

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH



## A National Hero

Ida B. Wells was a Civil Rights Journalist and Activist in the United States in the 1890s. She risked her life to oppose oppression, racism and violence in America.

She was born a slave and freed by the Emancipation Proclamation.

In May 1884, she resisted forcible removal from a "whites-only" train from Memphis to Nashville. After having purchased a first-class train ticket, she was outraged when the train crew ordered her to move to the African American car. She refused on principle and was forcibly removed. She sued the railroad, winning a \$500 settlement in court, but the decision was later overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court.

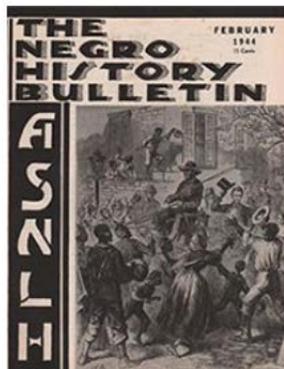
This injustice led Ms. Wells to share her grievances and started working as a journalist and publisher. She became very vocal about segregation and led an anti-lynching crusade. She also formed the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) in 1896 and is considered a co-founder of the NAACP. In 1898 she brought her anti-lynching campaign to the White House, leading a protest in Washington, D.C. and calling the President to make reforms.

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IDA B. WELLS:

[https://www.biography.com/activist/ida-b-wells?li\\_source=LI&li\\_medium=m2m-rcw-history](https://www.biography.com/activist/ida-b-wells?li_source=LI&li_medium=m2m-rcw-history)

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/ida-b-wells-barnett>

<https://www.history.com/news/ida-b-wells-lynching-memphis-chicago>



### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CARTER G. WOODSON:

<https://www.naacp.org/naacp-history-carter-g-woodson/>

<https://woodsonmuseum.org/about-us/>

<https://www.nps.gov/cawo/learn/carter-g-woodson-biography.htm>

## The Father of Black History

Dr. Carter G. Woodson was born in 1875 and was the son of former slaves. In 1912, he received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, becoming one of the first African Americans to earn a doctorate from Harvard. Dr. Woodson dedicated his career to the field of African American history.

In addition to his many successes, in 1926 he launched the annual February observance of "Negro History Week", a special program to encourage the study of Black history. February was chosen for the initial weeklong celebration to honor the births of Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.

By the late 1960s, with help from the Civil Rights Movement, Negro History Week evolved into what we know today as Black History Month. President Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976. The President called upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history".

Black History Month pays tribute to and celebrates the achievements of Black Americans and acknowledges the central role of African Americans in U.S. history.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2021



### 2021 THEME

## THE BLACK FAMILY: REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

Black History Month returns to its roots this year with a focus on black family ties. It explores the wide-ranging diversity of the black family life -- from single to two-parent households to nuclear, extended and, more recently, bi-racial.

Throughout black history, factors such as slavery, inequality and poverty have put pressure on maintaining family ties, when a better life meant traveling far from home. This may certainly be the reason why family reunions have always remained popular within the African American community, as meetings of far-flung relations take place each year with a joyful exchange of memories, photos and storytelling. Paradoxically, economic pressures that may pull black families apart also often unite them. That is, against prejudice and bigotry, many black families may pool resources or find job opportunities, or simply find emotional comfort within their own micro-community. In that respect, "brothers" or "aunties" may be good friends or neighbors who simply qualify for the title.

Throughout American history, the black community has always exhibited an unwavering understanding of the value of family -- as an incomparable source of comfort, strength, and even survival.

### Did You Know?

- The NAACP was founded on February 12, 1909, the centennial anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln. It was created by the growing racial violence and 1908 race riots in Springfield, Illinois.
- In late 1865 some southern states enacted Black Codes. Black Codes were restrictive laws designed to limit the freedom of African Americans and to ensure their availability as a cheap labor force after slavery was abolished. Black Codes required Black people to sign yearly labor contracts and if they refused, they risked being arrested, fined and forced into unpaid labor. By 1866 almost all Southern States had versions of Black Codes. This led to the ratification in 1868 of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Granting "Equal Protection of the Law". This amendment became the basis for many landmark Supreme Court decisions over the years.

*For more information on Black Codes:*

[https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes#section\\_2](https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes#section_2)

- In 1870 the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was adopted guaranteed the right to vote would not be denied "on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude". Unfortunately, there were multiple organizations that came to be such as the White League and the Red Shirts that terrorized and intimidated Black men so they would not vote.
- In 1870 Hiram Rhodes Revels was elected as the first Black member of the U.S. Congress. He was a Mississippi Republican. Democrats were determined to not allow him to take his seat in Congress using the argument that Mr. Revels had only recently become a citizen based on the 1866 Civil Rights Act & the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The constitution required members to hold citizenship for at least nine years. With the 1857 Dred Scott decision, Black people were determined not to be U.S. citizens. A technicality that didn't hold up.

### **THE GULLAH GEECHEE PEOPLE**

<https://gullahgeechecorridor.org/thegullahgeechee/>

The Gullah Geechee people are descendants of Africans who were enslaved on the rice, indigo and Sea Island cotton plantations of the lower Atlantic coast. Many came from the rice-growing region of West Africa. The nature of their enslavement on isolated island and coastal plantations created a unique culture with deep African retentions that are clearly visible in the Gullah Geechee people's distinctive arts, crafts, foodways, music, and language.

Gullah Geechee is a unique, creole language spoken in the coastal areas of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. The Gullah Geechee language began as a simplified form of communication among people who spoke many different languages. It is the only distinctly African creole language in the United States and it has influenced traditional Southern vocabulary and speech patterns.

The ancestors of the Gullah Geechee people brought a rich heritage of African cultural tradition in art, food and music. Gullah music can be heard in many genres of music such as gospel, ragtime, R&B, soul, hip hop and jazz. "Southern Food" comes from the creativity and labor of plantation cooks who were enslaved.

Religion and spirituality have a sustaining role in the Gullah family and community life. These values include belief in God, community above individuality, respect for elders, kinship bonds and ancestors, respect for nature and honoring the continuity of life and afterlife.