Luther King Jr.’s most remembered speeches. The Selma march focused national attention on the exclusion of African Americans from the electoral process and galvanized public sentiment in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The event was one of the last large-scale protest demonstrations of the Civil Rights movement’s “classic” phase during which a series of public protests drew national attention to the impact of racial segregation and helped bring an end to the legal structures of the system of racial discrimination known as Jim Crow.

The march that eventually made it to Montgomery began on Sunday, March 21, 1965, when approximately 3,000 people left Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, and crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the eastern edge of the city. The procession continued along both highways and rural county roads, enduring rain and cold weather, as well as threats of violence, along the way. By court order, only 300 of the marchers were permitted to walk the entire distance from Selma to Montgomery, but as the march made its official entry into Montgomery on Thursday, March 25, its ranks swelled once again.

The march that reached Montgomery actually represented the third attempt to do so. On Sunday, March 7, in an event known as “Bloody Sunday,” a group of marchers made its way from Brown Chapel Church as far as the Pettus Bridge only to be set upon by state troopers and other law enforcement officers. With many of them attacking from atop horses, the officers pursued the marchers all the way back to Brown Chapel and continued their assault until no African Americans could be found on Selma’s streets. John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was among the most seriously injured, suffering a fractured skull, and numerous others were treated for cuts, broken bones, and exposure to tear gas. In a development that was unusually swift for the time, film footage of the attack aired that same evening

on ABC, interrupting the network's broadcast of the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*.

Two days later, Martin Luther King Jr. fronted a second march, but once again it only went as far as the Pettus Bridge. Per an advance agreement designed to comply with a federal court's injunction against proceeding all the way to Montgomery, King did not attempt to lead the group across the bridge. Instead, the group knelt in prayer and returned to Brown Chapel. That evening, attacks by local whites resulted in the death of James Reeb, a white seminary student who had traveled to Selma from Boston to participate. Reeb's death and the violence of Bloody Sunday prompted an address by President Lyndon Johnson before a joint session of Congress in which he called for passage of the Voting Rights Act and invoked the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome." Six days after Johnson's speech, the court lifted its injunction, and the third and final march commenced.

The full story of the march, however, stretched back further even than Bloody Sunday. For several years before 1965, a cadre of SNCC fieldworkers had been working with local black leaders and organizations in an effort to challenge racial discrimination in Selma and develop indigenous black leaders. These activists built their efforts around the issue of voter registration and coordinated regular processions of would-be black registrants to Selma's downtown courthouse. Their efforts prompted sustained and often violent reactions from local whites including state, county, and city officials who jealously guarded the political hold they maintained across Alabama's Black Belt.

The ability to count on such stubborn resistance was one of the reasons that, in 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) accepted an invitation to come to Selma and lend King's national recognition to the continuing demonstrations. Although his arrival amplified existing tensions between



*Flag-bearing demonstrators march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in the historic March 1965 voting rights protest. The march led directly to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which outlawed Southern states' attempts to prevent African Americans from voting. (Library of Congress)*

SNCC and the SCLC, King brought additional resources and exposure to the Selma campaign. Racial tensions increased after King's arrival as Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark met the protestors with violence and mass arrests. Clark jailed at least 4,000 demonstrators between January and March 1965. Events in Selma even prompted a visit from Malcolm X. In February, Jimmie Lee Jackson, a black resident of Marion, Alabama, was murdered during one of the numerous marches taking place simultaneously in the rural areas surrounding Selma. A proposal to carry Jackson's coffin to Alabama's state capital made his death the genesis of what became the Selma march.

In the years and decades that followed the Selma march, the city continued to be the site of civil rights activity as African Americans met resistance in their efforts to translate their newfound voting rights into tangible political power. Although the persistence of racial tensions revealed the Selma march to have been less than a panacea for many local concerns related to race, its contributions to the national Civil Rights movement are undeniable.

See also: Bloody Sunday; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Lewis, John; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Voting Rights Act, 1965; Williams, Hosea

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## Shabazz, Betty X

Betty X Shabazz (1934–1997), also known as Betty Dean Sanders and Betty X, was a former member of the Nation of Islam, wife of Malcolm X, and a longstanding professor and administrator at Medgar Evers College in New York. Born in either Detroit, Michigan or Pinehurst, Georgia in 1934, Shabazz was likely abused by her biological mother,

prompting her adoption at age 11 by Lorenzo and Helen Malloy, a prominent entrepreneur in Detroit and his activist wife. After high school, Shabazz attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama where she encountered frequent examples of overt racism. Finding southern racism incomprehensible, Shabazz moved to New York City in the mid-1950s where she attended the Brooklyn State Hospital School of Nursing. On one Friday night, a friend working at the hospital invited her to dinner and to attend a lecture by a minister of the Nation of Islam at Harlem Temple No. 7. Although Shabazz was not initially moved to join the organization, she did meet Malcolm X who later talked to her about her experiences with overt racism in Alabama.

By the time Shabazz graduated from nursing school in 1958, she was already a dedicated member of the Nation of Islam and, on January 14 of the same year, she and Malcolm X were married in Lansing, Michigan. Within seven years of their marriage, the couple had six daughters. Shabazz was, in fact, pregnant with twins on February 21, 1965, the day her husband was assassinated at New York's Audubon Ballroom. After Malcolm's death, Shabazz went back to school, earning a master's degree in public health education from Jersey City College in 1970 and a doctorate in education administration from the University of Massachusetts in 1975. In 1976, she began her work at Medgar Evers College in New York as an associate professor of health administration and, eventually, director of the school's Department of Communications and Public Relations.

Shabazz also played a significant role in elevating the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense to the national stage. Early in 1967, she was invited to appear at the Malcolm X Memorial Day Conference, the offices of *Ramparts Magazine*, and at the Black House—a cultural center in San Francisco—where she was escorted and guarded by several Black Panthers during her stay. Among those in Shabazz's armed guard detail were Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, two of the three founders of the Black Panther Party. In fact, the series of events that led to Shabazz's visit to the Bay area in 1967 also prompted Eldridge Cleaver's first meeting with Newton and Seale and his eventual decision to join the Black Panthers. Newton and Cleaver needed someone to draft an invitation letter to Shabazz and the person they enlisted was Cleaver, a follower of the teachings of Malcolm X while he was in prison.

In the 1990s, Shabazz engaged in a number of activities, from serving as a consultant for Spike Lee's film *Malcolm X* to publicly linking Louis Farrakhan to the assassination

of her husband. Shabazz and Farrakhan reconciled after Qubilah Shabazz—her second daughter with Malcolm—was accused of trying to hire an assassin to kill Farrakhan. Farrakhan later participated actively in fundraisers for Qubilah's defense and invited Shabazz to give a speech at the October 1995 Million Man March. Tragically, Shabazz died on June 23, 1997 three weeks after suffering extensive burns in a fire set by her 12-year-old grandson who was, ironically, named after her husband. Her death was met with an international outpouring of grief by those touched by her perseverance and strength.

See also: Black Nationalism; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; X, Malcolm

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## Shakur, Assata

Assata Shakur (1947–), former member of the Black Panther Party, is currently living in exile in Cuba. While activists and artists in the United States and around the world hail Assata Shakur as a revolutionary thinker, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is offering \$1 million for her capture. Assata Shakur was born in Jamaica Queens, New York as Joanne Deborah Byron. She was later known as Joanne Chesimard. Her birth date is believed to be July 16, 1947, but in her autobiography *Assata*, Shakur states with pride that the FBI has had difficulties gaining information about her origins. During her early life, Shakur lived with her grandparents in Wilmington, North Carolina. When her grandparents died she moved back to New York where she later enrolled in Manhattan Community College, intending to major in business administration.

While enrolled at the community college and later at City College in the 1960s, Shakur discovered the literature

of the black arts movement and was involved in many political activities. After she graduated she became involved in the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and owing to charges that she assisted in an attempted bank robbery, she was forced to go underground as a member of the Black Liberation Army, the underground wing of the Black Panther Party. From this point on, she was on the run from law enforcement. It was later discovered that the bank she was accused of robbing did not even exist at the time. On this note, the alleged bank robbery may have been the result of a COINTELPRO operation.

Between 1971 and 1972, Shakur was accused of three different bank robberies and in late 1972 and early 1973, she was accused of kidnapping and murdering a heroin dealer and attempting to murder policemen. None of these cases resulted in conviction. In 1972, the FBI used Assata Shakur as the face of a “manhunt” that they were engaged in against the Black Liberation Army, characterizing her as the “revolutionary mother hen” who nurtured the violence of the organization.

On May 2, 1973, Assata Shakur, along with Sundiata Acoli and Zayd Malik Shakur, were stopped allegedly for a defective taillight. As defense attorney Lennox Hinds explains, however, pulling over these three activists was consistent with the COINTELPRO guidelines of the FBI, which used the arrests of activists for minor violations as part of a larger strategy to disrupt the work of progressive and radical organizations. This incident resulted in a shootout in which Zayd Malik Shakur and State Trooper Werner Foerster were killed and Assata Shakur was shot and wounded. Although doctors testified that Shakur was too severely injured by the multiple gunshot wounds that she received to have resisted or fought back, she was charged as an accomplice to the murders of both Zayd Malik Shakur and Foerster and of assault on Trooper James Harper with intent to kill.

Police reportedly tortured Shakur while she was hospitalized. Officers held guns to her head in unsuccessful attempts to force her to confess to crimes and to provide information about Sundiata Acoli. Shakur's first lawyer, her aunt Evelyn Williams, was forced to strip naked to be searched before she visited Shakur, who was hospitalized, partially paralyzed, and handcuffed to a bed. She was the first female prisoner to be placed in the all-male prison on Riker's island and was subjected to inhumane treatment by prison guards because of her “dangerous” political beliefs. It was during this period of brutal incarceration that



Assata Shakur became a mother and suffered the trauma of not being able to spend more than a few minutes with her daughter after giving birth.

Defense attorneys including Evelyn Williams, Lennox Hinds, Florence Kennedy, Bob Bloom, William Kunstler, and Ray Brown supported Assata Shakur's innocence, but she was eventually convicted as an accomplice in the murders of Zayd Shakur and Foerster by an all-white jury.

On November 2, 1979, Assata Shakur escaped from prison. No one was harmed in her prison break. Shakur lived as a fugitive for the next few years until she relocated, by unrevealed means, to Cuba in 1984, where she was granted political asylum by the Cuban government. The head of the FBI said that its attempt to find Shakur were hampered by the fact that residents of the neighborhoods they searched were not willing to help. In 1985, Shakur was reunited with her daughter, Kakuya. Assata Shakur remains a cultural worker and international icon living in Cuba today.

In 1987, Assata Shakur's autobiography *Assata* was published. Activists often cite reading *Assata* as a turning point, with an impact comparable to that of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Personal and poetic, *Assata* is accessible to a wide range of readers. Assata Shakur's example has mobilized elders in the black freedom struggle, prison abolitionists, and members of the hip-hop generation. Known popularly as Tupac Shakur's godmother, Assata Shakur is praised in songs by hip-hop artists including Common, Cee-lo, and Mos Def who are, themselves, active players in the campaign against her continued criminalization.

The continuing story of Assata Shakur's life is a testament to the persistent struggle for freedom within the context of black captivity and imprisonment. Her solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and Cuba's support of her status as an unjustly convicted political prisoner has encouraged many to be critical of the United States' antagonistic relationship with Cuba. Along with Angela Davis and Kathleen Cleaver, Assata Shakur is one the living former members of the Black Panther Party who remains an icon and a catalyst for action in the contemporary movement for human rights and social justice.

See also: Black Panther Party; COINTELPRO; Destination, Cuba

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## Sharecroppers Union

The Sharecroppers Union (SCU) was a communist-led labor union of mostly African American farmers and farm workers in Alabama and Louisiana during the 1930s. Inspired by a local uprising of rural poor people in Arkansas, Angelo Herndon, a black Communist, organized the Croppers' and Farm Workers' Union in Tallapoosa County, Alabama in the summer of 1931. Ralph Gray, a local black tenant farmer and one-time small landowner, led the first local. Initially, the union demanded that tenant farmers be allowed to grow subsistence foods, to market their own crops, and to pick cotton for a minimum wage. Attacks by local police and vigilantes nearly crushed this nascent group.

In August remaining union members re-formed as the Sharecroppers Union. Al Murphy, a black ex-sharecropper and communist organizer, took control of the union in May 1932 and focused its efforts on the struggle for African American self-determination in the plantation region of the South. He likened the union effort to past slave revolts. Murphy delegated powers to local union "captains," who directed day-to-day organizing. He also encouraged the captains to defend their communities against further white violence, with arms if necessary. Union meetings, advertised as Bible classes, often bristled with guns of all sorts. Women joined these locals through auxiliary units called "Sewing Clubs." Organizers did not approach poor whites in these years because they did not trust them. After members clashed again with police in early 1933, the union became widely known for its militant stance and people joined in droves. The union had 73 locals by June.

In the mid-1930s, the union launched a series of strikes to protest planter abuse of New Deal legislation. Although cotton strikes in 1933 and 1934 failed to make significant gains, they reinforced the union's militant reputation. By the

spring of 1935, the union claimed more than 10,000 members. At this high point, Communist Party USA abandoned confrontational tactics for participation in the Popular Front. The Central Committee replaced Murphy with Clyde Johnson, a white Communist from Minnesota.

During the Popular Front era, Johnson tried to transform the SCU from a secretive, armed movement into a public trade union. To do this, he sought to ally the union with other agrarian organizations. Although early efforts failed, black sharecroppers in Louisiana joined the union in late 1935. By May 1936, the union claimed more than 1,000 members in Louisiana. Later that year, the union merged with the Alabama Farmers Union (AFU), the state wing of the left-leaning National Farmers Union. The Louisiana locals were chartered as the Louisiana Farmers Union (LFU). This enlarged union called for New Deal legislation to help tenants achieve farm ownership, mortgage relief, and crop loans, and to establish price controls. Shifts in cotton production, however, had demoted most black members into wage labor by 1937. Seeking better representation, wage workers left the AFU and LFU that year and formed District 9 of the CIO-affiliated United Canning and Packing Workers of America (UCAPAWA). Tenants remained in the LFU. Economic and bureaucratic changes weakened both unions. Led by Hosea Hudson, a black Communist from Alabama, District 9 claimed only 2,000 members in 14 locals in late 1938; the LFU, meanwhile, had only 900 members. By 1940, District 9 had collapsed. The LFU grew to as many as 3,000 members by 1940, but suffered because of its communist ties. It disappeared during World War II. *See also:* Colored Farmers Alliance

Jarod H. Roll

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## Sharecropping

Sharecropping was a labor system that grew in the wake of the Civil War and passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Penniless and landless, former enslaved African Americans became “croppers,” working on the same lands owned by their former owners. Because most landowners lacked cash and had to borrow money to produce crops, they employed croppers without paying them wages in most cases. Croppers would receive a portion of the crop yield on land designated from them, in exchange for a one-half or one-third share of the crop, farming tools, seed, and the use of mules and other beasts of burden (e.g., horses and oxen). With their share of the crop, African Americans could sell it to the merchant who extended credit to the land owner, or they could buy things like food and clothing on credit, normally at exorbitant rates, from a furnishing merchant, who, in some cases, was also the landowner.

In many ways, this labor system was akin to slavery or, at the minimum, debt peonage, in that croppers generated 100 percent of the labor in exchange for food, clothing, and shelter. With that said, there were a handful of significant differences for African American croppers. Although they earned no wages, croppers worked the land allotted to them as families, not as work gangs, and they typically did not work under direct white supervision. Without the ability to read or write, many African American sharecroppers were cheated out of their fair share of the crop, did not receive the correct value for their crop when purchasing items on credit, and were stuck in a constant cycle of debt. Sharecropping was perhaps singular proof that the key failure of Reconstruction was the failure to redistribute confiscated and abandoned land to ex-slaves. Until the Great Migration, the lives of the majority of African Americans would be bound to crop cultivation on the lands of former slave owners well into the 20th century.

*See also:* Black Nadir; Forty Acres and a Mule; Sharecroppers Union; Thirteenth Amendment; Washington, Booker T.

Walter C. Rucker

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## Sharpton, Al

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Alfred Charles Sharpton Jr. (1954–), a black Pentecostal minister and a civil rights activist known for his inflammatory speeches on racial injustice, led a series of protest marches and sit-ins during the 1970s and 1980s in New York City. This controversial public figure represented the extreme wing of black activism.

Sharpton was born in a middle-class neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, until a domestic tragedy forced his move to a housing project in the Brownsville area of the borough. This firsthand experience of the living conditions in this poor neighborhood, along with his profound admiration to the developing new black conscious and protests in the decades after World War II, directed Sharpton to the Civil Rights movement.

Dropping out of Brooklyn College, New York, he became the first youth director of Operation Breadbasket, an organization that boycotted and picketed corporations and supermarkets that conducted unfair business. In his biggest confrontation with the grocery chain store A&P, he was arrested along with Reverend Jesse Jackson.

In 1971, Sharpton became the youngest director of National Youth Movement (NYM), which aimed at combating police brutality and fighting drug abuse. Associating with James Brown, an American music legendary, Sharpton organized Hit Brown, a black concert promotion strategy and made concerted efforts to change the racial composition of the music business. But his endeavor in this direction did not bear fruit because he was suspected of having links with organized crime. This jeopardized his image and that of his movement in the community.

Sharpton protested against the New York City administration on several occasions. During the 1970 sit-in at New York City Hall, he demanded more summer jobs for blacks and for fair hiring and proper treatment of African Americans. A few months later, he led a group of black leaders to the New York deputy mayor's office meeting to protest the death of a 14-year-old black youth. In both instances he was arrested for his role in instigating racial tensions.

During the series of killings in the 1980s, Sharpton was a vibrant voice in his community. He stood in the front line of protest marches and sit-ins. The first instance that ignited racial violence was during the shooting death of four black unarmed teens. Bernard Goetz, a white man, was charged

for this crime, but was later acquitted of murder charges. Sharpton and a group of his followers held a protest vigil at the steps of the New York City courthouse condemning the all-white grand jury for this decision. He led protest marches and sit-ins strikes on transit rail tracks after a white mob assaulted three black men at Howard Beach in Brooklyn, New York.

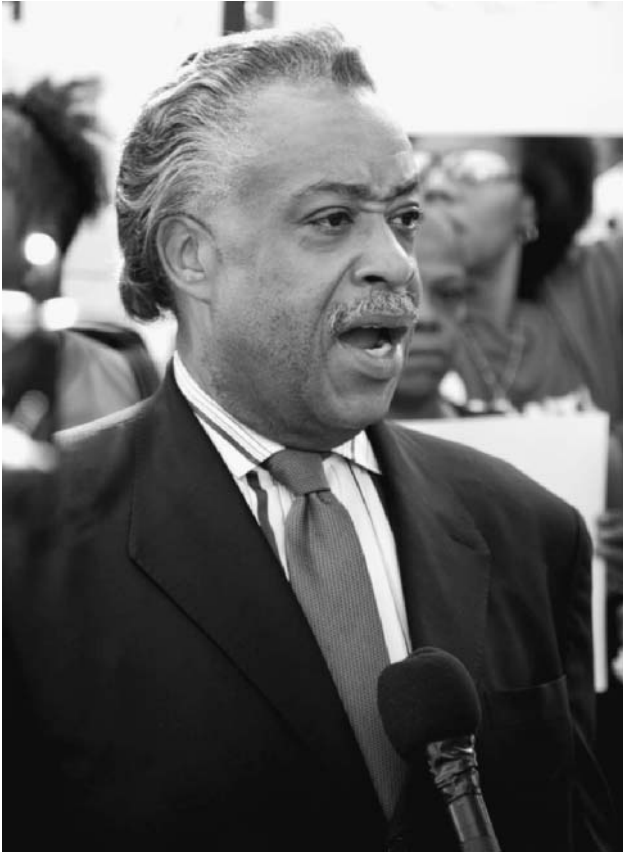
In this atmosphere of racial polarity, Sharpton organized another strike at the Grand Central Station rail tracks during morning rush hour to protest the hiring policy of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). His public debate with New York Governor George Pataki forced the highest official in the state to appoint the first black MTA board member, Laura Blackburn. This incident was a stepping stone for his rise to prominence in the national media as a civil rights leader.

In 1987, Tawana Brawley, an African American teen from Wappinger's Falls, New York, was found inside a garbage bag with racial epithets and dog feces smeared on her face. A gang of white men did the same to another black woman in Newton, New Jersey. In both these cases justice was not served. Sharpton held rallies at the steps of the New York City courthouse and brought national media attention to these injustices in the judicial system.

Two years later, a white mob killed a 16-year-old African American teen, Yusuf Hawkins, in Bensonhurst, New York. While leading a march to protest this crime, Michael Riccardi, a 27-year-old white man stabbed the minister in his chest. After this incident, Sharpton changed his strategy in fighting racial injustice. Even though he adopted a conciliatory approach to race relations and tried to establish ground in the white community, he came under FBI investigation of his past income tax returns.

He attempted to run twice for the U.S. Senate, garnering only a small percentage of the vote in the election primaries. Despite this failure, he was one of the few African Americans who won a place as a power broker in the New York political scene, who led a campaign during Decision 2000 in favor of Albert Gore Jr., the Democratic presidential candidate, and the only African American in the 2004 Democratic presidential primaries.

Sharpton stands as a committed advocate of the rights of the African Americans. He, along with Reverend Jesse Jackson and other civil rights leaders, continues the fight against racism, urban poverty, and racial violence in the nation.



*Reverend Al Sharpton leads a protest to stop the execution of Troy Davis, a Georgia death row inmate, October 2008. (Katherine Welles)*

See also: Bensonhurst, New York, Incident of 1989; Brown, James; Diallo, Amadou; Howard Beach Incident, 1986; Jackson, Jesse

*Sivananda Mantri*

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## **Shuttlesworth, Fred**

Reverend Fred Lee Shuttlesworth (1922–), a minister and human rights activist, was one of the staunchest and most courageous opponents of racial discrimination and segregation during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and

1960s. Shuttlesworth and the organization he led, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), were instrumental in desegregating Birmingham, Alabama, one of the most segregated cities in the South and the home of Eugene “Bull” Connor, the notorious segregationist who used violence to maintain racial discrimination. The civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham during the spring of 1963, where police dogs and fire hoses were used to assault peaceful civil rights activists, some of them children, were broadcast on television to the United States and the world, prompting widespread support for desegregation. More important, the violence compelled President John Kennedy to enact legislation that would eventually become the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public accommodations. Although Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led the protests in conjunction with the ACMHR, King and the SCLC have received most of the credit for the success of the Birmingham demonstrations. Activists and scholars agree, however, that it was the work of Shuttlesworth and the ACMHR that ultimately made the demonstrations successful.

Fred Shuttlesworth was born Freddie Lee Robinson on March 18, 1922, in Mt. Meigs, Alabama to Alberta Robinson and Vedder Greene. The unmarried couple also produced a daughter, Cleola. It was from his mother that Shuttlesworth would get his combative personality, earthy spirituality, and indomitable will, traits that would prove invaluable when challenging the authority of Bull Connor and the rigid code of race relations in Birmingham and the South as a whole. In 1925, Ms. Robinson and the children moved to Oxmoor, Alabama, where she would later marry William Nathan Shuttlesworth, a farmer and former miner. Both Fred and his sister would take his last name. Seven siblings would follow soon after. Although Shuttlesworth and his family grew up in poverty, they were able to maintain some stability. His childhood would cement identification with poor and working-class folk, and it was this segment of the African American population that proved to be Shuttlesworth’s staunchest supporters.

Birmingham was known as a rigidly segregated city that would not hesitate to violently keep African Americans in their “place.” In fact, African Americans referred to the city as “Bombingham,” and one black community was known as “Dynamite Hill,” for the number of bombings that took place there. Any African American who protested

against discriminatory treatment could be attacked or even killed. It was while attending high school in Birmingham that Shuttlesworth would come face-to-face with racial discrimination, growing resentful of the rundown conditions of buses used to transport black children to equally dilapidated schools while white children enjoyed newer facilities and more reliable transportation. He was also subjected to the discriminatory behavior of the Birmingham police force. Shuttlesworth would distinguish himself as a student and athlete at Rosedale High School, graduating as class valedictorian in May 1940. Within a year of graduating, Shuttlesworth would marry the former Ruby Keeler, a union that produced four children: Patricia, Ruby Fredericka (Ricky), Fred Jr., and Carolyn.

Now with a growing family, Shuttlesworth would gradually embark on a career as a minister, a vocation he began to think about after graduating high school. Moving the family to Mobile, Alabama, to work as a truck driver on an air base, Shuttlesworth would study the Bible. Initially an African Methodist, Shuttlesworth would become a Baptist, and began occasional preaching at the invitation of Pastor E. A. Palmer of Corinthian Baptist Church. Talented as a preacher, Shuttlesworth would receive invitations to preach before other congregations and would further his theological education at Cedar Grove Academy in Prichard, Alabama. In September 1947, after completing the Academy, Shuttlesworth enrolled at Selma University. The next year, he was ordained as a Baptist minister on August 10, 1948, at Corinthian Baptist Church.

In 1949, the family moved to Montgomery and Shuttlesworth enrolled at Alabama State College, later serving as pastor of First (African) Baptist Church in Selma in 1950. It was at First Baptist that Shuttlesworth would encounter some of the class conflicts within the black community that would later plague his relationship with some churches in Birmingham. Shuttlesworth's class orientation, folksy preaching style, and blunt, direct manner caused problems with the more middle-class sensibilities of the church congregation, and Shuttlesworth left after two years. The next year Shuttlesworth accepted the pastorate of Bethel Baptist Church in an African American section of North Birmingham known as Collegeville. It was here that Shuttlesworth and his followers would begin a veritable crusade against the evils of Jim Crow segregation and other forms of racial discrimination in the city known unofficially as the "Johannesburg of the South."

Shuttlesworth began his crusade in earnest after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in May 1954, which ruled school segregation unconstitutional. Determined to make the ruling a reality, Shuttlesworth joined the local branch of the NAACP. Headed by some members of the African American middle-class, the leadership was slow to respond to Shuttlesworth's suggestions and demands, which included petitioning the city for more black police officers and complying with the *Brown* decision. The local leadership and the city both rejected the requests.

In reaction to increasing demands of African Americans to dismantle segregation and extend freedom and democracy to all American citizens in the aftermath of the *Brown* decision, white state authorities in Alabama in 1956 were successful in banning the Alabama NAACP, preventing the organization from operating within the state. Shuttlesworth and members of his congregation then formed the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights on June 5, 1956, to carry on the fight, basing the organization on Christian and patriotic principles while calling for desegregation and expanded employment opportunities. Its membership consisted of mostly working-class African Americans, with the majority being black women, and they used direct action protests such as marches and sit-ins to highlight grievances. The ACMHR also believed strongly that God supported their efforts and their religious fervor spread rapidly to other African Americans. It would soon be the only organization in Birmingham to stand up to Bull Connor and other segregationists.

Shuttlesworth's courage knew no bounds, and his actions suggested that he and his family were willing to make sacrifices to bring about equality. After bus segregation was declared unconstitutional on December 20, 1956, Shuttlesworth announced that African Americans would ride the buses on a nondiscriminatory basis, despite resistance from the City Commission to a petition submitted by the ACMHR. On Christmas Day, Shuttlesworth's home next to the church was bombed when dynamite exploded under his bed. Although Bethel Baptist and the home were severely damaged, miraculously, Shuttlesworth received only scratches. Shuttlesworth and his followers took this as a sign that God was protecting him to lead the movement. Shuttlesworth would have other opportunities to put himself in harm's way. Demanding school desegregation,

Shuttlesworth attempted to enroll his daughters at all-white Phillips High School; that same day, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957. A white mob beat Shuttlesworth severely with chains and baseball bats while his wife was stabbed and children suffered injuries. Again, Shuttlesworth survived. In 1958, the *Birmingham World* named Shuttlesworth “Newsmaker of the Year,” for 1957.

Between 1958 and 1961, Bull Connor increased his harassment of Shuttlesworth and the ACMHR as they continued to demand that the city commission hire black policemen and desegregate schools and parks. When black students began a sit-in at segregated stores and restaurants in 1960, Shuttlesworth encouraged them. Shuttlesworth was arrested several times during this period, and Bethel Baptist Church was also bombed for a second time. The activism would extend to Shuttlesworth’s children, as Pat, Ricky (Fredericka) and Fred Jr. were arrested in Gadsden, Alabama, for allegedly causing a disturbance on a Greyhound bus on August 16, 1960. Shuttlesworth would experience personal problems, however, as he and Ruby disagreed over money, his civil rights activities, and church responsibilities. Shuttlesworth also experienced problems in Bethel Baptist, causing him to agree to the pastorate of Revelation Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1961, although he continued to be heavily involved in Birmingham.

Shuttlesworth immersed himself in the Civil Rights movement in other parts of Alabama and throughout the South. He attended meetings of, and pledged financial support to, the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization created after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated city bus on December 1, 1955, prompting the Montgomery bus boycott that brought Martin Luther King Jr. to national prominence. He was a founding member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, a major civil rights organization created for Dr. King to support local civil rights struggles throughout the South. And during the Freedom Rides of 1961, Shuttlesworth served as the point person for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), taking care of riders who were attacked in Birmingham.

In 1962, SCLC looked for a situation that would garner more national and international support for the Civil Rights movement. Shuttlesworth continuously urged Dr. King and the SCLC board to conduct demonstrations in Birmingham, feeling that if segregation could be broken there, it would cause desegregation in other parts of the

South. At the same time, Dr. King and the SCLC needed something to push a reluctant federal government to end segregation. They hoped to do that by demonstrating to the public, through marches and sit-ins, how far segregationists would go to continue to deprive African Americans of their citizenship rights.

In spring 1963, King and the SCLC agreed to work with the ACMHR to carry out Project “C” (for confrontation) to advance the local and national movements, demanding total desegregation of schools and public facilities and the removal of obstacles to voter registration while forcing the Kennedy administration to act. Shuttlesworth led mass marches on city hall and helped organize other demonstrations and support. He later suffered injuries from a fire hose while demonstrating downtown. Although Shuttlesworth would disagree with some of King and the SCLC’s decisions regarding negotiations with the city, it was he who declared the demonstrations ended in May 1963 when the SCLC and the city reached a limited agreement on gradual desegregation of public facilities and gradual upgrading of black employees. The demonstrations directly resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing segregation in public accommodations among other provisions.

Shuttlesworth would continue his activism in the succeeding years, remaining involved in the local movement in Birmingham while also demonstrating against unfair conditions in and around Cincinnati. In March 1989, he established the Shuttlesworth Housing Foundation to provide low-cost housing to poor families. He experienced continued strained relationships in his personal life, divorcing his wife Ruby in 1970 after 29 years of marriage and resigning from Revelation Baptist Church in 1966 to form another congregation. Shuttlesworth has received several accolades for his activism, the city of Birmingham renaming Huntsville Road in his honor in September 1978 and having a statue of his likeness erected in front of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and Museum in November 1992. In 2008, the Birmingham International Airport was renamed Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport in his honor. He currently resides in Birmingham after retiring from the ministry in 2006.

*See also:* Bombingham; Jim Crow; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

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**Simpson, O. J.**

The life of Orenthal James (“O. J.”) Simpson (1947–) was forever changed on July 8, 1994. On that day Simpson, who was once one of the most beloved American sports icons, was charged with the double murder of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Before his tragic fall from grace, Simpson was a model of meritocracy for African Americans and was well respected by whites as an acceptable black who made the transition to the mainstream. He was an adored TV pitchman and sports commentator for NBC, and he had a somewhat successful stint as an actor. Simpson was even welcomed in country clubs during the 1980s, freely interacting in the segregated world of wealthy whites, and because of his huge popularity, he was the first African American crossover athlete to receive major corporate endorsements. Simpson paved the way for the lucrative advertising contracts that Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, and LeBron James now enjoy.

Using sports as a means to escape the pitfalls of Potrero Hill, the San Francisco neighborhood in which he grew up, Simpson emerged as an All-American football hero in the late 1960s. He came from a humble background, as his father left when Simpson was a child, forcing Simpson’s mother to bear the burden of supporting four children. Although he often got into trouble as a teen, Simpson graduated from Galileo High School in 1965 and enrolled at City College in San Francisco. He not only did well on the field but also in the classroom, as he was able to pull his grades up to qualify to play at a Division I-A school. In 1967, Simpson transferred to the University of Southern California (USC)

and married his first wife, Marguerite L. Whitley. He helped lead USC to the Rose Bowl and a national championship that year and earned All-American honors. In 1968, Simpson won the Heisman trophy and the next year was chosen as the first pick of the Buffalo Bills in the American Football League (AFL) draft. Simpson struggled to live up to his college reputation on the gridiron during his first three seasons, averaging a little over 600 yards. By his fourth year, after the AFL merged with the National Football League (NFL), Simpson was an offensive juggernaut and became the first NFL player to gain over 2,000 yards in one season. Simpson wowed Bills fans with his explosive running style, which catapulted him to celebrity status both on and off the field. In 1969, he got his first product endorsement with Chevrolet, and when Hertz hired him in 1975, Simpson became the first black celebrity spokesman for a major corporation. The Hertz commercials led to other contracts with companies such as Tree Sweet Orange Juice, Foster Grant Sunglasses, RC Cola, and Nabisco.

Five years after he signed the Hertz deal, Simpson’s 11-year marriage to Marguerite ended. A knee injury forced him to retire from football in 1979, the year after he was traded to the San Francisco 49ers. Facing life for the first time without football at the relatively young age of 32, Simpson used his fame for big payoffs in the business world. He hired lawyers who invested his football fortunes in food franchises such as Pioneer Chicken and Honey-Baked Ham stores, and he was also the main attraction at celebrity golf tournaments and convention banquets.

Simpson was inducted into the Football Hall of Fame in 1985, the same year he married Nicole Brown. Their marriage was very unstable, and in 1989 Nicole filed assault charges against Simpson, but he was given a light sentence—a \$470 fine, 120 hours of community service, and mandated counseling twice a week. Unable to reconcile their differences, Nicole filed for divorce in 1992. Simpson not only lost his wife, but also was starting to lose his celebrity image as his popularity declined in the 1990s.

When Simpson was charged with the murders of his ex-wife Nicole and Ronald Goldman, race became a dominating factor in how the trial was covered and perceived. Having been a favorite son of America, many whites were disturbed and even felt betrayed by Simpson, who they thought played by all the rules to achieve the American dream. Thus, in many ways, the Simpson tragedy was a bitter reminder to the nation that a colorblind society did not exist.

*Newsweek* and *Time* magazines had some of the most controversial pretrial coverage of Simpson's disgraced image. In an article titled "Day and Night," *Newsweek* reporter Evan Thomas described Simpson as a man who eventually went wrong because he tried to go white. Using the theme of "two-ness"—a term W. E. B. Du Bois coined that relates to the struggle of being American as well as black—Thomas depicted Simpson as a black man who deliberately played the race card to get ahead. Thomas likened Nicole to a trophy wife and criticized Simpson for aspiring to be a successful actor, a goal Thomas said was based more on hope than reason. Although Simpson's company, Orenthal Productions, made four successful TV movies for NBC, Thomas does not credit him for being a smart business owner. Although he concedes that whites did not perceive Simpson as a threat, Thomas's constant referrals to Simpson as a face man in the business world and Simpson's attraction to white women conveyed the image of the black male white America fears.

*Time*'s June 27, 1994 story, "End of the Run," was somewhat objective in its reporting, but stereotypical in its presentation of Simpson's mug shot on the cover. *Time* used a computer to darken Simpson's appearance, making him appear more blurred and heavily bearded, which brought charges of racism from prominent African Americans. In an editorial for *The Chicago Defender*, Earl Ofari Hutchinson claimed that *Time* darkened Simpson's photo to make him look more menacing and that the magazine's treatment of Jeffrey Dahmer, a confessed serial killer, was more favorable than its coverage of Simpson. Hutchinson pointed out that *Time* did not tamper with the photographs of Dahmer but presented him as a contrite young man. He also explained that *Time* did not scrutinize Dahmer's personality or make judgments about his character, but highlighted speculation about Simpson and called his relationship with Nicole dysfunctional and characterized by physical abuse.

As *Newsweek* and *Time* chose to examine controversial traits of Simpson's life, the black press was divided in its coverage because Simpson was not considered the usual black victim, and some African American reporters expressed no sympathy for him. Black newspapers did point out the disparity in terms of how white men had been portrayed in the media who committed similar crimes. Yet, owing to Simpson's crossover appeal, black publications such as *The New Pittsburgh Courier* reprimanded him for abandoning his community and claimed he had reneged on his obligation

to black America. Most black newspapers did not indicate a presumption of guilt as *Newsweek* and *Time* had done, but rather asserted that Simpson had allowed himself to become too deeply entrenched into the mainstream.

After Simpson was arraigned for the murders of Nicole and Goldman, he stated that he was "absolutely, one hundred percent not guilty" during his second court appearance on July 23, 1994. He assembled a defense of high profile lawyers, whom the press nicknamed the Dream Team, which included Johnnie Cochran, Alan Dershowitz, Barry Scheck, Robert Kardashian, F. Lee Bailey, and Robert Shapiro. The trial lasted eight months and was covered daily by Court TV and a plethora of other media outlets. The prosecution argued that Simpson killed his wife and Goldman out of envious rage and attempted to use DNA evidence to convince the jury of Simpson's guilt. DNA experts testified that blood found in Simpson's home and truck matched Nicole and Goldman's. The defense, however, argued that Simpson was a victim of a setup by the police, claiming that evidence had been planted and blood samples were contaminated. One of the major turning points in the trial occurred when the defense exposed tapes of LAPD detective Mark Fuhrman using the word "nigger" in reference to African Americans. This contradicted Fuhrman's earlier testimony that he had not used derogatory terms to describe blacks, and it cast reasonable doubt on his claim to having found a black leather glove stained with Nicole and Goldman's blood, as well as blood in the driveway of Simpson's home. Another gaffe of the prosecution was their request for Simpson to try on the bloody glove, which had undergone extensive examination in the crime lab. The glove was apparently too small for Simpson's hand and Cochran, in perhaps one of the most famous quotes from the trial, urged the jury that "if it doesn't fit you must acquit."

Of the 12 jurors, 9 were black, and when Simpson was acquitted of the murders on October 3, 1995, race became a prevalent polarizing factor in how many Americans believed the jury reached its verdict. A *Newsweek* poll taken 13 days after the jury's decision revealed that 54 percent of whites disagreed with the "Not Guilty" verdict, but 85 percent of blacks believed it was the right ruling; 66 percent of blacks thought Simpson probably did not commit the slayings, but 74 percent of whites thought he probably did. Simpson immediately became a social outcast, as most whites believed he had escaped conviction. He endured constant scorn on golf courses and sneers in restaurants,



as many accused him of craving the attention he received before his legal troubles began.

The Goldman and Brown families filed a civil suit against Simpson after the criminal trial and won \$8.5 million on February 4, 1997. Punitive damages were later brought against Simpson for \$25 million to be shared between Fred Goldman and Nicole's children. Simpson appealed the verdict, but the civil judgment was upheld in court. Since the civil trial, Simpson has become a constant tabloid figure, appearing on various cable shows still trying to tell his side of the story and proclaim his innocence. Eleven years after the criminal trial, he made what many considered one of his most arrogant moves with the release of the book *If I Did It*. *If I Did It* was not a confession but as Simpson claimed, an account of how he would have committed the murders of Nicole and Goldman. Ron Goldman's father was awarded the rights to the book to help pay the damages ordered by the civil suit judgment, but most bookstores refused to promote or sell it. Simpson received approximately \$630,000 after *If I Did It* was completed, but the book was cancelled as a result of the public's extreme opposition.

Late in 2007, Simpson infamously made the headlines again when he and two associates were accused of robbing and kidnapping sports memorabilia dealers at gunpoint in a Las Vegas hotel-casino. Simpson maintained that he was trying to retrieve items that belonged to him and pleaded not guilty to all charges. The armed robbery case was not the cultural and racial spectacle that the media fueled in 1995, but the factor of race was again questioned, as no African Americans were on the jury. Thirteen years to the exact date that Simpson was acquitted of double murder, the jury found him, along with co-defendant Clarence (C. J.) Stewart, guilty of first-degree kidnapping, armed robbery, and 10 other charges in connection with the Las Vegas holdup. Simpson's attorneys plan to appeal, arguing that Simpson was a victim of racial prejudice associated with the 1995 homicide ruling. Both Simpson and Stewart face up to life in prison.

The armed robbery case brought attention to the national division in terms of how African Americans and whites feel regarding Simpson. Less than 30 percent of whites today believe that Simpson is not guilty of murder, but almost 90 percent of blacks still think he is innocent. Many African Americans also question the criminal proceedings and the nature of the Las Vegas case, as they did the 1995 trial. Those who absolutely loathe Simpson,

however, consider his current status as a convicted felon an indirect way of bringing him to justice.

*See also:* Black Athletes

Jessica A. Johnson

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## Singleton, Benjamin "Pap"

Benjamin Singleton (1809-1892) pioneered the large-scale black emigration movement from the South to the Midwest during the last quarter of the 19th century. The self-proclaimed "Moses of the Colored Exodus" inspired thousands of African Americans, known as the Exodusters, to permanently relocate to Kansas and other states in the 1870s and 1880s.

Details of Singleton's early life are sketchy. Born a slave in Nashville, Tennessee, he learned the carpenter and cabinetmaker trades as he grew up. Although his owner sold him to Gulf Coast slaveholders numerous times, he always escaped and made his way back. Eventually, he fled briefly to Canada, but soon after took up residence in Detroit, where he surreptitiously aided other fugitives until the end of the Civil War. Singleton then returned home to Middle Tennessee in 1865 and began his public career in Edgefield as an advocate for the newly freed slaves. Mild-mannered, compassionate, and friendly, he became known universally as "Pap."

Asserting that the ownership of land offered the greatest opportunity for advancement and security, Singleton encouraged freed people to save their money to purchase small plots, rather than rent them. He and his associates organized the Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead

Association (1869), which attempted to locate available tracts on the outskirts of Nashville. Although some white people aided and encouraged Singleton, the endeavor failed. Most landowners either refused to sell to black people at all or demanded high prices for worn-out cropland.

Singleton's lack of success in this effort led him to conclude that freed people needed to separate entirely from their former masters and establish new lives outside the South. He looked at Kansas, the former home of abolitionist John Brown, as a possible refuge. Beginning in 1869, small parties of African Americans had ventured to the fertile prairies and began sending back encouraging reports of the conditions there. Singleton himself journeyed to Kansas in 1873 and, favorably impressed, returned with a group of pioneers to the southeastern part of the state, where he founded Singleton's Colony on 1,000 acres near Baxter Springs.

After coming back to Nashville the following year, "Pap" immediately made plans to take additional colonists west. Aided by like-minded colleagues in Tennessee, such as Columbus Johnson and A. D. DeFrantz, Singleton's revitalized Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead Association recruited and prepared likely emigrants; located suitable public lands for settlement (such as the communities of Dunlap and Nicodemus); and arranged special rates with steamboat companies for transportation to Topeka.

Wary of educated people and distrustful of politicians, Singleton acted, he believed, in the interests of the common people. In most of the South, sharecropping was proving to be little better than slavery, political promises had borne scarce fruit, and legal protection had steadily deteriorated. Many contemporary black leaders with statewide or national reputations opposed large-scale migrations out of the South as undermining black political strength. Singleton, however, disputed this rationale and insisted that the social and economic benefits of the exodus outweighed the political costs.

In the spring of 1880, an investigative committee of the United States Senate called Singleton to Washington to explain the agenda and goals of the Exoduster movement. He dramatized the impoverished position of African Americans in the South and asserted that only a mass emigration could provide the impetus for positive change. He claimed full responsibility for putting the undertaking into motion and dismissed those who ascribed more mundane causes for the exodus as unwilling to give him the proper credit that he deserved.

By 1880, years of black immigration to Kansas had severely taxed that state's resources. The later arrivals tended to be poorer than those who came earlier and almost no employment opportunities existed. After urging prospective homesteaders not to come to Kansas, Singleton and his allies searched for a new destination outside the United States for those leaving the South. After considering Canada but ultimately rejecting it as too cold, they settled on Liberia, where African Americans could have a government of their own. Few people, however, immigrated to Africa at that time.

By the mid-1880s, Singleton was more than 75 years old and was growing feeble, but he still devoted his energy to the cause. After years of promoting black nationalism, "Pap" had accumulated little to see him through old age. As his personal honesty and sincerity remained apparent to all who came in contact with him, and in recognition of a lifetime of service, the black community of the Midwest embraced "Pap" until the end of his life. Each year on his birthday, hundreds of African American supporters gathered at a suitable outdoor venue in either Topeka or St. Louis for a party that honored Singleton and served as a fundraiser for his support in the coming year. These annual celebrations continued until 1892, when Singleton died in Topeka at the age of 83.

*See also:* Exoduster Movement; Nicodemus, Kansas

*Michael Thomas Gavin*

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## Sit-In Movement

The sit-in movement was just one of a number of techniques used by civil rights supporters in their campaign to end racial segregation. They appealed to the courts, the legislature, and sometimes the President of the United States for relief.

From time to time they depended on the actions of the federal government to sweep away discrimination in the military or in education. But the sit-in movement, which was not mandated by a Presidential Executive Order or driven by a Supreme Court decision, was just as important. It helped sweep away legal and cultural barriers that had blocked African Americans from equal access to food service, and enabled the Civil Rights movement to take greater advantage of an untapped resource: young African Americans.

The idea of the sit-in as a way to end food service segregation was not new. It had been tried in Chicago and St. Louis in the 1940s and in Baltimore in 1953. But little attention was paid to the attempts or the reasons for them. The idea gained new energy in the wake of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, where African Americans, using nonviolent methods, effectively ended the practice of segregated bus seating in Montgomery, Alabama. Montgomery's civic leaders expected African Americans to tolerate the humiliation of riding in the back of city busses to and from their downtown shopping trips. If the local economy could be crippled by a bus boycott, and whites required to treat African Americans with respect, could not the same be done by a sit-in?

In 1958, civil rights leaders began sponsoring a series of workshops throughout the South to train people in the ways of nonviolent protest. Many African American college students in and around the Nashville, Tennessee area attended those workshops. Their ultimate goal was to desegregate the lunch counters in Nashville's department stores. It did not make sense to them that although the stores would sell them clothes and school supplies, they would refuse them service when they wanted something to eat. The students' training was designed to prepare themselves for the day when they would break the color barrier at Nashville's lunch counters.

But four African American students from North Carolina's College of Agriculture and Technology beat them to the punch. On February 1, 1960, Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, David Richmond, and Ezell Blair Jr. strolled into the Woolworth's department store in downtown Greensboro. They bought toothpaste and school supplies, and then settled into seats at the lunch counter and ordered coffee. First, they were ignored. Then they were told they would not be served. Finally, the store manager called the police to complain. The police did nothing because the protesters were doing nothing. Four well-dressed young African American college students were sitting quietly at the lunch counter, waiting for service and doing their homework while

they waited. Exasperated, the manager closed early. The four young men left, only to return. But this time there were six of them. By the end of the week there were more than 300 African American students seeking service at lunch counters at Woolworth's and at S. H. Kress and Company, another department store in Greensboro. They tried to order food. They were denied service, but remained at the counter, waiting quietly. Joining the sit-in were white students. Newspaper reporters and photographers were also on hand to record the events. When businesses considered the potential impact of the protest on their bottom line, many of them, including Woolworth's, rethought their policies, and by August, 1960, desegregated their lunch counters.

But the lunch counter sit-ins had repercussions that went far beyond Greensboro's city limits. Soon black and white students were staging sit-ins at restaurants, play-ins at segregated parks, and read-ins at segregated libraries across the United States. A few weeks after the events in Greensboro, students in Nashville began sitting in at lunch counters in their city. There was violence, as white students attacked the demonstrators, and later arrests, as the police moved into to take them to jail. But every time an African American student was removed from a lunch counter, there was another student waiting to take his/her place. The nonviolent protests, and the sometimes violent reaction, continued until May, when Nashville changed its policies and began serving African Americans at department store lunch counters.

The sit-ins also caused the leadership of the Civil Rights movement to think about how best to capitalize on this infusion of youthful energy. The answer materialized in late 1960 when the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) underwrote the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). "Snick," as it was called, was originally composed of black and white university students who would enter the Civil Rights movement armed with energy and enthusiasm, determined to achieve equality wherever inequality might be found. In 1961, veterans of the sit-ins were participating in Freedom Rides, venturing into the Deep South on commercial busses to test compliance with federal laws guaranteeing equal treatment in interstate bus terminals. Later those same students would be in Mississippi, helping to register voters for the 1964 presidential election. The lunch counter sit-ins energized the Civil Rights movement by adding youth to the campaign to end inequality and adding national attention to the cause.



On February 1, 1960, four young African American college students walked into the Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat down at a whites-only lunch counter and triggered the Civil Rights movement that spread across the nation. Shown here on February 2, 1960, are (left to right) Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Billy Smith, and Clarence Henderson. (Library of Congress)

See also: Baker, Ella; Freedom Rides; Lewis, John; Nash, Diane; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

John Morello

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## Sixteenth Street Baptist Church

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama is an important historic site of the Civil Rights movement.

The home of Birmingham's first African American congregation, the church became a center of civil rights activity and the location of a tragic racially motivated bombing.

Birmingham, Alabama's first African American church was established in 1873, less than two years after the city was incorporated. Founded by migrants from rural Alabama who had come to work in the new industrial city's mines and mills, The First Colored Baptist Church of Birmingham met in a tinner's shop. The growing congregation later moved into its own downtown building. In July 1882, the congregation purchased a lot on the corner of Sixth Avenue North and Sixteenth Street, where the church now stands, and took the name Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. By 1887, the congregation constructed an impressive gothic revival building on the site, with several members of the church mortgaging their homes to help complete the project. This building was demolished in 1909 and replaced in 1911 with the present structure, designed by African American architect Wallace A. Rayfield. Largely Romanesque in design, the brick church features a central entrance porch flanked by two towers and stained-glass windows.

By the early 20th century, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church had grown to more than 1,000 members and was a major church of Birmingham's African American elite and middle class. Many members held professional positions, such as educators, and many were successful business people and community leaders. Located in Birmingham's downtown black business district, and with a seating capacity of 1,600, the church hosted concerts and other cultural events and political meetings.

From the late 19th century to the 1960s, the City of Birmingham strictly enforced an extensive system of racial segregation. African Americans and whites were separated by law in many public facilities including street cars and busses, theaters, hospitals, and restaurants. Separate schools, libraries, and parks were maintained for blacks and whites, and facilities for African Americans were always inferior to those provided whites. Almost all Africans Americans in the city were prevented from voting, and before the late 1960s, Birmingham had no black elected officials, police officers, or fire fighters.



*Ambulance attendants load the body of an African American girl, one of four killed in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on September 15, 1963. (AP Photo)*

African Americans protested segregation and racial discrimination through legal actions in the courts, boycotts, sit-ins, and street demonstrations. In the spring of 1963, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by Martin Luther King Jr., worked with the Birmingham-based Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) led by Fred L. Shuttlesworth to organize large-scale demonstrations. Sixteenth Street Baptist Church hosted some of the weekly mass meetings sponsored by ACMHR. Because of its size and central location, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was used as a site to organize and launch daily demonstrations. These demonstrations generated worldwide publicity, as more than 3,000 demonstrators, including children, were jailed, and Birmingham authorities used police dogs and fire hoses against the demonstrators. Nationwide public reaction to the Birmingham protests encouraged the United States Congress to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Birmingham's public schools were desegregated during the second week of September 1963. Five African American students were placed in formerly all white schools, and violent protests occurred around the schools. In retaliation for the school desegregation, members of the Ku Klux Klan placed a bomb outside Sixteenth Street Baptist Church sometime during the night of Saturday, September 14. The bomb exploded the next morning at approximately 10:20 A.M., just as Sunday school classes were ending and before the start of the service. The explosion tore a large hole in the side of the church, blew out windows, and damaged the interior of the building. Four girls, Denise McNair (age 11), Addie Mae Collins (age 14), Cynthia Wesley (age 14), and Carole Robertson (age 14) were killed inside the basement women's rest room; they were crushed by falling debris. Several other members of the congregation were injured.

White supremacists had committed dozens of racially motivated bombings in the Birmingham area since the late 1940s, but the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing was the first in which people were killed. The bombing and the deaths of the four girls were reported worldwide, and the incident generated both sympathy and outrage. Birmingham mayor Albert Boutwell, a segregationist, wept when told of the deaths. The City of Birmingham established a reward fund to encourage witnesses to come forward with information.

Carole Robertson's funeral was held Tuesday, September 17 at St. John AME Church, as Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was too badly damaged, and nearly 2,000 people

attended. The next day a mass funeral for the other three girls was held at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. Martin Luther King Jr. preached the sermon at this service and a crowd estimated at 7,000 people filled the church and the street outside.

The Birmingham Police Department, the Alabama Department of Public Safety, and dozens of agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated the bombing. On September 30, the State of Alabama arrested three known Klansmen, Robert Chambliss, John Wesley Hall, and Charles Cagle. But the suspects were charged only with illegal possession of dynamite and were fined.

The church received contributions from throughout the world totaling more than \$200,000 to repair the damage done by the bombing. Sixteenth Street Baptist Church reopened in June 1964. In 1965, parishioners installed a large stained glass window over the front door of the sanctuary. Known as the Wales Window, it was donated by the people of Wales and depicts a black figure of Christ crucified and bears the inscription “You do it to me.”

No other arrests were made until Alabama Attorney General Bill Baxley reopened the investigation in 1971 and won a conviction of Robert Chambliss in 1977. Chambliss, whose nickname was “Dynamite Bob,” was a long-time Klansmen suspected in other racial bombings. He was sentenced to life in prison and died in 1985.

Public and media attention to the bombing was sporadic for more than a decade after the Chambliss conviction. Neither state nor federal law enforcement agencies made any serious efforts to investigate the case further or indict more suspects. But the church became a symbol of civil rights activism and sacrifice and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. In 1992, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, a museum and research center, opened across the street from Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Nearby Kelly Ingram Park was renovated and several pieces of sculpture honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and the Birmingham civil rights demonstrators were placed in the park. More than 200,000 people visit the area, now designated the Civil Rights District, each year.

By 1995, a change of leadership in the Birmingham office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation led to a reopening of the case. The FBI did not announce the reopening until 1997, and that same year filmmaker Spike Lee released *Four Little Girls*, his documentary about the bombing. The film was nominated for the Academy Award

and focused new international attention on the case. Also in 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed Doug Jones as U.S. attorney for the northern district of Alabama. Jones worked closely with the FBI and, in 2000, secured murder indictments against the two suspects still alive, Tommy Blanton and Bobby Frank Cherry. The two were tried separately. Blanton was convicted in 2001 and Cherry in 2002. Both were sentenced to life in prison.

In the 21st century the membership of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church has declined to about 200, but the church is a popular tourist and pilgrimage site. Because of the large number of visitors, weekly attendance at Sunday services averages 2,000. In 2007, the church completed the first phase of a major restoration, and fundraising continued to complete the restoration of the structure.

*See also:* Black Churches; Bombingham; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Shuttlesworth, Fred

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## Soledad Brothers

Despite its contemporary revolutionary connotations, the origin of the term “Soledad Brother” is far removed from progressive politics and revolutionary struggle. The term

originally denoted an African American incarcerated in California's Soledad Prison. During the early 1970s, the term became integral to a political lexicon that divided Americans along New Left, Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative lines. For black power advocates, the "Soledad Brothers" were an example of the spirit needed to overthrow American racial apartheid.

The "Soledad Brothers" legend centers on George Jackson (1941–1971). Although Jackson was born in Chicago, it would be on the West Coast, where the family migrated in the mid-1950s, that the legend of George Jackson would be established. Shortly after his arrival, Jackson fell into a pattern of juvenile delinquency, which landed him in the Paso Robles Youth Authority Corrections facility. Confinement proved to be no deterrent, as George continued his criminal behavior upon release. Jackson's petty crimes led to a charge of stealing \$71 from a local gas station. Considering Jackson's prior criminal activities, the judge sentenced the 18-year-old to a term of one year to life at Soledad Prison.

Once incarcerated, Jackson made several life-altering observations. Inspired by the revolutionary polemics of the Black Panther Party's (BPP) Huey P. Newton, Jackson began the process of becoming politicized. During his relatively frequent stays in solitary confinement, Jackson used his time wisely and voraciously devoured the works of Karl Marx, W. I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Mao Tse-tung (Zedong). Informed by such thinkers, Jackson emerged from solitary confinement with radical ideas. Before accepting a field marshal position with the BPP, a politicized Jackson formed the Black Guerilla Family (BGF) with fellow inmate W. L. Nolen. The BGF was initially intended to be a vehicle that politicized black and Hispanic inmates and organized in efforts to secure prison reforms. Despite Jackson's intentions, correction officers labeled the group a prison gang. Ironically, Black Panther Party cofounder Huey P. Newton would be murdered by a street-level drug dealing BGF member on August 22, 1989. The BGF wrought an immediate reaction from correction officers. Toward dismantling the BGF, corrections officers struck a lethal blow. On January 13, 1970, BGF cofounder W. L. Nolen, along with two other inmates, was murdered. When contextualized with other mid-1960s law enforcement attacks on black radicals, Nolen's demise was predictable.

Despite the natural desire to exact some form of retribution for Nolen's death, Panther politics forbid it; such behavior was considered counterrevolutionary. BPP Field

Marshall George Jackson was mired in a peculiar dilemma; his personal desire for revenge, which BPP Chairman Huey P. Newton denounced as "reactionary suicide," was supported, if not mandated, by Soledad's prison culture. Toward countering such tendencies within the BPP, Newton invalidated reactionary violence in two position papers: "*In Defense of Self-Defense*" and "*The Correct Handling of a Revolution.*" Newton had taught his cadre that it was a similar pursuit of retribution after Martin Luther King's assassination that led to the death of Lil' Bobby Hutton; Hutton had been the first to join the BPP. Jackson was torn between revolutionary edicts and prison culture. The matter was largely settled, however, after a grand jury ruled the murders justifiable homicide. In direct violation of existing revolutionary policies, George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clutchette murdered correction officer John Mills on January 13, 1970.

Within a late-1960s/early-1970s period of radicalism, the murder of a white correction officer by black inmates made sensational copy. Similar to Huey P. Newton's October 28, 1967 shootout, the "Soledad Brothers" became the cause célèbre for black revolutionaries and white radicals. Jackson's popularity would only increase with his legendary tomes: *Soledad Brother* and *Blood in My Eye*. Unbelievably, George Jackson's legend was extended by events that occurred absent his presence.

On August 7, 1970, Jonathan Jackson, George's younger brother, bodyguard for University of California, San Diego, Professor Angela Davis, stormed the Marin County Courthouse; the teenage Jackson executed the plan alone because the BPP deserted him moments before the attack was to commence. Jackson intended to send an unforgettable message via an unprecedented display of revolutionary actions. Jackson burst into the Marin County Courthouse brandishing a machine gun and carrying armaments for the three San Quentin prisoners—James McClain, William Christmas, and Ruchell Magee—involved in the day's court proceedings. Jackson instructed the others to take the judge, prosecutor, and three jurors' hostage. The teen-age Jackson planned to use the hostages as human shields while commandeering a local radio station. Jonathan intended to issue a national plea for the immediate end of the intolerable conditions present in the California penal system. Most important, Jackson sought to propagate the "Soledad Brothers" case and order their immediate release.

Unbeknownst to Jackson, officers had mobilized in the parking lot where a van awaited his return; as Jackson

attempted to exit, officers opened fire on the vehicle. When the firing ceased, Jonathan Jackson, inmates William Christmas and James McClain, and Judge Harold Haley were mortally wounded. The district attorney was paralyzed by gunfire. Inmate Ruchell Magee was struck, yet survived. The kidnapped jurors were unharmed. As a result of what came to be commonly referred to as “The August 7th Rebellion,” Magee would be charged with murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy.

Incredibly, the blame for Jackson’s attack was also laid at the doorstep of University of California, San Diego, Professor Angela Davis. Davis had already achieved prominence via her public battle with California Governor Ronald Reagan over academic freedom and free-speech issues; both concepts proved anathema to California’s highest elected public official throughout his public career. Despite his demise, Jackson had succeeded in bringing attention to the Soledad Brothers; however, tragedy loomed on the horizon.

In preparation for George Jackson’s trial, authorities transferred him to San Quentin Prison. Three days before the trial, August 21, 1971, BPP Field Marshall George Jackson was gunned down by prison guards while standing in San Quentin’s prison yard. Corrections officers alleged that Jackson was in the midst of an escape attempt that had commenced earlier that day via a prison riot that left two guards and three inmates dead. Officers bolstered their charges by alleging Jackson had a 9-mm automatic pistol in his possession during the escape attempt. The alluded to weapon was allegedly smuggled in by Jackson’s legal counsel Stephen Bingham; Bingham would eventually be acquitted of the charges. Eyewitnesses to Jackson’s horrific demise testified that Jackson was neither attempting an escape nor did he have a weapon in his possession when officers mortally struck Jackson with gunfire. Those present maintain that Jackson was murdered by officers seeking retribution for their two fallen colleagues. When pressed to support their theory that Jackson was armed, prison officials were unable to produce either the weapon or records showing its destruction. George Jackson was 29 when slain by San Quentin Prison correction officers.

See also: Black Panther Party; Black Power; Davis, Angela; Newton, Huey P.

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James Thomas Jones III

## Southern Christian Leadership Conference

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is a civil rights organization formed in January 1957 that played a key role in administering direct-action, nonviolent campaigns against legalized segregation in the United States. The chief founder, and first president of SCLC, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., successfully collected a partial payment on that “unpaid check” he had spoken of in his “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C. in August 1963, by overseeing the implementation of new laws and desegregating many aspects of public life in the South.

SCLC is located in the “Sweet Auburn” historic district, in the center of downtown Atlanta, Georgia. Originally housed at 208 Auburn Avenue, the SCLC offices were moved into the Prince Hall Masonic Temple building located at 334 Auburn. Today, the SCLC staff resides in their new headquarters on Edgewood Avenue, in the historic district of Atlanta.





*Civil rights demonstrators from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chained to a federal courthouse in New York City in protest of civil rights abuses in Jackson, Mississippi, 1965. (Library of Congress)*

The significance of Auburn Avenue and the history of SCLC dates back to January 15, 1929, when King was born in the upstairs bedroom of a modest Victorian style home located at 501 Auburn. From 1955 to 1960, the Reverend Martin Luther King Sr. was pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church located on the same avenue, just two blocks west of their home on Auburn. Young Martin would often deliver guest sermons at Ebenezer, and eventually, in 1960 officially began serving as co-pastor.

It was at Ebenezer, within walls that reverberated with King's fiery speeches and sermons, that various African American leaders gathered in the first weeks of 1957 to discuss the formation of a southern organization grounded in Christian principles and committed to nonviolent social change. For civil rights leaders such as Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levison, Ella J. Baker, C. K. Steele, and many involved

in the victorious Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott from December 1, 1955 to November 13, 1956, King represented a distinctive approach to social reform.

In retrospect, it seems clear that King's move to Montgomery in May 1954 to become pastor the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church began a new era in the African American liberation movement in the United States. Soon after his arrival, he joined the local NAACP and other advocacy organizations and encouraged participation by members of his church. King's personality played a decisive role in the bus boycott and the establishment of the first genuine grassroots movement directed pointedly against segregation in the South. King appeared as a vigorous and determined leader who bridged church and society as no one had in the long southern struggle for racial equality.

The founders of SCLC seized the grassroots momentum created in Montgomery and carried it into Atlanta. Ebenezer church served as more than SCLC's founding location; in subsequent years, the church building provided accommodations for various meetings, rallies, and their 1967 annual convention. King, the church membership, and SCLC participants were molded into an inseparable, united movement.

The first SCLC convention was held in Montgomery in August 1957. During this meeting, members adopted their official name and selected King as their first president, with C. K. Steele as the first vice president. The key to understanding the effectiveness of SCLC lies in viewing the composition of the organization as a loose connection of church groups capable of uniting in a mobilized campaign under the auspices of their leadership.

Under the guidance of King and Steele, SCLC participants made the decade of the 1960s a pivotal period in the history of the American Civil Rights movement. In less than five years, successful SCLC campaigns prompted African Americans to find and enjoy a new freedom, as segregation, Jim Crow customs, and lynching became part of the South's past. Notably, the Albany, Georgia campaign of 1961–1962 was pivotal in shaping the approach of SCLC to direct-action campaigns. In July 1962, while in an Albany jail, King became convinced that a “four-pronged approach” was the best means of unifying society. This approach consisted of legal action, direct action, selective buying, and voter registration.

During the Birmingham campaign of 1963, SCLC and King propelled the Civil Rights movement to national attention in an effort to gain leverage in negotiation and apply pressure to the United States government. In his “letter from a Birmingham Jail,” King outlined four stages of a nonviolent campaign: investigation to determine whether injustice existed, negotiation with local officials, self-purification, and direct action. Subsequently, the St. Augustine, Florida campaign of 1964 would test every stage of the nonviolence campaign. The following year brought the successful Selma, Alabama campaign. The famous Selma to Montgomery march prompted Congress to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

By 1965, King had led SCLC to three cardinal gains. First, it had psychologically raised the hopes of African Americans by giving them a sense of pride, dignity, and confidence in themselves as a people. Second, SCLC and its

allies had gathered and consolidated a tremendous amount of political leverage in gaining desegregation of facilities and polling booths. Last, the SCLC campaigns had laid important groundwork and precedent for future generations who were now armed with the right to vote, eat, sit, study, and live as they wished.

#### SCLC Presidents:

Martin Luther King Jr. (1957–1968)

Ralph D. Abernathy (1968–1977)

Joseph E. Lowery (1977–1997)

Martin Luther King, III (1997–2004)

Fred Shuttlesworth (February 2004–November 2004)

Charles Steele Jr. (November, 2004–)

*See also:* Abernathy, Ralph David; Albany, Georgia, Movement; King, Martin Luther Jr.; March on Washington, 1963; Montgomery Bus Boycott; Selma March; Shuttlesworth, Fred; Williams, Hosea

*Bobby R. Holt*

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## Springfield Race Riot of 1908

For two days in August 1908, a race riot ravaged the streets of Springfield, Illinois. Two African Americans were brutally murdered, four whites were killed by gunfire, more than 100 people were hospitalized, 40 African American homes were burned, and two dozen businesses were damaged or destroyed.

Two local events helped spark the riot. First, on July 4, 1908, Earl Ballard, a white man, was stabbed and killed by Joe Johnson, an African American. Second, on August 13, 1908, Mabel Hallam, a married white woman, reported that an African American man broke into her home during the night, choked her, and dragged her into her backyard, and proceeded to assault her. Neighbors came to her aid, but the assailant was already gone. Mrs. Hallam, bruised and badly shaken, told police that a young African American male, wearing a colored shirt and work clothes, was responsible. Police arrested George Richardson, an African American, who despite being misidentified twice by Hallam, was booked into the county jail.

On August 14, a white mob arrived at the jail to lynch Ballard and Richardson. Sensing trouble, local officials had transported the suspects 60 miles north to Bloomington, Illinois to avoid retribution. Rumors circulated that a local restaurant owner, Harry Loper, had allowed police to use his automobile to transport the prisoners. The mob turned its rage on Loper's restaurant, first throwing a brick through the window, and then by firing shots into the establishment. Louis Johnson, a white man, was hit by the gunfire and died on the scene. Still unsatisfied, the mob made its way to the African American neighborhood, known as the Levee, where they destroyed homes and businesses. When they came across Scott Burton, an African American barber, they hanged him from a tree, shot him, and burned his body. An estimated 3,700 militiamen arrived in the town, dispersed the crowd, and opened the state armory to the homeless and badly shaken African Americans. Hundreds more African Americans fled the town.

On August 15, the mob re-formed and proceeded to the home of 80-year-old William Donnegan, a wealthy African American who had been married to a white woman for 32 years. Claiming he fired at them, the mob slashed Donnegan's throat, hanged him from a nearby tree, and proceeded to burn his home.

Two weeks after the riot, Hallam recanted her story. She claimed that Richardson was not the man who attacked her. She gave the description of another African American male. Later, she told a special grand jury that she was not attacked by an African American man after all. Her assailant was a white man, with whom she was having an affair. Hallam and her family moved from Springfield a few months after the riot. Richardson was released from jail and continued to live in Springfield, and James was tried for the murder of Clergy Ballard and found guilty and hanged.

The scene in Springfield was eerily reminiscent of a lynching in Georgia just four years earlier. In 1904, in Statesboro, Georgia, a mob burned alive two African American men who were each accused of murder and destroyed the property of several other African Americans. By 1908, lynchings were a southern phenomenon. Between 1884 and 1900, 2,000 African Americans were lynched in the South. Springfield was among the first northern cities to witness the racial violence that would later sweep cities like East St. Louis, Illinois in 1917 and Chicago in 1919.

The two-day riot in Springfield, Abraham Lincoln's adopted home town, startled many Americans. As a result, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was organized on Lincoln's birthday six months after the Springfield race riot. On August 13, 1994, a Springfield nonprofit group called Monument 1908 put headstones on four previously unidentified graves believed to belong to two African American and two white victims of the Springfield race riot of 1908.

*See also:* Lynching; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; White Mob Violence

Samuel Paul Wheeler

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## Stevens, Thaddeus

Thaddeus Stevens (1792–1868) was a lawyer and, as a Republican representative from Pennsylvania from 1858 to 1868, a leading radical voice in Congress. He consistently agitated for emancipation and later for the full legal equality of former slaves. Controversial throughout his life, Stevens never achieved the entire program he desired, but he helped shape some of the most important legislation of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

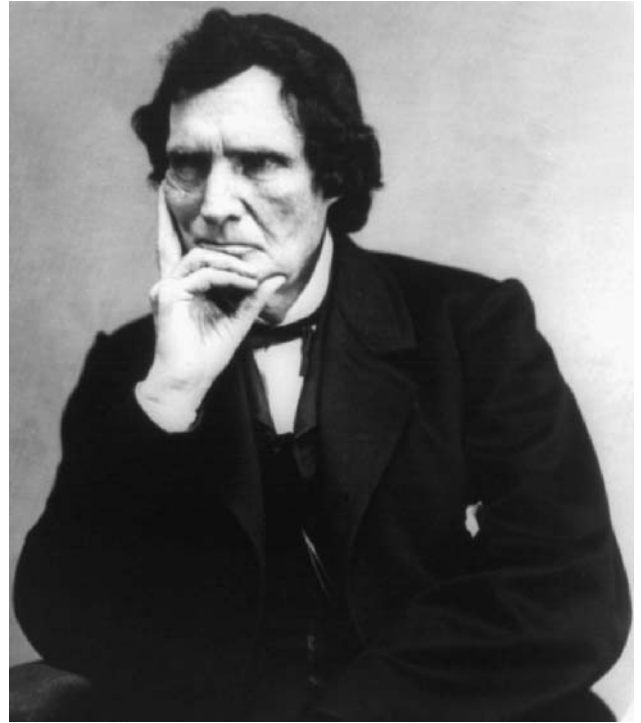
The second of four sons, Stevens was born on April 4, 1792, in Danville, Vermont, to shoemaker and surveyor

Joshua Stevens and Sarah Morrill. His father deserted the family when Stevens was 12. Stevens learned the shoemaking trade, but his mother moved the family to Peacham, Vermont in 1807 so that her children could attend the Caledonia Grammar School, also called the Peacham Academy. In 1811, Stevens entered Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire and graduated in 1814. He then relocated to Danville and began studying law with Judge John Mattocks.

On the recommendation of a Dartmouth classmate, Stevens moved to York, Pennsylvania in February 1815, where he became a teacher at the York Academy and studied with lawyer David Cassat. After passing the bar exam in 1816, Stevens moved to Gettysburg and established his own law office. He soon became one of the most prominent lawyers in southern Pennsylvania and served on the Gettysburg Council from 1822 to 1831. He demonstrated his commitment to the abolition of slavery early in his career, taking on the defense of fugitive slaves by the mid-1820s. In addition to his legal work, Stevens established the Mifflin Forge and Maria Furnace around 1826 and later an ironworks he named the Caledonia Forge.

Stevens became active in local and state politics, particularly the campaign against Masonry's secrecy and exclusion. His increasing political profile won him election to the state legislature in 1833. While serving in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from 1833 to 1836 and again in 1839 and 1841, Stevens successfully argued for public education and the recharter of the Bank of the United States in Pennsylvania. Stevens left the legislature as anti-Mason political clout waned, and financial troubles with his ironworks following the Panic of 1837 prompted Stevens to set up a new law practice in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1842. While in Lancaster, Stevens participated in the Underground Railroad and continued to defend fugitive slaves against capture. In 1843, he also hired a biracial woman named Lydia Hamilton Smith as his housekeeper. Stevens never married and lived with her until his death, and the nature of their relationship inspired endless conjecture. Most historians agree that there is insufficient evidence to prove that Stevens and Smith had a romantic relationship.

In 1848, Stevens entered national politics, winning a seat in the House of Representatives as a Whig and serving until 1852. There, he gained renown for his impassioned speeches against the expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories. After the Whig party fractured in 1854, Stevens was integral to the organization of Pennsylvania's Republican Party. He returned to the House of



*Thaddeus Stevens led the Radical Republicans in Congress during the Reconstruction period and was the primary instigator in the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. (Library of Congress)*

Representatives in 1858. With the advent of the secession crisis in 1860 and 1861, Stevens, who was by now chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee, emerged as a vehement foe of any compromise with the rebellious South. Stevens believed that national reunification required the abolition of slavery, and throughout the Civil War, he urged President Abraham Lincoln to do so. Although Stevens was often frustrated with Lincoln's progress toward declaring emancipation, he also became one of the administration's most important congressional allies in other respects. Stevens guided such legislation through the House as higher protective tariffs and the first income tax, which expanded the economic authority of the federal government. He also supported the passage of the Confiscation Acts and the first military draft in 1863. He was an early advocate of the enlistment of African American soldiers and late in 1863 successfully proposed legislation to give black soldiers equal pay and repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. Stevens also supported the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, which passed in 1865.

Some of Stevens's most radical suggestions involved the fate of the South after the Civil War. He unsuccessfully pushed for the seizure of the estates of rebellious planters

for redistribution among former slaves. Stevens set himself firmly against the Reconstruction plan of President Andrew Johnson, which permitted the reorganization of Southern state governments and required only an oath of loyalty to pardon ex-Confederates. Especially as the new Southern governments began to adopt restrictive Black Codes, Stevens worked to galvanize opposition to Johnson. Congress passed the Civil Right Act of 1866 over Johnson's veto and in 1867 wrested control of Reconstruction from the President with the passage of the Reconstruction Act. This measure imposed military rule on the South and required its states to remove racial restrictions on voting in their new constitutions. In a final blow to Johnson, Stevens helped bring impeachment charges against him in February 1868 after Johnson attempted to replace Secretary of War Edwin Stanton without congressional approval. By this time, however, Stevens was too ill with dropsy and stomach ailments to lead the charge, which some historians blame for the impeachment effort's failure in May.

Stevens died at midnight at his Washington, D.C., home on August 11, 1868. After lying in state at the Capitol, he was buried at Schreiner's Cemetery in Lancaster, a site selected by Stevens because it was racially integrated.

*See also:* Civil Rights Act of 1866; Fourteenth Amendment; Johnson, Andrew; Lincoln, Abraham; Radical Republicans; Republican Party; Sumner, Charles; Thirteenth Amendment; Underground Railroad

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## “Strange Fruit”

In 1935, Abel Meeropol saw a photograph of the lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, which had taken place in Marion, Indiana, on August 7, 1930. The image haunted

Meeropol for days and in response he wrote a three verse poem, “Strange Fruit.” The poem depicted the memory of trauma in the landscape, echoing the trope of the haunted tree in Hannah Crafts’s *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* (1859), Charles Chesnut’s story “Po Sandy” (1888), Paul Dunbar’s poem “The Haunted Oak” (1903), and Angelina Weld Grimké’s poem “Tenebris” (1927). Here Meeropol reminded readers that some trees were used for multiple lynchings and also evoked numerous tales of encounter with lynching’s aftermath (scenes of shoes, bones, teeth, and the strange fruit of the victim’s dismembered corpse). His poem spoke of a cultural haunting.

A union activist and a member of the American Communist Party, as well a Jewish schoolteacher, Meeropol published the poem under the pseudonym Lewis Allan in the *New York Teacher* in 1937 and in *New Masses* in 1939. After he set the poem to music, it was regularly performed at leftist gatherings, including once at a fundraiser for antifascists during the Spanish Civil War. But he is virtually forgotten as the original author of the lyrics to “Strange Fruit.” In January 1939, he took his song to the newly opened Café Society in Greenwich Village—Manhattan’s only integrated nightclub and the venue where Billie Holiday performed. He asked Holiday to listen and played his song at the piano. Meeropol remembered that afterwards Holiday asked only one question: what did “pastoral” mean?

Holiday was only 23 years old and had not yet recorded a political song. Before 1939 much of her material consisted of upbeat swing numbers, and she had sung with Count Basie and Artie Shaw’s bands before landing a solo engagement at Café Society in December 1938. Meeropol’s song would now mark a turning point in her career. She first performed her own version of “Strange Fruit” later in January 1939, at Café Society. “There wasn’t even a patter of applause when I finished,” Holiday recalled. “Then a lone person began to clap nervously. Then suddenly everyone was clapping” (*Lady Sings the Blues*, p. 85). Meeropol later added of her rendition: “She gave a startling, most dramatic and effective interpretation . . . which could jolt the audience out of its complacency anywhere. . . . Billie Holiday’s styling of the song was incomparable and fulfilled the bitterness and shocking quality I had hoped the song would have” (Greene, 59).

After that first performance, audience responses to the song continued to be extreme. For a long time it was rarely played on the radio and was almost impossible to find in

record stores. Holiday's label had refused to record it and so she released it with the obscure label Commodore. She performed her own version around the country throughout the 1940s, sometimes encountering such violent audience responses that she was forced to stop singing or leave town. The South African government banned the song during apartheid. Yet others could not get enough. This was the first time anyone had sung so explicitly about lynching and many listeners were gripped. In October 1939, one journalist for the *New York Post* wrote that a record had obsessed him for two days. Even after 10 hearings "Strange Fruit" would "make you blink and hold to your chair," he explained. "Even now, as I think of it, the short hair on the back of my neck tightens and I want to hit somebody" (*Billie Holiday: A Biography*, p. 62).

Still others recognized the song as a call to arms in a year when three lynchings took place, a survey revealed that 60 percent of southerners thought lynching was justifiable, and audiences flocked to see *Gone With the Wind*. The film, later criticized for its romanticized "moonlight and magnolias" approach to American history, was sweeping the nation; but in "Strange Fruit" a smell of burning flesh accompanies the "scent of magnolias," as the lyrics put it. It is rare that a protest movement does not have a great protest song at its heart, and "Strange Fruit" was the anthem of the antilynching movement from 1939 onwards. It became one of the most influential protest songs ever written—often compared to Bob Dylan's "The Death of Emmett Till" (1963) and Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam" (1963).

It has been re-recorded by more than 100 musical artists to date, including Abbey Lincoln, Nina Simone, Sting, and Tori Amos. Black singer Josh White began singing "Strange Fruit" a few years after Holiday, and in 1941 he released it on his album *Southern Exposure* with a liner note by Richard Wright. Jazz writer Leonard Feather described it as the first un-muted cry against racism, and record producer Ahmet Ertegun called it a declaration of war and the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. Although *Time Magazine* initially dismissed it as propaganda for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, by 1999 the magazine had hailed the song as the best of the century. Four years later the British magazine *Q* ranked it sixth in a list of 100 songs that have changed the world.

The song's presence also extended to a controversial exhibition of lynching photographs. In 2002, the exhibition

*Without Sanctuary* opened in Atlanta. It featured the photograph that had haunted and inspired Meeropol in 1935, along with Meeropol's lyrics on one of the foyer walls. And as visitors looked at the photographs, the sound of "Strange Fruit" filled the gallery.

See also: Antilynching Campaign; Black Folk Culture; Lynching; White Mob Violence

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## Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was one of the most important organizations to participate in the 1960s African American Civil Rights movement. Often referred to as the "shock troops" of the movement, SNCC remained on the cutting edge of the southern black freedom struggle. The organization differed from other groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in its organizational style and leadership. Unlike the SCLC, SNCC believed in creating and developing leadership. In accordance with SNCC founder Ella Baker's famous stance that "strong people do not need strong leaders," SNCC based most of its actions on creating grassroots leadership in African American communities. This leadership style facilitated the emergence of different types of leaders who would have most likely been marginalized by other organizations in the movement. Northern blacks, women, whites, and especially local people held prevalent positions in SNCC and were essential to its development. Creating leaders among these groups enabled the organization to maintain a great deal of diversity and promoted

community-based activism. The dynamics of the grass-roots leadership style encouraged by SNCC brought local communities into the forefront of the modern Civil Rights movement and helped pave the way for future generations of leaders among black southerners.

On the afternoon of February 1, 1960, four black students at North Carolina A & T entered a Woolworth's department store in Greensboro. Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair, and David Richmond spent several dollars in the department store and then took seats at the store's segregated lunch counter where they were refused service. The four young men remained seated and refused to leave until served. They stayed at the lunch counter for nearly one hour before the store closed and they were forced to leave. The young students returned the next day with 20 of their classmates and took seats at the segregated counter. The four young men came back to the lunch counter for several consecutive days, bringing more classmates each time. By February 5, hundreds of young people, including some whites, joined the sit-in protest only to be denied service each time.

Within days of the initial protest, African American students in nearby Winston-Salem, Durham, and Raleigh, began conducting their own sit-ins at segregated lunch counters throughout the state. News of the sit-ins continued to spread, and eventually African Americans outside of North Carolina joined the movement. By mid-February, there were sit-ins in Norfolk, Virginia; Rock Hill, South Carolina; Baltimore, Maryland, and Nashville, Tennessee. By late March, students in Nashville and Atlanta, Georgia had begun massive sit-in demonstrations that commanded the attention of the American media.

Many people across the country were extremely impressed by this burgeoning movement that was being led by college-blacks. Included among these sit-in supporters was 56-year-old Ella Baker who was a veteran activist and current executive secretary for the SCLC. Ms. Baker realized the potential of these students if they could coordinate their protests through a national organization. She lobbied SCLC for an \$800 grant to be used to construct such an organization, and SNCC was born at an April conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, which was attended by sit-in leaders from across the South.

SNCC's first major campaign began on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the original Greensboro sit-ins. On January 31, 1961, 10 young African Americans were

arrested for sitting at a segregated lunch counter in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Upon their arrest, SNCC arrived in the city and began a campaign that would be known as "jail-ins." SNCC leaders knew that they would be arrested for sitting at the segregated lunch counters in Rock Hill, but did so anyway in order to fill the city's jails. This would apply pressure on city officials who would have to use a vast amount of resources to arrest and detain large numbers of protesters. The "jail-in" strategy that SNCC used in Rock Hill would become one of the most important tactics used during the Civil Rights movement.

Later that year, SNCC joined forces with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to test a 1961 Supreme Court decision that banned segregation on interstate busses. In *Boydton v. Virginia*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation on interstate busses and terminals was unconstitutional. Like every other victory for integration, however, the court decision would have to be tested to ensure that the United States government would back the rights of African Americans. Freedom Rides were designed to test *Boydton v. Virginia*. Members of CORE and SNCC planned to travel on buses through the South, desegregating bus terminals as they went. The original group included seven blacks and six whites who left Washington, D.C. for New Orleans on May 4, 1961. The trip was relatively uneventful at first, but the Freedom Riders met violence upon reaching the Deep South. On May 9, two of the protesters were attacked at the bus terminal in Rock Hill. A few days later, white segregationists slashed the bus tires outside of Anniston, Alabama and the group had to switch buses to proceed even deeper into the Jim Crow South. The violence reached a pinnacle outside of Birmingham, Alabama when white supremacists, aided by the absence of policemen, entered the bus and attacked all of the Freedom Riders and bombed their vehicle. Volunteer James Peck was beaten so badly that it took 53 stitches to close the wound he received from a blow to the head. The next day, pictures of the attack appeared on the front page of most of the nation's newspapers. This coverage of the violence that Freedom Riders faced forced the Kennedy administration to provide protection for future Freedom Riders.

SNCC experienced its first major internal conflict during the months after the Freedom Rides. Two factions emerged within the organization. One faction encouraged direct action protests such as sit-ins and marches. Another favored voter registration. Ms. Baker suggested that both

sides pursue their objectives by their chosen means, and SNCC grew into two separate entities that worked together but chose to conduct different forms of activism.

The first major voter registration project took place in McComb, Mississippi and was led by Bob Moses who had been stirred into action after learning of the nationwide sit-in movement that began in February 1960 at the Greensboro Woolworth's. Moses was a 26-year-old high school teacher in Harlem, New York when he first heard of the sit-in movement. It immediately propelled him into action and he joined SNCC in 1960. By 1961, Moses had become SNCC's field secretary in Mississippi after entering the nation's most segregated state with nothing more than a list of contacts gathered by Ms. Baker during her decades of prior activism. In Mississippi, Moses was able to connect into underground networks of activists who had been fighting for black freedom in the state for decades. These activists were able to connect Moses to local people. By 1961, Moses had created a beachhead in Mississippi. True to SNCC's founding philosophy of grassroots organizing, most of the leaders in Mississippi were locals. Many outsiders entered the state to join Moses, but the majority of groundwork was done by local people who were mired in one of the nation's worst forms of poverty in 1961. The median income of local blacks was less than half the poverty level for a four-person household. This poverty extended into the state's racist educational system as well. Mississippi blacks were extremely undereducated. The state took aim to ensure that its black students did not achieve any form of academic freedom. Many local blacks did not even know that they had a constitutional right to vote. If they did pursue this right, Mississippi blacks were subject to violence. Because of the incredibly dangerous characteristics of white supremacists in the state, SNCC was severely limited in its ability to recruit organizers and incorporated anyone willing to risk their lives into the organization. Women, older black men, black youths, and some whites played key parts in the state as SNCC's presence in Mississippi grew in 1961.

Voter registration campaigns were key to the struggle for black freedom in Mississippi for two reasons. First, only a very small percentage of African Americans had been allowed to register over the previous decades. Counties like McComb, where only 5 percent of age-eligible citizens were registered to vote, were typical. Second, the state was characterized by an culture of extreme racial violence. The

Mississippi Justice Department simply refused to prosecute whites who committed violence against African Americans. White supremacists in Mississippi knew fully well that any violence inflicted on African Americans would go unchecked. A black civil rights activist could be killed at any time. Direct-action campaigns in Mississippi were more dangerous to conduct than anywhere else.

In August, 1961, with the help of funds from the federal government's Voter Education Project (VEP), Moses began a voter registration project in McComb. SNCC workers traveled door-to-door in an attempt to convince potential black voters to register. Initially, the organization experienced some success as members began to venture out into other black communities to canvass potential voters and recruit new SNCC volunteers. Voter registration was often slow, however, owing to the prevalence of fear among black Mississippians. This fear was confirmed by the 1961 murder of Herbert Lee who was a native Mississippian who had been transporting SNCC workers throughout black communities. Lee was shot in broad daylight by a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives who was quickly acquitted. This confirmed to most black Mississippians that voter registration was impossible, and the murder greatly slowed SNCC's progress throughout the state. The organization kept fighting, however, and continued to spread into other regions of Mississippi including the rural Mississippi Delta where the majority of citizens were black. SNCC encountered the most impoverished and disenfranchised group in the state when it entered the delta, but it also incorporated an incredibly driven and able group of local black activists into the organization. Included among these local people was Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville, Mississippi who did not know that she should be allowed to vote until she attended a SNCC-sponsored meeting that took place in her local church in 1962. She was 44 years old and became one of the most important local leaders in Mississippi and symbols of the potential of grassroots organizing.

The direct-action division of SNCC also experienced several setbacks in 1961. Led by former Freedom Riders Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagon, SNCC entered Albany, Georgia in October 1961 to lead protest activities in the city. The organization was effectively able to recruit local people to join movement activities, but it also encountered an obstacle that clashed with SNCC's basic philosophies. Initially, SNCC led marches and demonstrations in the city that were designed to protest segregation, discriminatory



hiring practices, and the systematic disenfranchisement of black voters. Just weeks into their campaign, however, a local leader asked Martin Luther King Jr. to join black Albanians' fight for equality and freedom. King's leadership style was contradictory to the SNCC leadership tradition that promoted grassroots organizing.

Upon his arrival, King immediately assumed the leadership of peaceful marches through downtown Albany. He was arrested soon after, and building on SNCC's "jail-in" philosophy, King vowed to spend Christmas in prison if necessary. King arrived in Albany in December and brought the attention of the media with him. SNCC always welcomed media attention that would expose the plight of African Americans, but the newsmen focused almost exclusively on King. He became the face and symbol of the Albany movement. This would have drastic repercussions for local people who were pushed from leadership positions. Albany leaders, fearful of the media frenzy that the incarceration of the most famous black preacher in the United States could create, negotiated a deal with King without involving local leaders or SNCC. Upon King's release from prison, he declared victory and left the city. After King left Albany, local officials denied an accord had ever been reached. They reneged on their agreement with King and Albany's racial caste system continued as usual. SNCC leaders then had a hard time remobilizing local people who had become so dependent on King's leadership and prestige. Over the next several months, SNCC struggled against white officials to achieve nothing more than a stalemate that hardly threatened the status quo before the organization's involvement in the city.

By July 1962, SNCC had begun to reestablish leadership in Albany. King and his SCLC followers returned to the city that same month to assume leadership of the local people that SNCC had spent months mobilizing. As he had the previous year, King began leading demonstrations in the city; however, King's absence over the previous seven months had left many local people wary of his leadership position and he had trouble invoking large-scale protests. King was arrested twice more in Albany, but he could not fill the jails. SNCC was powerless to do so as well because King undermined the organization's leadership. Eventually, King left the city without any further concessions made by white officials. Leadership had been split, and both King and SNCC had been rendered ineffective as a result of the changing characteristics of Albany leadership. The

developments in Albany reinforced to SNCC that it had to remain largely autonomous from national movement figures, especially King, in order to be effective. It also motivated the student-led organization to recruit even more local people into leadership positions as it conducted localized campaigns throughout the South.

The year 1963 was a turbulent one in the Civil Rights movement and a definitive one for SNCC. In May, King-led protests in Birmingham captured the world's attention as policemen and firefighters used German shepherds and fire hoses to break-up peaceful demonstrations on the Alabama city's streets. This protest inspired demonstrations across the country. In all, approximately 930 protests occurred in 115 U.S. cities. More than 20,000 people were arrested for demonstrating against Jim Crow and discrimination. Later that year, the SCLC, NAACP, CORE, and SNCC led a massive March on Washington, during which more than 250,000 protestors gathered on the mall in D.C. to protest segregation. King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech during that protest and cemented the moral righteousness of the Civil Rights movement. SNCC conducted various direct-action campaigns across the South with the help of an influx of volunteers, including many whites. White individuals such as Bob Zellner, Sam Shirah, Jane Stembridge, and Sandra Hayden either joined the fight against Jim Crow or became more prevalent leaders in the organization. By the fall of 1963, 20 percent of SNCC members were white. Voter registration activities spread throughout the South's Black Belt, and SNCC began to experience breakthroughs in Mississippi.

In November 1963, SNCC conducted a mock election called the Freedom Vote in Mississippi. This campaign was designed to allow Mississippi African Americans an opportunity to participate in their first election, as well as to show the federal government that black Mississippians truly desired a stake in national and state politics. To illustrate the political potential of African Americans in the state, SNCC conducted an independent election. Because African Americans had been systematically excluded from Mississippi's regular Democratic Party, SNCC created an alternative Democratic organization named the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). SNCC, which now included a large number of white volunteers fanned the state. Black candidates ran on the MFDP ticket and were elected to mock offices, including the governorship. More than 80,000 black Mississippians participated in the Freedom

Vote. This clearly showed that many more blacks desired a vote in Mississippi than the average of approximately 5,000 blacks who regularly voted in statewide elections. The Freedom Vote also helped lay the ground for a statewide voter registration campaign.

By the end of 1963, SNCC had come of age. The organization claimed large amounts of members from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Civil Rights movement was at its height, and the nation saw nearly 1,000 protests during the course of one year. SNCC leaders attempted to build on this momentum when planning for 1964. The organization knew that it could register black Mississippians if allowed. The Freedom Vote had showed that the disenfranchised African Americans in the state could and would be called into political action if SNCC took the proper measures. The other lesson that SNCC had learned over the previous years was that it could recruit a highly diverse and capable group of organizers from across the nation. Young people, including northern whites, cared about the SNCC cause and had shown in the years before 1964 that they were willing to risk injury and death in order to fight Jim Crow. These factors would all play a major influence on SNCC's planning for 1964.

In 1964, SNCC conducted the most ambitious and audacious civil rights campaign in the history of the United States when it launched an all-out campaign to crack Mississippi. Although the organization had achieved some previous successes in Mississippi, most of these, such as the Freedom Vote, were largely symbolic. The biggest deterrent in the state was the large-scale amount of unchecked violence that constantly threatened civil rights activists. SNCC could not get the federal government to help its cause even though Mississippi segregationists were blatantly violating the rights of black citizens. In 1964, SNCC decided that it needed a force large enough to effectively mobilize black Mississippians and prestigious enough to force the federal government to protect civil rights workers in the state. Based on SNCC's recent influx of white volunteers and sympathetic groups throughout the nation, the organization believed that it could recruit a large force of white college students to join the black freedom struggle in Mississippi during the summer of 1964. SNCC also believed that such a large group of white volunteers would force the federal government to protect civil rights workers in Mississippi. In the winter of 1963, SNCC representatives began appearing on northern college campuses to recruit young

white students to participate in its 1964 Freedom Summer campaign.

Perhaps the most important goal of Freedom Summer was drawing attention to Mississippi and forcing federal intervention. The volunteers who would arrive in the state during the summer of 1964 were well positioned to do so. During the winter of 1963–1964, SNCC had recruited the children of American privilege. The organization believed that the more affluent its summer workers were, the greater chance of federal intervention. In all, 40 percent of the project's applicants came from Stanford, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Their parents included esteemed historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Congressman Don Edwards, and U.N. Ambassador Sidney Yates. As nearly 1,000 of these students poured into the state in late June, the nation took notice. Unfortunately, SNCC's greatest success in drawing federal intervention came at the expense of three lives. On June 21, SNCC workers Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman were arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Local police officers then held the three young men until dark before delivering them into the hands of Klansmen from Meridian and Neshoba County. The Klansmen, who had been tracking SNCC veteran Schwerner's moves for months, then executed the three young men and buried them under an earthen dam just outside of Philadelphia. The disappearance of the three workers, two of whom were white, drew the nation's interest and forced the federal government to build a presence in the state. It took the deaths of three young men for the federal government to launch a campaign against the KKK in the state, but their deaths probably saved dozens of lives during Freedom Summer.

Another important aspect of Freedom Summer was a program designed to create an active leadership class among Mississippi's black youths. Freedom Schools were taught mainly by white volunteers and provided training in the basic remedial skills absent from regular black schools in the state. The schools were also explicitly designed to incorporate young African Americans into the freedom struggle. Freedom Schools educated young blacks about the rich traditions of African American protest. They also encouraged high levels of student participation and let the black youths dictate the subject matter. Finally, the schools included training in civil rights protest activities such as sit-ins, letter-writing campaigns, and various forms of organizing. By the end of Freedom Summer, the students at

Freedom Schools showed encouraging signs of leadership potential.

The final, and perhaps most practical, goal of Freedom Summer was to register black voters. Hundreds of volunteers canvassed black communities to convince local people to attempt to register. The volunteers often met various forms of violent resistance and reluctance from the black community, but did successfully convince approximately 17,000 age-eligible voters to attempt to register. The canvassers solicited votes as part of the MFDP, which was planning its own ambitious civil rights demonstration to take place later that year.

In 1960, the regular Mississippi Democratic Party split from the National Democratic Party in the presidential election. Rather than voting for John F. Kennedy, who rhetorically promoted civil rights, the Mississippi Democrats supported another Democratic candidate. In 1964, it looked like the regular Mississippi Democrats would again refuse the national Democratic nominee, incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson, because of his strong civil rights platform. Based on this, and the exclusion of African Americans from the regular Mississippi Democratic Party, the MFDP concluded that it could successfully lobby to replace the traitorous Mississippi regulars at the 1964 National Democratic Convention to be held in Atlantic City in August. During the Freedom Summer, the MFDP successfully lobbied support from Democrats across the nation who promised to vote for the MFDP if the issue should hit the convention floor. By August, the MFDP believed it had enough support to unseat the Mississippi Democratic Party on the convention floor, thereby winning a major victory in front of a national audience. The challenge, however, would not go as planned.

Although the MFDP had support from a large faction of the National Democratic Party, it did not have the support of the party's leader, Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson knew that the Mississippi Democrats would probably support Republican Barry Goldwater in the election and that the MFDP enjoyed a lot of support among national Democrats, but the president was afraid that if the MFDP was allowed to replace the Mississippi regulars, then important border states such as Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maryland could fall to the Republicans as well. The president also desired an orderly convention so as not to upset what he and his advisors perceived to be an enormous landslide in the oncoming election. To ensure that the convention went smoothly, Johnson used the power of the White House to

suppress the challenge. He called a press conference during an emotionally charged and nationally televised press conference in which Fannie Lou Hamer described the horrors in Mississippi. He also threatened MFDP supporters with demotions and blacklisting should they support the civil rights group. Finally, he promised Hubert Humphrey the vice presidency if Humphrey could suppress the challenge. Johnson's tactics worked and the MFDP was offered a token compromise of seats. Enraged that they had been betrayed by the national Democratic Party, many MFDP leaders stormed out and became extremely alienated with the party and Johnson. The MFDP challenge severely discouraged many SNCC volunteers. As the summer wound down, and the summer workers left the state to return to their northern universities, SNCC experienced a great deal of displeasure and frustration. SNCC peaked during the Freedom Summer of 1964, but the disappointment from the MFDP challenge led many to leave the organization. Although it would conduct several meaningful protests after the MFDP challenge, SNCC would never be the same.

Over the next several years, SNCC led protests across the Southern Black Belt and did achieve meaningful successes. The level of activity after 1964, however, must be seen as disappointing in comparison to the massive campaigns before Freedom Summer. Overall, however, SNCC remained at the forefront of the movement and black intellectual thought. Black power, a term coined by SNCC staffer Stokely Carmichael, emerged in the late 1960s as an answer to the critics of the Civil Rights movement who were often frustrated by the limitations of working with the Democratic Party. SNCC also facilitated the growth of many of the major movements that characterized late 1960s protest including the antiwar movement, the feminist movement, and Latino movements in the southwestern United States. Many of the leaders of such movements came of age and experienced their first taste of leadership while in SNCC. Despite the frustrations that arose toward the end of SNCC, the organization played a major role in mobilizing African American communities, enforcing various aspects of civil rights legislation, and providing a model for grassroots leadership. *See also:* Baker, Ella; Black Power; Lowndes County Freedom Organization; Lewis, John; Nash, Diane; Robinson, Ruby Doris Smith, Sit-In Movement; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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## Students for a Democratic Society

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was a radical student group that was very active in the 1960s. It evolved from the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which was the young people's branch of an organization developed in 1905 called the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. The group changed its name in the 1960s so as not to seem totally focused on labor issues, thereby appealing to a broader group of young people.

The organization held its first meeting in 1960 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. There an SDS staffer named Tom Hayden introduced his political manifesto, the *Port Huron Statement*. Hayden criticized the political system in general and the United States government specifically for its failure to realize world peace, the Cold War, the nuclear arms race, racial discrimination, economic inequality, and big business. He advocated reforming the two dominant political parties and developing a governmental system that would encourage, support, and sustain participatory democracy. Hayden also called for corporations to encourage more participation by their employees and an expansion of the welfare state to include a concerted effort to eliminate poverty. Finally, Hayden supported nonviolence as a tactic in the struggle for a more democratic, humane, and inclusive society.

The Port Huron Statement was unique among leftist groups for several reasons. First was the recognition that every organization needed a clear vision about its reasons for being. Second, the statement recognized that the problems in society were linked to one another, meaning that a more holistic approach to their resolution was needed.

Third, SDS made a commitment to work with any interested group regardless of its position in the political spectrum. Finally, unlike most left-leaning organizations, it rejected the militant anticommunism so prevalent in those organizations.

SDS grew slowly in part because of its policy of decentralization, a position it adopted from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The group had a national office with a president, vice president, and secretary, but it had few resources and was mostly a loose collection of campus-based chapters. During its early years, it mainly assisted SNCC in its civil rights work. Its 1964 summer convention revealed the fissures already developing between those who embraced traditional campus-based activism and those who wanted to branch out into other activities. Another outcome of the convention was the development of a more stable organization that included centralized administrative functions and increased attention to recruiting new chapters.

The year 1964 was a propitious one for SDS. On October 1 at the Berkeley campus of the University of Southern California, the free speech movement was born. Led by the charismatic Mario Savio among others, students protested against the administration, demanded that it cancel the ban on political activities, and give students more academic freedom. Hundreds of students demonstrated, held meetings, and engaged in strikes, virtually shutting down the university. SDS had truly become a national force with which to be reckoned.

The next year the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson escalated the war in Vietnam by bombing the North Vietnamese and introducing ground troops into South Vietnam. The military draft was reactivated, and college students realized that there was more at stake than an esoteric exercise. SDS shifted its focus from civil rights to antiwar activities, and held its first teach-in against the war at the University of Michigan. It also organized a march against the war, which was held in Washington D.C. on April 17, 1965. Approximately 25,000 demonstrators converged on the city. Moreover, the organization expanded its antidraft activities to include protests against colleges and universities that had begun to supply the names and grade point averages of its male students, thereby assisting the military in deciding who would be drafted.

As the Black Power movement developed and white students became unwelcome in SNCC, SDS increasingly

focused its attention on the development of campus-based activism through local chapters. It also stepped up its demonstrations against the Vietnam War and the draft, organizing several highly successful student strikes around the country. Like SNCC, it also became more militant. The organization demonstrated against businesses it deemed as profiting from the war, drawing the attention and increased criticism of the U.S. government. These activities drew the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), who had for some time had been working against SDS through a secret operation known as COINTELPRO.

In the autumn of 1967, SDS sponsored a well-attended demonstration at the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin. Madison police attacked the demonstrators and a number of students were injured and arrested. Their action signaled to SDS that the nonviolent tactics it had borrowed from the Civil Rights movement were no longer effective, and thereafter its demonstrations became more like guerilla warfare as they engaged in raids on draft offices and the like.

Local SDS chapters organized a nationwide effort known as Ten Days of Resistance, which consisted of sit-ins, marches, and rallies against the war. In a show of interracial cooperation, SDS and Student Afro Society activists shutdown Columbia University, and it was estimated that about 1 million students skipped class on April 26, 1968, the largest student strike ever reported. Flush with power, the organization saw a huge increase in membership that year.

Solidarity was difficult to maintain, however. At the 1969 national convention, various factions of SDS faced off. A manifesto that said, in part, "You don't need a Weatherman to know which way the wind blows" was distributed to each conventioneer. Among the 11 members who contributed to the work, Bernardine Dohrn and Mark Rudd became the leaders of the so-called Revolutionary Youth Movement with SDS. Supporters of Dohrn and Rudd split off into yet another faction, which came to be known as the Weathermen or Weather Underground Organization. Its stated intention was the overthrow of the capitalist system, and its tactics were much more aggressive than any other campus-based organization. SDS never held another national convention, and by 1970 the Weather Underground had issued a declaration of war, committing bombings, arson, robbery, and murder in support of its goals. Several of its member went underground eluding authorities for decades, but by the 1980s most had turned themselves in.

Eventually they became involved in the very establishment they had fought so hard against.

*See also:* Black Panther Party; Black Power; COINTELPRO; Johnson, Lyndon Baines

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## Suffrage Movement, Women's

Throughout the long and painful struggle to secure the franchise for Americans of both genders and all races, many suffrage activists tended to frame the battle for the vote, quite literally, in black and white terms. Both before and after the Civil War, abolitionists and suffragists fiercely debated whether it would be more expedient to seek full political rights for white women or African American men first. Although the very terms of this debate inevitably pushed African American women to the margins of the discussion, African American suffragists consistently and fiercely resisted being thus marginalized. From the beginnings of the suffrage movement in 1848, to the enfranchisement of women in 1920, and beyond, black female activists insisted on African American women's right, not only to the vote, but also to full, equal access to political empowerment and authority.

During the 1820s and 1830s, the first radical abolitionist movement took shape in America. From the very beginnings of abolitionism, African American antislavery activists insisted that if America was to be a truly egalitarian republic, abolitionists needed to fight, not only for the end of slavery, but also for the civic and political empowerment of free African Americans. During the rise of political abolitionism during the 1840s and 1850s, many African American abolitionists called for the franchise to be extended to African American men. All too often treated as

second-class citizens within white-led antislavery organizations, black male abolitionists insisted that they needed the vote if they were to be treated as equals both within antislavery circles and within American society as a whole.

The 1840s witnessed not only an increasing emphasis on politics within the abolitionist community, but also the birth of an organized woman's rights movement, which, among other demands, called for female suffrage. In July 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York, a group of women (and a few men) assembled to hold the first woman's rights convention in the United States. At this convention, organizers called for full voting rights for women, a radical move that was widely ridiculed by the popular press of the day. Despite the powerful hostility that woman's rights advocates faced in the decades leading up to the Civil War, they persisted in holding conventions, and boldly insisting on women's right to the franchise, throughout the 1850s. Although the formal woman's rights movement was dominated by both white women and African American women, the needs of African American women and concerns were all too often marginalized within woman's rights circles. Nonetheless, African American female activists were among the most powerful and persuasive voices in early struggles for female suffrage.

Much like white suffragists, many African American suffragists came to the woman's rights movement through their involvement in abolitionism. Antislavery activists Margaretta Forten, Frances E. Watkins Harper, and Harriet Forten Purvis, for example, were all deeply involved in female antislavery societies and abolitionist activism before the Civil War and ardent supporters of female suffrage after it. Pioneering educator, author, and newspaper editor Mary Ann Shadd Cary consistently blended abolitionist, civil rights, and prosuffrage rhetoric in her newspaper the *Provincial Freeman* during the 1850s. Shadd Cary joined the National Woman's Suffrage Association after the Civil War, advocating female suffrage both in the United States and Canada. Perhaps the most famous abolitionist and suffragist of the pre-Civil War era was Sojourner Truth, the formerly enslaved orator and activist who electrified the North with her eloquent speeches during the 1840s and 1850s. In a world in which white suffragists all too often ignored the claims of African American women, and African American men all too often prioritized the political empowerment of men over the needs of African American women, Truth insisted that securing full political rights for African

American women would be a vital part of achieving the free and egalitarian America that all abolitionists and suffragists ostensibly longed for.

In 1865, America's long and bloody Civil War came to an end, leaving the shattered and bleeding nation to rebuild its society anew. In the 1860s and 1870s, Americans fiercely debated what this "brave new world," in which slavery had been abolished and millions of formerly enslaved Americans were suddenly free, ought to look like. One of the bitterest and most divisive of these discussions centered on questions of suffrage. It seemed plausible to many former abolitionists that widespread respect for African American men's valiant military service in the Union army during the war might make the white public receptive, for the first time in American history, to giving black men the right to vote. Abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass passionately insisted that it was the "Negro's hour": a rare and precious chance for black men to seize the political rights that had been denied to them for so long. Although Douglass was himself a staunch supporter of woman's suffrage, he was firmly convinced that the enfranchisement of black men would be a vital part of rebuilding the postwar South, and securing newly liberated slaves' rights in the American government.

Some female suffragists agreed with Douglass's line of reasoning. Although devoted to securing votes for women in the future, female suffragists such as Frances E. Watkins Harper felt that enfranchising African American men first would best serve the interests of the African American community as a whole. Facing a violent, tumultuous South, inhabited by former slaveowners eager to preserve their dominance in southern society, suffragists such as Harper called for immediately granting African American men the franchise, so that African American men could vote for policies and elect officials who would protect their interests and preserve their rights. Other female suffragists, however, insisted that it was of vital importance that activists push for the simultaneous enfranchisement of African American men and all women, lest they never again be presented with such a remarkable opportunity. Sojourner Truth was a powerful voice in favor of universal suffrage in the years immediately after the Civil War, insisting that to give black men, but not black women, the vote, would establish dangerous inequalities within the African American community. "There is a great deal of stir about colored men getting their rights," Truth affirmed in one speech, "but not

a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and colored women not theirs, the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as before.”

In 1869, two national suffrage movements were founded, each organization taking a different side on the question of African American male suffrage. The National Woman’s Suffrage Association (NWSA) (led by white suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) focused on the enfranchisement of women, and the American Woman’s Suffrage Association (AWSA) (led by white abolitionists Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell) called for the enfranchisement of African American men first, and all women second. African American female suffragists joined both organizations, although slightly more activists became part of AWSA than they did NWSA. One year after the founding of NWSA and AWSA, the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, giving African American men the right to vote. So bitter was the spilt between NWSA and AWSA that the two organizations did not reunite in the wake of the Fifteenth Amendment’s passage, despite their common goal of securing voting rights for all American women. Although neither organization prioritized the needs of African American women, NWSA especially distanced itself from its roots in the abolitionist movement and struggles for African American civil rights. Stanton and Anthony accepted money from George Francis Train, a wealthy businessman prone to airing his racist views, in order to fund their suffrage newspaper, the *Revolution*. Stanton and Anthony themselves increasingly incorporated nativist and anti-African American rhetoric into their suffrage speeches and writings, lamenting that “ignorant” men should have been given the vote before white, middle- and upper-class women.

Frustrated by their persistent marginalization within mainstream, white-led suffrage institutions, African American feminists often pursued their suffrage goals through independent, African American led organizations in the decades after the Civil War. One important site of African American women’s suffrage activism during the 1880s and 1890s were women’s clubs. In these clubs, middle-class African American women met to pursue intellectual self-improvement, to organize on behalf of less fortunate members of their communities, and to agitate for causes such as female suffrage and temperance. In 1896, representatives from African American women’s clubs across the country

came together to form the National Association of Colored Women, under the leadership of prominent activists including Anna Julia Cooper, Charlotte Forten Grimké, Frances E. Watkins Harper, and Mary Church Terrell. Throughout the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, the NACW was a powerful force for African American women’s suffrage in American society.

In 1890, the formerly feuding NWSA and AWSA reunited to become the National American Woman’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA). African American female suffragists continued to work within and alongside the predominantly white NAWSA, but they faced persistent marginalization and discrimination within the organization. Between 1890 and 1920, NAWSA increased its efforts to draw white southern women into the suffrage cause. These white southern suffragists often used racist rhetoric in making their arguments for votes for women, insisting that if white southern women were granted the franchise, they could counteract the “pernicious” effect that African American male voters had allegedly had on southern society. (What would become of black southern female voters in this scenario was left deliberately vague.) African American women faced similar difficulties in seeking to become fully involved in other white-dominated, prosuffrage organizations such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Although some white WCTU leaders, such as Amelia Bloomer, advocated the full integration of African American women into the WCTU’s efforts to secure the vote for women and combat alcohol abuse, most WCTU chapters remained decidedly segregated along racial lines.

In the 1910s, a younger, more radical contingent arose within the suffrage movement, which argued that American suffragists ought to follow the example of their British counterparts and use dramatic, and even violent, means to secure their suffrage goals. Led by two white suffragists, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, in 1913, this faction of the movement organized a huge suffrage parade, the same day as Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration as president. Eager not to offend white southern suffragists, Paul and Burns informed African American suffragists that, although they might participate in the parade, they would need to march in a segregated group at the back of the procession. Some African American suffragists, including Mary Church Terrell, agreed to this restriction; but others, including suffragist and antilynching advocate Ida B. Wells-Barnett, refused to comply with the order. On the day of the parade,

Wells-Barnett and several of her African American female suffragist colleagues waited in the crowd, and then marched out into the middle of the designated “whites only” part of the parade, where they remained for the duration of the event. In part because of the dramatic theatrics, violent protests, and sustained hunger strikes of militant suffragists during the 1910s, female suffrage was finally granted when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed on August 26, 1920.

Although the Nineteenth Amendment made the enfranchisement of all American women the law of the land, much like the Fifteenth Amendment before it, for many decades, the Nineteenth Amendment did not truly benefit African Americans. In the decades after 1920, African American women and men who sought to exercise their voting rights, especially in the South, were barred from casting their ballots by a brutal, systematic campaign of violence and intimidation waged by white supremacists. One of the central goals of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was to make the promises of the Fifteenth Amendment and the Nineteenth Amendment a reality for African Americans across the United States. Female civil rights activists such as Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Ann Moody fearlessly denounced the bigotry and violence of whites who forcibly sought to prevent African Americans from voting, and, in the face of sustained, violent attacks, they went to the South to register new African American voters. Although America’s contemporary political scene is far from ideal, with voters of color (particularly economically disadvantaged voters of color) facing significant obstacles to the full exercise of the franchise, the tireless efforts and courageous sacrifices of generations of African American suffragists has nonetheless helped to move American government and society closer to realizing their promise of being truly free, democratic, and representative.

*See also:* Cary, Mary Ann Shadd; Cooper, Anna Julia; Douglass, Frederick; Fifteenth Amendment; Liberty Party; National Association of Colored Women; Smith, Gerrit; Terrell, Mary Church; Truth, Sojourner; Wells-Barnett, Ida

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## Talented Tenth

The term “talented tenth” was coined in 1896 by the Reverend Henry L. Morehouse, who envisioned a class of erudite and upright African Americans emerging as a vanguard for the black community. But it was W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) who gave this theory prominence. In 1903, Du Bois published his classic manifesto, “The Talented Tenth.” The theory was simple yet profound: Cultivate the talents of the best and brightest African Americans and they will advance the interests of all black Americans. Du Bois proposed: “Men of America . . . The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and the Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men” (156–57). These remarkable men held promise. But would they fulfill it? Du Bois reflected on this question for 45 years before he substantially modified his theory.

His theory was the product of his own experience. In 1900, Du Bois was struck by the plight of his people: “American Negroes were an inferior caste, were frequently lynched and robbed, widely disfranchised, and usually segregated in the main areas of life.” Then came his vision: “I looked upon them and saw salvation through intelligent leadership; as I said, through a Talented Tenth. And for this intelligence I argued we needed college-trained men” (“The Talented Tenth: Memorial Address”). As part of this process of mutual, social “salvation,” Du Bois was the talented tenth’s living exemplar, embodying all of its ideals. As a strategy for racial advancement, a critical mass of highly educated blacks could theoretically produce a sea change in the collective destiny of all African Americans. At the other end of the social spectrum was the “submerged tenth,” an underclass of “criminals, prostitutes and loafers” (*The Philadelphia Negro*, p. 311).

Critics tasked Du Bois for placing too great an emphasis on the educated elite—those who today are occasionally



nicknamed “blackademics.” Pilloried by black radical Hubert Harrison as the “Subsidized Sixth,” the talented tenth theory was supported in principle by no less than Alain Locke—W. E. B. Du Bois’s intellectual equal and sometimes rival—who later became the first African American president of the American Association for Adult Education in 1945. This is a prime instance of a member of the talented tenth effecting a change in the fortunes of African Americans. In this case, Locke touched the lives of all Americans receiving adult education under the institutional auspices of the American Association for Adult Education.

Speaking of the talented tenth, Du Bois wrote: “Can the masses of the Negro people be in any possible way more quickly raised than by the effort and example of this aristocracy of talent and character? . . . There can be but one answer: the best and most capable of their youth must be schooled in the colleges and universities of the land” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, pp. 139–40). This implied some opposition to Booker T. Washington’s emphasis on industrial training for racial economic independence and his policy of quiescent accommodation as well. Eschewing “industrialism drunk with its vision of success” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, p. 149), Du Bois was careful to say that “these two theories of Negro progress were not absolutely contradictory” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, p. 236).

Later in life, Du Bois refined his theory. In August 1948, Du Bois delivered his “The Talented Tenth Memorial Address” at Wilberforce University to an audience of distinguished African Americans (representing the talented tenth), to whom he said: “My Talented Tenth must be more than talented, and work not simply as individuals. Its passport to leadership . . . would be its willingness to sacrifice and plan for such economic revolution in industry and just distribution of wealth, as would make the rise of our group possible” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, p. 163). Then, transcending this Marxist agenda, Du Bois spoke of the “Guiding Hundredth” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, pp. 177), which was his “new idea for a Talented Tenth” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, p. 168).

The “guiding hundredth” was to be a “group-leadership, not simply educated and self-sacrificing, but with a clear vision of present world conditions and dangers, and conducting American Negroes to alliance with culture groups in Europe, America, Asia and Africa, and looking toward a new world culture” (*The Autobiography of W. E. B.*

*Du Bois*, p. 168). The “guiding hundredth” would be open-ended, capable of forming alliances with other groups and races, including whites. This doctrine democratizes and internationalizes Du Bois’s strategy for racial advancement by placing it in a global context. Numerically narrower yet strategically broader, the “guiding hundredth” represents the evolution of Du Bois’s original theory of the “talented tenth.” In 1996, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West reflected on the significance of Du Bois’s theory of the talented tenth in *The Future of the Race*.

See also: Du Bois, W. E. B.; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Locke, Alain; Washington, Booker T.

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## Terrell, Mary Church

Mary Church Terrell (1863–1954) was a social and political activist and a champion of the women’s suffrage movement. Born Mary Eliza Church on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee, Terrell was the product of formerly enslaved parents. Her father, Robert Reed Church, was the son of a Mississippi planter and one of his female servants. Terrell’s mother, Louisa Ayres, was a bondswoman who gained literacy while in the clutches of slavery. Once legally emancipated, Ayres opened a store specializing in hair

products. Ayres's establishment served as a major attraction for affluent women of Memphis and allowed her to generate enough wealth to purchase a home for her family.

Mary Church, often referred to as "Mollie" by members of her family, was protected from the vices of poverty and hopelessness that plagued a large segment of the newly freed black populace of Memphis. Nonetheless, her maternal grandmother, Eliza Ayres, shared her recollections of the traumatic incidences of slavery with "Mollie." Because of her parents' divorce and her mother's subsequent relocation to New York City in 1870, Terrell was sent to Yellow Springs, Ohio to attend the integrated Model School on the campus of Antioch College. She was one of the few African American children enrolled at the school. At age 12, Terrell moved to Oberlin, Ohio to complete her high school education, and later enrolled at Oberlin College.

During the late 1800s, very few women, and even fewer African American women, were afforded a college education. Terrell was one of the first African American women to attain a college degree in the United States. One year after her graduation from Oberlin College in 1884, she began teaching courses in grammar, mineralogy, and French at Wilberforce University. In 1886, Terrell moved to Washington, D.C. to teach at the premiere Colored High School. In 1888, acting on the advice of her father, Terrell commenced teaching and moved to Europe to study. Her experiences abroad allowed her to briefly escape American racism and segregation. In Europe Terrell began to crystallize her personal mission toward liberating the *darker race* and women.

In 1891, after her return to the United States, the then Mary Eliza Church married Robert Terrell, a colleague from the Colored High School and the first African American to graduate from Harvard University. Afterward, in compliance with the social customs of the era for women, she permanently withdrew from teaching. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women were not considered to possess the aptitude or intellectual capacity for higher education. Consequently, many women were relegated to perform domestic duties. Terrell, thereby, receded to domestic work.

In 1892, Terrell shed the chrysalis of domesticity to engage in a myriad of social and political activities centered on elevating the status of African Americans and women in the United States. During this same year, she began participating in the antilynching campaign. She joined forces with abolitionist Frederick Douglass to petition president

Benjamin Harrison to publicly denounce lynching in a congressional address. Her involvement in the women's suffrage movement during the last decade of the 19th century, however, far exceeded her involvement in the protest of lynching, the southern convict lease system, alongside a number of other social ills.

In 1895, Terrell became the first African American and the second woman to serve on the Board of Education in Washington, D.C. Her position on the board allowed her to challenge unjust decisions proposed by the predominately white committee. In 1896, she became president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), which represented a merger of the independent clubs that existed among black women. Although Terrell used an integrated approach to resolving the issue of women's disenfranchisement, she scorned the discriminatory practices of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), the national



Mary Church Terrell, an African American suffragist, was president of the National Association of Colored Women and a charter member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (Library of Congress)

organization established by white women to improve the “situation” of women in America. Although the GFWC and the NACW sought to fulfill similar objectives to ensure the betterment of life for women, the NACW was also committed to improving the situation of African Americans. Terrell, being thoroughly engaged in the struggle to ensure equal rights for women, as well as racial equality for black Americans, was one of the movement’s most critical agents.

Remaining dedicated to the struggle for racial equality, in 1909 Terrell helped organize the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and became a charter member. Although her husband, who was a political ally of Booker T. Washington, discouraged Terrell’s decision, she abided with the organization and in 1919 became vice president of the Washington, D.C. local branch. Throughout the course of her life, Terrell made groundbreaking achievements and overcame great odds that many African Americans and women alike could not surpass. She is most remembered for her commitment to justice and equality for America’s 19th-century pariahs—African Americans and women.

*See also:* Antilynching Campaign; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; National Association of Colored Women; Washington, Booker T.; Wells-Barnett, Ida

Talitha L. LeFlouria

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## ***The Birth of a Nation***

*The Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915, heralded a revolution in American film-making, but its laudatory portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan and its thoroughly racist depiction of African Americans have subjected it to extensive criticism. Thomas Dixon Jr.’s novel and play *The Clansman* provided

the inspiration for director D. W. Griffith’s three-hour epic, which drew enormous crowds despite an exorbitant \$2 ticket price and nationwide protests by the NAACP. Fans included Woodrow Wilson, who screened the film in the White House and commented “it is like history written with lightning.” *The Birth of a Nation* takes as its subject matter the Civil War, Reconstruction, and “redemption” by the Ku Klux Klan. The film’s main conclusion—that Reconstruction was the most horrific experiment in the nation’s history because it elevated a naturally inferior race to equality—both reflected and helped shape the pro-Southern view of 19th century history that would dominate popular and scholarly thought in the first half of the 20th century.

The film begins when Phil Stoneman, the son of the “great parliamentary leader” Austin Stoneman (who is undoubtedly based on Thaddeus Stevens, a Pennsylvania Congressman and Radical Republican), visits Piedmont, South Carolina to stay with his friend Ben Cameron. News of Lincoln’s election, however, sends Stoneman back home to Pennsylvania to enlist in the Union Army. After the war, Col. Ben Cameron, wounded in battle, is nursed back to health by Elsie Stoneman, the Congressman’s oldest daughter. The pair fall in love and move to the Cameron home in South Carolina.

The onset of Radical Reconstruction, however, allows Northerners like Representative Austin Stoneman to seize power and institute a plan to “crush the white South under the heel of the black South.” African American enfranchisement gives the vote to a people entirely unprepared to handle it, like the freedman who proclaims that “ef I doan’ get ‘nuf franchise to fill mah bucket, I doan’ want it nohow!” Griffith portrays a Reconstruction government made up almost entirely of African Americans, who eat chicken, drink whiskey, and take their shoes off while the state Congress is in session, and pass a series of bills designed to ensure black dominance over Southern whites. Silas Lynch, Austin Stoneman’s protégé, a mulatto “drunk with wine and power,” comes to epitomize the danger of empowering African Americans when he is elected lieutenant governor.

In despair over the chaos, destruction, and perversion of the social order wrought by Reconstruction, Ben Cameron founds the Ku Klux Klan in an effort to reestablish white control. The film’s damaging racial stereotypes are especially apparent in the scene in which Gus, a black Union soldier, whose bulging eyes and foaming

mouth make him look more like a beast than a man, seeks to “marry” (or rape) Flora Cameron, Ben’s youngest sister. The final montage of the film depicts an epic battle between the forces of good and evil, as the Klan, led by Ben Cameron, swoops into the city, restores order to the streets, rescues Elsie Stoneman from the clutches of the villainous Silas Lynch, saves the residents of a small cabin from an attack by crazed African Americans, and finally puts an end to Reconstruction by keeping blacks from voting in the next election. The film ends with a double honeymoon, as Ben Cameron and Elsie Stoneman get married, along with their younger siblings Margaret and Phil. The weddings represent a reunion of North and South under a banner of white supremacy.

The portrayal of African Americans in *The Birth of a Nation* is one of the most egregious examples of overt racism in cinematic history. Reflecting and enlarging prevailing Southern stereotypes around the turn of the century, the film’s black characters (all of whom are played by white actors in black face) are portrayed either as hopelessly childlike and naïve, or as violent, criminal, lustful brutes with uncontrollable passions and unspeakable desires. Griffith’s racism had a political and historical purpose, however. African Americans are not portrayed as innately depraved; it is the addition of political equality and social power during Reconstruction that accounts for their dangerous and destructive behavior, and it is this power and equality that the Klan seeks to end. Early in the film, the Cameron’s slaves are happy and faithful to their masters. It is Lynch, who has been elected to office, and Gus, who has served in the Union army, who come to represent the dark side of black equality. The film’s portrayal of rioting and violent African Americans, therefore, attests to the dangers of a society in which the proper racial hierarchy has been inverted and seeks to justify the segregated and oppressed status of African Americans in the 1915 South.

Perhaps the most interesting historical contribution of *The Birth of a Nation* is its visual encapsulation of the racial worldview of white Southerners in the late 19th and early 20th century. The film’s idealization of antebellum Southern society, its antipathy toward Reconstruction, and its disturbing obsession with black sexuality and white female purity reflect the lines of thought that allowed black disfranchisement, lynching, and the rise of a Jim Crow South between 1890 and 1910. While it is of little use as a history of Reconstruction, *The Birth of a Nation* remains

a fascinating primary source, which speaks to the nature of racism in the early 20th century and the manner in which history may be mobilized to justify oppression in the present.

See also: Ku Klux Klan; Lynching; White Supremacy

K. Stephen Prince Jr.

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## The Elevator

Founded by Philip Alexander Bell in 1865, *The Elevator* became one of the longest published African American newspapers of the 19th century. This “weekly journal of progress” reported on current events, American politics, science, and the arts for more than 40 years. Prominently displayed on the masthead, the motto of the newspaper expressed its chief concern: “Equality before the Law.” Bell planned to use the newspaper in the pursuit of social and political equality for African Americans. Under his leadership, *The Elevator* became one of the most widely read and influential black newspapers in California.

Bell, along with Peter Anderson, founded *The Pacific Appeal* in 1862, but a disagreement between the two over editorial policy prompted Bell to create *The Elevator* as a rival newspaper in 1865. Bell envisioned that *The Elevator* would serve as a venue for blacks to publicly enter the political debate over enfranchisement. Five influential black Californians who served on the Executive Committee of the California State Convention of Colored Citizens supported Bell’s plans. These five made up *The Elevator*’s Publishing Committee: William H. Yates, James R. Starkey, R. A. Hall, James P. Dyer, and Frederick G. Barbadoes. The paper’s prospectus stated that it was the organ of the executive committee, and will advocate political and civil equality to all American citizens. Bell and the committee

wanted African Americans to be treated as Americans, not as a separate group.

Although the paper was based in San Francisco, it attracted a national readership, with published reports from communities across the country. *The Elevator* used well-known contributors and subscription agents. James J. Spelman, editor of *The Baptist Messenger*, was a regular correspondent using the pseudonym Private L. Overture. John J. Moore, the founder of San Francisco's first black church, regularly contributed editorials about the need for equality and self-development. William J. Powell served as *The Elevator's* corresponding editor. Robert Hamilton, the son of *Abolition Times* journalist Robert Hamilton, also served on the staff. David Ruggles, publisher of *The Mirror of Liberty* and *The Genius of Freedom*, served as the newspaper's treasurer.

Bell and the contributors hoped to persuade readers that blacks should be given the right to vote because of their patriotism and loyalty to the country that had granted them their freedom. When the mainstream papers were suggesting that blacks may take up arms against whites, *The Elevator's* writers tried to dispel such fears and downplay any militancy images. They argued that the country's underlying principles supported nothing less than universal suffrage. Indeed, hopes were high in October 1865 that an official petition to the California legislature for the black vote would be favorably received. The California State Convention of Colored Citizens met to discuss matters and *The Elevator* printed the proceedings. Unfortunately, the legislature refused to debate the issue. The national political scene also showed signs of increased disinterest. These discouraging developments were reflected in the newspaper's reduction in editorials on the enfranchisement topic.

Despite these disappointments, *The Elevator* continued to comment on political issues, and the Chinese labor question was no exception. Chinese immigration was rapidly increasing and Bell often spoke against it, claiming that the Chinese were taking job opportunities from blacks and lowering wages. *The Elevator* also continued to closely follow the California elections. In 1867, the newspaper endorsed the Union Party candidates and Bell discussed the various issues of the election. Bell had always been a supporter of the Republican Party, and this stance was clearly reflected in his comments. He was disappointed, however, that the Union Party did not directly address black suffrage in this

election. When the Union Party lost the 1867 elections, Bell was concerned that equal rights would disappear from the political agenda.

Hope for the resurrection of the enfranchisement issue was raised anew with the election of President Grant. In the spring of 1869, Congress approved the Fifteenth Amendment, prohibiting the states or the federal government from using a citizen's race, color, or previous status as a slave as a voting qualification. Two-thirds of the states needed to approve the amendment, and Bell wanted California to be one of them. Once again, the topic of black enfranchisement dominated *The Elevator*, persuading voters to approve it. Updates on the ratification process across the country were regularly reported. Although California voters rejected the amendment, *The Elevator* was finally able to celebrate victory when the necessary amount of states did approve the amendment in 1870.

*The Elevator* had seen its major goal, black enfranchisement, achieved. The paper continued its mission to educate blacks about American politics, as well as commenting on specific reforms such as the need for equality in the educational system. Bell remained involved with *The Elevator* until his retirement in 1885. Although the exact date that the paper ceased publication is unclear, it was at least produced until 1898.

See also: Abolition, Slavery; Bell, Phillip A.; Colored Convention Movement; Republican Party

Donna Smith

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## Thomas, Clarence

Clarence Thomas (1948–) is the second black Supreme Court Justice in the United States. The second of three children, Clarence Thomas was born in Pin Point, Georgia, a small poor community outside Savannah that was given to freed slaves after the Civil War. He was born on June 23,

1948, to Leola and M. C. Thomas. His father abandoned the family shortly after Clarence was born.

After years of living in poverty with no indoor plumbing, Thomas moved to Savannah, Georgia, to live with his maternal grandfather, Myers Anderson, a religious man and self-taught entrepreneur. According to Thomas, this move proved to be a turning point in his life. For the first time, Thomas and his brother had an adult male figure and a comfortable home, with indoor plumbing and adult supervision. His grandfather enrolled Thomas in St. Benedict the Moor, a Catholic grade school that was started to educate poor African American children. Although Thomas had difficulty adjusting, this school pushed Thomas to excel and made him believe he could achieve great things as long as he worked hard. The stern hand of his grandfather proved influential in his life, teaching him discipline, the importance of an education, and hard work.

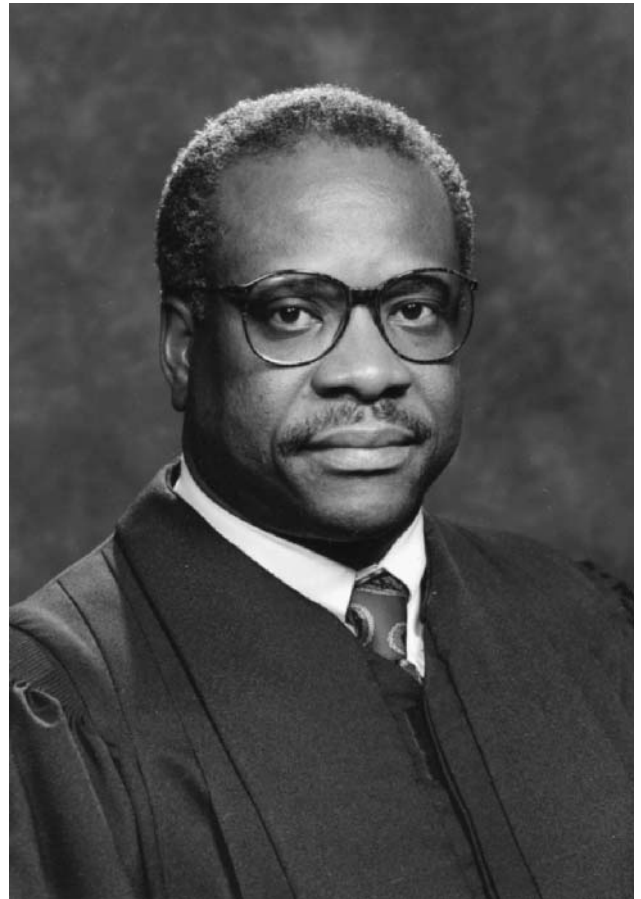
Because Anderson wanted Thomas to be a priest, he enrolled his grandson in St. John Vianney Minor Seminary, a Catholic boarding school, where he experienced bigotry for the first time. After graduating the seminary, in 1967, Thomas entered Immaculate Conception Seminary in Missouri to prepare for the priesthood; however, the prejudices there almost cost Thomas his faith. He was faced with southern bigotry from young men who were to be ordained as Catholic priests, something that troubled him. Ultimately, Thomas would enroll in Holy Cross College in Massachusetts. While at Holy Cross, Thomas worked part-time, participated in community service programs, and help establish the Black Student Union. In 1971, he graduated with an honors degree in English and soon thereafter married Kathy Grace Ambush who had his only child.

Thomas attended law school at Yale, where he had been accepted as part of an affirmative action program. To avoid being identified as the black student, Thomas often sat in the back of the class and avoided taking any civil rights courses. Instead he took business classes and studied tax and property law because he did not want to be labeled a civil rights attorney. This was his first experience, as he recalls, having the “monkey on his back,” being at Yale to satisfy some social goal, not because of his credentials but because of his race. It was at Yale that Thomas formulated his opinion against affirmative action programs because they helped more middle-class blacks and he was poor. After graduation from Yale in 1974, he accepted a position in Missouri to work in the Office of the State Attorney General John

Danforth, a position that allowed him to work in the tax division. When Danforth won a seat in the U.S. Senate, Thomas became a corporate lawyer for the Monsanto Company and later went back to work as a legislative assistant for Danforth, who was now a senator.

In 1980, President Ronald Reagan gained an interest in Thomas when he attended the Fairmont Conference for black conservatives, and the *Washington Post* wrote an article about him. He was offered a job as the assistant secretary for civil rights in the U.S. Department of Education. Soon after, Reagan promoted him to chairman of the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) where he changed the environment of the agency. Under Thomas’s leadership the EEOC stopped the use of time-tables, numeric goals, and the use of trials that relied on statistical evidence of discrimination, a move that angered many civil rights groups.

President George Bush then appointed Thomas in 1990 to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. In 1991, he



Clarence Thomas was seated on the U.S. Supreme Court in 1991. (U.S. Supreme Court)

was picked by President Bush to be the successor to Justice Thurgood Marshall, who had retired. There was widespread outcry by civil rights groups, particularly the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congressional Black Caucus, against his nomination as an associate justice because of Thomas's opposition to affirmative action. Women's rights groups also opposed his nomination because of charges of sexual harassment from Anita Hill. During Senate confirmation hearings, which were broadcast nationally, Thomas denied all allegations. The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended him to the full Senate for confirmation and Thomas was confirmed by a 52 to 48 vote in the Senate, the closest confirmation vote in history. He took the oath of office October 23, 1991 and is the youngest member of the Court.

Thomas is considered a conservative justice who attracts much debate. As a black Republican, Thomas is strongly supported by conservatives and despised by black intellectuals. Yet, Thomas argues that America should not expect blacks to speak in a monolithic voice.

*See also:* Black Conservatives; Congressional Black Caucus; Hill, Anita; Marshall, Thurgood; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Angela K. Lewis

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## Till, Emmett

Emmett Louis Till (1941–55), was a young Chicago native whose lynching in Mississippi helped galvanize the modern Civil Rights movement. He was born on July 25, 1941, to Mamie and Louis Till. The latter died serving in Europe during World War II leaving only a ring with the initials L. T. At the age of five, Emmett was stricken with polio, which left him with a slight stutter.

In the summer of 1955, 14-year-old Till traveled to Money, Mississippi, to visit his great-uncle Moses Wright.

Because of the Supreme Court's *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision several months before, which mandated integrated schools, racial tensions in the area were volatile. Not long after his arrival, Till and some other teenagers visited Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market. Accounts of what happened have varied. Some say that Till whistled at store owner Carolyn Brant, which could have been misinterpreted because of Till's stutter. Others say Till said "bye baby" as he left the store. Four days later, Carolyn Bryant's husband Roy and his brother J. W. Milam threatened Moses Wright and kidnapped Till. Bryant and Milam were arrested for kidnapping Till and three days later, Till's body was found in the Tallahatchie River tied to a cotton gin fan. The body could be identified only through the L. T. initial ring. Bryant and Milam were later charged with murder.

Emmett Till's body was brought back to Chicago and newspaper photographers captured pictures of Mamie Till fainting. Till's mother decided to hold an open casket funeral and invited the press so that everyone could see Till's body. Tens of thousands of people gathered at the funeral. *Jet* magazine and the *Chicago Defender* published pictures, and local television stations aired funeral footage. Although black communities throughout the South had experienced lynching before, this was one of the first times that the aftermath was widely publicized. In addition to mobilizing the black community around civil rights, Till's lynching also had an effect on white northern journalists: it cemented the fact that the South was "worthy" of national news coverage.

Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam's trial began in Sumner, Mississippi on September 19. No black men or women of any ethnic background were allowed to serve on the jury. Although Moses Wright stood in open court and identified Bryant and Milam as the kidnapers, after 67 minutes of deliberation, the jury acquitted both men on the murder charges. A juror was later quoted as saying the deliberations would have taken less time if they had not taken a break. Outrage surrounding the verdict was published in newspapers all over the world including Belgium, France, and Germany. Moses Wright and Willie Reed, a black sharecropper who also testified against the men, fled to Chicago. Several months later Wright and Reed returned to Mississippi to testify on the kidnapping charges; however, the grand jury refused to indict.

In January 1956, *Look* magazine offered Bryant and Milam \$4,000 for an interview with journalist William Bradford Huie. Milam went on the record and admitted to kidnapping Till and stated that they only intended to beat



Emmett Till and his mother, Mamie Till Mobley. The 14-year-old Till was murdered by vigilantes in Mississippi in 1955. (Library of Congress)

him. Because Till remained defiant, however, Milam forced him to strip and shot him at close range in the head. Huie later wrote a follow-up article that stated Bryant and Milam were ostracized by both the black and white communities, which put their stores out of business.

J. W. Milam died in 1980 and Roy Bryant died in 1990, both of cancer. Mamie Till Mobley died in 2003 a few weeks before PBS aired a documentary chronicling Emmett's lynching. In 2004, Senator Charles Schumer and Representative Charles Rangel urged the Justice Department to reopen the investigation into Till's murder because of new evidence that suggested Bryant and Milam did not act alone. On May 10, 2004, the Justice Department and the Mississippi District Attorney's Office officially reopened the case.

See also: *Jet* Magazine; Lynching; White Supremacy

Lisa Doris Alexander

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## “To Secure These Rights”

“To Secure these Rights” was a landmark report on civil rights issued by Harry S. Truman's President's Committee on Civil Rights on October 29, 1947. It provided information on the contemporary status of civil rights and made recommendations for appropriate legislation and measures.



Despite certain economic and social improvements during World War II, segregation and racism still dominated America's societal and political structures. In the light of the growing African American quest for racial equality, the South, in particular, wanted to reinstate the strict system of segregation and white dominance. Racial tensions and violence against blacks were increasing.

Initially President Truman was hesitant to actively enforce civil rights, fearing the exasperation of the South and an increased split of the Democratic Party. But appalled by the increasing racial violence, he personally intervened, and on December 5, 1946, established the President's Committee on Civil Rights.

The committee consisted of 15 members representing industry, labor, the legal profession, the South, and the African American community, as well as various religious denominations. Its task was to investigate the current status of civil rights of minorities in the United States and the ways in which current laws and federal, state, and local authorities could enhance and protect civil rights for all. The executive order mandated that all executive departments and agencies of the federal government cooperate. The committee held public hearings, sought evidence, and corresponded with private organizations, individuals, cooperating government agencies and local public agencies.

On October 29, 1947, the committee issued its revolutionary report "To Secure These Rights," which set out the general situation of civil rights in the United States, emphasizing the special position of African Americans. The report was divided into four parts. Part One, entitled "The American Heritage: The Promise of Freedom and Equality," laid out the American ideal of equality and freedom consisting of four essential rights: The Right to Safety and Security of the Person, The Right to Citizenship and its Privileges, The Right to Freedom of Conscience and Expression, and The Right to Equality of Opportunity.

Part Two, "The Record: Short of the Goal," outlined the existing shameful inadequacies of civil rights, highlighting the defective condition of the four essential rights including lynching, police brutality, the inequality of the system of justice, and the continuance of involuntary servitude. The disfranchisement of African Americans in the South in particular and the segregation in the Armed Forces were also listed as signs of the infringement of citizenship rights and privileges. The inequalities with respect to employment opportunities, on-the-job discrimination, education,

housing, health services, public services, and accommodations were also noted. The report condemned segregation and the separate-but-equal premise as unfair and essentially contradicting the concept of American citizenship. Segregation had not only created unequal facilities and opportunities, but also hostility between the races. Only by ending segregation could the American society attain equal rights and racial accord.

Part Three, "Government Responsibility: Securing these Rights," pointed to the special role of government in safeguarding civil rights. It argued that the federal government could not evade its responsibilities and should take immediate action to guarantee civil rights for all. For moral and economic reasons, the United States was obliged to abolish the existing inequalities and segregation. It furthermore argued that the abominable status of civil rights would continue to adversely affect foreign policy interests and the image of the United States, specifically Washington, D.C. and its symbolic position.

Part Four, "A Program of Action: The Committee's Recommendations," suggested a broad range of measures to guard and expand civil rights and to end segregation. African American voting rights were to be protected. The report demanded the establishment of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). It recommended the reorganization, empowerment, and enlargement of the Civil Rights Section of the Department of Justice. In addition, it urged the government to establish a special section focusing on civil rights in the FBI, law enforcement agencies in the states, and a permanent commission on civil rights in the Office of the President, the Congress, and the states. The government was encouraged to enact legislation banning all segregation and discrimination on all levels and in all aspects of American society, including abolishing poll taxes, police brutality, forbidding lynching, and ending forced servitude. It demanded the end of segregation and discrimination in the Armed Forces and in all departments of the government.

The metropolitan newspapers praised the report, but the South mainly condemned it as inflaming racial hatred. The African American community welcomed the report, but most were skeptical about what real impact the report would have on African Americans.

Truman considered the report a landmark, but did not initially address its implementation. He used the report as the basis for a civil rights message to Congress in February

1948. It also led him to issue executive orders integrating of the Armed Forces and ending of discrimination in the civil services.

See also: Cold War and Civil Rights; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; White, Walter

Christine Knauer

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## Trotter, William Monroe

William Monroe Trotter (1872–1934) was a newspaper publisher, a radical civil rights activist, and a critic of Booker T. Washington and his accommodationist approach to white racism. He was born in Springfield Township, Ohio, on April 7, 1872, the son of James Monroe and Virginia Isaacs Trotter. His father, who was recorder of deeds for Washington, D.C. under President Grover Cleveland, was also the author of an 1878 book and a former Union soldier who had enlisted in the famous 55th Massachusetts Regiment under the command Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. William Monroe Trotter was a child of privilege, as he grew up in a mostly white neighborhood in Boston. In 1890, he graduated from the Hyde Park High School as class president and valedictorian of his class. In 1891, Trotter entered Harvard and, because of his academic acumen, he received the coveted Prize Deturs and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year—the first African American student to do so in the history of the school. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University in 1895 and continued his education, earning his MA in 1896 before returning to Boston. He became a real estate broker, engaged

in political activities for the Republican Party, and was married on June 27, 1899, to Geraldine Louise Pindell.

In 1901, Trotter and George Forbes, an assistant librarian at the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, founded the *Boston Guardian*, a weekly publication that gave voice to Trotter's opposition to the powerful sway of Booker T. Washington and that advocated, in radical and aggressive fashion, the full inclusion of African Americans into the American mainstream. Trotter and Forbes modeled their paper after William Lloyd Garrison's the *Liberator*, publishing the *Guardian* from the same building and even on the same floor as the *Liberator*. Even before W. E. B. Du Bois launched his infamous attack against Washington in the 1903 publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, Trotter was publishing acerbic diatribes against Washington and accommodationist approaches to white supremacy in the pages of the *Boston Guardian*. In one particularly sharp editorial published on December 20, 1902, Trotter alludes to Washington's "cowardice" and labels him a race traitor for making conciliatory remarks about southern state constitutions that had ignored the Fifteenth Amendment by actively evoking fears of "Negro Domination" as a rationale for denying African American suffrage. Through his bitter and even satirical editorials, Trotter successfully conveyed the notion that Washington was, in effect, the voice of the African American collective who blindly agreed with everything the so-called Wizard of Tuskegee wanted.

On July 30, 1903, Trotter and a group of his supporters disrupted a speech that Washington delivered at the Columbus Avenue African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Boston. By constantly heckling the speaker and shouting questions that challenged Washington's ideological stances, Trotter and the actions of his associates created a tremendous amount of chaos, which later came to be known as the Boston Riot. As a result of his actions, and at the insistence of Washington's supporters, Trotter and two others were arrested. Trotter and Granville Martin were fined \$50 and spent a month each in the Charles Street Jail when they lost their appeal in the superior court. This incident solidified the mutual disdain and animus Washington and Trotter would have for each other. Moreover, the so-called Boston Riot catapulted Trotter to the national stage.

In 1905, Trotter, W. E. B. Du Bois, and other prominent African American intellectuals and activists concerned with the various aspects of the black nadir—the brutal combination of disfranchisement, segregation, sharecropping, and

racial violence—founded the Niagara movement. Although Trotter helped push Du Bois toward a greater militancy in his approach to civil rights, the two quarreled over tactics, with Trotter insisting that any national civil rights organization be led and financed entirely by African Americans. To this end, Trotter founded the National Equal Rights League in 1908. Despite his philosophical and tactical disputes with Du Bois, Trotter participated in the 1909 merger of the Niagara movement with the group of white progressives from Springfield, Illinois who founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), although he continued to vehemently oppose white involvement in the organization.

A political independent, Trotter initially supported Georgia Democrat Woodrow Wilson for president in 1912. When Wilson's policies began to illustrate his unfaltering commitment to segregation and disfranchisement, however, Trotter turned against the president and personally confronted Wilson with his concerns in the White House in November 1914. After a heated exchange, Wilson ordered Trotter to leave his office after stating that segregation was actually to the benefit of African Americans.

In 1915, Trotter organized boycotts and demonstrations against D. W. Griffith's racist film, *The Birth of a Nation*, a film President Wilson had shown in the White House. Trotter led more than 1,000 people in a march on the Massachusetts State House in opposition to the film and its glorified depiction of the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. In 1919, to Wilson's great annoyance, Trotter announced his intention to attend the Versailles Peace Conference to push for inclusion of a racial equality clause in the peace treaty ending World War I. When the U.S. government denied him a visa, Trotter took a job as ship's cook and so secured passage to France. Although he failed to obtain a hearing at the Versailles Peace Conference, his trip and continued editorials in the *Guardian* won international publicity for the cause against segregation and white supremacy.

In the decade between 1920 and 1930, Trotter became increasingly radicalized and was actively involved in the Scottsboro, Alabama case, and petitioned for the release of the soldiers involved in the 1917 Houston mutiny. Although a lifelong political independent, Trotter became a staunch supporter of the policies of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, seeing in him a humanitarian and someone who could potentially embrace civil rights as a means of strengthening the entire nation. Hit hard by the Great

Depression, Trotter lost control of the *Guardian* in 1934. He died at the age of 62 on his birthday, April 7, 1934, when he fell from the roof of a three-story Boston building.

*See also:* Du Bois, W. E. B.; Houston, Texas, Mutiny, 1917; Niagara Movement; Washington, Booker T.

Walter C. Rucker

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## Tulsa, Oklahoma, Race Riot of 1921

On the morning of May 30, 1921, the Greenwood section of Tulsa was one of the most prosperous African American communities in the country. It had more than 6,000 residents, numerous businesses, lawyers, physicians, a hospital, a school, two newspapers, and two movie theaters. Two days later, on the afternoon of June 1, the community had been destroyed. More than 35 blocks had been burned to the ground; virtually every black person in the city was being held in custody.

The origins of the riot can be found in several places. First, the Greenwood community was becoming more self-confident and prosperous. Tulsa's African American community grew rapidly in the decade before the riot. Migrants came from the Deep South and from other parts of Oklahoma. They were drawn by Greenwood's prosperity and job opportunities. The weekly newspaper, the *Tulsa Star*, edited by A. J. Smitherman, fostered the community's independence. Each week Smitherman's stories and editorials emphasized racial uplift, pride, and the need to protect against violence. When a young black man was taken from

a jail in Oklahoma City in 1920, for instance, Smitherman chastised the Oklahoma City community for failing to take more aggressive action to protect him. He wrote that citizens had the right to use force—including taking life—to prevent a lynching.

Smitherman and other leaders of the Greenwood renaissance met frequently to discuss the news of racial inequality and violence and to take action. For example, J. B. Stradford filed a lawsuit in 1910 to challenge his arrest for violating a railroad segregation statute. J. D. Spears, a lawyer, was heard to remark that every time he heard of a lynching, it made him want to get some more ammunition. Still other Greenwood leaders were veterans of World War I, who had fought in France and had seen how the world might be organized differently from the segregation and deference demanded by white Tulsans.

But as aspirations and expectations in Greenwood soared, whites expected a return to prewar patterns of deference and subordination. Moreover, white Tulsans feared the freedom of the Greenwood community, where in music

halls blacks and whites danced and drank together. Thus when a sensational newspaper story appeared in the May 31, 1921 edition of the *Tulsa Tribune*, Tulsa was primed for a racial showdown. The article told of a young white orphan, Sarah Page, who was attacked in an elevator by 19-year-old Dick Rowland. By late afternoon, there was talk of lynching and Tulsa's black citizens were becoming alarmed.

A group of veterans decided to go to the courthouse and protect Rowland around 7 P.M. Once at the Courthouse, they saw an angry white mob. They also received assurances that the sheriff would protect Rowland. Throughout the night, groups made periodic trips to the courthouse to check on the progress of the mob.

By 10 P.M., when the white mob had not dispersed, several dozen veterans appeared at the courthouse. The leader was a man of whom it was said after the riot that he had come back from France with outlandish ideas about equality. Someone, perhaps a police officer, tried to disarm the veterans and when they refused, riot erupted.



*Smoke billows over the African American community of Greenwood during the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, which left nearly 300 people dead. (Library of Congress)*

The police department deputized perhaps 250 men. One white man present that evening recalled that he was instructed to “get a gun and get busy and try and get a nigger.” (*Reconstructing the Dreamland*, p. 40) Back in Greenwood, people also got out their rifles and prepared for the attack. The police formulated a plan to disarm everyone in Greenwood and take them into custody. Most surrendered peacefully, but there were some pitched battles, and some who refused to give up their guns were killed. After the arrests were made, the mobs followed with looting, then burning. Civilization broke down in Tulsa on June 1. There were reports of cold-blooded killing of unarmed men and women; a man was dragged behind a car. There are many unconfirmed reports of airplanes dropping turpentine balls on Greenwood to speed the destruction.

The arrests were completed by about 10 A.M., and the burning and looting were completed shortly afterwards. Then units of the National Guard arrived from Oklahoma City and restored order. Over the next several days, Greenwood residents were released from custody, but only when white employers came and vouched for them. Many left town immediately for places like Chicago, Los Angeles, and Kansas City. Those who stayed on lived in tents for months until they rebuilt homes.

The city refused to accept responsibility for the riot or for reconstruction. The all-white grand jury that investigated blamed the riot on Greenwood residents. The city attempted to prevent rebuilding in Greenwood by passing a building ordinance that required use of fireproof material. That ordinance was struck down as an interference with residents’ property rights. Moreover, insurance companies refused to pay on fire insurance policies, citing “riot exclusion” clauses, and the city was immune from suit.

The riot was brought back into public discussion in 1997 when the Oklahoma legislature established a commission to investigate it. In 2001, the commission recommended paying reparations, which the legislature declined to do. Then in 2003, a legal team led by Charles Ogletree and Johnnie Cochran filed a lawsuit on behalf of the riot victims. The city argued that it was filed too late. The plaintiffs argued, however, that the Oklahoma courts were effectively closed at the time of the riot and for decades afterwards. As the riot illustrated, when Greenwood residents tried to assert their rights, they were subject to extreme violence. Moreover, in 1923, Oklahoma’s governor declared martial

law to reclaim control of the state from the Ku Klux Klan. In March 2003, the lawsuit was dismissed. In dismissing the suit, the federal court acknowledged that the courts were unavailable, but it said that the plaintiffs should have filed their case when the courts became available again. Riot victims were left, once again, waiting for justice.

*See also:* Franklin, John Hope; Ku Klux Klan; White Mob Violence; White Supremacy

*Alfred L. Brophy*

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## Turner, Henry McNeal

Henry McNeal Turner (1834–1915) was a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and one of the most influential and outspoken African Americans in the late 19th-century South. Turner used his position and pulpit as a means of actively promoting economic, social, and political reform. He is particularly known for his contributions to the AME Church, Reconstruction politics, black nationalism, pan-Africanism, and black theology.

Turner was born free in Newbury Courthouse, South Carolina, in 1834. His paternal grandmother was a white plantation owner, and his maternal grandfather was reported to be an African prince. He grew up in Abbeville, South Carolina, working alongside field slaves on a local cotton plantation. As a teenager, he learned to read and write while working as a janitor in an Abbeville law firm.

After converting to Christianity in his late teenage years, Turner decided to become a preacher. He was licensed by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1853 and served as an itinerant, traveling and preaching all over the South. Turner married Eliza Ann Preacher, daughter of a wealthy free black family in Columbia, in 1856. Together they had 14 children, although only four survived into adulthood and only two outlived their father. Following

Eliza's death in 1889, Turner married three more times, the last of which, at the age of 73 to his secretary, evoked considerable controversy.

Turner joined the AME Church in 1858 and studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and theology at Trinity College in Baltimore. In 1860, he moved his family to Washington, D.C., where he became pastor of Union Bethel Church. In Washington he became exposed to politics, and he developed friendships with leading Republicans such as Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, and Benjamin Wade. Turner was part of a group that lobbied President Lincoln to allow freedmen to enlist in the Union Army, and when the first black regiment was created in 1863, he served as its chaplain. He was with the regiment as it fought numerous battles in Virginia during the closing years of the Civil War.

After the war ended, Turner was appointed by President Johnson to a post with the Freedmen's Bureau. He moved to Georgia, where he split time working with the bureau in providing education, relief, and suffrage for blacks and organizing AME churches around the state. Encouraged by emancipation and the Radical Republican commitment to black civil rights, Turner was hopeful for racial reconciliation and equality.

Turner was very active in politics during the late 1860s and early 1870s. He was instrumental in organizing the Republican Party in Georgia, acted as the leader of black Republicans in the state during the Reconstruction era, and was a delegate to the state constitutional convention. In 1868, Turner was elected to the state legislature from Macon, but, along with the other black representatives elected that year, he was barred illegally by whites from taking his seat. Eventually seated in 1870 at the behest of the U.S. Congress, Turner lost his reelection bid the next year, in part as a result of white political fraud and intimidation. Afterward he blamed moderate white Republicans for not more actively speaking up on his behalf and for betraying black political and civil rights more broadly.

Because of his role as an active preacher-politician in the Reconstruction South, Turner's life was threatened by whites on numerous occasions. He avoided armed mobs by hiding in houses, woods, and a hollow log at one point. On one occasion he narrowly escaped the Ku Klux Klan, who assassinated his speaking partner in Columbus, Georgia, and sought to kill him as well. In Macon, the homes of

Turner and Jefferson Long, Georgia's only black congressman during Reconstruction, were once protected by 150 armed blacks who sought to prevent white vigilantes from doing harm to their political leaders.

As Reconstruction ended and white terrorist violence continued unabated, fewer black ministers believed in the efficacy of politics, and the black church gradually slid into a phase of relative conservatism. Turner proved to be the exception to this trend, as he vocally denounced the leadership of both national political parties. He became particularly disenchanted with the prospect of African Americans in the United States after the 1883 Supreme Court decision invalidating the Civil Rights Act of 1875; a few years later, in a private letter he referred to the Court as "an organized mob against the negro" (*Respect Black*, p. 78).

By the mid-1880s, Turner was generally embittered by the nation's betrayal of the progress and promises of Reconstruction. He taught that it was providential that Africans were brought to America, which, despite the horrors of slavery, allowed them to embrace Christianity and learn the principles of self-reliance and the rule of law. In the context of political rejection and the tightening grip of Jim Crow, however, it became evident that blacks in America could never gain their full manhood, a subject that Turner often dwelt on in sermons and speeches. He even suggested that unless something drastic changed, racial extermination was inevitable.

Disillusioned by the loss of black civil rights and by the increased quantity and brutality of lynching in the South, Turner concluded that there was no future for blacks in America, and embraced African emigration as the only remaining strategy for African Americans. He was elected an officer of the American Colonization Society in 1876, and later helped organize the International Migration Society. During the 1890s, he was one of the most prominent black nationalists in the United States and the most vocal advocate of recolonizing American blacks in West Africa. He traveled to Africa four times in the decade, surveying emigration opportunities and building the AME Church on the continent. Although he made few converts to the cause of emigration, partly as a result of negative reactions of returned emigrants to Liberia, Turner's pan-African vision and support for colonization provided an important precedent for the more popular movement led by Marcus Garvey two decades later.

Turner was well aware that by the 1890s he was on the radical edge of southern black leadership. It was a position he relished. As opposed to Booker T. Washington and other southern blacks who were tied into the white power structure, Turner's independence allowed him to launch fiery diatribes at whites, to be publicly offensive in condemning Jim Crow, and to deride hypocrisy of both whites and blacks wherever he saw it. His endorsement of emigration can be seen as a black nationalist alternative to the accommodationist posture of Washington during this period, although the latter was ultimately more successful in achieving his aims. Turner urged blacks to arm themselves to defend their homes, their leaders, and their manhood. He criticized black participation in the Spanish-American War, saying that fighting to liberate oppressed colored peoples abroad was for naught, given the intensity of race-baiting and lynching back home in the United States. In 1896, he called on blacks to register a protest vote, and although he supported William Jennings Bryan's bid for the presidency in 1900, he came to consider himself a Prohibitionist rather a supporter of either major political party.

Throughout his period of political activism, Turner remained an energetic and effective missionary and institution builder for the AME Church. His efforts were rewarded in 1880 when he became the first southern bishop elected in the denomination. He was the first AME bishop to ordain a woman, Sarah Ann Hughes, as a deacon in the church. In 1885, he published *The Genius and Theory of Methodist Polity*, demonstrating his theological and ecclesiastical acumen. An active writer and editor, he also founded three church-related periodicals (although he often devoted their pages to political and social issues): *The Southern Christian Recorder* (founded 1889), *The Voice of Missions* (1892), and *The Voice of the People* (1901).

Turner believed strongly that the black church should play a prominent role in improving the embattled black psyche and self-image. In a way that offended whites and some blacks who were more committed to separate roles for church and state, he combined religion and politics, believing that both were ultimately concerned with freedom from bondage and that they could and should work together for the uplift of the race.

His belief in religion's function as an agent of social and political change was perhaps best revealed in one of his most controversial and memorable statements. In 1895, at a conference in Atlanta that helped lead to the creation

of the black National Baptist Convention, Turner famously proclaimed that "God is a Negro." The assertion reflected a culmination of his previous teachings rather than a departure or radically new idea. In the 1880s, he spoke of black angels in heaven and forcibly denounced the notion that God was white and the devil was black. In proclaiming God's blackness, which he asserted as an ontological rather than strictly physical fact, Turner became the first prominent African American leader to directly confront the issue of God's racial identity rather than simply reflecting on his divine commiseration with blacks as an oppressed people, an idea that had existed since slavery.

Rather than merely protesting against the dominant culture of whiteness, Turner's rhetoric of God's blackness was a conscious and proactive strategy to uplift the race through the affirmation of a more positive self-image. Turner considered his discussion of God's color, which whites criticized as heresy, as a means to the end of racial progress and a testimonial to the dignity and even sacredness of blackness. He has thus appropriately been seen by some scholars and churchmen as an important predecessor to the black theology movement of the 1960s.

The last of the group of preacher-politicians with roots in slavery and emancipation who played a substantial role in the expansion of black freedom during Reconstruction, Turner was one of the most popular black leaders of the late 19th century, particularly among the black lower class that he came from and ministered to. Old age, an increasingly oppressive racial climate, and the growing conservatism of the black church all combined to marginalize him as a public figure after the turn of the 20th century. In his final years he traveled to Canada, helping to establish the AME Church there and ministering to blacks who had fled north of the border in the pursuit of greater freedoms. He died in 1915 in Windsor, Canada. Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta is named in his honor, as well as numerous churches throughout the United States and Canada.

See also: African Methodist Episcopal Church; American Colonization Society; Jim Crow; Ku Klux Klan; Lincoln, Abraham; Pan-Africanism; Republican Party

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## Tuskegee Airmen

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of black pilots who flew missions and escorted heavy bombers over Italy and Germany during World War II and set out to prove that African Americans could fly combat aircraft. Despite early setbacks, the experiment proved successful and, by the end of the war, they had earned 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and Legions of Merit, lost 66 pilots killed in action, and did not lose a single bomber to German fighters during escort duties over Italy and deep in the industrial heart of Germany.

Since 1607, both free and enslaved African Americans have served America traditionally in the infantry or cavalry. Once their service was completed, African Americans were marginalized back to the fringes of society as second-class citizens. Yet, more than 400,000 African Americans served in the Civil War and each of the two world wars. Moreover, black soldiers who served in the infantry and cavalry were at an economic disadvantage because of a lack of technical training. The pace of technology changed rapidly during World War I. By 1918, the use of aircraft in support of infantry was an integral part of military strategy.

More pilots were needed. Institutional racism and quotas prevented African Americans from entering the Army Air Corps. A 1925 Army War College report suggested that African Americans were incapable of operating aircraft, undisciplined, unskilled, and did not desire to fly as whites did, especially in war. The report lacked evidence, but its findings were accepted by the American military. Nevertheless, American black pilots such as Bessie Coleman, Willa Brown, William Powell, Cornelius Coffey, John C. Robinson, and ace Eugene Bullard distinguished themselves in World War I while attached to the French Air Force. Despite the report, Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, pressured the War Department to allow African Americans to fly in the military.

Subsequently, black aviation clubs sprang up in the cities of Chicago and Los Angeles. William Powell started the Bessie Coleman Flying Schools. Black leaders and politicians pushed for all-black airports and airlines; however,

the movement died because of insufficient funding, the lack of political support, and the Great Depression.

Everyone was hit hard by the depression, as 25 percent of Americans were out of work. Poor whites suffered but African Americans were hit harder because many were already living well below the poverty line and tried to join the military as a way out. But the military would only take a limited number of African Americans in unskilled positions.

As war winds swept across Europe and Asia, however, the time was right to effect changes in military policy at home. Two key events changed the fortunes of black pilots wanting to serve their country. First, in 1939, Wyoming senator Harry H. Schwartz pushed for Public Law 18, which allowed black civilian pilots to train under the Civil Aeronautics Authority. The passage of this law opened the door for black pilots in the army.

Second, the chairman of the Civilian Committee on Participation of Negroes in the National Defense, Howard University Professor Rayford W. Logan, pushed for raised quotas in the armed forces. Logan's efforts were successful, as the Selective Service Act of 1940 raised the numbers for existing black quotas in the military.

Combined with pressure from other black leaders, these acts of legislation led to the creation of an experimental black pilot program at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. By January 1940, and under direction of George L. Washington, chief of aeronautics at the institute, training was underway at Montgomery, Alabama about 40 miles from Tuskegee. The long roundtrip from Montgomery to Tuskegee prompted the building of a new airfield only 12 miles from the school. A closer airfield made for less weary pilots and increased training time.

In May 1940, the first pilots were awarded their private pilot's license and two years later five of these pilots were commissioned into the Army Air Force and were the first members of the 99th Fighter Squadron; Captain Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was placed in command. The newly formed unit was only five pilots strong and too weak to ship out and could not fly with white units owing to segregation. The 99th Squadron could only sit and await the graduation of more black pilots.

Pilot training was a five-week course and army brass wanted the best crop of black pilots they could get. Entrance requirements were strict and the first few classes had a 70 to 80 percent washout rate. For example, the second class





*The Tuskegee Airmen at Tuskegee Army Air Field. The Tuskegee Airmen were the only African American Air Corps officers during World War II. (Library of Congress)*

of pilots entered with 10 men, but only 3 graduated. Typically, the average soldier in the first few classes held a bachelor's degree; some even had master's degrees. As wartime attrition drained human resources, however, entrance requirements became less stringent. As a result, by the end of 1942, enough pilots completed training to form four fighter squadrons collectively known as the 332nd Fighter Group and assigned to the 15th Army Air Force.

In 1943, however, just before the invasion of Sicily, the 99th Fighter Group became the first of the 332nd to leave for war and was sent to Casablanca. While there, the 99th received their new P-40 fighters and were visited by several noted dignitaries, Hollywood stars, and war veterans. A critical visitor was Lieutenant Colonel Philip Cochran of the famed Flying Tigers. Cochran lived and trained with

the 99th in Casablanca, imparting invaluable lessons from his combat experience in China. He treated the black pilots with respect and as fellow Americans. Phil Cochran was highly respected and regarded by veterans of the Tuskegee Airmen until his death in 1980.

Leaving Casablanca in May 1943, the 99th moved to an old German air base in Algeria and placed in the 33rd Fighter Group under the command of Colonel William "Spike" Momyer who virtually ignored their existence at first. Shorthanded, the 33rd pressed the 99th into action against the island of Pantellaria as the invasion of Sicily loomed. The 99th scored early successes against German fighters and ground targets. The island soon fell, however, and the 99th turned to escorting bombers over the Italian mainland.

During these escorts, it was soon discovered that the P-40 was slower and less maneuverable than the German aircraft, but it could take more enemy fire and turn tighter than the FW-190s or the ME-109s. Despite the P-40s' disadvantages, the 99th successfully escorted several bombing raids and did not lose a single bomber to German aircraft.

With Sicily secured and a foothold established in southern Italy, the 99th moved to the air base at Foggia, Italy. Assigned to bomb in support of the assault against the virtually impregnable Monte Cassino, the 99th did not engage many enemy aircraft. Shooting down fewer planes than their white counterparts, the black pilots were perceived as ineffective in combat. According to journalist Ernie Pyle, however, the actions of the 99th at Monte Cassino were extremely successful.

Consequently, prewar ghosts returned to haunt the 99th as Army Air Force leaders claimed that black pilots lacked the guts, discipline, organization, stamina, and aggressiveness to be good combat pilots. The Tuskegee experiment was in danger as Momyer and Hap Arnold threatened to dissolve the 99th and have the men reassigned to a rear area.

In the midst of this controversy, Davis was sent home. While there, he went to the Pentagon to argue on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen. He suggested that improper training, fewer pilots, more missions resulted in the 99th requesting more leave than their white counterparts. Davis also took responsibility as a unit leader, claiming he had been too conservative in order to protect the Tuskegee experiment. As a result, Arnold changed his mind and convinced Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall to keep the black pilot program in operation.

In the meantime, the 99th was reassigned to the 79th Fighter Group and sent to the Allied airbase at Madna. The 79th was an independent unit that did not have specific combat duties. The 99th was in limbo and its future was uncertain. However, the 79th was led by Colonel Earl Bates and, like Cochran at Casablanca, Bates treated the black pilots with respect. Bates was a no-nonsense commander that expected the 99th to perform at its best at all times. While there, the 99th flew more than 500 missions in support of the British Eighth Army where their morale, stamina, combat aggressiveness, and confidence all increased.

Soon after, the fortunes of the Tuskegee Airmen would change forever. In January 1944, the 99th was given the full responsibility of supporting the American landings at Anzio. A fierce five-minute dogfight over the beachhead

erased five months of disappointment as 12 fighters of the 99th engaged 15 German fighters, shooting down eight of them. These pilots knew this was the last chance they had to impress their detractors and they made the most of it. A few months earlier an article in *Time Magazine* criticized the 99th as an ineffective and incapable unit. After the Anzio landings, the magazine ran another story giving the Tuskegee Airmen their full support.

By May 1944, the other three units of the 332nd Fighter Group had joined the 99th in Italy. The 332nd was moved northward to Ramitelli airbase to escort Allied bombers over Germany. Striking at the industrial heart of Germany, these missions were dangerous but crucial to the war effort, especially after the D-Day landings in June 1944.

By this time the cumbersome P-40s were replaced by the sleek and powerful P-51 Mustang. Army regulations allowed pilots and units to paint nose art on their planes to personalize it. A supply problem resulted in a surplus of red paint at Italian airfields. Black ground crews painted the tail assemblies of the 332nd P-51s solid red. Thereafter the Tuskegee Airmen became known as the Red Tail Angels in the skies over Germany. And by the time of the German surrender in May 1945, the 332nd did not lose a single bomber to German planes.

After the German surrender, the 332nd Fighter Group and the inactive 477th Bomber Group formed the 477th Composite Group, which was deactivated in 1946. The 332nd was re-formed and remained an active unit until 1949 after President Harry S. Truman desegregated the armed forces. The Tuskegee Airmen proved successful. The combat success of the 332nd proved false any report that African Americans could not, or lacked the desire to, fly. And by 1946, the training program at Tuskegee Army Air Field under the command of General Noel F. Parish produced almost 1,000 black pilots.

*See also:* National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Roosevelt, Eleanor; Tuskegee Institute; White, Walter; World War II (Black Participation in)

*Jeffery Othele Mahan*

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## Tuskegee Experiment

The *Tuskegee Study of Syphilis in the Negro Male*, better known as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, was one of the most reprehensible and controversial scientific studies involving human subjects to take place in the United States. The study was conducted from 1932–1972 in Macon County, Alabama. The blistering racial climate that characterized much of the Deep South during this period accounted for the exploitation of the 399 black men selected to participate in the study of untreated tertiary syphilis in black men. Because blacks were believed to be unkempt, unsanitary, and libidinous, the high incidences of syphilis among African Americans in Macon County was believed to have extended from these variables. The high rate of poverty and illiteracy made Macon County residents vulnerable to the exploits of the U.S. Public Health Service who provided long-term funding for the project.

Entrenched in scientific racism, the impetus behind the Tuskegee Syphilis Study was a desire to prove that syphilis had different effects on African Americans than on whites. Whites were believed to suffer more from the neurological complications of the disease in its latent phase, whereas blacks were believed to suffer from its cardiovascular effects. Late 19th- and early 20th-century scientific curiosities about certain physiological aspects of African Americans (cranial size as a measurement of intellect), in addition to blacks presumed susceptibility and/or resistant to certain diseases (pellagra, malaria) aided in the justification of the experiment. Thus when the syphilis epidemic struck in the mid 1920s, as a result of the prominence of the disease among African Americans, it was immediately coined a “black disease.” By 1932, when the study properly

began as an offspring of the former syphilis demonstrations throughout the South, the medical community was wedded to the belief that certain diseases were racially specific in regard to their effects.

The Tuskegee Study, in particular, was a continuation of the Oslo Study conducted by Dr. E. Bruusgaard, chief of the Venereal Disease Clinic in Oslo, Norway between 1891 and 1910. The Oslo Study was designed to show the effects of untreated syphilis in whites. The primary justification for the experiment was to observe the effects of untreated syphilis in African Americans in an effort to juxtapose scientific findings with the former Oslo Study.

Macon County, Alabama was a *gold mine* for researchers who wanted to learn more about syphilis. In the 1920s, the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), with help from the Rosenwald Fund, set out to perform syphilis demonstrations throughout the South. The demonstrations were intended to test individuals for the disease to get an estimated number of infected carriers. When the Great Depression struck in the 1930s, however, there was no funding to treat the subjects. Researchers did not want to completely abort their efforts, and alternatively sought to apply their efforts toward the examination of the effects of untreated syphilis on black males.

When the study initially began in the early 1930s, there was no reliable cure for syphilis. The syphilitic subjects in the Tuskegee Study were provided some minor treatment that consisted of mercury and salvarsan that was highly toxic and ineffective. The toxicity and unreliability of the early treatments were the basis for Public Health Service officials denying treatment altogether. Even with the introduction of penicillin during the 1940s, the study subjects were still denied treatment. As a compensation for their cooperation, the men were offered incentives such as free physical exams, transportation to and from the clinic, meals after examinations, free medical treatment for nonsyphilis-related illnesses, and the promise that burial stipends would be provided to patients’ families. Many of the men were unaware of the severity of their medical condition and were merely told that they had “bad blood,” a term that the population applied to virtually every ailment. Nurse Eunice Rivers served as the nurse in the experiment from its inception to its collapse in 1972, when Jean Heller of the *Washington Star* published the story.

Nurse Rivers was employed by the PHS to monitor the study participants. She was in many ways a cultural mediator,

“bridging the many barriers that stemmed from the educational and cultural gap between the physicians and the subjects” (*Bad Blood*, p. 6). The study participants trusted Rivers and were unaware that she was partially responsible for their detainment. Rivers never openly contested the experiment and, to secure employment, conceded with the PHS and doctors’ orders.

Because of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the medical community has tightened up restrictions on experiments involving human subjects. Internal review boards have been established on college campuses and elsewhere to monitor the efficacy and legitimacy of such experiments. The enforcement of certain mandates and restrictions to regulate human experimentation has proved beneficial in preventing studies similar to the Tuskegee experiment. *See also:* Clinton, William Jefferson; Tuskegee Institute

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## Tuskegee Institute

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The Tuskegee Institute is an African American school that opened in the Black Belt of Alabama in 1881. Through the years, Tuskegee played a critical role in the education of African Americans. Today the Institute remains a prominent school for multiple disciplines in Tuskegee, Alabama.

On July 4, 1881, the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute opened its doors. Originally created to train teachers, the school developed over time into an institution to train the masses of African Americans. The education African Americans received at the Tuskegee Institute was

different from that of most schools. Booker T. Washington, the first president of Tuskegee, promoted the school as an industrial, or hands on, education. At Tuskegee, African American students participated in practical training in homemaking, agriculture, mechanics, and other industrial trades. The skills and trades practiced at Tuskegee were those in which African Americans were commonly engaged throughout the South.

Tuskegee’s style of education received a lot of positive feedback from many whites, but some African Americans took were offended by it. While white students at other schools were gaining a literary education, African Americans at Tuskegee were concentrating largely on industrial skills and trades. African Americans at Tuskegee did study some academic coursework; however, the large majority of their education was based on practical training. Washington argued that the education gained at Tuskegee helped African Americans make a life and living for themselves. This consequently would allow African Americans to advance economically. Washington believed economic advancement would result in eventual social advancement as well. Washington’s opponents, however, claimed that Tuskegee’s form of education did not help to advance African Americans but instead further estranged them from their white counterparts. Southern whites who had previously fought against the education of African Americans came to accept the Tuskegee Institute because they believed the school taught and encouraged African Americans to accept their inferior economic and social status. The school was so highly praised by many whites that prominent white businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie and Seth Low donated large sums of money to Tuskegee.

Tuskegee was the product of a political negotiation made in 1881. Lewis Adams, a former slave, and W. F. Foster, an Alabama senator, negotiated a deal that resulted in the founding of Tuskegee. Adam had never received any formal education, but he was able to read and write, as well as succeed in various trades. Adams was a prominent African American in Macon County, Alabama. In 1880, when Foster, a state senator, was up for reelection, he sought the help and support of Adams. In turn for Adams securing the African American vote for Foster, Foster agreed to help Adams establish a school for African Americans in Alabama.

When Foster was reelected, he along with fellow legislature Arthur Brooks succeeded in passing House Bill



*Laboratory at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, about 1902. (National Archives)*

165, which granted \$2,000 to the creation of Tuskegee. The money was only enough to employ staff for the school. Consequently, the first year of classes, which began on July 4, 1881, was held in a church building. When Washington received money from the Hampton Agricultural Institute, he purchased an abandoned plantation and used it to build up a campus for his school. The students at Tuskegee worked over the next few years to construct the school themselves on the recently purchased plantation. Over the years Tuskegee continued to grow and flourish. The initial academic course work was on an elementary level, but it quickly expanded to the secondary level, and in 1923 added postsecondary study.

Tuskegee gained national attention thanks to its president, Booker T. Washington. Washington was president of the Institute until his death in 1915, at which time Robert

Moton became president. Moton helped create the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Dr. Frederick Patterson followed Moton in 1935. Patterson created the Tuskegee Airmen flight training program. The all-black airmen were highly decorated World War II veterans. The group also is credited with advocating for civil rights and bringing the movement to the forefront.

In 1985, Tuskegee received university status. With more than 40 majors, the school is attended by thousands of African Americans every year. Thus the brain child of Lewis Adams and the project of Booker T. Washington has remained standing and has continued to prosper for more than 100 years. The school played an integral role in educating African Americans at a time when many whites did not support the idea. For this Tuskegee will remain an important part of African American history.

See also: Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Tuskegee Airmen; Washington, Booker T.

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## Universal Negro Improvement Association

The goal of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), an international organization, was the liberation of all peoples of African descent by developing economic self-sufficiency, cultural pride, political independence, and newfound levels of race consciousness, thus creating an international brotherhood among black people.

During his international travels, Marcus Garvey interacted with scholars, writers, philosophers, and religious leaders who helped shape his worldview, which was ultimately introduced to the world through his creation of the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). The UNIA-ACL was created by Garvey while he was living in his native home of Jamaica in 1914. Shortly after his arrival to Harlem, the UNIA-ACL gave way to what would be known around the world as simply, the UNIA.

Unlike any other organization at the time, the UNIA championed a black nationalist approach against religious deceit contrived by colonial Christians to validate slavery, enduring psychosocial effects of European imperialism, economic deprivation, political disenfranchisement, and cultural suppression among Africans and African Americans around the world.

By July 1918, an original constitution and book of laws was developed as an instrument of governance and to maintain consistency among chapters. Within the core belief system of the UNIA, a comprehensive list of affirmations served as the critical framework for building racial solidarity. On a daily basis, members' actions were an outward manifestation of the belief system, which posited that rights of all men are to be respected, all races must work to

preserve their pure lineage. God shall be the guiding force, interracial marriage will lead to the annihilation of the Negro race, development of an almighty Negro nation in Africa must be promoted, those of African heritage should always be proud, dominion of Negro women by whites is unacceptable, and racial separation serves as the optimal means to maintain cultural ideals.

From its inception in 1914 until the 1940s, the UNIA in the United States held active chapter membership in Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Focused on fighting racial injustice and violence aimed at African Americans in the United States, the UNIA established networks throughout the country that focused on uplifting the race. Through partnerships with clergy from black churches, businesses, political leaders, and intellectuals who shared the UNIA vision, programs were instituted to provide social services, religious motivation, cultural integrity, political awareness, education, and gainful employment.

To resolve economic hardships endured by deprived and often uneducated poor and working class African Americans, the UNIA initiated collaborative efforts with labor unions that yielded financial benefits to the economically disadvantaged by balancing wages in skilled labor markets throughout the United States and Canada. Business owners unwilling to extend opportunities for employment to African Americans found the UNIA to be a formidable force through mass protests that encouraged people to stop spending money in businesses that contribute to oppressing the race. Auxiliary groups within the UNIA, such as the Black Cross Nurses and African Legionnaires, existed to further ensure that the overall needs of members were being met.

As representatives from more than 1,000 chapters convened from August 1, 1920 through August 31, 1920, the First International UNIA Convention was successfully hosted in New York City, which later became home to the organization's first Liberty Hall. With attendees coming from more than 40 countries, nearly 2,000 members were present, including regional delegates who shared updates regarding local membership drives, fundraising efforts, propaganda aimed at destroying the reputation of the organization, and community issues to be addressed.

Economic developments and effective strategies to alleviate rights infringements were important, but the most significant accomplishment of the 1920 Convention was the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro

Peoples of the World, as presented by the organization's Supreme Executive Council or international leadership. Published in the September 11, 1920 edition of *The Negro World*, the declaration gave life to the organization's motto, "One God! One Aim! One Destiny!" In the declaration active members found solace and strength that not only guided but reaffirmed their shared belief in global racial allegiance.

After the success of the first convention, subsequent conventions and celebratory parades were hosted at Liberty Hall during August of 1921 and 1922. Along with the Constitution, Declaration of Rights, and core belief systems, the UNIA developed its own pledge of allegiance to be recited in the presence of the definitive red, black, and green flag. Within the pledge, members committed to lifelong service that would further the goal of liberation, unity, and knowledge among African descendants around the world.

International leadership of the organization believed that the race could one day shape international politics once a unified vision was established, disseminated, and adopted by all chapters. Worldwide strategic goals were set throughout international regions to best meet the needs left void by corresponding governments. UNIA chapters in Africa and the Caribbean focused on developing political participation among natives to overcome cultural inequalities established during European colonization.

In March 1920, efforts of UNIA leaders began to make the infamous "Africans for Africans" slogan ring true. Research and preliminary planning for colonization of Liberia, including provisions for economic, political, and social growth independent of European influence, was initiated. Consistent with steps taken in American cities, the UNIA planned to create an environment in Liberia that fostered a sense of empowerment among Africans and African Americans by building schools that incorporated an Afrocentric viewpoint into education, sustainable employment opportunities, social enrichment through cultural activities, and long-term health through universal health care initiatives. Enthusiasm toward the growing project was echoed by members in Africa and the United States. Carrying enlightened African Americans to Liberia, the S. S. Phyllis Wheatly was purchased as the ship to fully complete the "Africa for Africans" charge of the UNIA, but it was unable to do so.

To their dismay, UNIA organizers who tirelessly worked until June 1924 to develop and negotiate what would be one of the largest ventures for the organization were told that progress would come to a screeching halt in Liberia because

of conflicts of interest. The Fourth International UNIA Convention in 1924 marked a shift within the organization as the Black Star Line was reestablished as the Black Star Steamship Company. In addition to reclaiming their most notable business venture, members of the UNIA regrouped from the disappointing news of the Liberia project by focusing on avenues to create political power. Establishment of the Negro Political Union was the organization's strongest effort to directly challenge the political disenfranchisement of the race on a large scale.

During the Fifth International UNIA Convention, the organization worked to continue its mission while maintaining a dwindling membership. Although resistance to the UNIA grew in some African countries, the organization achieved success in other parts of the world including Central America. Substantial efforts were exerted in the region to mitigate deplorable working conditions, substandard living accommodations, and political inactivity among inhabitants of African descent. Between August 1, 1929 and August 31, 1929, the Sixth International UNIA Convention was hosted in Kingston, Jamaica, which was the final formal convention. Beyond participation in their own conventions, representatives of the UNIA participated in international conventions hosted by organizations with similar goals including the International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World.

By January 1918, Harlem was not only the headquarters of the UNIA but it also set the stage for the first printing of the weekly newspaper. Subsequent editions were printed and distributed to all members around the world in multiple languages. Through the publication and distribution of *The Negro World*, members of the UNIA were unified on a global scale as the messages often reinforced the organization's mission and goals. To increase awareness of the mission, local chapters relied on independent black-owned newspapers in Chicago, Egypt, London, New York, and other key cities where UNIA chapters were forming.

Within each edition, UNIA members published updated committee reports on membership development, fundraising efforts, business enterprises, and social programs. In addition to committee reports, the newspaper announced special events and world news that affected the development of the organization, and recounted details of regional and national conventions for those unable to attend. As the newspaper was the thread that weaved together the organization's international membership, opponents of

the UNIA sought to destroy the unprecedented circulation of *The Negro World* by banning circulation and imposing severe penalties on those caught distributing the newspaper.

Weekly advertisements encouraging members and supporters to patronize African American-owned businesses were placed in each edition of *The Negro World*. The UNIA was responsible for developing its own economic independence through the development of grocery stores, laundries, restaurants, insurance companies, tailoring company, record companies, newspaper subscriptions, and sales of stock in the Black Star Line, all of which were advertised in *The Negro World*.

Differing opinions among members as to the future actions of the organization began to create factions within the group. At the same time, civil rights organizations whose focus embraced integrationist approaches to resolving racial issues gained national notoriety, which further added to the UNIA's membership crisis.

In response to increasing violence against African Americans in the South, Marcus Garvey believed that by reiterating the UNIA's goal of racial separation would deter violence inflicted by members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Representing UNIA leadership, Garvey visited KKK headquarters in Atlanta during June 1922 but was unsuccessful in his attempt to find a solution to the racial hostility felt among KKK members. Coincidentally, as violence against African Americans continued in the South, the Atlanta meeting caused greater alienation among members who felt the organization was taking the wrong approach toward civil rights violations.

The Black Star Line was officially started on June 27, 1919 with the purchase of the UNIA's first ship named *Yar-mouth*. In its second purchase, the UNIA's Black Star Line was expanded to include the *S. S. Shadyside*. Following the success of the first two ships, the *S. S. Antonio Maceo* was purchased as sales of the Black Star Line stocks began to increase. Subsequent ships were named after world-renowned scholars who held differing ideological perspectives from UNIA leaders, but were nonetheless influential in the early stages of the organizations development—the *S.S. Frederick Douglass* and *S.S. Booker T. Washington*.

Revenue generated by sales of Black Star Line stocks initially supported activities of the UNIA, but income did not sustain the organization for long. Criminal charges filed against Marcus Garvey suggesting long-term use of the mail system to defraud investors in the Black Star Line

cast the UNIA in a negative light among members and critics. Skeptics of the UNIA used the charges against Garvey as impetus to publicly diminish the organization's image by painting it as a racist cult whose national leadership contradicted its own goals of racial unity and empowerment.

Marcus Garvey's formal sentence to five years imprisonment caused UNIA members already disappointed with the direction of the organization to denounce their membership publicly. In December 1927, remaining members of the UNIA traveled to New Orleans to send off the organization's first leader as he was being deported to Panama. *See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Star Line; Garvey, Marcus; Ku Klux Klan; Moore, Queen Mother Audley; Pan-Africanism

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## Urban Ghetto

The term "ghetto" is an Italian word originally used to refer to those sections of the European city set aside for Jews. In the Middle Ages, Jews were heavily discriminated against, denied access to employment, and deprived of access to quality housing. The result was extreme spatial



congregation and segregation into what ultimately became known as urban “ghettos.”

In the U.S. the rise of the urban ghetto is a recent occurrence. It describes the geographically isolated, run-down, and impoverished residential districts of the inner city where mostly black and Latino people are crowded together. Like their European predecessors, America’s urban ghettos are clearly demarcated spaces easily recognizable by vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and physical deterioration.

Almost all European immigrants to the United States spent some time in an urban ghetto, benefiting from the social networks, cultural comforts (e.g., language, food, religion), and protection against hostilities. Although outsiders saw the ghetto as a squalid, unclean, foul, tenement-ridden environment, for insiders, these were communities that provided much of what they needed to achieve the American dream and make the transition into the American middle class.

A number of factors converged to transform these early ghettos to the sites of high unemployment, social pathologies, and poverty they are today. One was the large-scale black migration north during the early 20th century. Segregation, discrimination, and racial hostilities were notable in the cities that experienced high levels of African American migration. Blacks, faced with restricted housing markets and job ceilings that blocked economic progress, experienced a similar spatial segregation as that experienced by Jews in Europe. As was the case with Jews and other early immigrants to the United States, often it was easier (and safer) to live among one’s own kind. Another factor contributing to the transformation of the American ghetto was the out-migration of the white population. Whites were willing to pay to live in areas with few, or no blacks. Once they became acculturated into American society and acquired the language skills and higher incomes, they were well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities offered them by the federal government and consequently fled the inner cities in massive numbers and moved to other places. This has not been the case with African Americans and Latinos who now occupy the areas abandoned by earlier immigrant groups. Although economically African American ghettos started out well owing to the high wages paid in manufacturing, continued high rates of black migration north combined with white flight to the suburbs resulted in an increasingly isolated black inner city population. Thus

racism, discrimination in the form of institutionalized racial preferences, and exclusionary practices all converged to produce today’s American urban ghetto.

Like the ghettos occupied by their European predecessors, the early African American ghettos were safe havens where people worked together, played together, worshipped together, and were educated together. Unlike their European predecessors, however, African Americans and Latinos did not experience comparable opportunities for upward—and outward—mobility. When they did, they left behind a place with little or no moral and social leadership. The urban ghetto today is a site where conditions have worsened.

There are three explanations for urban ghettos: social, economic, and structural. The social explanation suggests that ghettos form in places where there are high concentrations of people who exhibit “pathological” behaviors. In the minds of most Americans, urban ghettos are synonymous with public housing and thus are viewed as receptacles for “problem” families. In this sense, ghettos are lifestyle choices made by individuals. The individuals and the areas they inhabit are characterized by high rates of unemployment, illegitimacy, family dissolution, welfare dependency, violence, school dropout, teenage pregnancies, alcohol, and drug abuse and crime. Accordingly, they are a product of social institutions and cultural values resulting from poverty and social isolation. Ghetto dwellers have few job prospects and for males in particular, participating in illegal activities (e.g., drug trafficking) becomes an attractive option.

An alternative explanation for urban ghettos is the economic explanation. It suggests that ghettos are the result of closed alternatives. It is discrimination in access or the inability to fully participate in the job market that ultimately produces urban ghettos. African Americans and Hispanics are in ghettos because their limited access to job markets restricts their access to housing markets. They cannot afford (or are not allowed) to purchase better housing elsewhere.

The structural explanation maintains that urban ghettos are areas that have experienced significant losses of jobs, businesses, and population. Although they are located near busy central business districts of most major cities, culturally, intellectually, and economically they are highly isolated, which in turn impedes opportunities for financial, employment, business, and cultural contacts with the larger community.

See also: Great Migration; Kerner Commission Report; Urbanization; War on Poverty

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## Urbanization

Urbanization is a two-pronged process. For a society, it is the transformation from being rural and agricultural to being urban and industrial. For individuals, the urbanization process is behavioral and spatial. It involves individuals making the spatial move from the rural countryside to the city and once there, adopting new behaviors, attitudes and ways of seeing the world. As a geographical concept, urbanization is visible on the landscape in the form of large, dense agglomerations of socially heterogeneous populations, high concentrations of settlements and/or businesses, and a wide range of other specialized services and activities. In addition to its being a process that represents itself on the landscape, urbanization is also a social process resulting in cultural and behavioral changes (e.g., changing attitudes toward work, family structure, role of women, identity, and economic status). It brings about changes in lifestyle and psychology; and social, cultural, economic, and political thinking. To be fully realized, the urbanization process requires both the move across space and the adoption of new ways of viewing the world.

Over time, the United States has become an urbanized society. In 1800, only 6.1 percent of the population lived in urban areas. By 1990, that number had increased to 75.2 percent. The two explanations commonly given for this exponential increase are increases in technological know-how and industrialization. As new more efficient technologies were applied to the agricultural sector, more and more people became redundant; their work was no longer needed. The jobs they had done were taken over by machines. Thus they were “released” from farm work. Left without a means of income, they were pushed off the farm and pulled to other, larger areas that offered more opportunities for employment. At the same time that labor was being released from farms, demand for machine produced goods was increasing. Urban areas with their ideal locations, greater economic and social capital, and large populations were perfect sites for planting the seeds of America’s industrial revolution. People came in droves from rural areas and abroad in search of a life that offered more.

African Americans were a part of this. The migration of blacks from the rural south to the cities of the Northeast, Midwest, and West during the early 20th century has been described as the largest internal movement of people in the history of the United States. Between 1900 and 1940, more than 1 million African Americans participated in this mass movement. Early on blacks had begun to move away from the South. During the 1870s, large numbers of blacks left the South, seeking their fortunes in places that were familiar—rural areas in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. By 1910, new destinations were sought and in what came to be known as the Great Migration more than a quarter of a million blacks converged in the cities of the Northeast, the Midwest, and the West.

The Great Migration created the first large, concentrated urban black communities in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and Cleveland. During the 1910s and 1920s, Chicago’s black population grew 148 percent, Cleveland’s by 307 percent, Detroit’s by 611 percent. Although the migration slowed during the Depression, nearly one-fourth of all blacks lived in cities of the North or West by 1940. The move to the cities continued during and after World War II. By 1960, 40 percent of all blacks lived outside the South and 75 percent lived in cities. Between 1910 and 1970, the country’s African American population was transformed from a predominately southern, rural group to a northern, urban one. By shedding their rural,

southern backgrounds, and embracing their new life in cities, African Americans created a new black culture, complete with music, language, dress, and art.

The movement out of the South and to the cities of the North was the result of push and pull factors. Push factors are negative attributes of the place of origin. They included lack of opportunities, poverty, and overt racism. Pull factors are positive attributes at the destination. They included the prospect of jobs, schooling, and socioeconomic mobility. The war years witnessed the greatest influx of southern blacks to the cities of the North and Midwest. Northern-based industries were experiencing loss of labor owing to military enlistments. Foreign immigration was slowed owing to restrictions placed on immigration, but demand for industrial goods was increasing. The result was a severe labor shortage in most northern and western cities. Blacks were available to provide the cheap, plentiful labor that was needed for the emerging factories.

African Americans' encounters with city skyscrapers, new technologies, streetlights, automobiles, and masses of people profoundly affected their behavior, attitudes, and goals. A few were energized by the new environment and were lucky enough to turn it into a new home with satisfying jobs, homes, and communities. Another small number never succeeded and either returned to their rural origins or resorted to a life of repeated disappointments. For all, however, it was clear that the city contained new kinds of segregation and that their hopes were not to be fully realized. The notion that one could climb from rags to riches was one of America's greatest myths.

For a time, the initial encounter with the city embodied all the promises of urbanization progress, economic security, culture, and hope. Despite its promise, however, the rural urban migration of African Americans failed to deliver the dream. Today the city has a different set of associations that have less to do with progress and light than with decay, crime, and poverty. African American urban life today is characterized by a host of adverse economic and social conditions— anonymity, institutional racism, disrupted family structures, low socioeconomic standing, underachievement, underemployment, teen pregnancy, divorce, and a host of other problems.

The African American urban experience has been impacted by a number of social, economic, political and technological issues. Early on, access to housing and jobs became a major source of friction between blacks and

whites. To maintain residential segregation, many cities adopted residential segregation ordinances and restrictive covenants. These were formal, institutionalized restrictions forbidding white property owners from selling their property to blacks. For whites who violated these agreements, the punishment was harsh. Thus African Americans were confined to all-black neighborhoods, in what eventually became known as urban ghettos. Although jobs were plentiful owing to the war effort, African Americans experienced significant job discrimination. Discrimination was so pronounced that in 1911, a concerned group of social workers, white philanthropists, and black leaders, founded the National Urban League. The National Urban League is the nation's oldest community-based organization devoted to empowering African Americans and facilitating their entry into the economic and social mainstream. At its inception, the mission of the Urban League was to dismantle the systems of institutionalized racism that prevented African Americans in cities from obtaining jobs.

More recently, one of the major issues facing African Americans in cities is gentrification. Gentrification may be defined as the process by which deteriorating, blighted properties in declining neighborhoods are purchased by middle class residents, renovated, beautified, and subsequently occupied by more affluent tenants. It tends to occur in neighborhoods with particular qualities (i.e., convenient to downtown, cheap but distinctive housing stock, and vibrant, lively communities). Gentrification is a general term for several simultaneous changes—an increase in median income, a decline in the proportion of racial minorities, a reduction in household size, changes in neighborhood character and culture (e.g., ideas about what is attractive, codes of public behavior, noise, and nuisance). It often results in the displacement of older residents who are forced to sell their property and move away if they cannot afford the rent and tax increases. It has been the cause of deep racial and class conflicts and has been described as a miscarriage of social justice in which wealthier, usually white, newcomers are used to carry out the wishes of urban developers and planners desiring to displace poor, minority residents so that the area they occupy can be put to a more profitable use.

On the other hand, the gentrification process has the potential for producing desirable results, reducing crime, spawning new investments in infrastructure, and increasing economic activity in neighborhoods. Unfortunately,

older residents who manage to stay are often left on the sidelines—socially, culturally, and economically marginalized.

Another issue facing African Americans in cities is suburbanization or urban sprawl. Traditionally, urbanization has been associated with thriving central business districts in the downtown core. Post-World War II, however, has seen residential areas shift outward giving rise to suburbs. The beginnings of suburbanization can be marked by the proliferation of the automobile owing to Henry Ford's mass production assembly line, the desire of returning veterans for more living space, the growing middle class, and the desire for racial homogeneity. Levittown was the first planned suburban development. It was built in the early 1950s. It fit all of the criteria; space (all of the homes had a yard and garage), new appliances (which offered convenience to their owners), mortgages guaranteed by the federal government (small down payments), and racial exclusion (returning black veterans could not purchase homes in Levittown).

The trend to move farther and farther away from the downtown core continues today, leading to what many describe as urban/metropolitan sprawl. Sprawl may be defined as large scale, low-density urban expansion that extends beyond the urban fringe. Sprawl has led to an increase in traffic congestion, pollution, and infrastructure costs as American drive longer distances to and from work. For African Americans and other minorities in particular, the steady decentralization of entry level jobs away from the city core has resulted in a spatial mismatch or a diseconomy in travel time and service provision. Thus, low-skilled minorities residing in inner cities face adverse labor market outcomes in the form of higher rates of unemployment, lower average wages, and increased time spent commuting. Urban sprawl has also led to suburbanites' feelings of detachment from inner city problems.

The spatial mismatch hypothesis argues that sprawl exacerbates certain dimensions of racial inequality in America. It has also raised concerns about social polarization because of suburbanites' physical and psychological remoteness from inner city problems.

Neither of these issues can be separated from the economic climate in which they occur. The new service economy and the rise of the creative class have taken center stage and has become the engine driving 21st-century American urbanization. This has changed the city's economic core. Old retailers who resided in the urban core and who

supplied goods to the working class population have been undermined by upscale boutiques, specialty shops, and restaurants catering to the new creative class. During the past 25 years, employment in manufacturing as a share of total employment in America's inner cities has fallen dramatically. Between 1967 and 2001, the United States lost 9 percent of its manufacturing jobs. In the cities of the industrial heartland, the loss reached more than 40 percent. There are two explanations for the declining employment in manufacturing. First, the phenomenal increases in worker productivity have given rise to dramatic increases in manufacturing output. Just as in the early days of urbanization/industrialization when increased agricultural productivity produced redundancy and prompted rural urban migration; today, in the manufacturing sector technological advances are again contributing to a situation where fewer workers are needed.

A second explanation for the decline in manufacturing employment is globalization. Lowering restrictions on trade has put the American worker in competition with overseas workers who are paid less, not represented by unions, and enjoy few of the benefits associated with work in the United States. Because manufacturers seek to reduce their labor costs, it is economically rational to move production to places where labor costs are lower.

In both instances, a steadily decreasing proportion of the American workforce is employed in manufacturing. Typically, industrial plants are closed down and not replaced. This phenomenon, known as deindustrialization, has had a significant impact on the social lives of African Americans and has been identified as a key determinant in urban and African American poverty. It has contributed to widening income inequality and high unemployment in America's cities. It has also been associated with a cycle of urban decay that seems immune to most policy recommendations and well-intentioned government interventions. Social conditions in the old industrial core have deteriorated fueling abandonment and decay. The culture of poverty that results has generated a system of ruthless, exploitative relationships for those confined to urban ghettos.

African American migration to urban areas was preceded by waves of immigrants from Europe. Roughly 10 million European immigrants came to the United States between 1860 and 1890. Nearly all of them settled in the great cities of the Northeast and the Midwest. Immigrants from other places (e.g., Asia) were few. They settled primarily in

the West, attracted by the possibility of working on the expanding railroad system. Most immigrants were poor, lived in crowded tenements, and worked in factories. During the decade between 1900 and 1910, nearly 9 million immigrants entered the United States and more than 90 percent were from Europe. By 1950, the number of immigrants had dropped to slightly more than 1 million but significantly, only half were from Europe. In the 1980s, the number of immigrants increased to approximately 8 million, but 84 percent of these immigrants were from Latin America and Asia. Immigrants from Europe were less than 15 percent of the total immigration stream.

Similar to previous immigrants, most of the new immigrants move directly into cities in search of employment. Because they are willing to work for low wages and work under less than desirable conditions, they add to the already well-stocked, unskilled labor pool in urban areas. They also compete directly with inner city African Americans for low-paying jobs. As tensions rise between newer immigrant groups and established African American communities, conflict has erupted.

Cities were the Land of Opportunity for African Americans coming from the rural south and for many past and present immigrants. For most, however, they came to realize that it was also a far-off dream. The city had the opportunities, but they were not as available in the quantity as they had first hoped. In recent years, the long-term out-migration of African Americans from the south to the great cities of the Northeast, West, and Midwest has been reversed. Southern metropolitan areas, particularly Atlanta have led the way in attracting black migrants. Detroit, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco experienced the greatest out-migration of African Americans.

See also: Great Migration; Kerner Commission Report; Redlining; Urban Ghetto

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## US Organization

In the months after the 1965 Watts Riot, Maulana (Ron) Karenga, Hakim Jamal, Dorothy Jamal, Tommy Jacqueline-Mfikiri, Karl Key-Hekima, Ken Seaton-Msemaji, Samuel Carr-Damu, Sanamu Nyeusi, and Brenda Haiba Karenga founded a new black power organization called "US." Despite claims later made by a number of Black Panthers, US never meant "united slaves" and this continued reference is part of the legacy of the conflict between the two groups. Instead, US was an allusion to the group's mission to serve "us" blacks as opposed to "them" whites. In addition, the dispute that drove a permanent wedge between the Black Panthers and US was over whether cultural nationalism or political/revolutionary nationalism was the best solution for African American communities. Initially, the US Organization was founded on the ideological principles forwarded by Malcolm X after his break with the Nation Islam and through his assassination on February 21, 1965. Malcolm X's shift from religious nationalism to political and secular nationalism, which coalesced in the creation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), proved to be powerfully influential for Karenga and the other founders of US. Malcolm X's vision of the OAAU as a vanguard that would launch a cultural revolution was embraced by US who collectively understood that a cultural revolution was necessary before a violent revolution could take place.

According to the US Organization's first newspaper, Hakim Jamal was the official founder and Karenga was designated as the chairman of US. By the summer of 1966,

however, Jamal split with US leaving Karenga to become the undisputed leader of the organization. Jamal's departure was likely due to ideological differences and his strong preference for following the teachings of his former associate, Malcolm X, while Karenga was pushing the organization more toward cultural nationalism. This ideological transformation was reflected in the symbolism of the US Organization as members shifted from wearing T-shirts bearing Malcolm X's face to ones with Karenga's likeness. Almost immediately after Jamal's departure, US and Karenga began the mission of fulfilling Malcolm X's goal of creating a cultural revolution by first building a "new" black culture that would be based on a number of African concepts, value systems, and traditions.

Since Karenga previously taught Kiswahili, and even met a number of the first members of US within the context of his language classes, he emphasized the use of African languages in order to express the goals, the organizational structure, and the cultural conceptualizations that served as foundations for US. *Simba Wachanga* (young lions) was the youth movement in US and served as its paramilitary wing; the Circle of *Isihlangu* (circle of the shield) were the organization's highest title holders, including Karenga's own title as *Maulana* or Master Teacher; *Kawaida* was the group's cultural nationalist philosophical, moral, and spiritual orientation; and two of the lasting legacies of US—*Nguzo Saba* (the seven principles of blackness) and the holiday *Kwanzaa* became popular beyond the US Organization and continue to be shaping influences throughout African American communities in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The particular brand of cultural nationalism espoused by Karenga and US is a blend of Kiswahili, Zulu, Kemetic (Egyptian), Gikuyu, and other African influences. *Kawaida*, Karenga's personal philosophy and theory of cultural nationalism, was borrowed from Zulu religious precepts and shaped by his antipathy for Christianity and other organized religions. According to Karenga, Kawaidists are part of the spiritual and theoretical legacy of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X and the philosophy itself is meant to promote self-awareness and consciousness through the seven principles of blackness embodied by *Nguzo Saba*: *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity), and *Imani* (faith). In this way, *Kawaida* undergirds and embodies the US Organization.

As a reflection of their change in consciousness and acceptance of *Kawaida*, US members—who often called themselves "advocates"—typically wore afros or shaved heads, donned Afrocentric clothing and jewelry, punctuated greetings with African phrases, adopted African names, and embraced other elements of an African aesthetic. US was an all encompassing organization for its advocates and became, in essence, a total way of life that permeated seven main facets: the family, the community, revolutionary schooling, the temple, the congregation, the revolutionary party, and nation building. This primarily inward focus, however, became a point of criticism by the group's detractors—including the Black Panther Party—who would label the cultural nationalism advocated by US as "pork-chop" or apolitical, reactionary, and nonrevolutionary nationalism.

Even so, in its early years, the US organization gained support nationally and abroad. By 1967, US advocates formed a chapter in San Diego and a group of black marines had even formed an affiliate chapter in Vietnam. In addition, the organization began to engage in coalition building as part of its strategy to create the united front of black nationalist organizations that Malcolm X envisioned when he formed the OAAU. Between 1967 and 1969, US formed coalitions with, and connections to, SNCC and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Efforts to establish a coalition among these organizations is best epitomized by the August 11, 1967 *Uhuru* Day rally, an event designed to commemorate the 1965 Watts Uprising. The rally not only attracted US members, but also the likes of H. Rap Brown of SNCC and Huey P. Newton of the newly formed Black Panther Party, both of whom delivered guest speeches. At least in 1967, the idea of a united front seemed viable and before internal conflicts—fueled by FBI instigation—disrupted this momentum, umbrella movements like the Free Huey campaign, the Black Congress, the Black Federation, and the Congress of African People were created and US advocates were actively involved.

By early 1968, the roots of the infamous US/Black Panther conflict began when the two organizations had a dispute over security arrangements for a "Free Huey" rally scheduled at the Los Angeles Sports Arena on February 18, 1968. From that point forward, real and imagined differences between US and the Black Panthers were augmented by the FBI's COINTELPRO, as well as the egos of Karenga, Eldridge Cleaver, Newton, and members of the LA Branch of the Black Panther Party. By September 1969, the FBI

stepped up its program to destabilize the creation of a united front and the Black Congress by actively stoking the fires of the US-Panther divide. In a series of contrived letters that threatened the assassination of Karenga by Panther Party members, the tensions between the two groups escalated to the point that violence was almost certain and clearly imminent. On January 17, 1969, a shootout between US and Panther members led to the deaths of two LA Panther leaders—John Huggins and Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter. This shootout proved the undoing of the Black Congress, which was effectively defunct by spring 1969, and the US-Panther divide continued.

As a result of the protracted conflict between the two organizations, the Panthers and the FBI generated a number of myths about Karenga and US. Among these myths was the notion that Karenga was a paid agent or informant of the United States government and that he was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic. Karenga and US were not without blame as a number of their actions between 1969 and 1971 discredited the organization and its leader. Karenga’s meeting with LA Police Chief Thomas Reddin soon after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to apparently head off and prevent black rioting, demonstrated a willingness to work with the white power structure in ways that may not have matched his rhetoric. Moreover, Karenga agreed to meet with then Governor Ronald Reagan that only added to the claims that he and his organization were willingly working with the agents of repression and reaction.

By late 1969, internal FBI memos point to a 50 percent decline in membership in the US Organization and the San Diego branch completely broke away as a direct result of COINTELPRO operations. Then, in 1971, Karenga and two others were convicted for felony assault and false imprisonment in the brutal torture of two female US members—Deborah Jones and Gail Davis. The group went into hiatus until Karenga was released from prison on parole in 1975. From 1975 until the present, US has begun to slowly rebuild alliances and develop Afrocentric educational programs and institutions. Currently, US maintains the African American Cultural Center, the Kawaida School of African American Culture, an independent cultural school for children, the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies, and the University of Sankore Press. After earning a PhD from USC, Karenga’s activism and influence has helped popularize Black Studies while he taught at a variety of universities across southern California, including a recent stint as department

chair of Black Studies at California State University-Long Beach. In addition to *Kwanzaa* and *Nguzo Saba*, the movements to create Black Student Unions and Black Studies departments can be seen as legacies, in part, of the US Organization and its cultural nationalist agenda.

*See also:* Afrocentricity; Black Panther Party; Black Power; COINTELPRO; Karenga, Maulana; Kwanzaa

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## Vietnam War (Black Participation in)

The Vietnam War, in which the United States was involved from 1945 to 1975, was the first American war to be fought with a completely desegregated military. Throughout the course of the war, African American attitudes would shift from viewing the military as a valuable path to respectability and prosperity to viewing it as a racist institution complicit with the oppression of blacks in America. Although the military was officially desegregated, racism among white officers and troops and institutionalized discrimination against African Americans combined with changes in black consciousness on the home front to produce an unprecedented level of racial conflict between black and white service members. During the course of the war in Vietnam, the military would also see the rise of radical black organizations composed of African Americans in the armed

forces. These organizations played an important role in the GI movement against the war, itself a key element in the United States' withdrawal of combat troops.

American involvement in Vietnam began in 1945, when American naval ships aided the French in their reconquest of the country; however, significant numbers of combat troops did not reach Vietnam until 1964. At this time, large numbers of African Americans had a positive view of the military, stemming from several factors. First, drawing on a long tradition in black political thought, many argued that service in the armed forces was incontestable proof of black loyalty and entitlement to equal rights. Second, the military offered steady work at pay rates, which were often hard for African Americans to find in the civilian sector. The bonuses accruing to combat troops also help explain the high rates of black reenlistment and volunteering for combat duty during the war's early years. Finally, many African Americans joined the military out of a sense of patriotic duty to the United States.

Despite this goodwill, there were signs even during this early phase of the war that the military reproduced the racism of the larger U.S. society. Until the late 1960s, African Americans faced casualty rates disproportionate to their numbers in the armed services as a whole. Part of this disproportion is attributable to African Americans volunteering for combat duty as described previously, but a significant portion is traceable to racism in the military. African Americans often found it harder to win conscientious objector status (which exempted the recipient from combat duty) than whites. The widespread stereotype of African Americans as criminals led many draft boards to deny black draftee's profession of pacifism, and members of the Nation of Islam found that draft boards simply refused to treat their faith as a real religion. These draft boards were locally controlled, and typically composed white businessmen; in some cases, open Ku Klux Klan members headed local boards. African Americans also found themselves drafted in disproportionate numbers, as lower average incomes meant far fewer black families could afford to send their children to college and earn a student deferment.

The draft had a far different impact in black communities than in white ones. Children from white families with means and a good chance of success in civilian life generally escaped the draft. By contrast, the racism of the draft boards combined with widespread poverty in the black

community meant that those drafted were much more likely to be upwardly mobile than their white counterparts. Many civil rights workers, for example, found themselves at the unfriendly attention of a local draft board, prompting Whitney Young and other black leaders to characterize the draft as a weapon against civil rights struggle.

Once inside the military, African Americans faced further discrimination. The test by which various branches of the military assigned service members to their positions, the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), was heavily biased toward whites. Because African American serving in Vietnam had often attended underfunded or segregated schools, they faced a marked disadvantage on the AFQT when compared with whites. Also, black sociologists argued that the AFQT was culturally biased toward European Americans (when the AFQT was replaced by a more culturally neutral test in 1973, black scores rose dramatically while white scores remained unchanged). As a result of their lower test scores, African Americans were often assigned to combat rather than positions like engineering or communications.



*U.S. Army soldiers fire at a suspected Viet Cong position during a search-and-destroy mission. (National Archives)*



Although black support for the military generally remained high during the war's early years, there were a few visible exceptions. The most important was Muhammad Ali's 1966 refusal to be drafted. Ali had caught the attention of his draft board in 1964, but he failed the reading and writing portion of the induction test. In 1966, however, the military revised its standards, and Ali became eligible to serve. Informed of the news, he made his now famous declaration that no Viet Cong had ever called him "nigger." Ali was stripped of his boxing title and charged with a felony for his refusal (the Supreme Court reversed his conviction in 1971). His linkage of the war with American racism, although isolated at the time, would become a touchstone for young African Americans opposing the war.

Part of the reason Ali's voice would prove to be prophetic was black soldiers' experiences in Vietnam. Black GIs found that in addition to disproportionate casualty rates, they also had to deal with racial friction with white service members. Although combat could be a situation in which racial tensions from back home were overcome, the situation outside the field was far different. On base, black soldiers faced the hostility of white officer corps, whose discretion in matters of military justice often weighed heavily against African Americans. Off base, local entertainment facilities such as bars or brothels were frequently segregated as rigorously as public facilities in the deep South.

Some of the worst instances of racial conflict took place between black and white enlisted personnel. The complete desegregation of the military, by allowing far greater contact between black and white soldiers, vastly increased the potential for racial conflict. The sources of tension were many. One of the most commonly cited was music programming. Whereas black soldiers wanted soul music on armed forces radio and in base recreational clubs, older white soldiers fought to keep country and western instead. Another source of friction was "dapping," the intricate handshakes that were developed primarily by black soldiers. The term originated in the Vietnamese word *dep*, meaning beautiful. Daps became a creative means by which black soldiers could express solidarity in the armed forces. The gestures involved could be quite complex and time consuming, and dapping in the chow line became a frequent source of tension between black and white soldiers. More generally, many whites resented the cliquishness they perceived in the practice.

Black soldiers also had to deal with the enemy in a different manner than whites. The National Liberation Front

and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were highly adept at using American racism as a weapon in the propaganda war. The Vietnamese left pamphlets informing black soldiers that they would not be hurt if they did not attack the Vietnamese. Numerous soldiers recounted stories of being found by Vietnamese forces and left uninjured. Even more devastating to black soldiers' morale were the leaflets the Vietnamese dropped that asked black soldiers why they fought for a country that lynched them. The greatest blow came when the military withheld news of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination out of fear of its effects on black soldiers. Instead, they were left to learn of the murder from Vietnamese.

King's death marked the moment when black support for Vietnam began dropping precipitously. In 1966, two-thirds of black soldiers reenlisted. By 1970, less than 13 percent would. The experience of racism in the armed forces, the revolution in black consciousness at home, King's assassination, and the Tet Offensive's exposure of American military vulnerability all combined to drastically change black perceptions of the military.

One sign that black soldiers were not as pleased with the military as they had been in the past was the sharp increase in racial violence. From 1968 onwards, the armed services were plagued with violence between white and black soldiers. Dr. King's assassination was one of the earliest sparks for this violence. Some white soldiers openly celebrated King's murder. At the Naval Headquarters Building in Cam Ranh Bay, whites hoisted a confederate flag over the base when they heard the news. Black grief and anger over the assassination often translated into a refusal to accept further racist treatment in the military. Violence between black and white soldiers spread throughout the military, and soon reports of incidents were coming in from all over the world, from Vietnam to bases in Germany to training camps in the United States.

The growing manifestations of black anger were intimately linked with the rise in black political militancy inside the armed forces. As the civilian antiwar movement grew in size after 1968, it found a counterpart inside the military. Black soldiers played a key role in this movement. Several large antiwar GI groups, the Movement for a Democratic Military, GIs United Against the War, and the American Servicemen's Union, had significant black membership. Other groups, like the Black Berets and the Malcolm X Society, were entirely black. Even largely white groups like

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the largest GI antiwar group, paid special attention to racism in the military as a result of the organizing done by black soldiers.

The rise of a politically radical black antiwar movement in the military contributed to the larger breakdown of the American military in Vietnam. Given the disproportionate presence of black soldiers in combat units, their radicalization had a relatively larger effect on combat units than that of white GIs. In the I Corps (the army corps stationed at the northern edge of South Vietnam, where the fighting was the most intense), racial conflict and demonstrations by black soldiers were nearly constant after a fight between black and white soldiers in 1970. Military police found that large numbers of soldiers were carrying illegal weapons to defend themselves against attacks by other GIs. Black GIs' refusal to accept racist treatment meant that the American military could not continue functioning as it had.

Military officials reacted with panic to the rise of black radicalism inside the ranks. In 1970, Commander George L. Jackson published his article "Constraints of the Negro Civil Rights Movement on American Military Effectiveness." Jackson argued that Dr. King's stand against the war in 1967 and increasing use of the American military in peacekeeping operations at home threatened the morale of black soldiers and reduced American military effectiveness. In response, he advocated increased sensitivity to black grievances.

Department of Defense officials implemented a whole host of reforms in response to the rise of black militancy. In 1970, the Defense Department instituted an aggressive affirmative action program. In 1971, they opened the Defense Race Relations Institute in Florida to monitor racial tension in the military and encourage equal treatment by officers. As mentioned earlier, the culturally biased Armed Forces Qualification test was removed in favor of the Army Classification Battery. In addition to these ameliorative programs, the military began quietly moving black troops away from the front in hopes of restoring military effectiveness. By 1972, African Americans accounted for only 7.6 percent of annual American casualties.

The shifting of black soldiers away from the front occurred simultaneously with the larger American troop withdrawal from Vietnam. Once back in the United States, black veterans found themselves with an entirely new set of problems. Their unemployment rate was about 1 in 3, whereas white veterans had a rate of 1 in 20. Black veterans also found themselves incarcerated at disproportionate

rates. A 1976 Veterans Administration study found that veterans made up a quarter of the prison population, and half of all imprisoned veterans were black.

Thirty years after the end of the Vietnam War, its effects are still being felt in black America. The epidemic of black veteran homelessness and poverty continues. The shift to an all-volunteer military, partially in response to the troop rebellion in Vietnam, has meant increased attention by recruiters to low-income minority communities. In turn, the armed services have used black soldiers as a signifier of the progressive, diverse nature of the American military. Far from heralding the end of the tangle of race and the military, Vietnam signaled an era in which the two would be more visibly linked than ever.

*See also:* Ali, Muhammad; Black Power; King, Martin Luther Jr.; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Students for a Democratic Society; X, Malcolm

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## **Voting Rights Act of 1965**

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In July 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed in the Civil Rights Act, which contained some voting-related provisions. Title I condemned state discrimination in voter registration. The bill prompted outrage from conservative white southerners, who were only slightly mollified that it was signed by a Texan. Yet many in the African American community criticized the act as well, feeling that it had not gone far enough. Just as the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 had failed to secure full legal rights for freed slaves, so the 1964 Civil Rights Act did not ensure the voting rights of African Americans. Recognizing this, Johnson followed the Civil Rights Act with a bill on voting rights, in an echo

of Congress's actions in ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 to prevent restriction of the ballot on the basis of race.

Existing federal antidiscrimination laws had not been sufficient to overcome state officials' resistance to the Fifteenth Amendment. Even after passage of the Enforcement Act of 1870 and the Force Act of 1871, black citizens encountered strong resistance to their enfranchisement. White supremacist groups practiced violent intimidation and election districts were gerrymandered. In the 1890s, some states enacted disenfranchising laws: poll taxes, literacy tests, and disqualification for "crimes of moral turpitude." By 1910, nearly all black citizens in the former Confederate states were disenfranchised, and in 1965 only a third of eligible African Americans (compared to two-thirds of eligible whites) were registered in these states. Literacy tests and poll taxes kept black voting registration low, especially in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. Only 6 percent of eligible black citizens were registered in Mississippi.

Johnson began work on the new bill in the fall of 1964, right after "Freedom Summer," which saw three voter registration volunteers murdered in Mississippi. The FBI declared that local law enforcement officials were involved in the murders. He announced the bill in his State of the Union address of January 1965, and on March 15, 1965, he gave a speech to Congress on voting rights. The speech, titled "The American Promise," pointed to the unkept promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation, then heralded the civil rights protest as the driving force behind the new legislation. There would have been no progress, Johnson said, were it not for the faith and bravery of black campaigners. He quoted the anthem of the Civil Rights movement, a freedom song titled "We shall overcome."

On August 5, Congress passed Johnson's bill, which was the most comprehensive voting rights legislation to date. Section 2 followed the language of the Fifteenth Amendment: "No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied



*President Lyndon B. Johnson moves to shake hands with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the Capitol rotunda following the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965. The law was the first national legislation to guarantee all Americans the right to vote. (Yoichi R. Okamoto/Lyndon B. Johnson Library)*

by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.” Section 4 ended the use of literacy requirements for voting in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia, and many North Carolina counties. The bill also provided for unprecedented federal intervention. It authorized the attorney general to appoint federal voting examiners and decreed that the Justice Department would take control of the registration process if any county failed to register 50 percent of eligible black voters. It did not prohibit the poll tax, instead directing the attorney general to challenge its use, but in 1966 the Supreme Court found Virginia’s poll tax to be unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment.

After his voting rights speech, Johnson went on to express support for equal outcomes policies. On June 4, 1965, he gave an address at Howard University titled “To Fulfill These Rights.” In language that would later be used by affirmative action advocates, he told the graduating students: “You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair” (*Freedom Is Not Enough*, p. 16). It was not enough, Johnson explained, just to open the gates of opportunity. Citizens needed the ability to walk *through*.

Nonetheless, the act did have an impact. Most southern states opened voter registration lists to black citizens and control passed to the Justice Department in the 62 counties that remained resistant. In Mississippi, black voting enrollment went from 6 percent to 44 percent by 1968. Johnson’s bill was extended in 1970, again in 1975 (when it was amended to protect language minority citizens from voting discrimination), and again in 1982. On January 20, 2001, ahead of the Shadow Inauguration, some 2000 people marched to the Supreme Court and took a vow to uphold Johnson’s Voting Rights Act.

See also: Disfranchisement; Grandfather Clause; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Literacy Tests; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Selma March; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Zoe Trodd

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## Walker, Alice

Alice Walker (1944–), an African American writer, is most famous for the novel *The Color Purple*. Walker was born in the small town of Eatonton, Georgia to sharecroppers, Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Tallulah Grant Walker. The youngest child of eight, she had five brothers and two sisters. In 1952, she was accidentally shot in the right eye with a BB gun by her older brother during a game of Cowboys and Indians. She never fully recovered and was left partially blind in that eye. With her loss of sight in her eye, she lost confidence. Walker grew depressed and as she frequently contemplated suicide, she used writing as an outlet for her emotional pain.

After reconstructive surgery to her eye, at 14, she eventually gained back some confidence, becoming prom queen and graduating valedictorian from high school, before going on to college via scholarships. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia from 1961–1963 and graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in Yonkers, New York, in 1965. Before leaving Spelman College, she was an activist in the Civil Rights movement. In 1964, as a senior at Sarah Lawrence College, she wrote her first book, *Once*, a collection of essays. Also during 1964, Walker discovered she was pregnant. Before terminating her pregnancy, she grew more depressed. Considering suicide, she continued to turn to writing to channel her emotions, and with the help of her teacher, Muriel Ruykeyser, she published, in 1965, *To Hell with Dying*.

After college, she moved to New York, to work for the welfare system. She soon after returned to the South to continue participating in the Civil Rights movement. In 1966, she taught black studies and writing in many universities throughout Mississippi. In 1968, *Once* was eventually published.

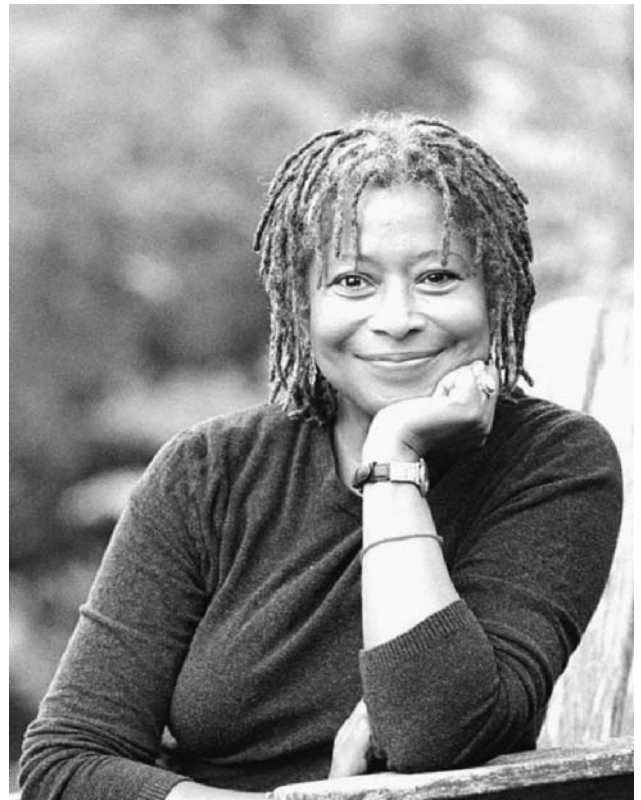
In 1966, while in Mississippi, she met Melvyn Rosenman Leventhal, an attorney, who was also an activist in

civil rights. The pair married in March 1967, but there was much controversy over the interracial match, which was the only one in Mississippi, at that time. Soon after she became writer-in-residence at Tougaloo College, and in 1972 taught at Wellesley College, where she began one of the first “Gender Studies” courses in the country. While looking for course material, she was greatly influenced by the work of Zora Neale Hurston. In 1974, Walker became a fiction editor of *Ms.* magazine, and, in 1975, she published an article that brought restored awareness to Zora Neal Hurston’s work.

In 1976, after nine years of marriage, Leventhal and Walker divorced. They had a daughter, Rebecca Walker, who is a feminist like her mother. Soon after her divorce from Leventhal, she fell in love Robert Allen, a colleague and editor of *Black Scholar*. Four years later, in 1978, Walker moved to San Francisco’s Japantown, where she still lives today.

Walker’s work includes poems, stories, essays, criticism, and novels, but she is most widely known for her third novel, *The Color Purple*, published in 1982. This novel won the National Book Award in 1983, and in the same year she became the first African American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. In 1988, it was made into a Steven Spielberg motion picture, casting Oprah Winfrey and Whoopi Goldberg. *The Color Purple* depicts discrimination against African American woman in a sexist and racist society. The novel caused some controversy because of Walker’s negative portrayals of men as sexist, abusers, and rapists through its depiction of socially oppressed, African American women who rise above discrimination through their female relationships. The major theme in the novel is womanhood, focusing on African American women, their interactions with men who abuse them, and how these women relate to one another. The novel’s subordinate themes include self-discovery and growth, which is developed in letters exchanged between Celie and Nettie, two sisters, and in letters Celie addresses to God tell the story. In the spring of 1982, because of *The Color Purple*’s success, Walker was offered a position as a professor at the University of California at Berkeley. She also went on to work at Brandeis University the following fall.

Her other works include novels *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *Meridian* (1976), *By the Light of My Father’s Smile* (1994), and *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart* (2004). *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) are novels about female circumcision in Africa. Volumes of her poetry include *Once* (1968),



Alice Walker, celebrated author, womanist, and social activist. (AP/Wide World Photos)

*Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems* (1973), and *Goodnight, Willie Lee, I’ll See You in the Morning* (1979). Walker’s nonfiction essay collection includes *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983) and *Living by the Word* (1988), where Walker defines “womanist” a term she uses for the black feminist, and *Anything We Love Can Be Saved* (1997). Her short-story collection includes *In Love & Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973), *You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down* (1981), and the partially autobiographical *Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems 1965–1990* (1991), *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart* (2000), and *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth* (2003). Her most recent work, *Sent by Earth: A Message from the Grandmother Spirit After the Bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon*, was written in response to New York City’s World Trade Center tragedy. See also: Hurston, Zora Neale; King, Martin Luther Jr.

Nicole Joy DeCarlo

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## War on Poverty

The War on Poverty was declared by Lyndon Johnson in his State of the Union address in 1964. It was a critical component of his larger vision of a Great Society and was intended to expand the reach of government to improve life for all Americans. At the time, approximately 35 million Americans lived in poverty. Moreover, the Civil Rights movement and events such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the Montgomery bus boycott, the decision to send federal troops to enforce desegregation at Central High School in Little Rock, and the Birmingham, Harlem, and Watts “riots” all highlighted previously unacknowledged links between race, poverty, and opportunity.

Ideologically, the War on Poverty was a progressive campaign drawn from the belief that the causes of poverty were a systemic lack of opportunity. Only government leadership directed toward changing the structures of opportunity that kept people impoverished could defeat the problem. In this way, Johnson’s ideas aligned themselves with the liberal tradition of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his New Deal.

For the War on Poverty to be fully implemented, all branches of government had to work together. For Johnson, this commitment was the only way to solve America’s problems. Thus, the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) required federal, state, and local participation and was designed to mobilize the resources of the country to address the numerous challenges it faced. The aim was not merely to expand old programs or improve what is already being done, but to chart a new course and address the cause of poverty, thereby eliminating it. The EOA was committed to lowering barriers to political participation, employment, housing, and education for African Americans. It also

proposed economic development programs for America’s cities and towns. Johnson subsequently established the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) as the legislative site with responsibility for administering War on Poverty programs. Some of the programs were Head Start, the Community Action Program, the Job Corps, food stamps, work study, Medicare/Medicaid, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Upward Bound, comprehensive health services, family planning, emergency food and medical services, Senior Opportunity Services, and legal services. The OEO reported directly to the president. It existed from 1964 to 1973. Between the time of its inception in 1964 and its demise in 1973, social welfare spending increased from \$75 billion to \$185 billion. In terms of percent, spending increased ~4.6 percent between 1950 and 1965 and ~7.2 percent between 1965 and 1976.

OEO was officially disbanded in 1973 by President Richard Nixon. Responsibility for its many social welfare programs was transferred to the newly established Community Services Administration (CSA) in the Department of Health and Human Services. CSA received little support from President Carter and was finally dismantled by the Reagan administration in 1981. Between 1964 and 1973, however, the impact of the War on Poverty was such that it was impossible for government to embrace any new initiative without being asked, “How does it help the poor?”

Looking back, the results of the Great Society and its War on Poverty were less than hoped for. There are several explanations for its limited effectiveness. The first was funding. As military engagement in the Vietnam War escalated and thoughts of how to extricate U.S. troops occupied more of the nation’s attention, the OEO received less of the funding it needed to carry out the programs it proposed. Local areas that had responsibility for many medical, emergency food, and legal services found themselves with little money to continue. Programs funded at the federal level (e.g., Head Start) remained intact but suffered under the weight of diminishing resources.

A second explanation was ideological. Four concerns have been cited. First, there was the split between those who viewed welfare as social insurance and those who saw it as public assistance. Second, there were those who claimed that the War on Poverty was unwilling to attribute the cause of poverty to the American economic system. Accordingly, the result was superficial, Band-aid solutions. Although opportunities were created, structural inequalities

were untouched. Third, many claim that the attention given to black America created a racial backlash. The white middle class felt that it was footing the bill for ever-increasing services to the poor and as the economy declined during the 1970s, many whites lost sympathy for Great Society programs. Finally, women also felt they had been ignored. Despite the fact that the majority of positions (e.g., community aide, community worker, and parent aide) were filled by women, the OEO held the traditional view that women's work was voluntary, unpaid labor. Strategies for preventing poverty focused on expanding employment opportunities for poor men and neglected the actual contributions of women as staff members and administrators.

Today, of the many Great Society programs, most support remains for Medicare, which serves the elderly, and for Head Start, which serves the youngest of the poor. The basic assumption of the Great Society—that government must take the leadership in reducing poverty—has been replaced by the 1990s belief that government support for the poor leads to dependency and undermines the work ethic. Whereas the Great Society emphasized the institutional and structural roots of poverty, contemporary poverty policy focuses on the individual behaviors and choices of people who are poor.

See also: Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kerner Commission Report; Long Hot Summer Riots, 1965–1967; Urban Ghetto

*Rickie Sanders*

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## Ware, Bill

William “Bill” Ware (1935–) was born in Cannonsburg, Mississippi. At the age of six, he and his family moved to the small rural town of Stanton, Mississippi, 12 miles

outside of Natchez. There Ware received his grade school education, first in a dilapidated one-room schoolhouse where two teachers, but most often one teacher, provided instruction for eight grades of students and later at a local Catholic school named Holy Garden, which he attended for high school. As a young child raised during the height of the Great Depression, Ware's parents and paternal grandparents stressed the importance of education. Although both had little formal education, they understood its value and instilled its importance into their children. Named after his paternal grandfather who labored as a sharecropper, Ware adopted many of his esteemed characteristics and saw education as a tool to improve not only his personal lot but also his community's condition. As a result, he developed a fondness for learning and, as time went on, excelled academically.

In 1950, Ware entered high school at Holy Garden where he gradually became known for his outstanding academic achievements. His hard work would eventually earn him a citizenship award and, most important, a scholarship to attend St. John's University, an all-male, predominantly white, Catholic school in Minnesota. In the fall of 1954, Ware left the humid confines of the Magnolia state for the cold terrain of Minnesota. Although Ware had a full tuition scholarship, he did not have much money to cover living expenses; in fact, he arrived to campus with only \$35. Because of his financial straits, he quickly found work at the school cafeteria as a dishwasher and enrolled in St. John's ROTC program to cover his living expenses. Although lack of money at times proved challenging, Ware also had to confront the North's racism. Ware was no stranger to racial bigotry, having been fed a steady diet from Mississippi's white supremacist menu, but it still proved challenging. As time went on, however, he developed several amicable relationships with his white counterparts.

Once Ware became settled, he pursued a degree in English and became involved in various extracurricular activities such as the Young Christian Students Organization in addition to writing for the school newspaper. His involvement in these endeavors proved to be critical to his development as a person and as a student, but they would pale in comparison to something that occurred during his junior year. In 1957, Ware witnessed a transformative event in the form of Ghana's declaration of independence in March of the same year. Not only did Ghana provide people of African descent with a tangible model

for liberation, it gave many African people great hope and enormous psychological upliftment. Moreover, Ghana's independence countered the myriad racist images of Africa and her descendants, and the notions of buffoonery and anti-intellectualism that whites commonly associated with African-descended people throughout the world. Ghana's independence quickly resonated with Ware, as it did with countless people of African descent, and it piqued his interest in one day visiting the coastal West African country. This sojourn would have to wait almost five years. In the meantime, Ware graduated with a bachelors of arts in English in the spring of 1958, and, in October 1960, his obligation to the military ended. In January 1961, he embarked on a brief term as a history teacher at a local high school in Minneapolis.

After his stint as a history teacher ended, Ware joined the Peace Corps in 1962. Admittedly, he notes that he primarily joined the organization after he learned that members had the option to travel to Ghana. After joining the Peace Corps, he became enamored with the teachings of black sociologist St. Clair Drake, who developed one of the first African studies programs in the United States and helped train Peace Corps volunteers. While in Ghana, Ware quickly absorbed Ghana's first Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah's teachings of black nation-building and Pan-Africanism. He soon embraced the idea of uniting African people worldwide, as well as certain elements of cultural nationalism such as wearing African garb and adopting African names. In June 1963, he returned to the United States to work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi shortly after white supremacist Byron De La Beckwith assassinated NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers. In 1964, after a brief stint in Minnesota on a SNCC fundraising trip, he returned to the South to become a full-time worker within the organization.

In the fall of 1965 en route to a civil rights workshop in Frogmore, South Carolina at the behest of civil rights activist Septima Clark, Ware became aware of the Georgia State Legislature's refusal to seat former SNCC member and legislator-elect Julian Bond because of his unwavering support of SNCC's statement against the Vietnam War. The news immediately created great shock and anger within the black community. As such, Ware did not see the value of attending a civil rights workshop in South Carolina if Bond could not take his seat in Atlanta. He immediately decided to go to Atlanta, where he and a small number of SNCC

members urged James Forman, SNCC's executive secretary, to organize a group that would galvanize the residents of Bond's Vine City district in support of him. Thus, in February 1966, SNCC established the Atlanta Vine City Project under the direction of Bill Ware and Gwendolyn Robinson in which both served as co-directors.

Although the Atlanta Project engaged in numerous grassroots organizing activities, it is most commonly known for the release of the black power position paper. In March 1966, project members Michael Simmons, Ronald Snelings, and Ware wrote and released a position paper that called for, among other things, the outright expulsion of whites from the organization. The paper immediately generated tremendous controversy, and, although both black and white SNCC members believed the paper to be anti-white and counterproductive, its black nationalist and Pan-Africanist threads resonated with many within SNCC. The release of the position paper came at a critical time when SNCC members constantly debated the role of whites and the organization's ideological and tactical direction. Before the position paper's release, SNCC organizers discussed white participation only in small circles. The position paper created space for the open discussion of this question, led to the outright expulsion of whites from SNCC in December of 1966, and in turn pushed the organization towards black nationalism and black power. Thus the Atlanta Project's position paper played a critical role in the emergence of the Black Power movement.

Ultimately ideological and tactical conflicts plagued the relationship between the Atlanta Project and SNCC's national leadership throughout most of the branch's one-year existence. At the beginning of 1967, SNCC's national leadership effectively disbanded the Atlanta Project as a result of a dispute over a SNCC-owned vehicle. This marked the end of the Atlanta Project and left a tremendous grassroots organizing void that SNCC never filled.

Bill Ware currently resides in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he continues to be of great service to the black community. He mentors Southern University students as well as young people in the surrounding community through his work with Bob Moses's Algebra Project and he also teaches young adults how to play chess.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; Nkrumah, Kwame; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

*Jason M. Perkins*



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**Washington, Booker T.**

As a former slave, coal miner, and educator, Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856–1915) lifted himself up out of the lowest levels of poverty and oppression to represent and advocate a distinctive approach to improving race relations in the U.S. South. He insisted that African Americans must begin forging their own pathway to equality through work, determination, skills development, and education. For Washington, self-sufficiency was the key attribute that would facilitate legal and social reform. He led by example, creating and building the preeminent center for educating African Americans following emancipation—the Tuskegee Institute. Located in the heart of the former Confederacy, in Tuskegee, Alabama, many African Americans such as George Washington Carver and the “Tuskegee Airmen” benefited from Washington’s work.

Washington possessed the gift of tenacity, a virtue that helped lift him out of the ignorant, oppressive condition of slavery and into the respected role as a professor and founder of Tuskegee Institute. The opportunity for an education and social advancement for African Americans

during Reconstruction in the South was limited at best; poverty and oppression, however, failed to deter his overwhelming desire to obtain an education and help improve the conditions of his race.

Washington believed that regardless of race, if an individual performed with a high degree of skill in his or her profession, whatever it may be, then that individual would eventually become recognized and given an equal place in society. He publicly elaborated this creed in an address delivered at the 1895 Cotton States International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. In what would become known as the “Atlanta Compromise,” Washington told African Americans to “cast down your bucket where you are,” as he urged them to learn useful skills and perform them so well that they would become invaluable partners with their white neighbors. The address greatly increased his popularity among white southerners; however, he received considerable opposition from many of his African American colleagues, most notably W. E. B. Du Bois.

Washington’s life and struggle was testimony to the benefits of hard work and determination. Born into slavery near Hale’s Ford, in Franklin County, Virginia on April 5, 1856, he lived the earliest part of his life toiling in slave labor. Just as he was unable to control the conditions into which he was born, he was also unable to control the conditions of his freedom, a life that included: poverty, white supremacists, and lack of opportunity for educational and social improvement. This precarious condition failed to ignite resentment or ill feelings. He knew that many people have had to struggle for freedom and prosperity, and his race would be no exception.

As a young man he recalled only two siblings and his mother. He never met his father. At a very early age he developed an appetite for knowledge. His mother helped him the only way she could by giving him a “blue-back” speller; he used the book to teach himself the alphabet. His family later moved to West Virginia, where he worked in the coal mine to earn a meager living for his family. Whenever possible, although not very often, he attended the segregated and newly formed school for blacks. The majority of his time, however, was spent in the deep, dark, coal-rich mine shafts of West Virginia.

One day while working in the mines, he overheard two of his co-workers talking about an educational facility for African Americans called Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute located near the Tidewater area of Eastern



Booker T. Washington was the founder of the Tuskegee Institute, a leading center of African American education. (Library of Congress)

Virginia. He immediately made up his mind to attend. Upon completing the 500-mile journey to Hampton, he was given an admissions test that consisted of sweeping a room. He was aware his future depended on how well he performed the task assigned to him. He set out to make the room spotless; upon finishing, the room was inspected, and he was promptly admitted to the school.

Hampton Institute was founded in 1868 by General Samuel C. A. Armstrong, who quickly became a mentor and moral inspiration to Washington. After completing his training at Hampton, Washington devoted his time to teaching, eventually returning to Hampton to teach Indians. It was during this time that Armstrong recommended him to oversee the development of a normal school for blacks in the small southern town of Tuskegee. In June 1881 he arrived in the heart of the “Black Belt” with no place to hold classes, as he noted in *Up From Slavery*, except an old horse stable and a hen house.

Washington’s autobiographical account, first published in 1901, quickly became an important and influential piece of American nonfiction literature. In clear and concise prose, he recounts episodes from his early life through his ascendance into historical prominence. In the book, Washington skillfully recalls how his character and political philosophy were shaped by his experiences and firsthand observations. He offers considerable commentary on building the school and curriculum at Tuskegee, as well as his 1895 speech in Atlanta. In print for more than a century, *Up From Slavery* continues to introduce new generations to the rewards of self-help.

Soon after his arrival in Tuskegee, Washington set out to observe the culture of the local community. After careful evaluation, he realized the enormity of his task. With this in mind Washington set an educational agenda for Tuskegee that included the basic practice of personal hygiene, the development of social manors, farming, and craftsmanship skills. The permanent site of Tuskegee Institute would be located on an abandoned plantation, about a mile outside the town. The lot was purchased for \$500. Washington was innovative when it came to the construction of the buildings—the students built them. They made bricks, dug the holes, laid the foundations, all while attending classes in make-shift buildings.

In his writing, Washington reported an agreeable perception of his white neighbors. He found the citizens of Tuskegee as helpful and enthusiastic as any he had met throughout the South. He realized the importance of making the best of a difficult situation. The two races had no choice except to live together in the South, so every effort should be made to live in harmony. In fact, Washington often cited the advantages of making every effort to respectfully acquaint one’s self with his or her white neighbors rather than resting their hopes on white integrationists who lived hundreds of miles to the North.

Washington, however, did not overlook the help that northerners could provide; he spent a considerable amount of time there fundraising for the school, as he traveled extensively throughout northern states in an effort to secure funds from philanthropist. During this time he was often invited to speak at engagements, an area he greatly excelled in. Although he was often very nervous, he had the ability to bring crowds to their feet. It was his gift of oratory, coupled with his conservative approach to integration, that prompted the invitation from the directors of the Atlanta

Exposition. He humbly accepted, noting in his autobiography that with the invitation to speak came much responsibility and opportunity.

As Washington rose to the platform to begin his speech in Atlanta, he stood before an overflowing and segregated crowd of onlookers. His audience was attentive as he focused on the task before him. He was completely unmoved by an insult the previous speaker launched at him. In his speech, he noted that African Americans accounted for one-third of the southern population, and that it would be unwise to ignore such a dominant constituency. He also recognized the importance of the Exposition in bridging the social gap between the races. Only three decades had passed since ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment that ended slavery. Washington believed that following the bitter American Civil War, not only did the Southern white men need time to adapt to the newly reconstructed South, but, the former slaves needed time to adapt to free life.

Washington largely ignored the social and legal oppression African Americans had suffered since 1865. He viewed the Atlanta Exposition as the beginning of a lasting friendship between the races for two reasons. First, the event planners had dedicated an entire section of the Exposition to showcase African American achievement. Second, his invitation to address a white audience on the same platform with white members was evidence that the times had drastically changed. Less than 30 years earlier, he could have been their legal property. He viewed that day as the beginning of the future as he urged members of his race to look forward instead of dwelling on the past.

Washington recalls in his autobiography that during some of his travels, he observed a church congregation consisting of a membership of just over 200 but with 18 ministers. Also, he met a family who owned a grandfather clock that they were making payments on, but no one in the family could tell time. Washington's point is that the majority of the population must make their living by working with their hands, and in the South there was much opportunity for skilled work. Frivolous ornamentation such as grandfather clocks, he felt, was a mere distraction from the important necessities of everyday life.

In his Atlanta speech, Washington made a resounding case for the white citizens of the South to accept and embrace the education of African Americans. By working together, either they can advance the nation as a whole, or, alternatively, one-third of the South's citizens can contribute

to ignorance and crime. He was not urging members of his race to accept an inferior position. He knew that the opportunity to earn a dollar must precede the opportunity to spend the dollar.

Washington's popularity greatly increased after his speech, and he became a major, but controversial, figure of history. His legacy has centered on his "Atlanta Compromise" speech, while critics largely overlook his personal achievements or his work at Tuskegee. Many viewed the compromise as accommodating. His life was testimony to the difficulties of the period. It was a transitory stage in American history. The transition, however, would evolve over many years, culminating with the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Washington's compromise was an initial step in that evolution. He firmly believed his race deserved full social and political equality. His insistence on individual self-improvement through education would help equip the next generation with the background they would need for direct-action, nonviolent confrontation.

Washington died in 1915 at age 59. He was buried on the grounds of the school he founded; today it is called Tuskegee University.

*See also:* Accommodationism; Cotton States Exposition; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Tuskegee Airmen; Tuskegee Institute

*Bobby R. Holt*

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## Washington, Harold

Harold Washington (1922–1987) was an articulate and astute lawyer and elected official who served his city and constituency in numerous capacities. He deserves attention for

being the first black mayor of Chicago, Illinois. Washington used his rich professional and political career to address civil liberties, civil rights, and political equity. In this way he permanently changed the political landscape of Chicago.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Chicago Democratic Party machine controlled 35,000 jobs in the public sector and 10,000 jobs in the private sector. These jobs and control of the city's government contracts were only a small part of the patronage system in Chicago. The machine and its operatives controlled the electoral apparatus, that is, the counting and casting of ballots, determining the validity of all nominating petitions, certifying election outcome, validating the legality of voter status, and deciding when voter fraud has taken place. The influence and clout of machine politics allowed a white minority of citizens to maintain political power and privilege at the expense of black citizens and other ethnic groups.

Washington helped form a reformist coalition of all ethnic groups outside the political mainstream created by Mayor Richard J. Daley who was one of the last of the big city machine bosses. As mayor, Harold Washington set a progressive agenda for reform, which included equal treatment of all Chicago's citizens in regard to housing, jobs, and reducing the city's budget deficit. Much of his energy during his first term as mayor was spent on dealing with the resistance of the white political alliance. Before Washington could serve his second term and implement more of his progressive plans, he died on November 25, 1987, the day before Thanksgiving.

Washington was the fourth child born to Bertha and Roy Lee Washington on April 15, 1922, in Cook County Hospital, in Chicago's segregated South Side. His father was from a small town in Kentucky. He moved to Chicago and worked in a meat packing company during the day and attended law school during the night. He later became an ordained African Methodist Episcopal minister and a Democratic precinct captain concerned with recruiting voters for the Democratic Party.

He graduated from Chicago Kent College of Law two months after Washington's birth. During this same year, Roy Lee Washington Sr. passed the Illinois bar examination and opened his own law practice. Several years later, he became an assistant prosecutor for the city. His mother was a comely and vigorous lady who was aspiring to attain a career in the theater. Consequently, she left Roy Washington Sr. and their children in the summer of 1926; they were

divorced four years later. Roy was granted legal custody of their children.

Washington and his brother Edward were sent to St. Benedict The Moor, a Catholic boarding school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Moor was considered perfect for the children of African American professionals; Washington remembers having sound judgment and a free spirit that was never broken by The Moor's institutionalized regimentation. Within the next 34 months, the brother ran away from school 14 times. Washington grew up around the black political elite, and by the age of 12 he was helping his father in the precinct and running errands for the Democratic Party. While attending Du Sable High School, he was known as an avid reader and a talented athlete.

In 1939, Washington dropped out of school and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs that provided employment for young men in forests and fields. The CCC sent him to Michigan to do limestone quarrying and to plant evergreen trees. He was drafted into the Army Air Force when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Washington earned his high school equivalency diploma between army missions. He became a soil technician and a first sergeant while in the South Pacific.

In 1941, Washington and his girl friend, Nancy, whom he called Peaches, obtained parental permission to get married; the marriage ceremony was performed by his father in his living room. After leaving the army in 1945, Washington used his GI Bill benefits to pay for matriculation in Roosevelt University and later Northwestern University Law School. Roosevelt was one of the few racially integrated institutions of higher education. His major was political science and economics; he was a serious student who was appointed a part-time lecturer during his junior year. His classmates, 95 percent of whom were white, also elected him senior class president in 1949.

After graduation from Northwestern University Law School, Washington worked in his father's law firm. Their office was across the hall from alderman Ralph Metcalfe, a popular African American figure in the city. After his father died in 1954, Washington served as an assistant city prosecutor from 1954 to 1958. For the next six years, he was the only African American arbitrator for the Illinois Industrial Commission. He then opened a successful law practice until he decided to engage himself on a fulltime basis in Illinois politics. Washington served in the Illinois

House from 1965–1976. During this time he began to show his independence by voting against machine-supported bills and helping to organize the first black caucus for the state. Washington was concerned with attaining recognition of Martin Luther King's birthday as a statewide holiday. He also helped establish the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

After Daley died in 1976, Washington ran for mayor but garnered only 11 percent of the vote, losing even among African American voters. He then vowed to continuously challenge Chicago's Democratic Party machine. While serving in the State Senate from 1977–1980, he was nominated 11 times as one of the 10 best state legislators by his colleagues. From 1981–1983, Harold Washington was a member of the U.S. Congress. His constituency was so pleased with him that they reelected him with 92 percent of the vote. In 1983, Harold Washington became Chicago's first African American mayor. He was reelected to serve as mayor of Chicago in 1987, but tragically Washington died in office on November 25, 1987.

*See also:* World War II (Black Participation in)

*Marva Strickland-Hill*

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## Wells-Barnett, Ida

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862–1931) was an African American journalist, civil rights activist, and most important, an active critic of lynching in the South. She was also instrumental in aiding in women's suffrage, which ultimately ended in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

In the early 1860s, the United States was embroiled in a violent Civil War. In the small town of Holly Springs, Mississippi, a slave carpenter witnessed the birth of his

daughter, Ida Wells. On July 16, 1862, Ida Wells was born in Holly Spring, Mississippi. Because she was born in the slave state of Mississippi, the young Ida was born into a life of slavery. Her parents, Jim and Elizabeth Wells, were slaves and she became the property of the respective plantation owner. With the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, the life of the Wells family did not improve dramatically. The father decided to continue working for the slave owner. Unfortunately, Ida's life assumed a tragic tone in 1878 when her parents became victims of a yellow fever epidemic that ravaged Holly Springs. This left the 16-year-old Ida in charge of her seven brothers and sisters. She decided to get her certificate in teaching and gain employment in one of the local schools. In 1881, Ida took two of her younger siblings and went to Memphis, Tennessee in search of better economic and financial opportunities. While in Memphis, she continued to teach to support her siblings. At the same time, Ida decided that a college education was a necessity for an African American woman. As a result, in 1880, the 18-year-old Ida entered Fisk (Rust) University.

One of the issues that most concerned Ida Wells was the issue of racial equality. In the South, law was still governed by the Jim Crow. That is, a state of legal segregation continued to be the rule throughout much of the South. In the 1880s, Wells decided to challenge a particular aspect of the Jim Crow South. In 1884, she started a campaign against segregation on local railroads. In the summer of 1884, she was forcibly removed from a white only carriage. Ida Wells believed this to be a moral injustice. She sued the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad. The lawsuit was instigated to try to weaken the Jim Crow laws in regard to segregation. The local courts judged in favor of Ida Wells. The Court of Appeals repeatedly overturned the lower court decisions. She recounted her story of the lawsuit in the black church weekly called *The Living Way*. Despite the setbacks, the resistance initiated by Wells became a symbol of African American resistance to the Jim Crow laws of the South.

In the late 1880s, Wells also became involved in journalism. In the summer of 1887, she was appointed as the secretary of the Afro-American Press Association. She also became part-owner of the *Memphis Free Speech* and was in charge of the editorial operations.

As Wells recovered from the challenges of the segregationist laws of the South, she engaged in another campaign, which became the centerpiece of Wells's career as an activist. In the late 1880s, lynching was a severe problem in the



Ida B. Wells was a civil rights activist, journalist, and crusader against lynching. (Library of Congress)

South. The local governments tolerated the actions while the national government looked the other way. In 1889, 728 African American men and women were lynched. The lynchings were mostly unprovoked. Of the 728 lynchings, 66 percent were over small differences and issues. As an African American intellectual, Wells could not tolerate this behavior. In addition, her activism in regards to lynching stemmed from a personal experience. On March 9, 1891, three African American proprietors, who were also Wells's personal friends, Thomas Moss, Calving McDowell, and Wil Stewart of the People's Grocery Store, were lynched. Allegedly, an interracial dispute in front of the store led to the violent lynching. Wells wrote and a scathing editorial indictment of lynching called "Eight Men Lynched" in the *Free Speech* on May 21, 1892. This led to the destruction of the newspaper and her exile from the South. She then began writing for the *New York Age* and adjusted to her new life in the North. This event was significant in Wells's life. She immediately started a public campaign to publicize the atrocities of lynching. She became part-owner of the newspaper,

*The Free Speech and Head Light*. Wells, under the pseudonym of Iola, would write editorial pieces and eyewitness accounts of lynchings in the South. Despite the repeated threats on her life, she continued to publicize lynching in the North, as well as internationally.

Her public life in essence started in 1892. On October 5, 1892, Wells gave a speech in New York City in front of 250 African American women about her difficult experiences dealing with the Southern lynch codes. She subsequently published "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases," a pamphlet describing the realities of African Americans in the reconstructed South. In *Southern Horrors*, Wells traced a pervasive belief that African American men are natural "rapists." She also reminded her readers that during the Civil War, Southern men left their plantations and families in the hands of black men. She concluded by noting that "lynching was an institutionalized practice supported and encouraged by established leaders of the community and the press they influenced." Wells had brought the atrocities of lynching to the fore in the public mind.

In 1893, Wells decided (or was forced) to move to Chicago, Illinois to continue her career in journalistic writing. The Chicago newspaper, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, hired Wells as editor to write exposé articles against lynching in the South. In a particular exposé, the paper proposed that Wells secretly pose as a widower to examine the lynching of C. J. Miller in the small town of Bardwell, Kentucky. By the time she arrived in Bardwell, the lynchers publicly acknowledged that they had killed the wrong man. After investigating the case, Wells concluded that the victim, Miller, was used as a scapegoat. Although thousands were involved in the lynching, no one was punished. Wells decided to depart for Chicago when she realized that there was not a resolution to the problem. Her reporting and the risks she was willing to take earned Wells an international reputation. She received an invitation from the "Brotherhood of Man" to visit Great Britain for a lecture tour. She cheerfully accepted the offer as a way to spread her opposition to lynching. While on her lecture tour, Wells shared her antilynching message with several groups. At the same time, she sent articles to the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* newspaper. While still in England, the American press began writing insipid articles about Wells. She also lectured at the British Anti-Lynching Commission, as well as other prominent antilynching societies in England. While in England, she received assurance that the issue of lynching was indeed an issue with international

repercussions. She also lectured throughout towns of England with the purpose of drumming up international support for antilynching. Unfortunately for Wells, the threats against her life in the South had become more vicious. In addition, opponents of her vision firebombed her newspaper headquarters. She thus had to move to Chicago, Illinois to escape the threats and violence.

In 1895, after her marriage to the prominent African American lawyer from Chicago, Ferdinand Barnett, Wells-Barnett continued to be a vocal and outspoken critic against lynching in the South. She published numerous articles and books, which offered statistical analysis of this chronic social problem. Her most important book was entitled, *The Red Record*, in which she offered the first statistical report on lynching in the South. The book was hailed as a masterpiece, as well as symbolic of the state of race relations in the late 19th century. As a nationally prominent figure in the crusade against lynching, Wells-Barnett visited President McKinley in 1898, demanding government action in the case against a black postmaster who was lynched in South Carolina. A few years later, in 1901, she wrote *Lynching and the Excuse for It*. She offered a sociological examination of the reasons southerners engaged in this violent behavior. Wells-Barnett noted that white southerners engaged in lynching as a way to intimidate blacks from getting involved in politics. The end result of this alienation was that power would continue to reside in the White South. The impact of *Lynching* was national. As Progressives and Theodore Roosevelt read the works of Ida Wells-Barnett, they became more disgusted by the state of race relations in the nation. The political system in the South was repressive to the extent that any challenge to that system would be viewed as a radical challenge. In 1896, Wells-Barnett formed a collective organization called the *National Association of Colored Women*. Even though she helped form the organization, she asked Mary Tyrell to serve as its first president while Wells-Barnett raised her children. The creation of this organization acted as a starting point for Wells-Barnett's political activism. As Booker T. Washington dined with President Roosevelt, other "radical" leaders like Wells-Barnett and W. E. B. Du Bois sought alternative forms of equality.

While becoming active on the issue of racial equality and lynching, Wells-Barnett also became entangled with the local chapter of the progressive movement. In August 1889, two women in Chicago, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, founded a settlement home in Chicago. At Hull House,

college-educated women would settle in local immigrant enclaves and teach the immigrants the ideals of American life. The ideal was to create a sense of civic pride in the recently arrived immigrants, thus creating productive citizens.

Wells-Barnett, who was a friend of Jane Addams, decided that the "settlement house" concept could be tried among the African American community. Sensing that there existed a need for the same type of social relief, Wells-Barnett opened a settlement house in Chicago, geared primarily for African Americans. She founded the Woman's Era Club, which was the first civic organization for African American women. The name of the club was later changed in honor of the founder of the club. The club aided African American women in occupations and culture. It was an efficient organization that in the long run proved to be successful in aiding the community. In addition to the settlement houses, Wells-Barnett and Addams also became involved in a campaign to block the continued segregation of public schools in Chicago. Wells-Barnett also served as secretary for the National African American Council and the Negro Fellowship League. Wells-Barnett's national fame as a promoter of civil rights was reaching an apex.

In addition to the Woman's Era Club, Wells-Barnett also became involved in national politics. The leadership of Booker T. Washington, who she viewed as accommodationist, particularly angered Ida Wells-Barnett. She believed that Washington's accommodationist stance was too lenient and did not offer African Americans any semblance of identity. Other African Americans, including W. E. B. Du Bois, agreed with Wells-Barnett's beliefs. In June 1905, W. E. B. Du Bois led a delegation of 29 blacks to Niagara Falls, New York, demanding equality and political rights. Ida Wells-Barnett was one of two African American women who supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and their quest for political and social equality. In the short term, Wells-Barnett had a falling out with Du Bois over her seeming radicalism, and the NAACP developed without her strong leadership qualities. When the first edition of *The Crisis* was published, Wells-Barnett's name was not even mentioned as a founding member of the organization.

With the NAACP appearing on the national scene, Wells-Barnett turned her attention to other issues, specifically women's suffrage. In the early 20th century, women had struggled for suffrage; Carrie Chapman Catt and her National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWA)

clamored for a suffrage amendment. Nationally, the progressives were ill prepared to offer women the right to vote. Ida Wells-Barnett became involved in the local suffrage movement in Chicago. In 1909, she became the first black woman suffrage associate at the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago, which had been a predominantly white organization. She was instrumental in women gaining the right to vote as she gained national acclaim for her struggles with civil rights and lynchings. She now became a standard bearer for the Nineteenth Amendment. As the NAWSA marched in Washington, D.C. in 1916, she also led the way to gain suffrage for all women.

In 1917, the United States became militarily involved in World War I. During the war, African Americans performed a variety of functions in numerous capacities. Many served on the domestic front as cooks and sanitation workers. There was a substantial amount of African Americans who fought in Europe, the most significant being the 369th Regiment out of Brooklyn. Thus, African Americans served in a variety of areas during the war.

The issue that bothered Wells-Barnett during World War I was a contradiction. Many African Americans sacrificed their lives in Europe to protect the freedoms of Americans. Yet, in the United States, African Americans were not given political and social rights, despite their sacrifices. She became especially concerned over the events in Houston in 1917 involving African American soldiers.

In August 1917, black soldiers reacting to segregation and abuse by the local police attacked white citizens; 16 whites and black 4 soldiers died. The U.S. Army indicted 118 soldiers, 110 of whom court martialed. Nineteen blacks were executed by hanging. This event, along with an increase in discrimination and violence, angered Wells-Barnett. She publicized the event on the national stage as another form of lynching.

In the years after the war, Ida Wells-Barnett focused on rearing her four children. This new caretaker role did not diminish her continued activities toward racial and social activity. During the 1920s, she worked with the national government to legally end the practice of lynching. Her last work was the publication of her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*. A few months before her death, legislation was signed making lynching a federal crime. This was the highpoint of her active political career. In 1931, Ida Wells-Barnett, mother, civil rights leader, journalist, and activist died of uremia in Chicago.

*See also:* Antilynching Campaign; Black Self-Defense; Exoduster Movement; Great Migration; Lynching; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Niagara Movement; Suffrage Movement, Women's; Washington, Booker T.; White Mob Violence

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## White, Walter

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Walter Francis White (1893-1955) led the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1929 to 1955. The White family was part of the black social elite of the early 20th century, some of whom had light skin, demonstrating their biracial backgrounds. Walter White had blond hair and blue eyes, features that allowed him secretly to attend whites-only affairs to get information for his black allies. The fact that White did not look physically black, yet chose to identify with the group of his birth, confounded those people who at the time could not realize any value in African American cultural life. Walter White, in contrast, knew that he was a black man and believed that the violence perpetrated against blacks by southern whites was reason enough to validate his championing of the race.



The Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 served as a catalyst for the race consciousness of Walter White. Thirteen-year-old White had accompanied his father, a federal postal carrier, in the mail carriage. For weeks, two competing city newspapers published sensationalized articles describing the brutal assaults of white women by black men. Although most of these stories had little truth to them, white Atlantans became incensed over the supposed attacks. On September 22, 1906, after both papers printed multiple stories of the alleged attacks of white women in both morning and evening editions, mobs of whites attacked blacks in streets, in businesses, and in homes. Walter White and his father escaped the downtown mobs because attackers assumed they were white. Along the way home, the father rescued a black woman chased by whites, demonstrating to his son that despite the seeming advantage in their light complexions, they still had an obligation to help other blacks no matter the consequences. Later that night a mob attempted to burn down the White family home, turning back only when harassed by gunshots from a neighboring store. Later in life, White would express both gratitude toward the neighbors who helped him avoid becoming a killer at 13, and dismay toward the whites who almost forced him to kill at such a young age to protect his home.

Certain of his racial obligations, White attended historically black Atlanta University, graduating in 1916, and going to work for Standard Life Insurance Company. He also helped found the Atlanta branch of the NAACP in 1916, serving as its executive secretary. Early in 1918, he relocated to New York at the urging of national secretary James Weldon Johnson to assist in antilynching reform. For 10 years, White would serve as assistant secretary, using his skin complexion as a cover to witness antiblack disturbances across the nation. In some instances, White became the target of would-be lynchers when someone revealed his racial identity. White sent wire reports to the NAACP in New York that became part of a series printed in the *Crisis*, the national journal edited by W. E. B. Du Bois.

White also published *Rope and Faggot* in 1929, a book detailing more than 30 lynchings and race riots. The book created renewed calls for antilynching legislation in Congress and eventually forced southern officials to do better at protecting blacks alleged with crimes against whites. One finding White made that agreed with the investigations done by reformer Ida B. Wells was that most lynchings did not have a direct connection to real black criminal

activity. Instead, angry whites attacked blacks perceived as economic competitors who refused to submit to the racial status quo in the nation.

Living in New York, White participated in the artistic period known as the Harlem Renaissance. During these years, he published *Fire in the Flint* in 1924, a fictional book based on his travels for the NAACP. Two years later came *Flight*, a story about the black migration from the rural South to the North during the Great Migration. White also involved himself socially in New York, working with other prominent leaders to secure philanthropic funding for Harlem Renaissance artists.

As head of the NAACP, White provided the needed leadership that produced the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by the United States Supreme Court, ending the legal sanctioning of racial segregation that had existed since *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. White hired Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, both from Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C., to plan a strategy to attack legalized segregation in the South. After years of court victories that chipped away at segregation, the NAACP won *Brown*, the case that finally called for overturning the precedent set in *Plessy*. Walter White died the next year, survived by his second wife, Poppy Canon.

*See also:* Atlanta, Georgia, Riot of 1906; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Houston, Charles Hamilton; Lynching; Marshall, Thurgood; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## White Citizens' Council

The White Citizens' Council was the Southern white reaction to the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of*

*Education* decision, which mandated the end of racially segregated public schools, varied widely. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan sought to resist integration through ritual violence and terror, and “high-minded” southern politicians hoped to forestall the demise of Jim Crow with a revival of archaic constitutional theories, such as nullification and interposition. The White Citizens’ Council, a segregationist organization that would eventually draw in thousands of anxious members across the South, appealed to the more “respectable” elements of society in its quest to undermine *Brown* and sustain the racial caste. Eschewing the predatory tactics of the Klan, the Councils instead relied on political pressure, economic intimidation, and legal maneuvering to achieve its goals. Before petering out in the 1960s, the Citizens’ Council became one of the most powerful and effective instruments in rallying white public opinion against desegregation.

Residents of Indianola, Mississippi organized the first chapter of the White Citizens’ Council in July 1954. Within a matter of months, the council movement had spilled over into Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, and eventually all the former states of the Confederacy. Events such as the Montgomery bus boycott and the integration of the University of Alabama by Autherine Lucy, along with efforts by the NAACP to desegregate local school districts in the wake of *Brown*, propelled thousands of whites into the group. By 1956, arguably the council’s peak year, organizers claimed more than 250,000 dues-paying members, making it, in the vaunted words of one official, one of the greatest mass movements of public opinion in American history. To better facilitate action and policy between the scattered chapters, council officials created the Citizens’ Councils of America (CCA) in April 1956 and established headquarters in the Delta town of Greenwood, Mississippi. Leadership of the national organization fell to Robert Patterson, cofounder of the original Citizens’ Council in Indianola, and William J. Simmons, who became the editor of the group’s widely distributed newsletter, the *Citizens’ Council*.

The council movement found its most fertile ground in the Black Belt regions of the South, where African Americans composed a substantial portion of the population and, for the most part, continued to earn their livings as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The ranks of the early councils were filled with the middle and upper classes of southern white society—planters, lawyers, bankers, doctors, businessmen, and politicians—who foresaw an erosion of their political hegemony with the implementation of

*Brown* and who shuddered at the thoughts of their children attending class alongside the offspring of their employees and clients. To counter such a threat, thousands of prominent lowland whites readily adopted the council philosophy, which demanded a rigorous defense of the social order, strict conformity to the ideals of white supremacy, and a veritable holy war against the evils of “miscegenation” and “mongrelization.”

In its crusade to stamp out proponents of integration, the Citizens’ Councils used numerous legal and economic tactics. Members were encouraged to fire black workers who supported desegregation or who attempted to register to vote. Tenants and sharecroppers were ordered to vacate farms if they were suspected of “radical” or otherwise questionable activity. And the council routinely published the names of NAACP members to discourage their continued activism.

African Americans were not the sole targets of the council’s wrath. White racial moderates and others who appeared “soft” on integration also found themselves at the mercy of the expanding movement. Council leaders conducted scurrilous campaigns to destroy the political careers of such “neo-Populists” as Jim Folsom of Alabama and Earl Long of Louisiana, men who refused to trumpet the rhetoric of white supremacy and racism. As a result, both men lost sway with the electorate. In Arkansas, the Capital Citizens’ Council led the opposition to the 1957 integration of Central High School in Little Rock. Members flooded Governor Orval Faubus’s office with letters, urging him to use emergency powers to prevent integration; harangued local school board members for “betraying” the white race with plans for desegregation; and took out newspapers ads to expose the plot between the NAACP and school officials. Largely because of such efforts, the integration of Central High flared into a constitutional crisis. In Mississippi, council officials, led by William J. Simmons, enjoyed a veritable stranglehold on state government and routinely flexed their political muscle to ensure strict adherence to the organization’s racial orthodoxy. Councilors there pressured lawmakers into passing favorable segregationist legislation, scoured libraries and schools for pro-integration materials, and waged a brutal campaign to subvert the freedom of the press. As a result, the Magnolia State, according to one observer, became a “closed society,” where moderation was tantamount to treason.

By the early 1960s, after enjoying years of unbridled political and social influence, the Citizens’ Council movement began to decline. Random acts of violence by council

members, petty infighting, and, most important, its failure to uphold segregation destroyed the organization. After passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, all that remained were the diehards and “bitter-enders” who refused to accept the inevitable tide of history. *See also:* Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; White Supremacy

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## White Mob Violence

White mob violence toward African Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was both frequent and brutal. White mobs killed around 3,000 African Americans in the South between 1882 and 1930, although the exact figures will never be known because many of these crimes went unrecorded. African American men, however, were not the only victims of white supremacist brutality. White mobs attacked Jews, Catholics, Mexicans, and other minority groups all over the United States in this period, including some women and children. Nonetheless, African American men bore the brunt of white racism from the Civil War until the mid-20th century; and most of these attacks took place in the Jim Crow South.

Before the Civil War, deviant white men, such as thieves or abolitionists, who threatened Southern values were most likely to suffer at the hands of mob violence, or “lynch law.” Punishments tended to be much milder than later in the century, as mobs flogged their victims or banished them from the area rather than put them to death. Slaves were rarely the targets of white mob violence in the antebellum period because they were valuable property and thus protected by their masters. Only in extreme circumstances like

insurrection scares were slaves subjected to lynch law. During Reconstruction, however, African Americans became the main focus of white supremacist violence. Southern lynch mobs, some ephemeral and reactionary, but others longstanding and organized (such as the Ku Klux Klan), victimized and intimidated African Americans on a daily basis, with the full support of their community.

Definitions of what constitutes a “mob” vary, but the usually involve a group of more than three or four people, acting in concert. Early work on collective violence, such as that of Gustave LeBon, seemed to justify the actions of mobs, arguing that people in a crowd lose their individual morals and character and form a collective mentality. Although this theory has been criticized for absolving the members of lynch mobs of their crimes, it is important to note that the perpetrators of mob violence against African Americans were ordinary people of all ranks of society and were not deviant members of the community. It is therefore necessary to try to understand why they committed such terrible atrocities.

Mob violence was an expression of collective values; it unified the white community by reaffirming white supremacy, and thus the perpetrators of such violence did not risk punishment. This was particularly the case with the highly ritualized, spectacle lynchings that attracted audiences in the thousands, including women and children. Mob violence toward African Americans took place when whites thought that the black population was threatening the social order. Whites believed that they needed to keep African Americans “in their place,” as after the Civil War the boundary that divided black and white along caste lines (which had been less crucial under slavery because of the legal subjugation of African Americans) became increasingly blurred.

This perceived threat from the black population came in a variety of forms. Whites maintained that they were merely protecting white women from the sexual aggression of black men, but in 1892 antilynching campaigner Ida B. Wells dispelled this myth; her investigations found that only one third of lynchings of African Americans were for raping a white woman. Historians have instead pointed to political and economic factors to explain the virulence of white mob violence. Whites used lynching to intimidate African Americans in order to prevent them from voting or seeking employment coveted by whites. White mobs

also targeted those African Americans who they perceived as having achieved too much economic success, as they thought they were attempting to cross the caste boundary. This is why mob violence tended to increase during times of economic depression.

Whites often used African Americans as scapegoats for their feelings of inadequacy, as they both psychologically and physically emasculated black men in order to reassert their supremacy. White mobs hanged or shot most of their victims, but they reserved the most brutal punishments for those African Americans who had committed the most serious “crimes” and sometimes burned them alive or tortured them to death. This process was often highly ritualized, involving mutilation of the body, including castration, both before and after death.

African Americans did not just passively accept lynching, however. Individuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells, and later the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), campaigned tirelessly on a national level against white supremacist violence, and in doing so risked their lives. Many African Americans also pushed the boundaries of caste in their own communities, challenging white supremacy on all levels despite the possibility of retaliation. After World War II the tide had turned against lynching, and in 1946 President Truman hosted the National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence, which condemned the actions of the Ku Klux Klan and the lynching of African Americans, and eventually led to the establishment of a permanent civil rights commission and the desegregation of the military. Although white mob violence did not disappear with civil rights, and still sometimes takes place today, by mid century—the majority of the white population no longer considered it acceptable.

See also: Jim Crow; Ku Klux Klan; Lynching; Plan de San Diego; Wells-Barnett, Ida

Lydia Plath

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## White Primaries

During the early-20th century all southern states except Florida, North Carolina, and Tennessee barred African Americans from voting in Democratic Party primary elections. Established to nominate candidates for political office, primaries are an integral part of the electoral process. This was especially true in the American South where, in the years after Reconstruction, government was dominated by the Democratic Party. Because there was no effective opposition, the South was virtually a one-party state. Like the poll tax, literacy test, and grandfather clause, the whites-only primary was designed to restrict African American's constitutional right to vote.

In establishing white primaries, southern Democrats were motivated by two major assumptions. First they desired to prevent African Americans from achieving social and political equality, and second, white southerners mistakenly believed that African Americans would forever remain loyal to the Republican Party. Despite white resistance, southern blacks challenged their exclusion from the American political process.

In 1923, the Texas legislature passed a law declaring all African Americans ineligible to vote in a Democratic primary election. The next year Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon, an El Paso physician and member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), attempted to vote in the Democratic primary election. When he was prevented from casting a ballot, Nixon filed suit arguing the new law violated his Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection and his right to vote guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment. The case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld Nixon's argument that his right to equal protection under the law was violated; however, the court did not rule on the question of voting rights.

Undaunted by the Supreme Court's action, the Texas legislature granted political parties the authority to decide who could vote in party elections. Soon afterwards, the state Democratic Executive Committee adopted a resolution that stated only white citizens were allowed to vote in primaries. Nixon, refusing to accept these discriminatory actions, tried to vote and was again rebuffed. Filing a second lawsuit, Nixon's case was again heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The equal protection clause was again used by the court to strike down the Texas primary law. But this did not settle the matter.

In 1932, the Texas Democratic Party convention adopted the policy that only white Texans were eligible to vote in party primaries. The NAACP declined to challenge the suit, but Houston barber Richard R. Grovey did. For the third time in a decade the U.S. Supreme Court heard a case regarding the constitutionality of white primaries. Grovey argued along the same lines as Nixon, but the court did not accept that the actions of the Texas Democratic Party violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights. Instead, the court held that the white primary was created by a private association rather than the state and thus was not bound by the equal protection clause.

Despite this setback, African Americans continued to challenge white primaries. In 1940, Houston dentist Lonnie E. Smith was prevented from voting in the Texas Democratic primary by election official S. S. Allwright. Like Nixon and Grovey, Smith filed suit and arguments were heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. Reversing itself, the court ruled that the white primary violated Smith's, and by extension all African Americans, Fifteenth Amendment right to vote. As a result, black voting across the south increased dramatically. In Texas, for example, voter registration increased from 30,000 in 1940 to 100,000 in 1947. Although it did not eliminate all voting restrictions, the *Smith* decision was an important step in achieving lasting civil rights for African Americans in the United States.

*See also:* Disfranchisement; MFDP; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Voting Rights Act 1965

Gerald Wayne Dowdy

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## White Supremacy

White supremacy is a racist ideology that has existed for hundreds of years. When Bartolomé de las Casas argued in the 16th century that Spaniards were cruel and barbaric in enslaving the Taino of Hispaniola, his critics responded that Native Americans were more like monkeys than humans and the indigenous people were mere children.

White supremacy shaped every aspect of antebellum society and undergirded a paternalistic society built on the superiority of slaveholders over their property, enslaved Africans. Slaveholders gained immense benefits from supremacist ideology. The inferiority of African Americans confirmed the benevolence and necessity of the institution of slavery. Furthermore, racist ideologies encouraged poor whites to identify with slaveholders and discriminate against African Americans.

With the destruction of the institution of slavery after the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, white supremacy thrived during and after Reconstruction in the South. After 4 million African Americans gained their freedom, Southerners and other Americans looked for ways to control them and to justify white economic, political, and social dominance. After the Civil War, African Americans endeavored to join the middle class in order to counter white supremacy. They graduated from colleges and universities and black men won elections at the state and local levels.

The rise of the Ku Klux Klan was one attempt to undo the gains of African Americans and enforce white supremacy. The Mississippi Plan was a bold effort by the Democrats to use force to win elections and uphold white supremacy in the South. The rise of Jim Crow politics systematized disfranchisement, and the Democratic Party promoted black disfranchisement and white supremacy.

The forced separation of races became the foundation for white racial identity, but black homes, businesses, churches, and bodies threatened to buttress black autonomy and provide a challenge to white supremacy. Lynchings, however, denied the existence of black space, and even the bodies of African Americans could be invaded at any time by whites.

*See also:* Jim Crow; Ku Klux Klan; Lynching; White Citizens' Council; White Mob Violence

Nathan Herrod

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## Wilkins, Roy

Roy Wilkins (1901–1981) was a prominent member and leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). During his tenure with the organization, Wilkins and the NAACP helped to usher in the popular Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and push for popular legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Roy Ottoway Wilkins was born August 30, 1901, in St. Louis, Missouri. Wilkins remained in Missouri with his mother, father, sister Armeda, and brother Earl until the death of his mother. Then Armeda, Earl, and Roy moved to St. Paul, Minnesota to live with their deceased mother's sister Elizabeth and her husband Sam. Although Roy's father was still alive, in many ways he respected and viewed his Uncle Sam as his stand-in father.

Wilkins began school at the Whittier Grammar School at the age of six. He graduated salutatorian of his class in June 1919 and then went to the University of Minnesota. Wilkins grew up with a benign look at race. Although he was the only African American at Whittier, he was always treated fairly and never viewed race as an issue. When Wilkins began studying at the University of Minnesota, however, this view changed. In the summer of 1920, three African Americans in Duluth, Minnesota, were unfairly lynched for the rape of a white woman. While all the evidence supported the innocence of the African American boys, they nonetheless were found guilty. This incident in Duluth forever altered Wilkins's view of race.

In 1922, Wilkins became the editor of the St. Paul Appeal—the voice of African Americans at the University of Minnesota and in the St. Paul community at large. The next

year Wilkins graduated from the University with a degree in sociology and a minor in journalism. After graduation in October 1923, Wilkins moved to Kansas City to take a job with the *Kansas City Call*. Once in Kansas City, Wilkins became entrenched in the Jim Crow South. As he saw members of his race being treated unfairly and he himself was treated unfairly, he turned more and more active in the promotion of black equality. While at *The Call*, Wilkins fought southern racism in his articles and editorials.

In the late 1920s, Wilkins lost his Aunt Elizabeth, Uncle Sam, and sister Armeda within one week's time. Roy's brother Earl moved to Kansas City to be with him. In September 1929, Wilkins then married Minnie Badeau. The two never had any children, but stayed together until Wilkins's death. Wilkins's outspoken editorials at *The Call* gained national attention from the NAACP. The organization offered Wilkins a position with their newspaper, *The Crisis*, but Wilkins turned it down. A few years later, in 1931, the NAACP again offered Wilkins a position as assistant secretary, which he accepted. The position at *The Crisis* was merely a business position to Wilkins. As assistant secretary, however, Wilkins would be able to work side by side with some of the most prominent civil rights advocates in the country. In August, Roy moved to New York and began work with the NAACP. In 1934, when W. E. B. Du Bois left the organization, Roy took over as editor of *The Crisis*.

In 1949, Executive Secretary Walter White requested a leave of absence from the NAACP. Wilkins temporarily took over the position. In 1951 White returned. Four years later, in 1955, White died and Wilkins became the executive secretary of the NAACP. Although many African Americans in the 1950s were promoting a gradual or slow pace for civil rights, Wilkins pushed for more progress. He felt blacks had been treated unfairly long enough. As executive secretary, Wilkins not only promoted, but participated in, civil rights events such as the March on Washington in 1963 and the Selma marches in 1966.

In the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement exploded. The NAACP had ushered in the Civil Rights movement, but many other organizations were on the scene by 1965. Many of these new groups supported black power and separation of the races. Wilkins fought hard for black equality, but he would never support separatism as advocated by black power supporters. To Wilkins separatism was a reinstatement of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the case's separate but equal doctrine.



Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, holds a hangman's noose mailed to his organization's headquarters, undated photo. (Library of Congress)

Throughout Wilkins's time with the NAACP, he met with Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter. Through these meetings Wilkins helped to promote black equality. He encouraged Kennedy and Johnson to pass the famed Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Wilkins always advocated civil rights through legislative means. He protested to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government. He felt it was through these organizations that African Americans would receive their long-awaited equality.

In July 1977, Wilkins retired from the NAACP. Although this was not the end of the relationship between Wilkins and the NAACP, it was the end of his active role in the organization's leadership. Until his death in 1981, Wilkins continued to advocate for the NAACP and civil rights.

*See also:* Cold War and Civil Rights; Du Bois, W. E. B.; March on Washington, 1963; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Robeson, Paul; White, Walter

Mindy R. Weidman

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## **Williams, Hosea**

Hosea Lorenzo Williams (1926–2000) was a pastor and civil rights activist known for his boundless energy. Born January 5, 1926, in Attapulgus, Georgia, to blind parents, Williams

was raised by his grandparents after his mother died while giving birth to his younger sister Teresa. His mother's untimely death left them in the care of her parents, Turner and Lela Williams, with whom he stayed until he was 13 years old. While growing up under his grandparents' guidance in Decatur County, a poor area in southwest Georgia, Williams's affection and concern for the poor and underprivileged began as he became aware that many whites limited the life chances of African Americans in order to prevent them from accumulating wealth and property.

In 1939, Williams had a more intense introduction to the racial tension of the segregated South. A group of racist whites from Decatur County accused him of having an "affair" with a white girl from the area and sought to lynch him for his alleged inappropriate behavior. This mob approached his grandparents' home seeking Williams, but as he described later, his grandfather held them at bay with a gun until a friendly white neighbor interceded to prevent further violence.

Williams would later move to Tallahassee, Florida, and then back to Decatur County finding work on farms, cleaning homes, serving as a caretaker, and working at a bus station between Decatur County, Georgia and Tallahassee Florida. Williams enlisted in the United States Army in 1942, serving as a weapons carrier, as well as time as a staff sergeant under General George S. Patton, and fought in the Battle of the Bulge, one of the most significant battles in France during World War II.

After returning to the United States, Williams was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in service. Life after military service for Williams was not the happiest of times. At a segregated Greyhound bus station in Americus, Georgia, he drank from a "Whites Only" water fountain and a mob of whites nearly beat him to death for his actions. Williams later enrolled at Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, receiving a BS in chemistry in 1951, and later an MA in chemistry from Atlanta University.

Williams moved to Savannah, Georgia, and was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Bureau of Entomology, becoming one of the first African American research chemists in the South. In Savannah, he began working with W. W. Law, who was the Savannah National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president. Under Law's direction, Williams became vice president of the Savannah NAACP branch, and they would lead the first sit-ins and night marches in

Savannah in the early 1960s. He would also help desegregate the DeSoto Hotel. Williams gained statewide attention with this local movement and later became vice president of the Georgia NAACP.

In 1962, Williams left Savannah for Atlanta to become part of the national Civil Rights movement as head of the national board of the NAACP. Faced with discrimination within the organization, in 1963 he was brought into the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who saw Williams as someone who could be beneficial to the movement. At this time, the SCLC began to implement marches as a tactic to combat the injustices adhered to through segregation.

Williams's role in the SCLC is first remembered as he and John Lewis, the national leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), led a march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, on March 7, 1965. This march became known as "Bloody Sunday." The objective of the march was to give then Governor George C. Wallace a petition demanding the voting rights of blacks in Alabama as guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, many marchers endured injuries; Williams suffered a concussion and fractured skull. Within days, President Lyndon B. Johnson passed legislation guaranteeing voting rights for blacks in America. On August 6, 1965, this legislation was put into law, as it disposed of the literacy tests and other policies that were designed to disfranchise blacks in the South from voting.

Despite the rifts within leadership, Hosea Williams was of great use to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and SCLC. Many people did not agree with Williams's ideology but still had respect for him. Aside from his role in "Bloody Sunday," Williams served numerous roles after the Civil Rights movement. In 1968, he was director of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign, a movement whose mission was to end poverty in the United States. Much of the aspirations for the Poor People's Campaign dwindled with the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. Williams was present with King at this unfortunate time.

The numerous arrests of Hosea Williams's demonstrated his dedication to African Americans gaining civil rights. Williams also founded the Hosea Williams Feed the Hungry and Homeless Foundation in 1970. In 1973, he led a boycott against the department store Rich's Incorporated,



and later took Richard H. Rich, the founder of Rich's, to court on a civil action suit against the corporation's practices.

While serving in the Georgia General Assembly, which he was elected to in 1974, Williams, as head of the Atlanta chapter of the SCLC, led a demonstration outside of an Atlanta hotel where President Gerald Ford was in attendance. Williams and 50 other demonstrators demanded to see the president to ask for jobs for the poor. After refusing to listen to the pleas of one of the aides to President Ford, Williams and three others were arrested and charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct. In 1987, Williams led 20,000 people into Forsyth County, Georgia, just north of Atlanta, to protest the racial tensions in the area that were elevated by the Ku Klux Klan.

Throughout his life, Williams showed determination to accomplish what he had his heart set on—changing the social, political, and economic status of blacks in America. Williams died in 2000 after a three-year battle with cancer. *See also:* King, Martin Luther Jr.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Southern Christian Leadership Conference

*Robert A. Bennett III*

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## Williams, Robert F.

Robert F. Williams (1925–1996) was born on February 26, 1925, in Monroe, North Carolina. In the 1950s, he became a militant civil rights activist whose radicalism would have a tremendous influence on the Black Power movement. As early as 1941, his resistance to racial discrimination during a federal job-training program prompted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to launch an investigation into his ties with Communists. Racial clashes in American cities during World War II, coupled with his 18-month military service, further politicized Williams, who was discharged in 1946. Between 1947, when he married Mabel Ola Robinson, and 1953, Williams worked in the auto industry in Detroit before returning to the South, where he honed his skills as a writer at several all-black colleges. In 1954, after working in Harlem and California, financial problems prompted Williams to join the U.S. Marines, but his defiance toward racist discrimination in the military led to an early discharge in 1955.

Back in Monroe, Williams revived the town's defunct chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As the chapter's president, he attracted many working-class members and, in 1957, launched a nonviolent protest campaign against Monroe's segregated swimming pool. Faced with a wave of violent intimidation from the Ku Klux Klan, Williams organized a black self-defense organization that successfully protected the local movement against white aggression. A year later, Williams widely publicized the controversial case of two black boys, who had been sentenced to reform school for kissing a white girl. Skillfully exploiting the ideological Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union, the NAACP activist eventually secured the release of the two children.

In 1959, Williams's public statement that blacks would have to meet violence with violence when confronted with racist terrorism cemented his radical reputation and prompted the national NAACP to dismiss him as president of the Monroe chapter. Undaunted, Williams continued his civil rights activism, publishing the newsletter *Crusader* to disseminate his militant ideas on self-defense, black pride, economic nationalism, and anticolonial internationalism. Williams counted among his friends white socialists, black nationalists such as Malcolm X, and revolutionaries such as Fidel Castro,

but his uncompromising militancy prevented his acceptance into the mainstream of the Civil Rights movement.

In 1961, Williams and his family were forced into Cuban exile. That year, a nonviolent protest by student activists in Monroe escalated into racial violence. Williams fled to avert bloodshed and to elude the FBI, which sought to prosecute him for allegedly kidnapping a white couple during the race riot. In Havana, Williams produced his own radio program, *Radio Free Dixie*, and continued to publish the *Crusader* to spread his ideas, which became increasingly radical. Going beyond his original call for black self-defense to protect the struggle for racial integration, he now advocated revolutionary guerilla warfare and favored black separatism. During the second half of the 1960s, Williams's militant program had a tremendous impact on black power groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the Republic of New Africa.

By 1965, Williams's relations with the Cuban government had soured, prompting him to move to China. Residing in Beijing, he became an ardent opponent of the escalating Vietnam War and sought to influence its outcome by producing antiwar propaganda. In 1969, Williams finally returned to the United States, where he briefly worked at the University of Michigan's Center for Chinese Studies before withdrawing from the national limelight to settle for a secluded life in Baldwin, Michigan. In 1976, the state of North Carolina dropped the remaining criminal charges against him. Robert Williams died of Hodgkin's disease on October 15, 1996.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; Black Self-Defense; Castro, Fidel; Destination, Cuba; Ku Klux Klan; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Republic of New Afrika; Revolutionary Action Movement; X, Malcolm

Simon Wendt

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## Wills, Frank

Frank Wills (1948–2000) is best known as the man who revealed the Watergate conspiracy; an event that forever transformed American politics and the American presidency. Born in North Augusta, South Carolina, on February 4, 1948, Frank Wills was a high school dropout who earned his GED through the Georgia Job Corps. Wills traveled to Detroit and Fort Custer, Michigan, in search of employment before eventually settling in Washington D.C. in 1971. In 1972, Wills was 24 years old when he was hired by General Security Services, a private security firm in Washington, D.C. Wills earned \$80 a week working as a night security guard in an office building in the Watergate complex.

While Wills was making his rounds on June 17, 1972, he discovered a conspiracy that led to the resignation of the highest elected official in the United States. Shortly after midnight Wills noticed a door taped so that it would not latch properly. He removed the tape, thinking the building's maintenance staff responsible and continued his rounds. Several hours later, just before 2 A.M., he checked the door again and found someone had replaced the tape. Wills immediately phoned the police. Three plainclothes policemen arrived within minutes and he showed them the taped door. Wills was told to stay in the lobby in case anyone tried to escape while the police went upstairs to investigate. The police arrested five men in the process of placing surveillance equipment in the Democratic National Committee headquarters. Wills's diligence sparked a chain of events that became known as "Watergate." The scandal eventually led to the resignation of, among others, President Richard Nixon, who had approved the break-in plan.

The immediate aftermath of Watergate treated Frank Wills well. Soon Wills took a new security job that afforded him a \$5 a week raise. He was paid for interviews and photographs, he hired an attorney to manage his business affairs, and he was given a lifetime membership by the NAACP. A little over a year later, however, Wills was unemployed and claimed that fear of the Nixon administration, which was still in power, kept potential employers from hiring him. Wills's lawyer, Dorsey Evans, claimed that it was Wills's race that kept him from being a national hero and gaining the recognition he deserved.

In August 1974, while still unemployed, Wills was given the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's highest honor, the Martin Luther King award. In 1976, Wills appeared as himself in the opening scenes of Woodward and Bernstein's tale of Watergate, the film *All the President's Men*. As the years passed Wills tried to write a book about his life and participation in Watergate, but publishers were not interested. Wills became increasingly bitter about his role and lack of recognition. In 1982, Wills was arrested for shoplifting a pair of \$12 tennis shoes from a store in Augusta, Georgia. The shoes were allegedly a present for his son. Several New Jersey politicians raised money to post Wills's bond and he did not serve his one-year sentence for the theft.

In 1990, Wills moved back to his hometown of North Augusta, South Carolina to care for his ill mother. She died several years later, but Wills remained in his hometown. On September 27, 2000, Frank Wills died while at the University Hospital in Augusta Georgia from complications relating to a brain tumor; he was only 52 years old.

See also: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Kara M. Kvaran

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## Winfrey, Oprah

Oprah Winfrey (1954–) is most famous for rising to prominence as a talk show host in the late 20th century, but she has also garnered attention as an actress, film and television producer, magazine publisher, and philanthropist. Winfrey was born in rural Mississippi and spent a number of her early years with her grandparents. Her relationship with both of her parents and half-siblings was troubled, and by her own account, she had a difficult childhood. She was sexually abused as a child and became pregnant at the age of 14. Her son, born prematurely, died shortly after birth.

Oprah Winfrey won the Miss Black Tennessee pageant in 1971, and soon began her media career on the radio in Nashville. She attended Tennessee State University, but did not complete her degree until 1987. Her work on the radio led to opportunities on television, and Winfrey became the

first African American woman and the youngest person to anchor the news at Nashville's WTVG-TV. She worked in Baltimore as a co-anchor on the 6:00 News and as co-host of a local talk show, and then moved to Chicago in 1983 to host a show that would become *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

In the midst of starting her broadcasting career, Winfrey also began a film career, playing roles in adaptations of prominent African American novels such as Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1986) and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1985). Winfrey received an Academy Award nomination for her role as Sofia in *The Color Purple*, a film adaptation directed by Steven Spielberg that was very controversial. Both the novel and the film were accused of presenting coonish or demonizing representations of African American men. Winfrey would later star in *The Women of Brewster Place* (1989), *There Are No Children Here* (1993), and *Before Women Had Wings*. Her most high-profile leading role was in the adaptation (1998) of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved* (1988), a story inspired by escaped slave Margaret Garner's decision to kill her child rather than allow all of her family to be taken back into slavery. Winfrey played the lead, Sethe, to mixed reviews.

Winfrey's most prominent success, however, has been through her talk show. Winfrey's show became nationally syndicated in 1986 and she is credited—and disparaged—for revolutionizing the industry. The talk show host broke down the boundary between host and guest with her confessional style of show. She brought her history with sexual abuse, pregnancy, drug use, and ongoing struggles with weight loss into the show, thereby forging a bond with audiences. Winfrey's success inspired a new term—"Oprahfication"—connoting intimate, confessional forms of public interaction.

Another innovation of Winfrey's talk show format was the successful inclusion of a book club that encouraged a national audience to read selected texts and tune in for the discussion on the show. Like many of Winfrey's projects, the book club has garnered both praise and denigration, but it was embraced by many in the publishing industry and inspired a number of scholarly discussions of Winfrey's importance to a culture of reading in the waning days of print culture's influence. Winfrey's love of reading and literature is well documented, and she has not only starred in but produced a number of adaptations of her favorite books.

In 2003, Oprah Winfrey became the first black woman billionaire, and one of the few black billionaires in the



Oprah Winfrey on the cover of her *O* magazine. (PRNewsFoto/Oxmoor House)

world. Her wealth was not only a result of her lucrative talk show but also of her other business interests. Her talk show is produced by Harpo Productions, a company behind a variety of other successful film and television productions. In 2000, Winfrey launched *O, The Oprah Magazine*, a successful monthly woman's magazine with a self-help thrust. She was also one of the founders of the Oxygen television network.

Winfrey is a well-known philanthropist. She formed The Oprah's Angel Network (1997), which has given money to projects in the United States and around the world. Such projects include education, housing, and youth development. Her most high-profile philanthropic project was the creation of a \$40-million school for girls in South Africa in 2007. A luxurious boarding school designed to meet the educational and psychological needs of the girls and prepare them for leadership, the school was met with a number of criticisms and was troubled by controversy about its management shortly after opening.

Because of Winfrey's wealth and popularity, people have periodically suggested that she run for public office. In the early 21st century, the closest Winfrey has come to state or presidential politics is her support of Barack Obama

during his campaign for president. Winfrey's high-profile support for a political candidate was unprecedented for her. Winfrey champions many causes, but she has explicitly stated that she is not a political person.

*See also:* Obama, Barack

Rebecca Wanzo

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## Woodson, Carter Godwin

Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson (1875–1950), one of the most prominent African American historians and social analysts of the 20th century, earned his much deserved notoriety as the innovator of "Negro History Week" celebrations (now Black History Month). He never married, spending much of his time, energy, money, and resources launching the foundations for the inclusion of black studies as a legitimate intellectual inquiry in American schools. Woodson wanted to reestablish dignity to people of African descent so that the world would no longer have to wonder what the Negro was good for.

Woodson was born on December 19, 1875, in New Canton, Buckingham County, Virginia, to proud parents and former slaves Anne Eliza Riddle and James Henry Woodson. Woodson was born 18 years after the infamous Dred Scott decision and 1 year before the 1876 presidential election between Democrat Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford B. Hayes.

The United States Supreme Court speaking through Chief Justice Roger Taney proclaimed in the Dred Scott case that no African free or slave could be a citizen; whites

were not bound to respect any rights proclaimed by African Americans. The 1876 presidential election brought an end to the Reconstruction era and enabled the Southern states to reduce African Americans to near slave status. The social and political system placed little value on the lives of African Americans; between 1890 and 1926, an African American was lynched every two-and-a-half days. Many people of African descent were so humiliated, dehumanized, and afflicted with low self-esteem that they did not attempt to know their past.

The Social Darwinism era, whereby much of America unashamedly condoned slavery and segregation, the academic community that justified racial subjugation and discrimination, and Dr. Woodson's proud parents inspired Woodson to search for the truth, refuting the misrepresentations of the African contributions to world civilization. He used education in black history as a primary conduit for political empowerment of African Americans. Carter Goodson was the first and only African American of slave parentage to earn a PhD in history. This child of former slaves nurtured a desire for learning that culminated in a rich and extraordinary career spanning 40 years.

Woodson was undaunted by the prejudice, challenges, and difficulties of his life. His father was an impoverished carpenter who had to supplement his income by sharecropping. Woodson was the eldest of nine children; two of his siblings died in infancy. He was required to work long, arduous hours to help his family. Because the local schools in Virginia operated on an agricultural calendar, opening only four months of the year owing to the rigors of farming, Woodson was primarily self-taught until age 19.

After working long hours during the day, he would often read aloud newspapers to his father, thereby learning about national and international events and places. During this time period, he would listen to accounts of slavery shared by the adults around him. Although his parents could not read or write, Woodson gave his father credit for influencing the course of his life. He later wrote that his father insisted that one could lose one's soul if one betrayed one's people, misled one's fellow human being, compromise on principle, and accept insult.

His knowledge about black history expanded when his family moved to West Virginia where they worked in the coalmines. During off-duty times, black laborers would rest and eat at the establishment of Oliver Jones, a black civil war veteran who was interested in black history. Woodson

would read the newspaper to these workers and, in exchange, listen to their accounts of life in antebellum days. He acquired appreciation for African folk culture and the African American masses.

Woodson went to school full time when he turned 20 and earned enough money to support himself. In 1895, he enrolled in Douglas High School in Huntington, West Virginia, where he finished the four-year curriculum and earned his diploma in less than two years in 1896. From 1896 through 1898, he continued his education by attending Berea College, which was racially integrated in all aspects of institutional life: dormitories, classrooms, dining hall, entertainment, and extracurricular activities.

While matriculating at Berea, Woodson experienced interpersonal contact with William Frost, the president of the college. From Frost, the faculty, and his colleagues, he acquired a commitment to teaching and an abiding respect for the value of a combination of vocational and classical education to transform the lower income classes of society, believing this would build character and prepare them for life. The next three years, 1897–1900, Woodson began teaching in a one-room school established by black miners for their children in Winona Fayette County, West Virginia. He returned to his high school alma mater, Douglass High School, in 1900–1903 to teach history and serve as acting principal, replacing his cousin Carter Harrison Barnett. Finally, in 1903, he graduated from Berea College with a bachelor of literature degree.

Carter taught English, health, and agriculture in the Philippines from 1903 through 1909 and became the general superintendent of education with the U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs. He took correspondence courses in French and English from the University of Chicago so that he could effectively communicate with his students at the school in San Isidro. Having become fluent in French and Spanish, he traveled in Europe and Asia and studied history for a semester at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. He went to a myriad of museums and libraries, learning basic principles of locating primary materials for research and strategies for incorporating this material into his scholarly works.

On his return to the United States, Woodson decided to begin graduate studies at the University of Chicago. Just as Berea did not accept all of his credits from Douglas High School, the University of Chicago did not give him full credit for his course work at Berea. Woodson was not disheartened; he simultaneously worked on his master's

degree and another bachelor's degree. His major was history and his thesis examined French diplomatic relations with Germany in the 18th century. After completing his BA in 1907 and his MS in history, romance and literature, one year later, Woodson enrolled in Harvard University and finished his coursework by 1909.

He accepted a teaching position with the Washington, D.C. public schools system. While working full-time at M Street High School, he inspired many students to study Negro history, prepared for his PhD comprehensive examinations, and worked on his dissertation on the secession of Virginia at the Library of Congress. In 1912, he became the second African American in the United States to receive a doctorate in history. Du Bois, who came from a free Northern background, was the first African American to earn a PhD in history in 1895. The third African American to receive a doctorate in history was Charles H. Wesley, whose parents were born free in Kentucky. Although James Henry Woodson's other children and their relatives had professional careers as teachers, doctors, and businessmen, only Carter Godwin Woodson became widely known as an intellectual.

Woodson sought the support of his dissertation committee to publish his dissertation. This was an exercise in futility in that Frederick Jackson Turner, the most positive member of the committee, declined to provide assistance to acquire publication. He wrote in a letter two months after Woodson's request stating that the dissertation was too similar to Charles Henry Ambler's, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861*, which was published in 1910. Ambler's book was a revision of his 1908 University of Wisconsin doctoral dissertation. Turner explained that he doubted that the Harvard history department would include Woodson's dissertation in its series of published dissertations or the Harvard University Press would publish it. Turner also warned Woodson that he might have to pay a subvention to have the dissertation published, as the book would probably not have a market and would not make money.

Woodson encountered similar difficulty with his first book, which was completed while he made revisions to his dissertation. He ended up submitting a subvention and *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* to G. P. Putnam's Sons; they agreed to publish it in 1915. The book was favorably and widely reviewed in historical journals, as well as the white popular press. Mary Church Terrell, a civil rights

advocate and African American suffragist, indicated that she was pleased with the book as "a work of profound historical research." Even Turner praised the book as a "substantial contribution to the subject."

All the while, publishers who refused to publish Woodson's dissertation, did so for white historians writing on the same subject. Four authors prevented Charles Henry Ambler from having the final say on the succession movement in Western Virginia. Only Richard Orr Curry's *House Divided: A Study of Statehood, Politics and the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* cited Woodson's 1912 dissertation. This book is still cited by contemporary historians.

Despite these achievements and struggles, Woodson did not begin his life's mission until he and George Cleveland Hall, personal physician to Booker T. Washington and a surgeon at Chicago's Provident Hospital; Alexander L. Jackson, then executive secretary of the YMCA; and James E. Stamps, a Yale University graduate student founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History on September 9, 1915. This was the first historical society devoted exclusively to researching the life and history of African Americans in America, Africa, and throughout the world. Also in 1915, D. W. Griffith released the racist movie *The Birth of a Nation*, which was vehemently protested by blacks and some white liberals. From the establishment of the association until his death on April 4, 1950, Woodson made the association and its work his life's mission. He never wavered in maintaining his independence from outside control.

The annual meetings of the association provided black scholars an opportunity to present papers before their peers. The next year the association launched its scientific quarterly the *Journal of Negro History*. Woodson included substantial portions of his never published dissertation into articles that appeared in the *Journal*. The *Journal* documented information that was previously ignored by mainstream historians. It was innovative in its methods of research used to collect data and in its interpretation of history. Woodson covered a wide range of subjects and emphasized a shift in the focus of historical analysis to the perspective of slave, away from that of the master's.

*Journal* contributors used oral histories, birth and death certificates, marriage registers, letters, diaries, and census data to research black history. Today many historians have adopted these methods. Benjamin E. Mays wrote in his "I Knew Carter G. Goodson," that the *Journal* documented

black life so well that any research on the Negro by perforce had to refer to it.

Woodson published the first issue of the *Journal of Negro History* at his own expense. Although the association had an executive council, Woodson did much of the work directing, organizing, producing, writing, and providing most of the funding. Obtaining adequate funding was a constant challenge; Woodson exerted much of his energy to keeping the organization afloat. He had to secure further employment in order for him and the association to survive.

From 1918 to 1919, he was principal of Armstrong Manual Training School in Washington, D.C. He then worked for one year at Howard University as professor of history, head of the graduate faculty, and dean of the School of Liberal Arts. He developed the graduate program but only one of his five students, Arnett J. Lindsay, completed the Howard graduate program under his tutelage. Later, Woodson published part of Lindsay's thesis in the *Journal*. He left Howard because of disputes with University President J. Stanley Durkee over academic freedom.

The next year Woodson became dean of West Virginia Collegiate Institute (now State College) in 1920. During this time, he established the Associated Publishers and wrote several books: *The History of the Negro Church* in 1921, *The Negro in Our History* in 1922, and *The Mind of the Negro As Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis, 1800–1860* in 1926. After his second position as dean, he retired from the teaching profession in 1922 to concentrate on the association. Although he obtained small contributions from rich white supporters such as Julius Rosenwald and grants from the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, Woodson and his association stayed afloat mainly on his teaching salary, book royalties, the black masses, and the contributions of African American organizations. The foundation funding dried up as a result of concerns of power broker Thomas Jesse Jones who wanted Woodson to relinquish control and affiliate the association with a university. The problem of funding became acute because Woodson was forced to rely more on the black masses and organizations at the zenith of the Great Depression.

Through the difficult times, Woodson was able to accomplish much. He was interested in the black nationalist movement led by Marcus Garvey. He became a frequent contributor for Garvey's weekly publication, the *Negro World*. He wrote more than 100 articles and 125 book

reviews in his capacity as a contributor to the *Journal*. Woodson was also editor and founder of the *Negro History Bulletin* and author of more than 30 books. His most popular book is *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, originally issued by Associated Publisher in 1933. In this book, he criticized any educational enterprise that did not serve the needs of the students.

In 1926, Woodson launched Negro History Week, which became Black History month in 1976. This pioneering educator, historian, and social analyst died in Washington, D.C. on April 3, 1950 at the age of 74. His mission and message provided an opportunity for America to acknowledge and understand the heritage of African Americans. *See also:* Association for the Study of African American Life and History; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Franklin, John Hope.

Marva Strickland-Hill

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## World War I (Black Participation in)

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African Americans have participated in every American war from colonial times to Iraqi Freedom, and their contributions to American military history have been severely underappreciated and virtually ignored. The United States entered World War I in 1917, and the all-black 92nd and 93rd Infantry divisions were sent to France and served bravely until the Armistice in 1918 and play a vital role in the defeat of Germany.

As African Americans were asked to sacrifice for their country, a wave of violence was perpetrated against them in 1916–1917, with about 120 lynchings, mostly in the South. Race riots occurred in New York, St. Louis, and Houston as a result of the combination of African American troops demanding their basic rights as citizens and American soldiers in a largely Jim Crow city. These waves of violence prompted

the United States Army to rely on National Guard and conscripts rather than regular African American enlistees. Famous units such as the 9th and 10th Cavalries, the Buffalo Soldiers, were not sent to France; however, these units provided much needed border security in Arizona and California and were spared the carnage of European battlefields.

The first American troops arrived in France in 1917 as the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) led by General John Pershing and included units of the 93rd Infantry division. The 93rd, the last of which arrived in April, under American leadership guarded German prisoners of war and directed supplies to the other units.

President Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of War Newton D. Baker ordered Pershing to keep the AEF under

American command while in Europe. The all-black 93rd, under the command of white officers, was seen as undesirable and detrimental to the American war effort and was quickly transferred to French command where they had to turn in all American equipment except for their uniforms. This included the Springfield 30.06 rifles, which were far superior to the French Lebel rifle. The Springfield was better suited for open warfare, rather than trench warfare, for which the U.S. soldiers had trained, and many were expert marksmen with the Springfield.

The 93rd consisted of three National Guard units and one drafted unit and was organized into four regiments: the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd. The 369th set an American World War I record for 191 days of unbroken combat with



*Some of the men of the 369th Infantry, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters, who received the Croix de Guerre for gallantry in action during World War I. (National Archives)*



French black colonial troops in the French sector of the Argonne Forest where they repelled massive German assaults at Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Wood.

Known as the Blue Helmet soldiers, they came to be respected by the French and feared by the Germans for their fierce determination and bravery under fire. Approximately 3,500 Blue Helmet soldiers were killed in action. Moreover, they distinguished themselves by earning 42 American Distinguished Service Crosses, 4 Medaille Militaire (the highest French military honor), 325 Croix de Guerre, and 1 Congressional Medal of Honor. President George Herbert Walker Bush posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor to Corporal Freddie Stowers who was killed in action in 1918.

The all-Black 92nd Infantry Division did not enjoy the same success. Made up of all draftees, the 92nd was organized into four infantry regiments and, like their brothers-in-arms, received insufficient training, poor equipment, and white officers. General Charles C. Ballou was the first commander. Despite his prejudices, Ballou sought to give a square deal to his troops and treat them fairly. Once they arrived in Europe in June 1918, however, command of the division was given to General Robert Bullard who shared the typical racial views of the era.

In August 1918, the 92nd was assigned to the St. Dié sector close to the German border and was supposed to train with French units until their withdrawal and subsequently take over the sector; however, the friction of war caused both French and American delays. The division arrived in the midst of German counterattacks and was quickly introduced to trench and chemical warfare. By the time they were pulled out of the sector in September 1918, the 92nd had repelled 11 German patrols and secured the French villages at Frapelle and Ormont.

Less than a week later, the 92nd was reassigned to the American sector of the Argonne Forest in preparation for the large American assault. Pershing's plan called for a simultaneous push with French units on the left and American units on the right. His plan had one fatal flaw that created an 800-meter gap between the French and American lines. Reserve French units and the largely inexperienced 92nd were to fill the chasm. In the fog of battle, inexperience, lapses in communications, and poor planning resulted in the 92nd's failure to hold the line. Subsequently the 92nd was ordered out of the Argonne and relegated to patrol duty until the Armistice in November and was largely regarded as ineffective in combat.

See also: Buffalo Soldiers; Houston, Texas, Mutiny, 1917; "If We Must Die"; Red Summer Race Riots

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## World War II (Black Participation in)

Since colonial times the African American has served this nation in war and peace. The first all-black unit in American history was the 54th Massachusetts Infantry that fought bravely in the Civil War. The 10th cavalry, the famed Buffalo Soldiers, won acclaim fighting Native Americans and at San Juan Hill with future U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. African Americans served in World War I in the 93rd Infantry Division, a segregated unit, and won countless medals. World War II was a unique era, as African Americans fought a war on two fronts against a tough and deadly enemy abroad and against strong, often violent, racial attitudes at home. Yet this period created more opportunities for black participation in the military, produced meaningful victories against discrimination, and planted the seeds for the Civil Rights movement of the mid-20th century.

After World War I, the National Urban League (1907), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1910), and the Universal Negro Improvement Association challenged social norms. Moreover, almost half of all southern African Americans moved north or from rural areas to the city during the Great Migration. In New York during the 1920s, this migration ignited the Harlem Renaissance movement, which was a celebration of black artistry, culture, and an increased recognition of the black struggle for racial equality.

In black history, World War II represented a gap between the Harlem Renaissance and the landmark *Brown v. the Board of Education* that legally ended segregation. In this period, approximately 12.8 million African Americans resided in the United States. Membership in the NAACP grew and the organization gained momentum politically. Moreover, some institutions within the federal government took a more active role in protecting civil rights. For example, U.S. Attorney General Frank Murphy created the Civil Liberties Unit within the Department of Justice and Wisconsin Governor Robert La Follette started the Civil Liberties Committee.

Before Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and many political leaders realized that America would be in the war as Nazi armies swept across Europe and amid ever increasing tensions with Japan. Both human and material resources would be at a premium for the war effort. Discussions were well underway how to best use the black population in the war effort.

Black leaders and politicians directed their efforts at war industries that were still hiring African Americans in nonessential jobs. In an investigation, the National Urban League uncovered discriminatory hiring practices that prevented African Americans from receiving the proper training for top jobs. Acting on these findings, A. Philip Randolph, Walter White, Mary McLeod Bethune, Dr. Channing H. Tobias, George E. Haynes, and Lester B. Grange organized and threatened to march on Washington, D.C.

Eleanor Roosevelt and New York Governor Fiorello La Guardia feared this march would alienate southern voters and convinced organizers to cancel the march and meet with President Roosevelt. The eventual meeting produced Executive Order 8802 and the Committee of Fair Employment Practice, which were among the first efforts to ensure fair hiring practices in industry and coupled with good timing more opportunities were created for black women and men not in the military.

At the same time, World War I veteran Rayford W. Logan with the support of the NAACP and the all-black newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* established the Committee for the Participation of Negroes and National Defense and pushed for larger black quotas in the military. Successful in their efforts, an amendment to the Selective Service Bill of 1940 increased black enlistments but did not end segregation in the military.

At the end of World War I, there were more than 400,000 African Americans in uniform including about 1,300 commissioned officers. By 1939, however, less than 3,500 black soldiers and five commissioned officers, mostly chaplains, were in the army. Few African Americans served in the navy as support and kitchen personnel. African Americans were denied entry into the Marine Corps and the Army Corps. By 1942, however, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis was made the first African American general and enlistments were above 460,000 and entrance into the Army Air Corps and Marines had been gained.

Despite the new quotas, African Americans were rejected for military service at a higher rate than whites for several reasons. Segregation retarded African American education and caused poor performance on entrance exams. With many African Americans already impoverished, the deprivations of the Great Depression left many in poor physical condition. Statistically, 12 percent of African Americans were rejected as a result of poor health, 15.8 percent for reasons unrelated to physical, and 35.6 percent were rejected because of their educational background. The units that did serve ultimately, however, opened the door for President Harry S. Truman to desegregate America's Armed Forces in 1948.

The first African American unit to see action was the 99th Pursuit Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group, collectively known as the Tuskegee Airmen because of their flight training at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The first 40 pilots were rushed into service because of manpower needs in the North African campaign. Rather than opting for top recruits, only pilots that had already completed civilian courses through the Civil Aeronautics Board were chosen. Basic training was shortened by several weeks.

Nevertheless, the 99th was shipped to Africa in early 1943 and produced disappointing early results. Inexperienced and not as aggressive as their white counterparts, the 99th was assigned to the rear for more training and to await less hastily trained African American pilots who had arrived from the United States. While there, the 99th flew missions with the 79th Fighter Group, an independent air wing. Experiencing fair treatment from the 79th, the Tuskegee Airmen gained invaluable experience and confidence that would serve them well in the skies over Italy and Europe. By the end of the war, the famed "Red Tails" of the 332nd escorted heavy bombers, raided oil refineries, and targeted key installations in Italy, the Balkans, and key

components of the Nazi infrastructure deep in the heart of Germany. The 332nd became a hardened, battle-tested unit in the final months of World War II.

Another unit of the Tuskegee Airmen was the 447th Bombardier Group. Frustration, conflict, and a well-disciplined, nonviolent strategy against the institutional racism of the army marked their wartime efforts. Black leaders and politicians realized that flying the huge bombers would better serve African Americans in the postwar world. Although gallant in their efforts, the 332nd fighter experience would be virtually useless in commercial aviation. Bomber experience could open doors for better jobs for African Americans as commercial pilots.

Racism and insufficient numbers prevented this unit from seeing active combat. Less than 20,000 African Americans served in the air corps, far below the necessary numbers required to supply replacement pilots for the 332nd or flight and maintenance crews for bombers. Throughout their training, however, they challenged army reluctance to press the unit into service at their installations and they were a forerunner of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s.

Subsequently, the 93rd Infantry Division of World War I fame was reactivated in May 1942. Unlike other segregated units, the 93rd trained at one military post and was not truncated. In 1944, the 93rd was sent to the Pacific theater as an occupation force. They arrived on Guadalcanal after the majority of the Japanese resistance had ended. Only the 24th Infantry of the 93rd saw any appreciable action on Bougainville in March 1944. Inexperienced, they were overrun by the Japanese. For the remainder of the war, the 93rd was relegated to patrol and guard duty.

Unlike the 93rd, the 92nd Infantry Division saw extensive combat action in Italy and trained at four separate installations across the nation: Fort McClellan, Alabama, Camp Atterbury, Indiana, Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky, and Camp Robinson, Arkansas. Part of Mark Clark's Fifth Army, poorly trained, and equipped, with an average fourth grade education because of educational discrimination, the 92nd fought against a deadly veteran German Army and suffered a high casualty rate. Several incidents of self-sacrifice and bravery, however, were noted during the war and recognized more than 50 years later by President William Jefferson Clinton, who awarded two of its members the Congressional Medal of Honor.

First Lieutenant John Robert Fox was a forward observer for the 598th Field Artillery Battalion, undertaking

training maneuvers near Sommocolonia, Italy on Christmas Day 1944. Stopping to rest for the night in the village, Fox and his platoon awoke to discover that Germans disguised as partisans had encircled their positions during the night. Rapidly under assault, Fox's platoon was nearly overwhelmed and outnumbered.

Many rescue attempts could not breach the German lines, which prompted Fox to call for artillery fire only 60 yards from his platoon. Desperate, Fox called for artillery to fire directly on his own position killing Fox and most of his platoon; however, about 100 Germans were killed, and several hours later an Allied counterattack reclaimed the village. Fox was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star at the time of the incident. Years later he was awarded the Distinguished Cross and the Medal of Honor.

Lieutenant Vernon J. Baker was a member of the 360th Regimental Combat Team of the 92nd Infantry Division. Ordered to assault Hill X and Castle Aghilnofi behind German Gothic Line on 5 April 1945, Baker lost nearly two-thirds of his platoon. Intense German artillery fire prevented Baker from obeying orders to withdraw his decimated unit. Baker destroyed one machine gun nest and a German observation tower virtually single handedly. Accompanied by a fellow platoon member, Baker demolished more gun emplacements and drew enemy fire away from rescue efforts.

The next day Baker led the counterattack through mine fields to eventually take the original objectives of the mission, earning him the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and Distinguished Service Cross and, like Fox, the Medal of Honor. Only five other black Americans, all posthumously, received the nation's highest honor from World War II: Private George Watson, Sergeant Edward A. Carter Jr., Private Willy F. James Jr., Sergeant Ruben Rivers, and First Lieutenant Charles L. Thomas. *See also:* Double-V Campaign; Evers, Medgar; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Randolph, A. Philip; Robinson, Jackie; Tuskegee Airmen; World War I (Black Participation in)

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## X, Malcolm

Malcolm X (1925–1965) was an author, activist, and minister of the Nation of Islam who has become the most enduring contemporary symbol of African American militant protest. Given the name Malcolm Little at birth, he became Malcolm X after entering the Nation of Islam and finally changed his name to el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz while on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964. Malcolm X's public career lasted only six years and ended abruptly with his assassination. Nonetheless, his influence on recent African American history is enormous. He left behind no lasting organization or movement, no record of changed legislation, no institutional legacy, no accomplishment of improved conditions for black people in America, and no developed political philosophy. His achievements were cultural. His most important and long-lasting contribution was *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written with Alex Haley. Beyond that, as a media figure between 1959 and 1964, he introduced the black community to a new model of black leadership, an unprecedented public display of black rage, and a new mode of aggressive black masculinity that continues to have a profound effect on popular culture today.

Born May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm was his father's seventh child. Reverend Earl (Early) Little, a freelance Baptist minister and a part-time organizer for Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), already had three children from a previous marriage and three children with his second wife, Louise (Louisa), Malcolm's mother. According to Malcolm, Louise was so fair that she looked white while his father was very dark-skinned. Malcolm begins his autobiography with an account of his mother, pregnant with him, confronting

armed Ku Klux Klan riders who surrounded the family house in Omaha while his father was away; however, Louise Little has denied that this incident ever occurred.

Malcolm was more light-skinned than any of his brothers and sisters, with reddish-brown hair. He was apparently his father's favorite child. His relationship with his mother was more troubled. There was considerable violence within the home. Earl beat Louise and also beat his children almost savagely, except for Malcolm. All of Malcolm's beatings came from his mother. In 1931, when Malcolm was six years old, his father was killed. Malcolm would later insist that he was murdered by white supremacists, but all contemporary evidence indicates that he died in a street car accident. With seven children to care for and overwhelmed by poverty during the Depression, Louise Little tried to maintain her family intact, but without success. Malcolm was placed in the care of a white family by the welfare authorities. He admitted to being glad when it happened. In 1939, after giving birth to an eighth child and being abandoned by the new baby's father, Louise was judged insane and was formally committed to a state mental hospital. She remained there for 25 years. Malcolm visited her occasionally, but she did not recognize him. In his autobiography, he blames social workers for driving his mother insane.

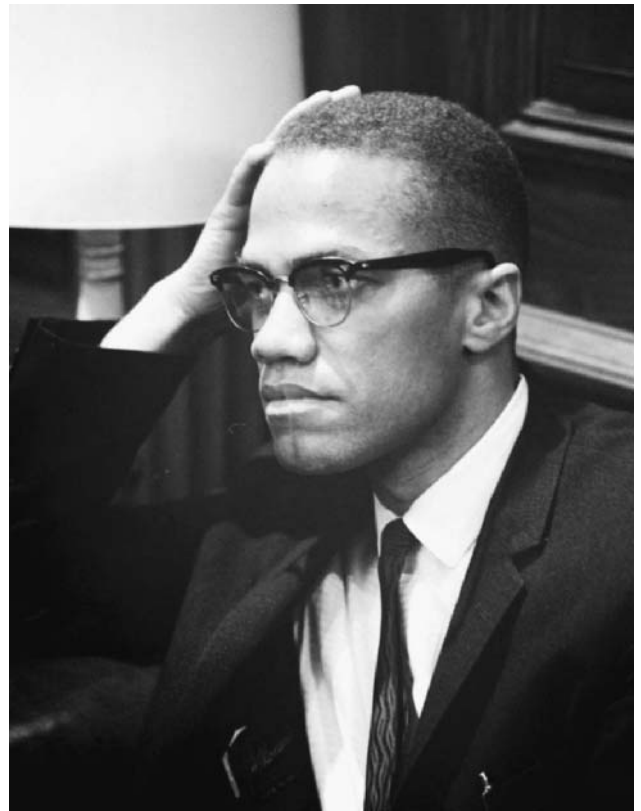
In 1941, at the age of 15, Malcolm moved to Boston to live with his half-sister, a daughter of his father's first marriage, Ella Collins. Despite her efforts to introduce him to her respectable friends and to keep him in school, Malcolm was almost immediately attracted to the criminal underworld of the city. His first part-time job as a shoeshine boy in the Roseland State Ballroom men's room was a thin disguise for a number of illegal activities, such as selling marijuana or putting his customers in touch with prostitutes. He also began a long-term relationship, over Ella's furious objections, with an older white woman he called "Sophia" in his autobiography (Beatrice Caragulian, later Beatrice Bazarian). Drafted into the army during World War II, he managed to avoid service by feigning insanity. He pursued a career of petty criminality that included a short stay in Harlem before he returned to Boston. There he was arrested for burglaries he had carried out with the help of his white girlfriend, her sister, and his male cohorts. In February 1946, at the age of 20, he was sentenced to three concurrent 8- to 10-year sentences at hard labor. Malcolm attributed the harsh punishment to the judge's anger over his sexual relationship with a white woman.

During his early days in prison, Malcolm earned the nickname “Satan” because of his outspoken atheism and his hostility toward religion. As he relates in his autobiography, his efforts to educate himself in prison began long before his conversion to the Nation of Islam. He enrolled in correspondence courses, studied the dictionary, and voraciously read books from the prison library. While serving time in prison, Malcolm was introduced to the teachings of the Nation of Islam by his brother Reginald, who had joined the group. Initially showing no interest, Malcolm was a deeply committed convert by the time he was released from prison in August 1952.

Ella had arranged for Malcolm to move to Detroit, where his brothers Wilfred, Philbert, and Wesley and his sister Hilda lived, after his release from prison. All of his siblings were now active members of the Nation of Islam there. Malcolm soon visited the leader of the movement, Elijah Muhammad, in Chicago, where he was given special recognition. Like most members of the Nation of Islam, he changed his last name to X, to symbolize his rejection of white oppression. He explained in his book: “The Muslim’s ‘X’ symbolized the true African family name that he never could know. For me, my ‘X’ replaced the white slavemaster name of ‘Little’ which some blue-eyed devil named Little had imposed upon my paternal forebears... Mr. Muhammad taught that we would keep this ‘X’ until God Himself returned and gave us a Holy Name from His own mouth.” (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, p. 199.)

He actively recruited new converts for the Nation of Islam and was an effective proselytizer. The Federal Bureau of Investigation opened a file on Malcolm in 1953, after learning that he had referred to himself as a communist. He remained under FBI surveillance for the rest of his life. He expanded the Nation of Islam in Detroit, established the Nation’s first Temple in Boston, and found new recruits in Philadelphia. In 1954, he was chosen to head Temple No. 7 in Harlem, and he rapidly expanded its membership there also.

In 1958, after receiving permission from Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm married Betty X (née Sanders, later Betty Shabazz) in Lansing, Michigan. The couple eventually had six daughters: Attallah (b. 1958), Qubilah (b. 1960), Ilyasah (b. 1962), Gamilah Lumumba (b. 1964); and twin girls, Malaak and Malikah, born in 1965 after their father’s death. During the marriage, Malcolm was often away from the home traveling, speaking, or attending to the business of the Nation of Islam.



*Malcolm X during a press conference for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1964. (Library of Congress)*

Malcolm X first became a public media figure in 1959, when he appeared in a television documentary broadcast in New York City, entitled “The Hate That Hate Produced.” On that program he explained that, according to the teaching of the Nation of Islam, black people were a divine race; he frankly denounced the white race as evil, incapable of good. The audience saw footage of the University of Islam, where Muslim children were taught that whites were devils. This message appeared in such sharp contrast to the theme of brotherhood being put forward by the Civil Rights movement that the Nation of Islam, and Malcolm in particular, immediately became the objects of national media attention. Although Malcolm would later complain about the negative publicity, it was his almost demonic media image that brought the Nation of Islam into the fore. He did everything he could to cultivate that image in media interviews.

At this time, Malcolm’s public statements adhered strictly to the teachings of the Nation of Islam as given by Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm unabashedly spoke of a self-righteous hatred of whites. In his autobiography, begun

in 1963, Malcolm repeated the Nation of Islam's official teaching that white people were an artificial race of mutant people who had been created in prehistory, through genetic experimentation, by an evil black scientist named Yacub.

Elijah Muhammad imposed a strict rule against political activity and protest on the Nation of Islam, including banning social involvement that might improve conditions for blacks. His teaching was that God would soon liberate his people without effort on their part, and that the followers of the Nation of Islam should simply wait for this inevitable divine event. All of these teachings would eventually become a problem for Malcolm X and lead to his break with the movement.

Malcolm X became the national representative, the chief spokesman, for the Nation of Islam. He was in much demand as a public speaker on college campuses and other venues and was sought after for television appearances. He was also interviewed as a spokesman for black Americans by journalists from other countries. He established the Nation of Islam's first national newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*. From these platforms he sharply criticized the leaders of the Civil Rights movement for advocating that blacks should integrate into white society, rather than build separate black institutions. He rejected their stance that black people should respond with nonviolence when faced with attacks from the white community.

Malcolm's popularity with the media and his obvious position as the second most important leader of the Nation of Islam, after Elijah Muhammad himself, caused tensions to develop within the movement. A book about the Nation of Islam, *When the Word Is Given*, published in 1963, featured Malcolm X on its cover and included transcripts of five of his speeches, but only one of Elijah Muhammad's, much to the chagrin of the latter. Publishers asked for the rights to Malcolm's autobiography, not for Elijah Muhammad's. Members of Elijah Muhammad's family and other high-ranking Muslim leaders in Chicago began to maneuver against Malcolm's position within the Nation.

Tensions developed between Malcolm and his leader, Elijah Muhammad, over the Nation of Islam's general non-involvement policy, with Malcolm moving toward more action and engagement in the black social struggle taking place around them in the early 1960s. For example, when Ronald Stokes, member of the Nation, was killed and six other Muslims were wounded in a police raid on the Muslim Temple in Los Angeles in April 1962, a furious Malcolm

X sought to organize the black community around the issue and bring a legal case against the police for brutality. Elijah Muhammad, however, eventually ordered him to discontinue his efforts in Los Angeles and return to New York. In the summer of 1963, Malcolm (without authorization from Elijah Muhammad) announced that Temple No. 7, in Harlem, would begin a voter registration drive. Against standing policy, he publicly advocated that the Nation of Islam should form a "united black front" with civil rights organizations. Malcolm was also deeply shaken by his knowledge of financial corruption at the Nation's headquarters in Chicago and the increasing confirmation he received of Elijah Muhammad's adulterous affairs and illegitimate children with former secretaries. He began discussing these issues with a few other Muslims.

These conflicts came to a head with the assassination of President John Kennedy. In keeping with his policy of caution and noninvolvement, Elijah Muhammad had strictly instructed all Muslim ministers to make no comment on the assassination. Malcolm complied for a few days, but then after one of his talks in New York, someone asked about Kennedy. Comparing the assassination to that of Patrice Lumumba and other deaths that he said the president had been responsible for, Malcolm remarked: "Chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad; they've always made me glad." (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pp. 300–301). This statement was widely reported and criticized in the press.

The next day, Elijah Muhammad suspended Malcolm from making any public statements for 90 days in order to distance the Nation of Islam from his remarks. A few weeks later, Malcolm was relieved of his positions as the national representative of the Nation and as the Minister of Temple No. 7. Loyal Muslims were quietly told to shun him and perhaps even to kill him. The ban on his public speaking was extended indefinitely. Realizing that his disputes with the Nation of Islam were now irreconcilable, Malcolm announced his break with the movement on March 8, 1964. He formed the Muslim Mosque, Inc., in Harlem, to continue his work to liberate and uplift African American people. He would later also found the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a secular organization devoted to the same ends. Both organizations were a direct challenge to the Nation of Islam.

Almost immediately after leaving the Nation of Islam, Malcolm decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The trip

was financed by his sister, Ella. He was received with hospitality by the Saudi royal family, who made him a guest of the state. The deputy chief of protocol for Prince Faisal accompanied him on his pilgrimage. Malcolm claimed that his pilgrimage amounted to a conversion experience that allowed him to reject the idea that white men were devils and embrace the racial brotherhood taught by orthodox Islam. While in Mecca he changed his name to el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz. In any case, the pilgrimage provided Malcolm with an opportunity to reformulate his message to his followers and to the public. From Saudi Arabia, he conducted a campaign of writing letters, postcards, and public statements to proclaim his conversion to orthodox Islam and his newfound belief in the unity of the human race.

After his return from pilgrimage, Malcolm X remained a popular media figure. He spoke regularly at the Muslim Mosque, Inc., and at meetings of the Organization of African Unity. Tensions with the Nation of Islam escalated, and there were a number of threats and attempts on his life. On February 21, 1965, while addressing a meeting of the OAAU at the Audubon Ballroom in New York, and before an audience of 400 supporters, who included his wife and children, Malcolm was shot 16 times, with a shotgun and with pistols, by at least three assassins. He died at the podium. The gunmen were seized by the crowd and by Malcolm's bodyguards. Three men, all affiliated with the Nation of Islam, were eventually convicted of the murder and served prison sentences. They have since been released.

Malcolm X certainly had a greater impact on the African American community after his death than he did while he was alive. His autobiography was published posthumously

and became a best seller. His militant stance was echoed by subsequent black activists such as the Black Power movement and the Black Panthers, for which his book was a standard inspiration. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Malcolm's face and the symbol "X" were marketed on T-shirts, baseball caps, and other casual attire. The clutter of "X" products and paraphernalia eventually lost touch with any political message. In 1992, Spike Lee released a major motion picture based on Malcolm's life that was successful at the box office. While this commercial popularity has since waned, Malcolm X remains an iconic figure for an entire generation of African American youth.

*See also:* Black Nationalism; Black Power; Haley, Alex; Muhammad, Elijah; Nation of Islam; Organization of Afro-American Unity; Pan-Africanism; Shabazz, Beatty X; Universal Negro Improvement Association

Anthony A. Lee

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