

# MILESTONES AND KEY FIGURES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

## 1865–PRESENT

### I. RECONSTRUCTION AND THE NEW SOUTH, 1865–1896

#### A. THE RECONSTRUCTION AMENDMENTS

1. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude.
2. The Fourteenth Amendment had three key components:
  - ▶ *First, it made the former slaves citizens, thus invalidating the Dred Scott decision.*
  - ▶ *Second, it stated, "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."*
  - ▶ *Third, it protected recently passed congressional legislation guaranteeing civil rights to former slaves.*
3. The Fifteenth Amendment provided suffrage for Black males.

#### B. SHARECROPPERS

1. The majority of freedmen entered sharecropping arrangements with former masters and other nearby planters.
2. Sharecropping and the crop lien system led to a cycle of debt and depression for Southern tenant farmers.
3. The freedmen did *not* receive 40 acres each.

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#### C. BLACK CODES

1. Black Codes were intended to place limits on the socioeconomic opportunities and freedoms open to Black people.
2. Black Codes forced Black Americans to work under conditions that closely resembled slavery.

#### D. THE COMPROMISE OF 1877

1. The compromise called for the removal of all federal troops from the South.
2. It supported internal improvements in the South.
3. It promised there would be at least one Southerner in the Cabinet.
4. It gave conservative Southern Democrats some control over local patronage.
5. It gave the South a "free hand" in race relations. As a result, White conservatives returned to power, lynchings increased, and Black voters were disenfranchised.

#### E. THE 1873 SLAUGHTERHOUSE CASES AND THE 1883 CIVIL RIGHTS CASES

1. Both cases narrowed the meaning and effectiveness of the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. Both cases weakened the protection given to African Americans under the Fourteenth Amendment.

#### F. PLESSY v. FERGUSON, 1896

1. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision upheld segregated railroad facilities.
2. The Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* sanctioned "separate but equal" public facilities for African Americans.

#### G. DISENFRANCHISING BLACK VOTERS

1. Southern politicians used a number of tactics to disenfranchise Black voters; tactics included these:
  - ▶ *Literacy tests and poll taxes were used to deny African Americans the ballot.*

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- ▶ *The grandfather clause exempted from these requirements anyone whose forebear had voted in 1860. Needless to say, slaves had not voted at that time.*
- ▶ *Electoral districts were gerrymandered to favor the Democratic Party.*

#### H. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

1. In his Atlanta Compromise speech (1895), Booker T. Washington called on Blacks to seek economic opportunities rather than political rights. Here is an excerpt from his speech: "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."
2. Booker T. Washington particularly stressed the importance of vocational education and economic self-help. Washington urged Black Americans to avoid public political agitation.
3. Booker T. Washington supported all of the following:
  - ▶ *Accommodation to White society*
  - ▶ *Economic self-help*
  - ▶ *Industrial education*
4. Washington opposed public political agitation.

### II. BLACK AMERICANS DURING THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1897–1917

#### A. W.E.B. DU BOIS

1. During the Progressive Era, W.E.B. Du Bois emerged as the most influential advocate of full political, economic, and social equality for Black Americans.
2. Du Bois founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.
3. Du Bois advocated the intellectual development of a "talented tenth" of the Black population. Du Bois hoped that this talented tenth would become influential through methods such as continuing their education, writing books, or becoming directly involved in social change.
4. Du Bois opposed the implementation of Booker T. Washington's program for Black progress.

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Be sure you understand the different approaches of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. Remember, Washington stressed economic self-help, while Du Bois stressed fighting for full political and social rights.

#### B. THE NAACP

1. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) rejected Booker T. Washington's gradualism and separatism.
2. The NAACP focused on using the courts to achieve equality and justice.

#### C. THE PROGRESSIVES

1. Civil rights laws for Black Americans were *not* part of the Progressive program of reforms.
2. Progressive Era legislation was *least* concerned with ending racial segregation.

#### D. IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT

1. Ida B. Wells-Barnett was an African American civil rights advocate and an early women's rights advocate.
2. Ida B. Wells-Barnett was the principal public opponent of lynching in the South.

#### E. THE BIRTH OF A NATION AND THE KKK

1. The Ku Klux Klan first emerged during Radical Reconstruction (1865–1877).
2. D. W. Griffith's epic film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) became controversial because of its depiction of KKK activities as heroic and commendable.
3. *The Birth of a Nation* played a role in the resurgence of the KKK during the Progressive Era.
4. The KKK favored White supremacy and immigration restriction.

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#### F. WORLD WAR I

1. African Americans fought in strictly segregated units, usually under the command of White officers.
2. The first massive migration of Black Americans from the South occurred during and immediately after World War I.

### III THE 1920s

#### A. THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

1. The Harlem Renaissance thrived during the 1920s.
2. The Harlem Renaissance was an outpouring of Black artistic and literary creativity.
3. Harlem Renaissance writers and artists expressed pride in their African American culture.
4. Key figures in the Harlem Renaissance included James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Josephine Baker.

#### B. MARCUS GARVEY

1. Marcus Garvey was the leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.
2. Garveyism was identified with the following:
  - ▶ Black pride
  - ▶ Black economic development
  - ▶ Black nationalism
  - ▶ Pan-Africanism
3. Garvey was committed to the idea that Black Americans should return to Africa.



Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are America's best-known civil rights leaders. Each has been the subject of a number of APUSH questions. Although you should study these leaders, do not neglect Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Marcus Garvey. Recent tests have included questions about both of these important, but sometimes overlooked, leaders.

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### IV THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE NEW DEAL, 1929–1941

#### A. THE NEW DEAL

1. New Deal programs did help African Americans survive the Great Depression.
2. The New Deal did *not* directly confront racial segregation and injustice. As a result, there was no major action on civil rights.

#### B. SHIFT IN VOTING PATTERNS

1. As a result of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Reconstruction amendments, African Americans were loyal voters for the Republican Party.
2. The presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt witnessed a major shift of Black voters from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party.

#### C. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND THE DAR

1. In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) barred Marian Anderson, a world-renowned African-American singer, from performing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.
2. Outraged by this action, Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the DAR.
3. Roosevelt's dramatic act of conscience gave national attention to the issue of racial discrimination.

### V WORLD WAR II, 1941–1945

#### A. HOMEFRONT

1. The Black migration from the South to the North and West continued.
2. President Roosevelt issued an executive order forbidding discrimination in defense industries. The order was monitored by the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

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#### B. THE WAR

1. Black Americans continued to fight in segregated units. The armed forces were *not* racially integrated during World War II.

### VI THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, 1945–PRESENT

#### A. PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

1. President Truman issued an Executive Order to desegregate the armed forces in 1948.
2. The Dixiecrats walked out of the 1948 Democratic National Convention to demonstrate their opposition to President Truman's civil rights legislation.

#### B. BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA, 1954

1. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was a denial of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed in the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. The Supreme Court decision directly contradicted the legal principle of "separate but equal" established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.
3. As a result of its victory in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the NAACP continued to base its court suits on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

#### C. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

1. President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock's Central High School to enforce court-ordered desegregation.
2. Ike supported his decision by saying, "The very basis of our individual rights and freedoms rests upon the certainty that the President and the Executive Branch of Government will support and insure the carrying out of the decisions of the federal courts, even, when necessary, with all the means at the President's command."

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3. Although President Eisenhower did send troops to Little Rock, he was not a vigorous supporter of civil rights legislation.
4. The primary power granted to the Civil Rights Commission in 1957 was the authority to investigate and report on cases involving discrimination.

#### D. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

1. Dr. King's goal was a peaceful integration of the races in all areas of society.
2. Dr. King's theory of nonviolent civil disobedience was influenced by the writings of Henry David Thoreau.
3. Dr. King was head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).
4. In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Dr. King argued that citizens have "a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." Dr. King believed that civil disobedience is justified in the face of unjust laws.
5. The following quote vividly expresses Dr. King's nonviolent philosophy:  
 "The problem with hatred and violence is that they intensify the fears of the White majority, and leave them less ashamed of their prejudices toward Negroes. In the guilt and confusion confronting our society, violence only adds to chaos. It deepens the brutality of the oppressor and increases the bitterness of the oppressed. Violence is the antithesis of creativity and wholeness. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible."

#### E. THE SIT-IN MOVEMENT

1. College students staged the first sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 to protest segregation in public facilities.
2. The sit-ins provide an excellent example of nonviolent civil disobedience.

#### F. MALCOLM X

1. Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael opposed Dr. King's strategy of nonviolent demonstration.
2. Malcolm X was a key leader of the Black Muslims.

#### G. KEY CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS

1. Dr. King—Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
2. Roy Wilkins—NAACP
3. Stokely Carmichael—Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
4. Black Panthers—Huey Newton
5. Black Muslims—Malcolm X

#### H. BLACK LEADERS WHO FAVORED SEPARATISM

1. Marcus Garvey—The Back-to-Africa Movement
2. Elijah Muhammad—The Black Muslim Movement
3. Stokely Carmichael—The Black Power Movement
4. Huey Newton—The Black Panther Movement

#### I. BLACK POWER

1. The Black Power movement of the late 1960s advocated that African Americans establish control of their economic and political life.
2. Huey Newton (Black Panthers) and Stokely Carmichael were spokesmen for Black Power.
3. The Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam emphasized a greater sense of Black nationalism and solidarity.

#### J. ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA, 2008

1. In November 2008, a record number of voters elected Barack Obama as the nation's 44th president.
2. Obama thus became America's first African American president.
3. Obama's winning coalition included minorities, college-educated Whites, and young voters aged 18 to 26.