

**BLACK  
HISTORY IS  
AMERICAN  
HISTORY**

General

Membership Notice

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the  
month

At the

Senior Citizen's  
Center

6:30pm start time

**Tentative 2017 1st  
Quarter Schedule**

**February 18**

Black History Day

**March 18**

Women's History  
Month Day

**April 8**

Baseball Day with  
Marge Villa

# Adobe Dust

JUAN MATIAS SANCHEZ  
ADOBE MUSEUM



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 7

## Message From the President—Chris Vargas

Black History Month recognizes and observes accomplishments by African-Americans in the United States of America. It started off as *Negro History Week* in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a pioneer of Black history in the early 20th century. *Negro History Week* was expanded to Black History Month in 1976 by President Gerald Ford. My interest in Black history began many years ago after reading about the Battle of the Crater, Petersburg, VA (July 30, 1864) where *U.S. Colored Troops* suffered heavy casualties. When I spoke with elementary, middle, high school, college students and teachers, it was always a pleasure to talk about a subject that was near and dear to my heart and intellectual curiosity. One of my opening statements during my talks was that *Black History is American History*. To share such a rich part of American history covering subjects ranging from science, the military, education, politics, civil rights, religion, the law, music, literature and sports was to cover a large chunk of time in our country's history. The Montebello Historical Society will observe and commemorate Black History Month on February 18, 2017 with an exhibit reflecting the rich and complex history of African-Americans through the eyes of the Buffalo Soldiers, Tuskegee Airmen, the 761st tank battalion during WWII, 19th century educators and early Civil Rights leaders, such as Ida B. Wells and much more at the Juan Matias Sanchez adobe. Please come visit the adobe and support the Black History exhibit and the Montebello Historical Society.

Thank you and persevere.

—Chris Vargas



Carter G. Woodson



761 Tank Battalion



Ida B. Wells

**Adobe Dust**

946 N Adobe Ave, Montebello, CA 90640 - <http://www.montebellohistoricalsociety.org>

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LYNCH LAW  
IN ALL  
ITS PHASES



Miss IDA B. WELLS.

Price, . . . Fifteen Cents.

THE NEW YORK AGE PRINT.  
1892.



## Ida B. Wells-Barnett: Crusader of Civil Rights for Black Americans in 19th and 20th century

Imagine, if you will, being a Black woman in late 19th century in the heavily segregated Southern United States of America and playing a part as a leader in the early *Civil Rights Movement*. Ida B. Wells would be that Black woman during this tumultuous period of history in our country. Wells is considered one the pioneers of the civil rights movement in the United State of America because of her never ending fight for equality and civil rights for Black Americans. Wells, in my view, is primarily responsible for informing our nation and Europe of the wicked lynching of Black Americans in the South through her investigative journalism and speaking tours.

Ida B. Wells was born a slave in Holy Springs, Mississippi in 1862 and would lose her parents to the 1878 yellow fever epidemic. The young Wells would start a teaching job and take responsibility for her younger siblings. On May 4, 1884, Wells only 22 years old was in Tennessee traveling on a train in the lady's first-class ladies car section when she was ordered to go to the smoking car section (*Jim Crow* section). She refused and was dragged off the train. Wells filed a lawsuit and the local circuit court granted her a \$500 award. The railroad appealed to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which reversed the lower court's ruling in 1887. Her response to the reversal was: *"I felt so disappointed because I had hoped such great things from my suit for my people...O God, is there no...justice in this land for us?"* Wells was not deterred because of this setback and continued her fight for justice and equality. She would write for several newspapers - e.g., Evening Star in Washington D.C. – where she served in an editorial position. In 1889, Wells became part owner of The Free Speech and Headlight, an anti-segregation newspaper. She also wrote on race issues for The Living Way weekly newspaper. In 1889, Wells wrote in the Free Speech and Headlight newspaper about a lynching of three Black men, one of whom was a friend (Thomas Moss) and owner a grocery store - Peoples Grocery, urging blacks to leave Memphis altogether. She wrote: "There is, therefore, only one thing left to do; save our money and leave a town which will neither protect our lives and property, nor give us a fair trial in the courts, but takes us out and murders us in cold blood when accused by white persons." Investigative journalism would be the next step for Wells where she would research and document lynching's and their causes. Her writings about the causes of lynching's upset local whites in Memphis that when Wells was in Philadelphia the offices of the Free Speech and Headlight that she wrote for was destroyed by a white mob.

In 1893, Wells would tour Europe in her campaign for justice, equal rights and inform Europeans of the lynching in America. Her European audiences were shocked to learn about the rate of violence against black people in the U.S. Wells was also one of the co-founders to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

Ida B. Well's spent her entire adult life advocating for justice, equal rights for Blacks and woman and writing and speaking about it in newspapers at home and in Europe. She was a crusader who put her life at risk when many remained silent about the injustices in our country.

-Chris Vargas

# First African-American pilot a war hero during WWI by the US Air Force

After watching his father narrowly escape a lynching in early 20th century Georgia, Eugene Bullard would escape the confines of racial tensions and a segregated country to become the first African-American combat pilot and one of the first African-American heroes of World War I.

Bullard, who grew up in Columbus, Ga., as one of 10 children of a former slave, left his hometown as a teenager, stowing away on a ship bound for Scotland and moved to London to fulfill his dreams.

Before the war began, Bullard moved to Paris where he made a reputation for himself as a professional boxer. At the start of the war in 1914, Bullard enlisted in the French Foreign Legion where he was assigned to the 170th Infantry Regiment. Nicknamed the "Swallows of Death," he and his unit would see heavy action, and during the battle of Verdun, Bullard was wounded twice. He was then sent to a Parisian hospital to recuperate for the next six months.

Bullard was promoted to the rank of corporal and was awarded the Croix de Guerre, and other war-time medals, for his bravery during combat. While still in the hospital, Bullard accepted a bet that he couldn't get into the flying corps and in October of 1916 arrived at French gunnery school. A month later he talked his way into pilot training and earned his pilot's license to become the first African-American aviator.

He reached the front lines as a pilot in August of 1917 flying more than 20 sorties in a Spad VII fighter biplane, with two unconfirmed kills to his credit. After a disagreement with a French officer he was eventually removed from the French air force and spent the remainder of the war back with his infantry regiment.

After the war, Bullard remained in France, got married, had two daughters, and purchased a bar on the north side of Paris. He was still living in Paris at the outbreak of World War II, and worked with French Resistance forces to spy on German troops who would patronize his bar. Considered too old to join the French army, Bullard found a way to escape from occupied France, and returned to the U.S. aboard a Red Cross ship in 1940.

In 1954, Bullard, along with two other French veterans, were invited by then French President Charles De Gaulle to light the flame of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. In 1959, he was honored with the Knight of the Legion of Honor.

When he returned to the U.S., he was never recognized as a war hero, and died in relative obscurity and poverty in Flushing, Queens, New York in 1961. While he never realized his dream of becoming a pilot in the U.S. military, he was finally recognized posthumously as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force in 1994.

- US Air Force



# Charlotte Forten Grimke: Activist and Educator

The National Women's History Museum houses resources from a number of historical genres regarding the female trailblazers of America one of which Charlotte Forten Grimke (1837-1914) deserves recognition here. Charlotte remains exceptional precisely because she was born a free woman of African-American descent into a family of anti-slavery activists in Pennsylvania. Her grandfather, James Forten Sr. was an abolitionist and her mother, Mary Woods Forten belonged to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.

She attended a primarily white grammar school and later the Normal School in Salem, Massachusetts. As noted by her biographers she was "the first African-American teacher to be hired in Massachusetts, she probably was the first in the world to teach white students." In 1862 several African-Americans were liberated by Union Soldiers in the region of South Carolina, so Charlotte decided to teach them about the anti-slavery cause which she and her family had always been passionate about. The "Atlantic Monthly" published her article "Life on the Sea Island" where she recounts her relationship with her students and the need to establish more schools in the south particularly in the islands off of South Carolina.

Due to poor health, Charlotte returned to Philadelphia and took a position as clerk for the Philadelphia branch of the U.S. Treasury Dept. There she met her husband, Francis Grimke, and they were married in 1878 when Charlotte was 41 years old. Francis was a Presbyterian minister and the nephew of famed abolitionists and feminists Sarah Grimke and Angelina Grimke Weld. Charlotte's only child, Theodora Cornelia, died in infancy. Her final years were spent with her husband in Washington D.C. where they continued to support the abolitionist cause.

Charlotte's greatest contribution to the world of literature were her many journals. She was a prolific writer since childhood and being well-educated was able to record her thoughts and opinions freely. Her later journals showed her support for the women's rights movement as well as anti-slavery. She was in fact the leading African-American feminist of her era. Even after her death in 1914, she inspired many activists such as Maria Weston Chapman and William Wells Brown and their many followers. She was one of the earliest founders of the civil rights movement, promoting equality from her early days as a teacher to her political involvement upon retirement. Her journals are still read today and offer scholars and students a well-recorded picture of the African-American struggle as well as the feminist cause. Charlotte Forten Grimke stood for freedom her entire life and well should she be remembered.

Information referenced : Young and Brave: Girls Changing History, National Women's History Museum.

Barbara Garcia-Guzman

# Afro Latinos in the New World

Africans have been in the New World from the start of Spanish Colonization. Hernandez Cortez brought the Black soldier Juan Garrido when he conquered the Aztecs in Mexico in 1519. Francisco de Gama exploration of Florida to Arizona also included his Black slave.

Many early Spanish Colonists were identified as “Mulato” that is, half White, half Black. The most famous Mulato is Manual Nieto, Soldado de Cuera, who received all the land from Long Beach to the Whittier Hills from the King of Spain in 1784. The most famous Mulato is Pio Pico’s maternal grandmother---Maria Arballo (de Guiterrez) who came North with the Anza trail group in 1776. In fact, both of Pio Pico’s grandmothers are listed as Mulatos. Maria Arballo is famous because she is referred to in Priest Font’s diary of the Anza walk---as a “loose woman” who sang “bawdy” songs at a camp party when the group crossed the river at Yuma. At the time of the Anza trip, she was widow with two daughters. Maria would later stay at the San Gabriel Mission and marry a soldier there by the name of Lopez---and she had seven more daughters. A granddaughter from her second marriage married Salvador Vallejo of Northern California, owner of the Petaluma Adobe (now a State Park).

There were other mulato families in Early California: The Briones, and Tapia’s.\* Africans were brought as slaves to New Spain (aka Mexico) to replace the Indian labor. Many established “free” towns from Durango to Mazatlan. The National Park Service estimates that 20 % of the New World population was African.

\*Source: Brochure---Damany Fisher (2010). *Discovering Early California Afro-Latino Presence*. National Park Service.

- Kathleen Rabago

