

African American History Timeline: 1619 - 2021

1619 The first African American indentured servants arrive in the American colonies. Less than a decade later, the first slaves are brought into New Amsterdam (later, New York City). By 1690, every colony has slaves.

1739 The Stono Rebellion, one of the earliest slave revolts, occurs in Stono, South Carolina.

1793 Eli Whitney's (1765 – 1825) cotton gin increases the need for slaves.

1808 Congress bans further importation of slaves.

1831 In Boston, William Lloyd Garrison (1805 – 1879) begins publication of the anti-slavery newspaper the *Liberator* and becomes a leading voice in the Abolitionist movement.

1831 – 1861 Approximately 75,000 slaves escape to the North using the Underground Railroad. **1846** Ex-slave Frederick Douglass (1818 – 1895) publishes the anti-slavery *North Star* newspaper.

1848 Augustus Saint Gaudens (1848 – 1907) is born in Ireland. His family soon emigrates to the United States.

1849 Harriet Tubman (c. 1820 – 1913) escapes from slavery and becomes an instrumental leader of the Underground Railroad.

1850 Congress passes another Fugitive Slave Act, which mandates government participation in the capture of escaped slaves. Boston citizens, including some of the wealthiest, storm a federal courthouse in an attempt to free escaped Virginia slave Anthony Burns (1834 – 1862).

1857 The *Dred Scot v. Sanford* case: congress does not have the right to ban slavery in the states; slaves are not citizens.

1860 Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865) is elected president, angering the southern states.

1861 The Civil War begins.

1863 Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation proclaims that all slaves in rebellious territories are forever free.

1863 Massachusetts 54th regiment of African American troops led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (1837 – 1863) marches out of Boston on May 28th, heading into combat.

1865 The Civil War ends. Lincoln is assassinated. Seventeen-year-old Augustus Saint Gaudens is so moved by the sight of Lincoln's body lying in state that he views it twice.

The 13th Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting slavery, is ratified. The era of Reconstruction begins.

1866 The "Black Codes" are passed by all white legislators of the former Confederate States. Congress passes the Civil Rights Act, conferring citizenship on African Americans and granting them equal rights to whites.

The Ku Klux Klan is formed in Tennessee.

1868 The 14th Amendment is ratified, defining citizenship. This overturns the *Dred Scot* decision.

1870 The 15th Amendment is ratified, giving African Americans the right to vote.

1877 The era of Reconstruction ends.

A deal is made with southern democratic leaders which makes Rutherford B. Hayes (1822 – 1893) president in exchange for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South, and puts an end to efforts to protect the civil rights of African Americans.

1879 Thousands of African Americans migrate out of the South to escape oppression.

1881 Tennessee passes the first of the “Jim Crow” segregation laws, segregating state railroads. Similar laws are passed over the next 15 years throughout the Southern states.

1887 Augustus Saint Gaudens unveils the “Standing Lincoln” statue in Lincoln Park, Chicago.

1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case: racial segregation is ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court. The “Jim Crow” (“separate but equal”) laws begin, barring African Americans from equal access to public facilities.

1897 Augustus Saint Gaudens unveils the Shaw Memorial in Boston Common.

1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case: strikes down segregation as unconstitutional.

1955 In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks (1913 – 2005) is arrested for breaking a city ordinance by refusing to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man. This defiant act gives initial momentum to the Civil Rights Movement.

1957 Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968) and others set up the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a leading engine of the Civil Rights Movement.

1964 The Civil Rights Act is signed, prohibiting discrimination of all kinds.

1965 The Voting Rights Act is passed, outlawing the practices used in the South to disenfranchise African American voters.

1967 Edward W. Brooke (1919 -) becomes the first African American U.S. Senator since Reconstruction. He serves two terms as a Senator from Massachusetts.

1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

2008 Barack Obama (1961 -) becomes the first African American to win the U.S. presidential race.

2009 - 2017 Barack Obama (1961 -) serves as the 44th President of the United States

2013 Black Lives Matter Movement

2020 Kamala Harris (1964 -) becomes the first African American, Asian and female to win as U.S. Vice-President.