

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY



THE COLONIAL PERIOD 1500s-1776

1526	Spanish explorer Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon brings African slaves to coastal South Carolina to establish a settlement
1530s	Africans take part in numerous Spanish expeditions to the New World, from present-day Florida to California
1542	Criticism from humanitarians leads Spanish monarch Charles V to outlaw Native American slavery and the <i>encomienda</i> system on the Caribbean islands and other Spanish-controlled colonies Charles V grants contracts to import African slaves rather than use Native Americans as slaves
1565	Africans take part in the founding of St. Augustine , Florida, the first permanent city in North America built by non-Native Americans
c. 1590	Portuguese begin to supply Brazil with African slaves from Angola and the Congo
1606	First recorded birth of a black child in North America (St. Augustine)
1619	First group of twenty African indentured servants arrives in the English settlement of Jamesstown , Virginia
1623	William Tucker is the first recorded birth of a black child in the English colony of Jamestown, Virginia
1624	Dutch slavers bring first enslaved Africans to New Amsterdam (present-day New York City)
1634	Enslaved Africans arrive in Massachusetts and Maryland
1641	Massachusetts becomes the first colony to give slavery statutory recognition; other colonies to follow include Connecticut (1650), Virginia (1661), Maryland (1663), New York and New Jersey (1664), South Carolina (1682), Rhode Island and Pennsylvania (1700), North Carolina (1715), and Georgia (1750)
1644	Eleven Africans in New York successfully petition for their freedom
1649	Colonial officials report that Virginia is home to "about fifteeene thousand English and of Negroes brought thither, three hundred good servants"
1652	Rhode Island enacts the first antislavery law in the colonies, limiting the term of servitude to ten years for both African and European servants
1663	House servant foils insurrection attempt between white indentured servants and black slaves of Gloucester County, Virginia
1672	King Charles II of England charters the Royal African Company, which monopolizes the transatlantic slave trade for the next 50 years
1688	Quakers publish pamphlets condemning slavery in the colonies
1695	Reverend Samuel Thomas, a white cleric in Charleston, South Carolina, establishes the first known school for African Americans
1700	Enslaved population in North America reaches 28,000 (23,000 of whom live in the South)
1708	Number of enslaved Africans in North and South Carolina exceeds that of European colonists in these states
1712	Revolt by enslaved Africans in New York City causes nine deaths and destroys buildings; 20 conspirators are killed or commit suicide South Carolina requires all slaves to carry a pass when traveling to another plantation
1715	North Carolina legally recognizes slavery, passes anti-miscegenation laws (preventing marriage or cohabitation between whites and blacks), and outlaws meetings between slaves
1724	Louisiana forbids slaves from carrying weapons and sentences slaves to death for striking or killing their owners
1730s	First Maroon War in Jamaica leads to British treaty that allows maroon communities of runaway enslaved Africans to exist as freed communities
1738	Fugitive slaves take refuge with the Creek tribe in Georgia and Spanish in Florida
1739	Stono Rebellion in South Carolina: 100 enslaved conspirators rebel unsuccessfully and are either killed in battle or hanged
1746	Lucy Terry's "Bars Fight" is the first poem written by an African American; it recounts the Deerfield Massacre, a battle between British locals and Native Americans in Massachusetts
1750	Enslaved African population in the American colonies reaches 236,000
1761	African-American inventor and astronomer Benjamin Banneker constructs the first wooden clock to keep precise time; later, he predicts the solar eclipse of 1789; drafts a survey blueprint of Washington, D.C.; and issues the first of ten almanacs (1791)
1770	African-American seafarer Crispus Attucks is the first colonist killed in the Boston Massacre
1773	Phyllis Wheatley becomes the first African American to publish a book: <i>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral</i> First known black Baptist church is founded in Silver Bluff, South Carolina; other congregations form in Georgia and Virginia over the next several years
1774	Massachusetts becomes the first American colony to ban importation of slaves
1775	African-American minutemen in the American Revolutionary War fight with distinction in the battles at Lexington, Concord, Ticonderoga, and Bunker Hill Pennsylvania Quakers organize the first abolition society in the United States
1776	Declaration of Independence is adopted, severing ties between the American colonies and Great Britain

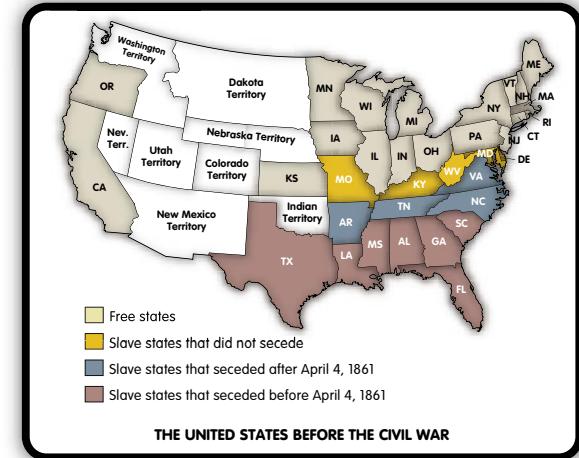
SLAVERY IN EARLY AMERICA 1777-1829

1777	Vermont becomes the first U.S. territory to abolish slavery Black slaves in Massachusetts petition the legislature for freedom based on the stated principles of the Declaration of Independence and military service in the Revolutionary War
1778	Virginia abolishes the slave trade
1779	Black Canadian fur-trader and pioneer Jean-Baptist-Point du Sable establishes a trading post that eventually becomes the city of Chicago
1780	Pennsylvania enacts a gradual-emancipation law
1781	Forty-four settlers, including twenty-six African Americans, found the city of Los Angeles
1783	Massachusetts abolishes slavery in the Quok Walker case Blacks are disenfranchised in Maryland; by 1789, all Southern states except Tennessee enact similar legislation
1784	Rhode Island and Connecticut pass gradual-emancipation laws
1787	U.S. Constitution is adopted, prohibiting the importation of slaves after 1808; declaring each slave to be three-fifths of one white, or free, person ("Three-Fifths Clause"), and demanding the return of fugitive slaves to their masters Richard Allen and Absalom Jones form the Free African Society , the first civil rights organization in the United States
1789	Freed slave Olaudah Equiano publishes his autobiography, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African</i>
1790	First U.S. census marks the African-American population at 757,208 (19.3 percent of the total population), of whom 59,557 are free
1791	Haitian revolutionary Toussaint-L'Overture leads a successful slave revolt in St. Domingue (present-day Haiti)
1792	A colony of 1200 black ex-slaves, formerly of Nova Scotia, settle in Freetown, Sierra Leone
1793	Eli Whitney's cotton gin greatly improves cotton production, stimulates Southern economies, and increases demand for slave labor U.S. Congress passes the first Fugitive Slave Law , which sanctions slave extradition and makes harboring a runaway slave a criminal offense
1794	U.S. Congress bans the exportation of slaves to foreign countries In Philadelphia, Rev. Richard Allen establishes the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and a day school for black children
1796	African Americans in Boston establish a mutual aid organization, the Boston African Society
1800	Total population of African Americans reaches 1 million
1804	New Jersey becomes the last Northern state to pass a manumission (emancipation) law
1801	Central Assembly of St. Domingue drafts a new constitution and appoints Toussaint L'Overture governor
1803	South Carolina reopens ports to African slave trade, using Latin America and the West Indies to satisfy labor demands in expanding cotton and rice markets
1804	Haiti becomes an independent country under Jean-Jacques Dessalines
1808	Federal law bans importation of African slaves; approximately 250,000 slaves are imported illegally until 1860
1810	Tom Molineaux, a former slave turned boxer, achieves international prominence
1812	African Americans serve in the War of 1812 as sailors and militia men Louisiana disenfranchises blacks; followed by Indiana (1816); Florida and Mississippi (1817); Illinois, Connecticut, and New England (1818); Alabama (1819); and Missouri (1821)
1815	Wealthy African-American shipping merchant Paul Cuffe starts campaign to resettle free blacks in West Africa; successfully transports 38 free blacks from the United States to Sierra Leone
1816	Richard Allen convenes a conference of black Methodists in Philadelphia to establish the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church , the first independent black denomination, and presides as bishop
1820	American Colonization Society charters the ship <i>Elizabeth</i> for an expedition to resettle 86 blacks and build Liberia as a black republic in West Africa
1821	Missouri Compromise allows Maine to enter the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state; also prohibits slavery in the territory of the Louisiana Purchase
1822	Denmark Vessey , a free African-American carpenter, organizes a slave revolt against an arsenal in Charleston, South Carolina; a house servant betrays the plot, resulting in the capture and hanging of Vessey and his followers
1823	Alexander Twilight becomes the first African-American college graduate, at Middlebury College in Vermont; Twilight later holds public office (see below)
1824	African-American actor Ira Aldridge begins a career in Europe; later debuts as Othello on the London stage (1833)
1827	State of New York abolishes slavery John B. Russwurm and Rev. Samuel E. Cornish publish the <i>Freedom Journal</i> , the first African-American newspaper in New York City
1829	White mobs attack African Americans in Cincinnati, Ohio, during a three-day race riot; approximately 1,000 blacks flee and resettle in Canada

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RISE OF THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT 1830–1859

1830	First National Negro Convention convenes in Philadelphia
1831	Nat Turner leads approximately 70 fellow slaves in a major slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia; some 60 whites are killed before several state forces suppress the uprising; Turner and his followers are hanged; Thomas R. Gray edits and publishes <i>The Confessions of Nat Turner</i>
1832	Abolitionists led by William Lloyd Garrison form the New England Anti-Slavery Society in Boston; Garrison expands this organization into the American Anti-Slavery Society the following year
1834	David Ruggles opens the first black bookstore and publishing company in New York City; he publishes the abolitionist pamphlet <i>The "Extinguisher" Extinguished</i>
1835	Free African Americans form a vigilance committee to assist fugitive slaves in New York City
1836	Alexander Twilight wins a seat on the Vermont legislature, thereby becoming the first African American elected to a public office
	Disenfranchisement of blacks continues: Arkansas (1836); Michigan (1837); Pennsylvania (1838); Texas (1845); Iowa (1846); New Jersey (1847); Wisconsin (1848); Minnesota (1858)
1837	First Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women meets in New York City; African Americans comprise 10 percent of membership
1838	David Ruggles edits and publishes the <i>Mirror of Liberty</i> , the first African-American periodical in New York City
1839	John G. Birney organizes the Liberty Party, the first U.S. antislavery political party, in Warsaw, New York
1840	Total African-American population reaches 2,873,648
1841	African-American orator, writer, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass delivers his first antislavery speech in Nantucket, Massachusetts
1843	African-American evangelist Sojourner Truth begins her abolitionist work
	Henry Highland Garnet delivers his famous "Call to Rebellion" speech, advocating armed resistance against slavery, at the National Negro Convention in Buffalo, New York
1845	Macon Allen, the first African American admitted to the bar, starts law practice in Massachusetts
	Frederick Douglass publishes <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> , the first of three autobiographies
1847	Frederick Douglass, Martin R. Delany and William C. Nell publish the <i>North Star</i> , an influential antislavery newspaper
1848	Antislavery politicians organize the Free Soil Party to oppose the extension of slavery into western territories
1849	Harriet Tubman escapes slavery in Maryland; later, using the Underground Railroad —a hidden network of people, places, and modes of transportation used to provide fugitive slaves safe passage to the North and Canada—she returns to the South 19 times to convey 300 slaves to freedom
1850	Compromise of 1850 admits California into the Union as a free state but also toughens the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act, granting federal officials authority to apprehend and return runaway slaves who escape to free states and paying a reward for these services
	Lucy Stanton Sessions becomes the first African-American woman to graduate from a four-year college, Oberlin College in Ohio
1851	Brazil outlaws the slave trade
1852	Publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's sentimental antislavery novel Uncle Tom's Cabin arouses sympathy for the abolitionist cause; it sells over 300,000 copies in the first year



1854 Rev. James A Healy becomes the first African American ordained a Catholic priest, at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France; later, Healy becomes the first black Catholic bishop

1857 U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that Scott cannot sue for his freedom while in a free state with his master, for a slave is the property of his or her slaveholder; this ruling denies citizenship to African Americans and extends the jurisdiction of slave-state laws to include the Northern states

1858 Abraham Lincoln gains national recognition as an antislavery candidate during his unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. Senate

1859 Harriet Wilson publishes the first African-American novel, *Our Nig, or Sketches from the Life of a Freed Black*. Militant white abolitionist John Brown, with a band of black and white rebels, unsuccessfully raids a federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia; Brown and others are hanged

THE CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, AND THE JIM CROW ERA 1860–1899

1860 After the election of antislavery President Abraham Lincoln, South Carolina secedes from the Union, followed by Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi, to form the **Confederate States of America**

1861 Civil War begins when Confederates fire on Union forces at Fort Sumter, South Carolina

1862 Congress bans slavery in Washington, D.C., and the territories and passes the **Second Confiscation Act**, which grants freedom to slaves whose masters support the Confederacy

A group of African Americans confer with President Abraham Lincoln, who voices support for **voluntary emigration** of African Americans to Africa and Central America

1863 **Emancipation Proclamation** frees all slaves in Confederate-held territories

Black troops of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment charge Fort Wagner in South Carolina

Wilberforce University in Ohio (founded in 1856) becomes the first college run by African-American educators when Bishop Daniel Payne purchases the school for the A.M.E. Church; he serves as the university's first president

1864 Congress repeals all Fugitive Slave laws and grants black Union troops pay equal to that of white troops

1865 Civil War ends with the defeat of the South

Congress ratifies the **Thirteenth Amendment** to abolish slavery in the U.S.

Congress establishes the Freedmen's Bureau to provide assistance to refugees and newly emancipated blacks

Establishment of major **black colleges and universities**: Atlanta University, Shaw University, and Virginia Union University (1865); Fisk University and Howard University (1866); Talladega College and Morgan State University (1867)

1866 Congress passes the Southern Homestead Act, which opens public lands in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Florida to settlers regardless of race

Civil Rights Act grants African Americans full U.S. citizenship

Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups begin terrorist campaigns against blacks and white Republicans

1867 Congress passes the **First Reconstruction Act**, which divides former Confederate states into five military districts under the command of army generals, requires districts to hold new elections for state offices, and grants voting rights for male citizens regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude; enforcement of the act gives African Americans the majority vote in most Southern states

1868 Congress ratifies the **Fourteenth Amendment**, which grants full civil liberties to African Americans

1870 Congress ratifies the **Fifteenth Amendment**, which grants voting rights regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude"; it does not extend this right to women

Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi becomes the first African American elected to the U.S. Senate; subsequent African Americans to be elected to Congress include Joseph H. Rainey (R-SC), Robert Brown Elliot (R-SC), Alonzo J. Ransier (R-SC), Benjamin S. Turner (R-AL), Robert C. DeLarge (R-SC), Josiah T. Walls (R-FL), Jefferson F. Long (R-GA)

1871 Fisk Jubilee Singers tour throughout the United States and Europe and popularize black spiritual music

1872 Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback becomes the first African American to serve as a state governor (interim governor of Louisiana)

Civil Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination in employment and establishes the right of African Americans to serve on juries

1876 Edward Alexander Bouchet becomes the first African American to receive a doctorate degree, in physics from Yale University

1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes removes all federal troops from Louisiana and South Carolina as **Reconstruction** comes to an end; by 1878, African-American Republican governors are ousted and African Americans disenfranchised via technicalities or newly enacted voting hurdles; the number of African-American representatives in Congress drops dramatically by 1881

1878 First migration of blacks, fleeing racial oppression in the South, to Kansas

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1881	Tennessee enacts the first of many Jim Crow laws to enforce racial segregation in the South; this first law mandates segregation on railroad cars
1882	Booker T. Washington founds the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama
1883	Approximately 50 African Americans are lynched across the U.S.; the number rises steadily for years afterward
1883	George Washington Williams publishes his <i>History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880</i>
1885	Cuban Giants become the first African-American professional baseball team
1886	Knights of Labor, the farmers, craft, and factory workers' union, reaches peak membership of 700,000; of these, 60,000 to 90,000 are African-American
1888	Princess-Regent Isabel abolishes slavery in Brazil
1889	Frederick Douglass serves as U.S. minister and consul general to Haiti
1891	Daniel Hale Williams establishes Chicago's Provident Hospital, the first hospital staffed and operated by African Americans; in 1893, Williams performs the world's first open-heart surgery
1892	Baltimore's <i>Afro-American</i> publication is founded
1894	Congress repeals the Enforcement Act, making it easier for states to disenfranchise black voters
1895	Booker T. Washington delivers his Atlanta Compromise speech, which calls on African Americans to accept segregation in return for economic advancement
1896	U.S. Supreme Court rules in <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> that "separate but equal" facilities are constitutional; this ruling enables proliferation of Jim Crow laws
1897	W.E.B. Du Bois and Rev. Alexander Crummell establish the American Negro Academy, the first institution to promote African-American literature, science, and art; writer, educator, and black women's rights activist Anna Julia Cooper is the only woman elected to membership
1898	John Merrick and associates found the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, setting off a boom of black-owned businesses in Durham, North Carolina
1899	National Afro-American Council calls for a day of fasting to protest lynchings and racial massacres

THE "NEW NEGRO" AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1900–1939

1900	First Pan-African Congress convenes in London to promote the liberation of colonized people; W.E.B. Du Bois serves as secretary
	Composers Scott Joplin and Eubie Blake pioneer ragtime music
1901	Booker T. Washington organizes the National Negro Business League
1903	W.E.B. Du Bois publishes The Souls of Black Folk
1905	Robert S. Abbott publishes the Chicago Defender , which becomes a major newspaper for African-American current events and opinion; it reaches a national circulation of 250,000 by 1929
1906	State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs incorporates Alpha Phi Alpha as the first black Greek letter fraternity, for undergraduates at Cornell University
1907	Alain Locke becomes the first African American to receive a Rhodes Scholarship
1909	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is created under the direction of W.E.B. Du Bois
1910	NAACP begins publishing Crisis magazine
1911	National Urban League is founded to train young African-American men and women as social workers and provide fellowships to students
c. 1915	Great Migration begins as African-Americans in large numbers begin to flee the socially repressive South in search of jobs in wartime industries and better social conditions in the North; between 1910 and 1930, one million blacks settle in Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; and New York City
1917	300,000 African Americans serve in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War I
1918	Cyril Briggs founds the African Blood Brotherhood , a radical black nationalist organization
1919	"Red Summer" in which race riots occur in twenty-six U.S. cities
	Marcus Garvey organizes and leads the first major black nationalist movement in the U.S., advocating separationism and racial purity
1920s	Decade of the Harlem Renaissance , a cultural flourishing of African-American visual artists, writers, musicians, and performers who garner recognition and access to white cultural institutions and patronage; the renaissance, also called the New Negro Movement , develops in Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City, and extends nationally
1923	Blues singer Bessie Smith records the hit song "Down Hearted Blues," which sells 800,000 copies
1924	U.S. Immigration Act restricts the number of persons of African descent, mainly from the West Indies, permitted to enter the country in favor of immigrants from Western Europe
1926	Historian Carter G. Woodson establishes "Negro History Week" to commemorate the achievements of African Americans
	Arthur Schomburg donates his personal collection of black literature to the New York Public Library's Division of Negro Literature; renamed the Schomburg Collection of Black Culture , it is considered one of the foremost repositories of black literary artifacts in the world
1930s	Economic effects of the Great Depression devastate the nation and African Americans in particular

ACTIVISM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA 1940–1969

1941	United States enters World War II; President Roosevelt prohibits racial discrimination within the defense industry
1944	African-American pastor and statesman Adam Clayton Powell begins an 11-term career in the U.S. House of Representatives
	Jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie begins a stint at the Onyx Club in New York City, where he pioneers the style of bebop jazz
1945	Ebony magazine is founded
1947	Jackie Robinson signs with the Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first African American to play for a major league baseball team
1950	African-American diplomat Ralph Bunche wins the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a U.N. mediator during the Arab-Israeli crisis in the Middle East
1952	First year since colonial times in which no lynchings are reported in the United States
1954	U.S. Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education verdict bans racial segregation in public schools and other public facilities
1955	Under the direction of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. , black citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, stage a bus boycott when commuter Rosa Parks is jailed for refusing to give up her seat to a white person on a crowded bus
1957	President Dwight D. Eisenhower orders 1,000 federal troops to enforce public school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas
1958	CBS airs Mike Wallace and Louis Lomax's five-part documentary <i>The Hate That Produced</i> , which gives the Nation of Islam and its spokesperson, Malcolm X , national exposure
1960	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded to coordinate youth-directed civil rights efforts in the South
1961	President Kennedy calls for an affirmative action program to establish equity in awarding government-backed contracts
1963	Police forces in Birmingham, Alabama, use high-powered hoses and dogs on peaceful civil rights marchers led by Martin Luther King Jr.; the event draws sympathy and support in the North for the civil rights cause
	Black civil rights activist and NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers is murdered at his home in Mississippi
	Martin Luther King Jr. gives his famous " I have a dream " speech before a crowd of more than 200,000 civil-rights protesters in the nonviolent March on Washington
	White supremacists bomb the Sixteenth Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four young girls
1964	Congress passes the Civil Rights Act , which establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and ratifies the Economic Opportunity Act, enabling blacks to benefit from Head Start and Upward Bound programs
	Martin Luther King Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize for his civil rights efforts
1965	Clashes between African-American residents and police in south-central Los Angeles ignite the catastrophic Watts Riots , the largest race-related disturbance in U.S. history
	Nation of Islam leader Malcolm X is assassinated while delivering a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, New York
1966	Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale found the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California; the organization offers numerous community aid programs and services to African Americans
	The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) espouse the concept of Black Power , which is articulated by Stokely Carmichael and other leaders
	African-American studies professor Maulana Karenga creates the holiday Kwanzaa , modeled after a traditional African harvest festival, to celebrate traditional African values in the United States; celebration of the holiday has since spread to other countries
1967	Senate confirms Thurgood Marshall as the first black justice ever to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court
1968	Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated while standing on the terrace of his hotel room in Memphis, Tennessee
1969	James Earl Ray is convicted of the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. and receives a 99-year prison sentence

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE

POST-CIVIL-RIGHTS CHALLENGES 1970–2004

1971	Rev. Jesse Jackson founds Operation PUSH, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that supports black empowerment and self-help
1973	Under mayors Tom Bradley, Maynard Jackson, and Coleman Young, the cities of Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Detroit each declare Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a holiday
1975	Harvard University establishes the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, one of the first major African-American studies programs
1977	The miniseries adaptation of Alex Haley's novel <i>Roots</i> , a saga about seven generations of African and African-American families, premieres on television to a record-setting number of viewers and sweeps the Emmy Awards
1979	Jesse Jackson meets with heads of state in the Middle East in an attempt to mediate an Arab-Israeli conflict
1980	Rap music emerges on the popular music scene with the Sugarhill Gang's <i>Rapper's Delight</i>
1981	Solidarity Day march of civil rights and labor activists draws 300,000 in Washington, D.C., to protest President Reagan's conservative stance on affirmative action and school desegregation
1983	Guion S. Bluford Jr. becomes the first African-American astronaut to orbit the Earth as a member of the space shuttle <i>Challenger</i> 's crew
1984	Vanessa Williams is crowned the first black Miss America
1984	Jesse Jackson makes his first bid for the presidency and receives 3.5 million votes in the Democratic primary; his second bid garners 7 million votes in 1988
1984	NBC's sitcom <i>The Cosby Show</i> debuts and wins acclaim for its groundbreaking, positive portrayal of an upper-middle-class black family
1989	Gen. Colin Powell serves as the first black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
1989	David Dinkins becomes New York City's first black mayor
1990	South African civil rights leader Nelson Mandela is released from prison after three decades of incarceration
1991	Clarence Thomas is confirmed as the second African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court
1992	Violent riots erupt in Los Angeles in reaction to the acquittal of four white LAPD officers who beat black motorist Rodney King
1992	Carol Moseley-Braun becomes the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate
1993	President Clinton appoints four African-Americans to cabinet positions: Ron Brown as secretary of commerce, Mike Espy as secretary of agriculture, Hazel O' Leary as secretary of energy, and Jesse Brown as secretary of veterans' affairs
1993	African-American novelist Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize in Literature
1995	Million Man March of African-American men, led by Nation of Islam head minister Louis Farrakhan, gathers more than 500,000 African-American men to Washington, D.C.
1995	Los Angeles district court acquits former NFL football star O.J. Simpson of the dual homicide of his ex-wife and her friend; the verdict polarizes the nation along racial lines
1996	California voters approve Proposition 209, which prohibits the state government from pursuing affirmative-action policies
1998	Government statistics reveal that the HIV/AIDS virus disproportionately affects the African-American community
2000	After 37 years, Thomas E. Blanton and Bobby Frank Cherry are charged for the murder of four African-American girls in the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama
2003	U.S. Supreme Court rules in <i>Grutter v. Bollinger</i> that the system of awarding points for race in undergraduate admissions is unconstitutional

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN EDUCATION

1804	Lemuel Haynes receives an honorary master's degree from Middlebury College in Vermont
1823	Alexander Twilight earns a bachelor's degree from Middlebury
1837	Cheney State Training School in Pennsylvania is founded as the first major black college or university
1849	Charles Reason becomes the first African-American professor at a predominantly white university, teaching French, Greek, Latin, and mathematics at New York Central College
1850	Lucy Stanton Sessions becomes the first African-American woman to complete a collegiate course of study, at Oberlin College in Ohio
1862	Mary Jane Patterson is the first African-American woman to receive a bachelor's degree, from Oberlin College
1865–1869	Several major black colleges and universities are founded: Shaw University (SC), Atlanta University (GA), Virginia Union University (VA), Bowie State College (MD), Fisk University (TN), Howard University (DC), Hampton Institute (VA), Clark College (GA)
1874	Edward Alexander Bouchet becomes the first African American inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society; in 1876, he becomes the first African American to receive a doctorate degree (in physics, from Yale University)
1895	W.E.B. Du Bois earns a doctorate degree from Harvard University; the next year, Harvard Historical Studies publishes Du Bois's dissertation, <i>Suppression of the African Slave Trade</i>
1904	Mary McLeod Bethune establishes the Daytona Normal and Industrial School in Florida, later renamed Bethune-Cookman College
1906	John Hope becomes the first African-American president of a university, at Morehouse College in Georgia
1907	Alain Locke becomes the first African-American Rhodes Scholar
1915	Historian Carter G. Woodson establishes the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and edits the <i>Journal of Negro History</i> , which first appears in 1916
1921	Several African-American women earn doctorate degrees from U.S. institutions: Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander (University of Pennsylvania, economics); Eva Dykes (Radcliffe College, English); Georgiana Simpson (University of Chicago, German)
1922	Lucy Diggs Stowe, cofounder of the African-American sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha, serves as dean of women at Howard University in Washington, D.C.
1926	Mordecai W. Johnson becomes the first African-American president of Howard University
1943	Frederick Douglass Patterson, president of the Tuskegee Institute, establishes the United Negro College Fund to provide financial support to black students who wish to attend college
1962	Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett attempts to prevent James Meredith from becoming the first black student at the University of Mississippi, but the U.S. Supreme Court rules in Meredith's favor, and he enrolls amid rioting
1963	Alabama Governor George Wallace physically bars Vivian Malone and James Hood from registering at the University of Alabama; ultimately, the National Guard is called in to accompany the two students to enrollment
1968–1969	African-American students wage protests to demand changes in curriculum, admissions, and hiring of black faculty on several college campuses, including Brandeis University, Trinity College, Columbia University, Ohio State University, and Cornell University
1987	Scholar and critic Henry Louis Gates Jr. publishes <i>Figures in Black</i> , a seminal work that sets forth his theories about the interpretation of black literature; the next year, he articulates these theories further in <i>The Signifying Monkey</i>

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN

SCIENCES AND PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

1783	Former slave James Derham buys his freedom from his physician slave owner, who trains him as a physician; Derham goes on to open his own medical practice in New Orleans
1822	James Hall becomes the first known African American to graduate from an American college of medicine (Medical College of Maine)
1843	Macon B. Allen becomes the first African-American to practice law; in 1845, he passes the Massachusetts bar exam and is formally admitted to the bar
1846	Businessman William Leidesdorff opens the first hotel in San Francisco and goes on to become the first African-American self-made millionaire
1854	John V. DeGrasse becomes the first African American admitted to a medical professional organization (the Massachusetts Medical Society)
1864	Rebecca Lee Crumpler graduates from New England Female Medical College and becomes the first African-American woman physician; others to follow include Rebecca Cole (Women's Medical College, Pennsylvania, 1867) and Susan McKinney (New York Medical College, 1870)
1865	John S. Rock is certified by the U.S. Supreme Court and becomes the first African American to be admitted to practice law before the Court
1867	Robert Tanner Freeman becomes the first African American to graduate from an American school of dentistry (Harvard University)
1870	Jonathan Jasper Wright becomes the first African-American judge at the State Supreme Court level when the South Carolina General Assembly elects him to the South Carolina Supreme Court
1872	Macon B. Allen becomes the first African-American judge at the municipal level
1872	Charlotte Ray graduates from Howard University Law School and becomes the first female African-American lawyer
1879	Lewis Latimer invents the electric filament bulb; goes on to invent the carbon filament for electric lamps (1882) and publish a work on electric lighting systems (1890)
1890	Ida Gray Nelson Rollins graduates from the University of Michigan Dental School and becomes the first black woman to earn a dental degree in the United States
1893	Dr. Daniel Hale Williams performs the first successful human open-heart surgery, at Chicago's Provident Hospital
1906	Madame C.J. Walker (born Sarah Breedlove) opens a black hair-care business in Detroit and goes on to become the first female African-American millionaire
1914	Plant scientist George Washington Carver revolutionizes Southern agriculture by publishing his research on peanuts and sweet potatoes, saving cotton farmers whose crops had failed because of pests and exhausted soil; later, Carver speaks before the U.S. Congress (1921) and serves in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (1935)
1915	Marine biologist E.E. Just becomes the first recipient of the NAACP's annual Springarn Medal, which recognizes achievements by African Americans
1937	William H. Hastie becomes the first African-American federal judge when he is confirmed to the Federal District Court of the Virgin Islands; in 1949, under President Truman, Hastie becomes the first African American on the U.S. Court of Appeals
1939	Jane Matilda Bolin becomes the first female African-American judge when New York City Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia appoints her to the city court of domestic relations
1940	Dr. Charles Drew develops a method of processing and storing plasma that becomes crucial in conducting blood transfusions
1966	Constance Baker Motley becomes the first African-American woman to be named to the federal bench when she is confirmed as U.S. District Judge in southern New York

1967	Thurgood Marshall becomes the first African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court when the Senate confirms him after President Johnson's nomination
1978	Guion S. Bluford Jr., Frederick D. Gregory, and Ronald McNair are the first blacks admitted to the NASA astronaut training program; Bluford serves as a mission specialist in the space shuttle program; McNair later loses his life serving as physicist on the ill-fated <i>Challenger</i> mission in 1986
1986	Oprah Winfrey becomes the first black woman to host a nationally syndicated television talk show; she goes on to purchase HARPO Productions in 1989, becoming the first black woman to own a television production company and one of the wealthiest women in the world
1987	Mae Jemison joins NASA, becoming the first black woman to go into space; she serves as mission specialist on the space shuttle <i>Discovery</i> in 1991 and the space shuttle <i>Endeavor</i> in 1992

African Americans in Politics

1836	Alexander Twilight becomes the first African-American elected to public office when he wins a seat on the Vermont legislature; in 1845, William Leidesdorff becomes the second when he is named sub-consul to Yerba Buena, part of the Mexican territory that would later become San Francisco
1866	Edward G. Walker and Charles L. Mitchell become the first blacks elected to a U.S. state legislature (Massachusetts House of Representatives)
1868	John Willis Menard of Louisiana is the first African American to be elected to Congress, but Congressman James A. Garfield contests the election by claiming it is "too early to admit a Negro to the U.S. Congress"; the following year, Menard pleads his own case but is denied his elected position
1869	Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett becomes the first official African-American diplomat when President Grant names him minister of Haiti
1870	Mississippi legislature elects Hiram Rhoades Revels to be the first African-American U.S. Senator, filling Jefferson Davis's unexpired term
1872	Black delegates Robert B. Elliott, Joseph H. Rainey, and John R. Lynch deliver addresses at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia John R. Lynch wins election to the U.S. House of Representatives (R-Mississippi)
1874	Blanche K. Bruce becomes the first African American to serve in the U.S. Senate (R-Mississippi) and serves as a chairman of the Select Committee to Investigate the Freeman's Savings and Trust Company
1877	Under President Hayes, Frederick Douglass serves as the first African-American U.S. Marshal of Washington, D.C.
1938	Crystal Bird Fauset becomes the first African-American woman to be elected to a state legislature (Pennsylvania House of Representatives)
1953	Hulan Jack is sworn in as Manhattan borough president, becoming the first African American to hold a major elected position in a major U.S. city
1954	Charles Mahoney becomes the first African-American delegate to serve on the U.S. delegation to the United Nations
1955	E. Frederic Morrow becomes the first African American to hold an executive position in the White House when President Eisenhower names him administrative officer for special projects
1958	Clifton R. Wharton Sr. becomes the first African American to head a U.S. embassy in Europe when he is confirmed as ambassador to Romania; three years later, he is named ambassador to Norway
1961	Robert C. Weaver becomes the first African American to head a major U.S. government agency when he is chosen as administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency
1964	Constance Baker Motley is the first African-American woman elected to the New York State Senate; she becomes Manhattan borough president in 1965 and, later, a federal district court judge
1966	Robert C. Weaver becomes the first African-American cabinet member (secretary of housing and urban development under President Johnson) Andrew Brimmer becomes the first African-American governor of the Federal Reserve Board (nominated by President Johnson)
1968	Shirley Chisholm is the first African-American woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York)
1973	Maynard Jackson is elected mayor of Atlanta, becoming the first African American to be elected as mayor of a major Southern city
1977	Patricia R. Harris becomes the first African-American woman to hold a position on the U.S. cabinet (secretary of housing and urban development under President Carter) Andrew Young becomes the first African-American U.S. ambassador to the U.N. (nominated by President Carter)
1983	Harold Washington becomes the first black mayor of Chicago
1984	Rev. Jesse Jackson mounts a high-profile campaign to become the Democratic candidate for president; the nomination eventually goes to Walter Mondale of Minnesota
1988	Colin Powell is the first African-American to serve as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff
1989	David Dinkins becomes the first black mayor of New York City
1990	Washington, D.C., voters elect lawyer Eleanor Holmes Norton as their nonvoting representative in the U.S. House of Representatives
1991	After controversial confirmation hearings, Clarence Thomas becomes the second African American ever to serve as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court
1992	Carol Moseley-Brown (D-Illinois) becomes the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate
2001	Newly elected President Bush appoints Gen. Colin Powell secretary of state and Dr. Condoleezza Rice national security advisor

African Americans in the Arts

1760	Poet Jupiter Hammon , an ex-slave living in New York, publishes his first poem, "An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential [sic] Cries"
1773	First major African-American author and poet Phyllis Wheatley publishes her collection <i>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral</i>
1821	African Grove Company, the first all-African-American acting troupe, debuts in New York City, performing Shakespeare plays and popular melodramas; in one of the Company's productions, James Hewlett becomes the first African-American to play Othello
1853	William Wells Brown , the first African-American novelist, publishes <i>Clootie</i> ; later works include the play <i>The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom</i> (1858) and the non-fiction work <i>The Rising Son</i> (1873)
1896	Production of John W. Isham's <i>Oriental America</i> becomes the first Broadway show with an all-African-American company
1898	First African-American musical comedy, Bob Cole's <i>A Trip to Coontown</i> , is directed and managed by blacks and runs for three seasons in New York City
1899	Pianist and composer Scott Joplin pioneers the ragtime style with the "Maple Leaf Rag"; he goes on to write more than 40 ragtime pieces, including the popular favorite "The Entertainer"
1900	James Weldon Johnson writes the poem "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which goes on to become an unofficial black national anthem; Johnson's later works include the novel <i>Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> and the collection of verse sermons <i>God's Trombones</i>
1902	Jazz pianist Jelly Roll Morton begins performing in the Storyville district of New Orleans
1904	"Mother of the blues" Ma Rainey begins touring as a vaudeville singer
1910	Bert Williams, the first major African-American male theater star, becomes the first black man to appear in an otherwise all-white Broadway production, the Ziegfeld <i>Follies</i>
1912	W.C. Handy 's "Memphis Blues," the first published blues song, goes on sale Pioneer black filmmaker Bill Foster directs the comedy <i>The Railroad Porter</i> , the first major African-American film
1914	Sam Lucas becomes the first African American to star in a full-length Hollywood film when he portrays Tom in the film adaptation of <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
1915	Lincoln Motion Picture Company, the first African-American movie production company, is founded in Los Angeles
1919	Oscar Micheaux, the first African-American independent filmmaker, releases his film <i>The Homesteaders</i>
1920	Charles Gilpin earns critical acclaim for his title performance in Eugene O'Neill's <i>The Emperor Jones</i> at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York City
1921	Langston Hughes 's first published poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," appears in <i>Crisis</i> magazine Ragtime composer Eubie Blake 's <i>Shuffle Along</i> is one of the first musicals to be written, directed, and produced by African Americans
1923	First Broadway play written by an African American, Willis Richardson 's <i>The Chip Woman's Fortune</i> , opens
1924	Florence Mills , the first major African-American female theater star, stars in the New York production of <i>Dixie to Broadway</i>
1925	Dancer and singer Josephine Baker begins performing in <i>La Revue Nègre</i> at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris; she goes on to become a popular and provocative cabaret star Jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong begins work on his <i>Hot Five</i> and <i>Hot Seven</i> recordings, which cement his reputation as a master jazz musician
1931	Jazz vocalist Billie Holiday lands her first singing work in a Harlem club; she records her first songs two years later
1933	Caterina Jarboro becomes the first African American to perform with a major American opera company when she is featured in a Chicago Opera Company production of Verdi's <i>Aida</i> at the New York Hippodrome
1934	Harlem's Apollo Theater hosts its first Amateur Night, which goes on to launch the careers of many important African-American performance artists
1935	Bandleader Count Basie assembles his nine-piece band and goes on to become one of the most influential figures in big-band jazz
1937	Zora Neale Hurston 's novel <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> is published
1938	Jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald has her first hit; she goes on to record hundreds of songs and tour internationally with numerous jazz greats
1940	Hattie McDaniel becomes the first African-American ever to receive an Academy Award, for her supporting role as Mammy in <i>Gone With the Wind</i>
1941	Richard Wright 's novel <i>Native Son</i> becomes a bestseller; Wright later receives similar acclaim for his memoir, <i>Black Boy</i> (1945)
1942	Actress Lena Horne moves to Los Angeles to pursue a film career
1943	Paul Robeson stars in a Broadway production of <i>Othello</i> that sets the all-time record for a Broadway run of a Shakespeare play
1945	Bandleader and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie , pianist Thelonious Monk , and alto saxophonist Charlie Parker pioneer the style of bop jazz Swing musician and vocalist Nat King Cole becomes the first African American to have his own radio show, which runs for two years on NBC Radio; later, he becomes the first African American to have his own network television show, <i>The Nat King Cole Show</i> , which airs on NBC
1949	Jazz trumpeter and composer Miles Davis releases his album <i>Birth of the Cool</i>
1950	Gwendolyn Brooks becomes the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize, awarded for her book of poetry <i>Annie Allen</i>
1951	Blues guitarist B.B. King records "Three O'Clock Blues," his first major hit
1952	Ralph Ellison wins the National Book Award for his novel <i>Invisible Man</i>
1953	James Baldwin 's first novel, <i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> , is published

1954	Tap dancer Gregory Hines makes his Broadway debut; he goes on to star in many films and plays and contributes to a major rebirth in American tap dance
1955	Marian Anderson becomes the first African American to be signed by the Metropolitan Opera, with her performance as Ulrica in Verdi's <i>A Masked Ball</i> Dorothy Dandridge is the first African-American woman to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress, for her role in <i>Carmen Jones</i>
1956	Singer, dancer, and actor Sammy Davis Jr. debuts both on Broadway (<i>Mr. Wonderful</i>) and film (<i>The Benny Goodman Story</i>)
1957	Soprano Leontyne Price , the first African-American opera singer to win international renown, debuts with the San Francisco Opera
1958	In New York City, choreographer Alvin Ailey establishes the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, which goes on to become world-renowned
1959	Singer Ray Charles has his first million-copy hit single with "What I'd Say"
1960	Lorraine Hansberry 's <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> becomes the first play by a black writer to win the New York Drama Critics' Circle award and the first play by a black woman to be produced on Broadway
1964	Sidney Poitier becomes the first African-American to win an Academy Award for Best Actor, for his performance in <i>Lilies of the Field</i>
1965	The Autobiography of Malcolm X becomes a major bestseller Bill Cosby becomes the first black star of a network television show, NBC's / <i>Spy</i>
1967	Pearl Bailey headlines an all-black Broadway production of <i>Hello, Dolly!</i> that runs for two years in New York and then goes on a lengthy national tour
1968	Henry Lewis becomes the first African American to serve as musical director of an American orchestra (the New Jersey Symphony) James Earl Jones wins a Tony award for his role in the Broadway production of the boxing drama <i>The Great White Hope</i>
1969	African-American soprano Jessye Norman makes her opera debut in Berlin, in Wagner's <i>Tannhäuser</i> Filmmaker Gordon Parks 's <i>The Learning Tree</i> , the first film directed by an African American for a major movie studio, is released; Parks goes on to direct <i>Shaft</i> (1971)
1970	The Jackson 5 have four consecutive number one hits on the pop charts
1972	R&B pioneer Stevie Wonder releases his hit album <i>Talking Book</i>
1976	Alex Haley publishes his novel <i>Roots</i> , which becomes a hit TV miniseries in 1977
1977	<i>Song of Solomon</i> brings Toni Morrison attention as a major literary talent; she goes on to further critical success with <i>Beloved</i> (1987) and the Nobel Prize for Literature (1993)
1982	Alice Walker 's novel <i>The Color Purple</i> receives wide critical praise Michael Jackson wins eight Grammy awards for his album <i>Thriller</i>
1984	The Cosby Show debuts on NBC; it runs for eight seasons
1986	Playwright August Wilson wins the Pulitzer Prize for <i>Fences</i> ; he goes on to win another Pulitzer for <i>The Piano Lesson</i> (1990)
1990	Denzel Washington wins an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in <i>Glory</i> , a retelling of the story of the black 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War
1992	Terry McMillan publishes her novel <i>Waiting to Exhale</i> , which is acclaimed for its portrayal of independent black women; the film adaptation (1995) is a major hit
2002	Denzel Washington and Halle Berry win Academy Awards for Best Actor and Best Actress for their respective roles in <i>Training Day</i> and <i>Monster's Ball</i>

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPORTS

1875	Oliver Lewis, the first major African-American jockey, wins the first-ever running of the Kentucky Derby
1878	Bud Fowler becomes the first African American to play professional baseball, for an all-white team in New Castle, Pennsylvania
1890	First African-American world champion boxer, George Dixon , wins the title by defeating Nunc Wallace
1892	First African-American college football game is played, between Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith University) and Livingstone College
1908	Jack Johnson becomes the first African-American heavyweight-boxing champion, defeating Tommy Burns
1909	Lincoln University, Virginia Union University, Hampton Institute, and Wilberforce University field the first African-American college basketball teams
1917	First African Americans to win the American Tennis Association championship are Tally Holmes (men's title) and Lucy Stone (women's title)
1919	Fritz Pollard begins playing for the Akron Indians of the American Professional Football League, becoming the first black professional football player
1924	DeHart Hubbard becomes the first African American to win an Olympic gold medal, in the long jump at the Paris games
1936	Jesse Owens wins four track-and-field gold medals at the Olympic Games
1937	"Brown bomber" Joe Louis wins the world heavyweight boxing title, which he holds until his retirement in 1949
1942	Pitcher Satchel Paige leads the Kansas City Monarchs to their fourth consecutive Negro American League baseball championship
1947	Jackie Robinson joins the Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first African-American major league baseball player; goes on to become the first black man enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame (1962) Don Barksdale of UCLA becomes the first African American to be selected for All-American college basketball honors
1950	Chuck Cooper becomes the first black man drafted by an NBA basketball team (Boston Celtics); later that year, Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton becomes the first black man to sign an NBA contract (New York Knicks), and Earl Lloyd becomes the first black man to play in an NBA game (Washington Capitols)

1956	Althea Gibson is the first African American to win a major tennis title, the French Open; the next year, she becomes the first African American to win the Wimbledon championship
1957	Charles Sifford becomes the first African American to win a major professional golf tournament, the Long Beach Open
1961	Ernest Davis wins the Heisman Trophy for college football player of the year, the first black man to do so
1962	John "Buck" O'Neil becomes the first black coach of a Major League baseball team, the Chicago Cubs
1964	Cassius Clay upsets Sonny Liston to win the world heavyweight boxing championship; later that year, Clay becomes a member of the Nation of Islam and changes his name to Muhammad Ali
1966	Bill Russell becomes the first African American to coach an NBA basketball team, the Boston Celtics
1967	Defensive back Emlen Tunnell of the New York Giants is the first African American to be inducted to the Football Hall of Fame
1968	Arthur Ashe is the first black man to win the U.S. Open tennis championship
1972	Baseball great Roberto Clemente is killed in a plane crash
1974	Atlanta Braves outfielder Hank Aaron hits his 755th home run, breaking Babe Ruth's all-time record, which had stood for four decades
1975	Lee Elder becomes the first African American to be invited to play in the Masters Tournament in golf
1984	Runner Carl Lewis wins four gold medals at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles; he goes on to win five more, in the 1988, 1992, and 1996 games
1998	NBA basketball star Michael Jordan wins his sixth NBA championship with the Chicago Bulls
2000	Sisters Venus Williams and Serena Williams emerge as major figures in women's tennis
2001	Tiger Woods becomes the first professional golfer of any race to hold all four major golf championships (Masters, PGA, U.S. Open, and British Open) at the same time

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN RELIGION

1773	First known black Baptist church is founded in Silver Bluff, South Carolina; other congregations soon form in Georgia and Virginia
1780	Lemuel Haynes begins to preach at a Congregational church in Connecticut, making him the first African-American minister of a predominantly white congregation
1794	First African-American church congregations in the North are established: the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas and the Bethel A.M.E. Church , both in Philadelphia
1816	Richard Allen becomes the first African-American bishop when he is elected at the general convention of the A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia
1875	James Healy is elected the first African-American Roman Catholic bishop; presides over the diocese of Portland, Maine
1964	Prince Taylor becomes the first black Methodist bishop to head a predominantly white district, in New Jersey Dr. Edler Garnet Hawkins becomes the first African-American moderator of the United Presbyterian Church
1969	Thomas Kilgore Jr. becomes the first African-American president of the predominantly white American Baptist Convention
1970	John M. Burgess is installed as the first black bishop to head an Episcopal diocese in the United States (Massachusetts)
1972	W. Sterling Cary becomes the first black president of the National Council of Churches
1976	Dr. Joseph H. Evans is elected the first African-American president of the predominantly white Church of Christ

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MILITARY

1775	Black soldier Salem Poor is cited for valor at the Battle of Bunker Hill
1863	Sgt. William H. Carney of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment becomes the first African American to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, for valor during the attack on Fort Wagner, South Carolina
1870	Robert Elliot becomes the first African-American general when he takes over as commanding general for the South Carolina National Guard
1877	Henry O. Flipper is the first African-American graduate from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York
1940	Benjamin O. Davis Sr. becomes the first African-American general in the U.S. Army, appointed by President Roosevelt; in 1945, he is the first African American to head an armed force in the United States when he is named commander of the forces at Godman Field, Kentucky
1949	Wesley A. Brown is the first African American to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland
1971	Samuel Lee Gravely Jr. is appointed the first African-American admiral in the U.S. Navy
1975	Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. is promoted as the first four-star general in the U.S. Armed Forces (Air Force) and is named commander-in-chief of the North American Air Defense Command
1979	Hazel Johnson is appointed to brigadier general in the U.S. Army, making her the first African-American woman to attain the general rank