

Tell the Truth

... About the History of the United States and its
Black People

Week 1: February 1 - 4, 2018

January 22nd
Today was not a good learning day.
blah blah blah I only wanted to hear you not
talking. You said something wrong and I can't
listen when I hear lies. My mom said that the
only Christopher we acknowledge is Warrack.
Because Columbus didn't find our country the
Indians did. I like to have Columbus day
off but I want you to not teach no
lies. That is all. My question for the
day is how can white people ~~teach~~ teach
black history? King Johnson

King I am very disappointed in
your Journal today.

ok

Articles Compiled and Arranged by Rann Miller
Original Content Written and Developed by Rann
Miller

Disclaimers

This text is a compilation of history articles related to Black people in the United States found from various online sources. These sources primarily comprise of traditional news outlets i.e. Washington Post, NPR and New York Times; also non-traditional online-based journalist reporting outlets i.e. Vox, Alternet, Huffington Post and Slate. These articles, and the information found in them, are not the original content of Rann Miller. All articles included in this text compiled from online sources will include the name of the original author and the online address for where the original article can be found. These various articles are not for resale.

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This text is not for resale. While original content is included within this document, this document is of no cost and is available for public consumption. The purpose of this text is to provide educators with a text to teach and instruct students. Also, this text is for any lifelong learner who desires to increase in their knowledge of truth about the history of the United States and the Black people who have contributed greatly to it.

- Rann Miller

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Introduction

Growing Up, Black History Month was a major part of my cultural curriculum. At the conclusion of my elementary education, stories and lessons on Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King were apart of my cultural, and academic, lexicon. However, as I got older, I realized there was much more information to build my knowledge upon.

As a middle and high school social studies teacher, I took pride in sharing the same lessons imparted to me to, my students during Black History Month. I taught Black history all academic year. During Black History Month, I taught the more concealed aspects of Black history. The history of Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King are a part of American history and in the context of the way we teach American history, educators should include these people and events in the curriculum. Some would argue that educators do; I do not believe that to be the case.

Eight-year-old King Johnson wrote in his journal that he did not want his teacher to teach him lies. He specifically was referring to the lies taught to him about Christopher Columbus “finding” the New World. I believe that King Johnson’s sentiment is indicative of all students, particularly students of color — students who, historically, have had the truth of their history withheld from them. They are tired of teachers lying to them. This text compilation of articles is to serve as a teaching resource for teachers to teach the unadulterated truth of American history to their students during the month of February, and throughout the year. The articles offered in this document can be used to create lessons and projects for students to increase in their knowledge of American history. Whether in high school or kindergarten, teach all students the history and not HIStory. TELL THE TRUTH!!!!

- Rann Miller

Bloom's Taxonomy Framework

This rubric is designed to provide educators with a framework to provide tiered questions to track student understanding. This rubric is based on the Bloom's Taxonomy of Higher Order Thinking. These questions are simply a guide to develop your own questions – they are not specific for each article. This is only to serve as a guide. You are welcome to develop your own questions for each article. For more information on Bloom's Taxonomy, please visit <https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/blooms-taxonomy-learning-objectives-and-higher-order-thinking/>

	Happening / Event	Famous Person(s)	Black Tradition	Popular Culture
Level 1 - Remembering	What are the major facts presented in this article: (1) who are the individuals involved, (2) what are the details of what took place according to the article, what is the setting, what is the date and why did it happen (what were the reasons it happened)?			
Level 2 - Understanding	Explain the main idea and the major details of the article in your own words. Please include 2 to 4 major details in your paraphrased explanation.			
Level 3 - Applying	Think about the details of the article and tell what you would do if you were living at the time facing similar circumstances.	Think about the details of the article and tell how your life would be similar or different if presented with similar circumstances as this person.	Think about the details of the article and demonstrate how you would apply this tradition with your family, friends or peers.	Think about the details of the article and interpret the meaning of this happening in popular culture.
Level 4 - Analyzing	Why do you think what happened was able to happen? Could a similar thing happen today?	What are the similarities and difference between this individual and a similar famous figure; past or present.	What criticisms do you have of this particular tradition? How to reconcile your criticism with someone who holds this tradition in high esteem?	Distinguish the meaning of the contents of the article between its impact on many people versus its impact on an individual person.
Level 5 - Evaluating	Appraise the value of this moment in culture. Evaluate the impact and results of what happened.	Defend the actions or decisions of this individual someone may consider to be risky, harmful or controversial.	Defend this tradition to someone looking to remove it from social and/or cultural significance.	Select an antithesis moment/trend to counter this moment in popular culture.
Level 6 - Creating	Develop a hallmark card that celebrates this event yearly.	Write a letter to this famous person explaining what you think of their life and the decisions they've made.	Either create new details to add to this tradition to make it better or create a brand new tradition to replace the tradition in this article.	Design an advertisement to promote this particular cultural moment to expose its impact on society.

Part One

Online Articles Of History

Wall Street Was a Slave Market Before It Was a Financial Center

By **Alan Singer**, www.huffingtonpost.com

January 17th, 2012

The Occupy Wall Street movement brought a lot of attention to Wall Street and the New York City financial district as the center of economic inequality in the United States. The 1 percent, the bankers, brokers, and hedge fund operators who dominate the global economy and politics in the United States own and make their home on Wall Street.

The Wall Street wealthy are equal opportunity buyers of influence, contributing mightily to both major political parties. In the 2008 presidential election, political action committees (PACs), employees, and owners of major Wall Street firms gave money to both Democrats and Republicans. The Obama campaign received over a million dollars from PACs, individuals, and groups associated with Goldman Sachs, \$800,000 from Morgan Chase, \$700,000 from Citigroup, and \$500,000 from Morgan Stanley. The McCain campaign, while it did not fare quite as well, received over \$300,000 from PACs, individuals, and groups associated with Morgan Chase and Citigroup, a quarter of a million dollars from Goldman Sachs, \$200,000 from Wachovia, and over \$350,000 from Merrill Lynch.

According to the non-partisan Americans for Campaign Reform, individuals and PACs in finance, insurance, and real estate contributed over \$2 billion to federal campaigns between 1990 and 2008. "Members of the U.S. House and Senate received an average \$142,663 and \$1,042,663, respectively, in Wall Street

contributions as of July 28, 2008." The total Wall Street "contribution" to people running for federal office in 2008 was over THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS.

Wall Street influence, and the battle between main Street and Wall Street stretches way back in United States history. Mary E. Lease was a well-known "stump" speaker for the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist Party. They called her and her colleagues stump speakers because they stood on tree stumps to be seen over the crowd. Between 1890 and 1896 she toured the country making speeches telling farmers to "raise less corn and more hell." Some scholars believe Mary E. Lease was the model for the character Dorothy in Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. In one of her best-known speeches she told her audience:

"Wall Street owns the country. It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street. The great common people of this country are slaves, and monopoly is the master... Our laws are the output of a system which clothes rascals in robes and honesty in rags."

But the sordid history of Wall Street is actually much older and darker. December 13, 2011 was the three hundredth anniversary of the law passed by the New York City Common Council that made Wall Street the city's official slave market for the sale and rental of enslaved Africans.

1711 Law Appointing a Place for the More Convenient Hiring of Slaves

Source: Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, vol. II, 458, December 13, 1711

Be it Ordained by the Mayor Recorder Aldermen and Assistants of the City of New York Convened in Common Council and it is hereby Ordained by the Authority of the same That all Negro and Indian slaves that are lett out to hire within this City do take up their Standing in Order to be hired at the Markett house at the Wall Street Slip untill Such time as they are hired, whereby all Persons may Know where to hire slaves as their Occasions Shall require and also Masters discover when their Slaves are so hired and all the Inhabitants of this City are to take Notice hereof Accordingly.

The predecessor bank of Citibank, which has offices at 111 Wall Street, was actually founded by a banker and sugar trader deeply involved in financing the illegal slave trade bringing Africans into Cuba in the 19th century. When Moses Taylor died in 1882, he was one of the wealthiest men of that century with an estate reportedly worth \$70 million, or about \$1.6 billion in today's dollars.

There is now an online petition addressed to Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council calling for a historical marker at the site of the Wall Street slave market detailing its role in the history of New York City. I signed the petition and welcome others to join the campaign. The letter reads:

December 13th is the 300th anniversary of the law establishing the first slave market in New York. That market was located at the end of Wall Street where present day Water Street is. Yet there is not a single sign, plaque, marker, statue, memorial or monument with any reference to slavery or the slave trade in Lower Manhattan (with the exception of the African Burial Ground memorial).

The fact is that New York's first City Hall was built with slave labor. The first Congress passed the Bill of Rights there and George Washington gave his inaugural speech there. Slaves helped build the wall that Wall Street is named for. Slavery was such a big part of early New York that during the colonial era one in five people living in New York was an enslaved African. One in five. Yet there are no permanent signs acknowledging the role slaves played in early New York.

Even after the discovery of a massive, 6.6 acre burial ground where Africans -- free and enslaved -- were buried, with thousands of individuals possibly still in the ground, their contribution to New York is and has been completely invisible. After 300 years it is finally time to tell their story.

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Slavery, by the Numbers

By Henry Louis Gates Jr., www.theroot.com

February 10th, 2014

Editor's note: to whom these "amazing facts" are an homage.

*For those who are wondering about the retro title of this black-history series, please take a moment to learn about historian Joel A. Rogers, author of the 1934 book **100 Amazing Facts About the Negro With Complete Proof***

Amazing Fact About the Negro No. 67: What are the most important facts to know about American slavery?

In honor of Black History Month, I've assembled a list of statistics on slavery that every parent and child in America should know. There are 28 entries in all, one for each day in February, covering such broad topics as the first and second Middle Passages, emancipation, genealogy and the geographical diversity among enslaved and free black people in the United States and throughout the Caribbean and South America. Politicians and academics love quoting facts—what they call their “elevator speech”—to their various audiences at public events. So, here are some facts for *you* to memorize and quote, as you sort through the meaning of this marvelous month when we commemorate the sacrifices and achievements of our ancestors in your own lives. You can keep these facts in mind if you decide to search for your family's roots or seek a deeper understanding of the many rivers our ancestors—and we, as a people—have crossed to get to where we are 149 years after the abolition of slavery.

Here is *The Root's Black History Month Challenge*: If you're a parent, I ask you to share one of these “amazing facts” each morning or perhaps over dinner with your children (you'll need to catch up by doing the first 10 today). If you're a teacher, think about highlighting one each day after your students “pledge allegiance to the flag,” if your school still observes this time-honored tradition. And, if you work in an office, labor outside or are mobile on a daily route, try passing one of these around each day to your co-workers or customers, regardless of their ethnicity, at the water cooler, over a coffee break, at lunch, or, yes, even in the elevator!

To become a fundamental part of the genuine “conversation about race” that our country so urgently needs, black history must be allowed to live and breathe through sharing rituals such as these, and not remain buried in scholarly studies and textbooks, which all too often simply serve as doorstops or accumulate dust!

“Fellow Americans, let the nation and the world know the meaning of our numbers,” the great African-American labor leader, A. Philip Randolph, declared at that most historical of settings, the Lincoln Memorial, during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. “Our ancestors were transformed from human personalities into private property,” he continued. “At the banquet table of nature, there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take and keep what you can hold.”

Dear readers of *The Root*, my hope is that the 28 facts assembled here give you something to hold onto you as you make your journey through Black History Month, this life and the larger American story.

Let's get started ...

The Middle Passage

1. **In the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (1525-1866), 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World.** Of them, 10.7 million survived the dreaded Middle Passage, disembarking in North America, the Caribbean and South America. Only about 388,000 were transported directly from Africa to North America, as David Eltis, David Richardson and their colleagues have definitively established in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

2. **Children typically comprised 26 percent or more of a slave ship's human cargo,** David Eltis writes in his "Brief Overview of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade." On average, the voyage took "just over two months," and because of "filthy conditions," "a range of epidemic pathogens" and "periodic breakouts of violent resistance," "between 12 and 13 percent of those embarked did not survive the voyage."

American-Style Slavery

3. The importation of slaves into the United States was banned by Congress (under Constitutional command) in 1808, yet **by 1860, the nation's black population had jumped from 400,000 to 4.4 million, of which 3.9 million were slaves.** The primary reason was *natural increase*, a distinguishing feature of American-style slavery. Between 1790 and 1860, reports Ronald Bailey, author of "The Other Side of Slavery: Black Labor, Cotton, and Textile Industrialization in Great Britain and the United States," in the spring 1994 issue of *Agricultural History*, the U.S. slave population increased between 25 percent and 33 percent per year—an average of 28.7 percent over the period.

4. In the U.S., on average, a slave mother gave birth to between nine and 10 children, "twice as many in the West Indies," according to the Gilder Institute of American History. Yet, **in 1860, "less than 10 percent of the slave population was over 50 and only 3.5 percent was over 60."**

5. Speaking of "natural increase," in that same year, 1860, the venerable historian Ira Berlin writes in his classic text, *Slaves Without Masters*, "fully 40 percent of the Southern free Negro population were classified as mulattoes, while only one slave in ten had some white ancestry." The obvious reason: **Masters were more likely to free slaves who looked like—and, in many cases, descended from—them.** And sometimes—not often enough—these slaves were able to earn enough money working on their own to purchase their freedom and that of their wife and children. The average African American today, according to Joanna Mountain at the genetics company 23andMe, "is 73.4 percent African, 24.1 percent European, and only 0.7 percent Native American" in their genetic makeup.

6. Largely as a result of natural increase, the United States went from being a country that accounted for 6 percent of slaves imported to the New World to one that in 1860 held more than 60 percent of the hemisphere's slave population, according to Steven Mintz, author of "American Slavery in Comparative Perspective," for the Gilder Lehrman Institute. (It's worth noting that Stanley Engerman, Richard Sutch and Gavin Wright put that number closer to 50 percent in their March 2003 report on "Slavery" (pdf) for the University of California Project on the Historical Statistics of the United States.)

The Second Middle Passage

7. The Middle Passage refers to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. A **second Middle Passage followed within the U.S. between the end of the Revolutionary War and the start of the Civil War.** In all, my colleague Walter Johnson estimates in his book *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, "approximately one million enslaved people were relocated from the upper South to the lower South ... two thirds of these through ... the domestic slave trade." In other words, two and a half times more African Americans were directly affected by the second Middle Passage than the first one.

8. The reason was business—specifically, the cotton trade. Where it flourished, in the states of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, the slave population increased by an average of 27.5 percent *per decade*, demanding that entire families be relocated from plantations in the East and Upper South. In turn, Steven Deyle points out in his 2005 book, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life*, "Southern slave prices more than tripled," rising from \$500 in New Orleans in 1800, to \$1,800 by 1860 (the equivalent of \$30,000 in 2005). **Of the 3.2 million slaves working in the 15 slave states in 1850, 1.8 million worked in cotton.**

Who Owned Slaves and Where Did They Live?

9. **In 1860, according to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 75 percent of white families in the United States owned not a single slave, while 1 percent of families owned 40 or more.** Just a *tenth* of 1 percent of Americans owned 100 or more slaves.

10. **That same year, 1860, 31 percent of all slaves in the U.S. were held on plantations of 40 or more slaves,** while a majority (53 percent) were held on farms of between 7 and 39 slaves, says the institute.

11. Also, according to the Gilder Lehrman Institute, **of the total African-American population in 1860, nearly 90 percent were slaves.** And, while blacks made up only 13 percent of the entire country, in the South one in three people was black.

12. **How about a state-by-state comparison?** In 1860, slaves made up 57 percent of the population in South Carolina, the highest of any state in the union. Coming in second was Mississippi at 55 percent, followed by Louisiana at 47 percent, Alabama at 45 percent, and Florida and Georgia, both at 44 percent. Perhaps not surprisingly, these were the first six states to secede from the Union following Lincoln's election. While

Southern sympathizers denied that slavery was the cause of the Civil War, Lincoln knew better, and in a map prepared by the United States Coast Survey in 1861, he could see the obvious correlation between where Southern resolve was strongest and where the country's slave population was greatest. For this reason, Lincoln could rightly say that issuing the Emancipation Proclamation—by executive order—in 1863 was closely tied to his military strategy for winning the war. (For more, see Susan Schulten's article "Visualizing Slavery" in the New York Times on Dec. 9, 2010.)

13. In terms of absolute numbers, Virginia had the highest slave population of any state in the country in 1860: 490,865. A year later, it also was home to the Confederate capitol, Richmond.

14. Here's one that may shock you: As late as 1850, the state of New Jersey, as a result of its gradual emancipation policies, still reported some 236 slaves in the Federal Census. New York also adopted a gradual emancipation policy, in 1799, but it didn't achieve its full goal until the late 1820s. Well before then, **New York City was a major hub of the slave trade.** "Between 1732 and 1754, black slaves accounted for more than 35 percent of the total immigration through the port of New York," according to the website SlaveryNorth.com. "In 1756," it adds, "slaves made up about 25 percent of the populations of Kings, Queens, Richmond, New York, and Westchester counties."

The Slave Labor Force

15. As for the slave labor force, the Gilder Lehrman Institute indicates **almost "a third of slave laborers were children and an eighth were elderly or crippled."**

16. **Slaves didn't just work on farms,** to be sure. They were hired out in the trades, worked in factories and on piers, and manned sailing vessels. They also built between 9,000 and 10,000 miles of railroad tracks by the time the Civil War broke out, representing "a third of the nation's total and more than the mileage of Britain, France, and Germany," says the institute.

European and Native American Slaves

17. Here's an interesting one: **"Over a million Europeans were held as slaves from the 1530s through the 1780s in Africa,** and hundreds of thousands were kept as slaves by the Ottomans in eastern Europe and Asia," writes Alan Gally in his essay "Indian Slavery in the Americas" for the Gilder Lehrman Institute. "In 1650," Gally adds, "more English were enslaved in Africa than Africans enslaved in English colonies."

18. Did Americans enslave Native Americans? You bet. **"North American Europeans did enslave Indians during wars,** especially in New England (the Pequot War, King Philip's War) and the Southeast (the Tuscarora War, the Yamasee War, the Natchez War, just to name a few)," Gally explains. "In South Carolina, and to a lesser extent in North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana, Indian slavery was a central means by which early colonists funded economic expansion." Remarkably, in the Southwest, "large-scale enslavement of American Indians persisted well into the nineteenth century." In fact,

“[a]fter the Civil War,” Gallay writes, “President Andrew Johnson sent federal troops into the West to put an end to Indian slavery, but it continued to proliferate in California.”

19. At the same time, **Native Americans owned and traded in slaves.** According to the Oklahoma Historical Society website, from the late 18th century on, Native Americans in the South, like whites, owned slaves. And, when the U.S. government “removed” the five nations to “Indian Territory” (now the state of Oklahoma) in the 1830s, they took their slaves with them, so that “[b]y the time the Civil War broke out more than eight thousand blacks were enslaved in Indian Territory.” Overall, enslaved people accounted for “14 percent of the population” of the Indian Territory, and it wasn’t until *after* the Civil War that emancipation arrived for some of the slaves. In fact, as late as 1885, the governor of the Chickasaw was still protesting demands that they free their black slaves.

Free Blacks in the South

20. **On the eve of the Civil War in 1860, Ira Berlin writes in *Slaves Without Masters*, there were a total of 488,070 free blacks living in the United States, about 10 percent of the entire black population.** Of those, 226,152 lived in the North and 261,918 in the South, in 15 states (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas) plus the District of Columbia. Thus, surprisingly, there were 35,766 *more* free black people living in the slave-owning South than in the North. And they stayed there during the Civil War.

21. **Maryland was the state with the largest population of free blacks in 1860—83,942—** and the highest proportion of free versus enslaved blacks, with 49.1 percent free.

22. **In 1860, free black people composed 18 percent of the population in Delaware, the highest percentage of any state in the Union** (though the total number of free blacks there was only 19,829). Louisiana, by comparison, had almost as many free black people as Delaware did in 1860—18,647—but they made up only 3 percent of the state’s population, while New York had more than both of these states combined—49,005 free black women and men—but they accounted for only 1 *per cent* of the Empire State’s total population.

23. **Free blacks in the South largely resided in cities—the bigger the better,** because that’s where the jobs were (in 1860, 72.7 percent of urban free blacks lived in Southern cities of 10,000 or more). In 1860, Baltimore City alone had almost 28,000 (3 percent of the state’s population). New Orleans, by contrast, had 10,939 free persons of color, or around 6 percent of the population, down from a high of more than 28 percent in 1810 and a high absolute number of 15,072 in 1840—the result, among other things, of tighter regulations on free black people’s privileges, increasing white immigration into the city and opportunities for them to advance elsewhere. (For more, see Caryn Cosse Bell’s book, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana*.)

24. **A majority of free blacks in the South were female** (52.6 percent of them were women in 1860), because, according to Berlin, free black men had a greater tendency to move out of the region.

25. **Free black people also were older than the average slave**, because they often had to wait to earn or buy their freedom, or, in not uncommon cases, be “dumped” by their owners as weak or infirm (in 1860, 20 percent of free blacks were over the age of 40 compared to 15 percent of slaves and whites).

26. **Not only did the vast majority of free black people live in the Upper South (224,963 in 1860 versus 36,955 in the Lower South in 1860), they were on average darker-skinned and more rural than their Lower South counterparts.** By contrast, free black people in the Lower South were fewer in number and lighter-skinned (the result, according to Berlin, of “miscegenation and selective emancipation,” as well as a greater “influx of brown émigrés from Saint-Domingo [Haiti] and elsewhere in the West Indies”), creating a much more pronounced three-caste system and within it various gradations of blackness, including mulattoes (those who would be called “biracial” today), quadroons (those with one black grandparent) and octoroons (those with one black great-grandparent).

Emancipation and Finding Your Slave Ancestors

27. **The Emancipation Proclamation did *not* abolish the institution of slavery in the United States.** Rather, it “freed” any slave in the Confederate states (that’s right—it did *not* apply to states in the Union in which slavery remained legal) who could manage to flee her or his plantation and make their way behind liberating Union lines. Historians estimate that as many as 500,000 black people managed to do this. So we might say that these black people *freed themselves*. To put this number into a bit of perspective, in 1860 there were about 3.9 million enslaved African Americans, which means that by the end of the Civil War, some 3.4 million black people remained in bondage, in spite of the Emancipation Proclamation. Their only salvation: the ratification of the 13th Amendment in December 1865.

28. Free African Americans were listed by name in the Federal Census prior to the Civil War. **Slaves’ names were *not* recorded in the U.S. Census until after the war, in 1870.** In the 1850 and 1860 censuses, there were separate *slave schedules* kept, but in almost every case they only listed individuals by age, color and gender. However, there were a few counties that did list slaves by name, according to genealogist Jane Ailes. For 1850, the counties were: Utah County, Utah; Bowie County, Texas; and Scott County, Tenn. And for 1860, the counties were: Hampshire County, Va. (where I have ancestors); Boyd County, Ky.; Camden County, N.C. (named only in the copy held by the courthouse, not the National Archives copy). In addition, some, but not all, are listed in Twiggs County, Ga.; Washington County, Ten.; and the Second Ward of the City of St. Louis. One more exception, says Ailes: Almost all slaves over the age of 100 are named in all counties. Last but not least, you can find slaves named in the Federal Census *mortality schedules* for 1850 and 1860.

That's our list of facts to ponder and learn during the month of February. I hope that you and your family and friends will enjoy meeting *The Root's Black History Month Challenge*.

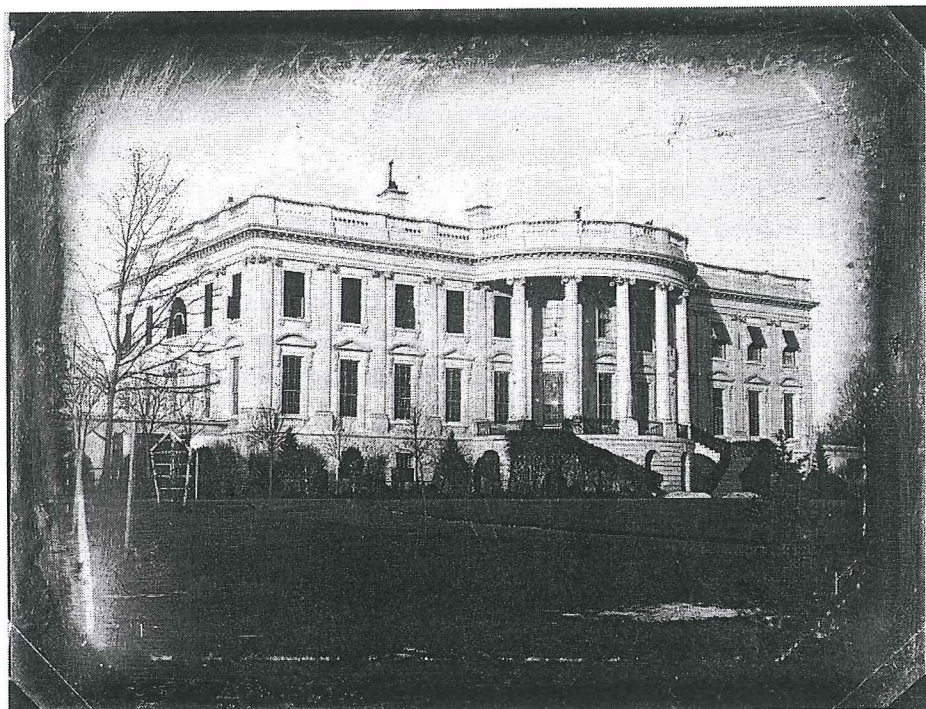
As always, you can find more "Amazing Facts About the Negro" on *The Root*, and check back each week as we count to 100.

The White House Was, in Fact, Built by Slaves

By **Danny Lewis**, www.smithsonianmag.com

July 26th, 2016

Along with the Capitol and other iconic buildings in Washington, D.C.



Earliest known photograph of the White House. The image was taken in 1846 by John Plumbe during the administration of James K. Polk.

Photo by: (Library of Congress/John Plumbe)

When First Lady Michelle Obama took the stage during the first night of the Democratic National Convention, she talked about how it felt to be a black woman waking up in the White House every morning—a building constructed with slave labor. It was a powerful moment in her speech, hearkening back to the generations of African-Americans forced into bondage in this country. Up until a few decades ago, little attention was paid to looking into who actually laid the foundations and put up the walls of the White House. But what documentation exists today shows that many of Washington, D.C.'s most iconic government buildings, including the White House, were built by slaves.

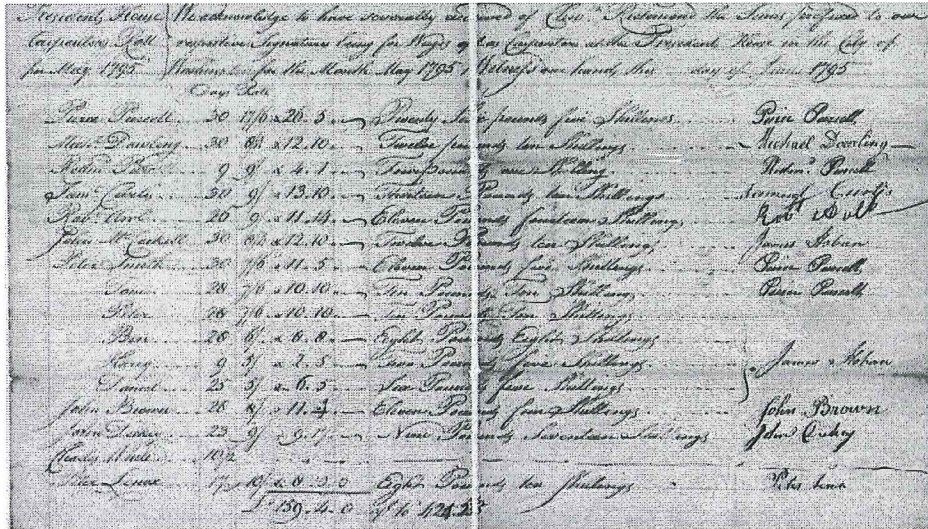
In 2005, Congress put together a task force to shed light on the subject. After months of research, the commission announced that while it would never be able to tell the full story of the slaves who built these buildings, there was no doubt that they were intricately involved in the work, Alexander Lane reported for *PolitiFact*.

“Indifference by earlier historians, poor record keeping, and the silence of the voiceless classes have impeded our ability in the twenty-first century to understand fully the contributions and privations of those who toiled over the seven decades from the first cornerstone laying to the day of emancipation in the District of Columbia,” Senate Historian Richard Baker and Chief of the House of Representatives Office of History and Preservation Kenneth Kato wrote in a foreword to the report.

From a geographical standpoint alone, it should come as no surprise that slave laborers were used to build the nation’s capital. Washington, D.C., was built on land ceded to the federal government by Virginia and Maryland, and at the time the Potomac region was home to almost half of the country’s 750,000 slaves, Lane reports.

While the White House Historical Association reports that the D.C. commissioners originally tried to bring cheap workers over from Europe to build the new capital, their recruitment efforts fell short. As a result, they forced local slaves to provide the labor, often renting workers from their masters for year-long periods of time.

“Slaves were likely involved in all aspects of construction, including carpentry, masonry, carting, rafting, plastering, glazing and painting, the task force reported,” Lane writes. “And slaves appear to have shouldered alone the grueling work of sawing logs and stones.”



The payroll to slaveowners shows that the government did not own slaves, but that it did hire them from their masters. Slave carpenters Ben, Daniel, and Peter were noted as owned by James Hoban.
 Photo by: (National Archives and Records Administration)

In addition to constructing the buildings, slaves also worked the quarries where the stones for the government buildings came from. Ironically, the Statue of Freedom that sits atop the Capitol dome was made with the help of Philip Reid, a man enslaved by sculptor Thomas Crawford, who was commissioned to build the statue. According to the Architect of the Capitol, Reid was paid \$1.25 a day by the federal government for his contributions.

“There is no telling how many stories that have been lost because, as a country, we didn’t value these stories,” historian and reporter Jesse J. Holland tells *Smithsonian.com*. “We’re always learning more about the presidents as we go forward and we’ll also learn more about the people who cooked their meals and dressed them.”

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How a Nearly Successful Slave Revolt Was Intentionally Lost to History

By **Marissa Fessenden**, www.smithsonianmag.com

January 8th, 2016

More than 500 slaves fought for their freedom in this oft-overlooked rebellion

Two hundred and five years ago, on the night of January 8, 1811, more than 500 enslaved people took up arms in one of the largest slave rebellions in U.S. history. They carried cane knives (used to harvest sugar cane), hoes, clubs and some guns as they marched toward New Orleans chanting “Freedom or Death,” writes Leon A. Waters for the *Zinn Education Project*.

The uprising began on the grounds of a plantation owned by Manuel Andry on the east side of the Mississippi, in a region called the German Coast of Louisiana. There, a slave driver named Charles Deslondes of Haitian descent, led a small band of slaves into the mansion of the plantation owners, where they wounded Andry and killed his son Gilbert. The group then armed themselves with muskets and ammunition from the plantation's basement. Some donned Andry's militia uniforms.

“Charles knew that the uniforms would lend the revolt authority, wedding their struggle with the imagery of the Haitian Revolution, whose leaders had famously adopted European military garb,” reports historian Daniel Rasmussen in his book *American Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt*, excerpted by *NPR*. Charles was inspired by the Haitian Revolution, which had succeeded less than a decade before and brought encouragement to those revolting in Louisiana that night.

After the attack on the Andry mansion, the group of revolutionaries started a two day march down River Road to New Orleans. Along the way they burned other plantations. The plan was to join with other revolutionaries in the city.

Official accounts at the time spun the fiction that the revolt was nearly a band of “brigands’ out to pillage and plunder,” writes Wendell Hassan Marsh for *The Root*. But this was the story of the victors— Rasmussen found through the course of his research, not the story of what happened. In reality, the revolt was carefully organized and it threatened to destabilize the institution of slavery in Louisiana.

To uncover the real story, Rasmussen pored through court records and plantation ledgers. “I realized that the revolt had been much larger—and come much closer to succeeding—than the planters and American officials let on,” he tells Littice Bacon-Blood of the *Times-Picayune*. “Contrary to their letters, which are the basis for most accounts of the revolt, the slave army posed an existential threat to white control over the city of New Orleans.”

Many rebels had copies of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man hidden in slave quarters and rebels had led smaller attacks in the region for years leading up to the revolt, Marsh writes for *The Root*. Among the ranks of the revolters included those with experience fighting in civil wars in Ghana and Angola. The plan was to establish a black state along the banks of the Mississippi. But as the marching group's numbers swelled to more than 500 strong, U.S. federal troops and the slave owners’ militia responded quickly.

On January 10, at Jacques Fortier’s plantation, near what is now River Town in Kenner, federal troops forced the revolt to turn back, Bacon-Blood reports for *The Times-Picayune*. With the militia blocking the revolutionaries’ retreat, that spelled the end of the revolt.

"It was really brutally put down," Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, an author and historian at Michigan State University, tells Bacon-Blood. "It was incredibly bloodthirsty in the way the elite put it down, cutting people into little pieces, displaying body parts." The brief battle killed dozens of the fighting slaves. The surviving leaders were rounded up to face a tribunal on January 13 and many were sentenced to death by firing squad.

"Their heads were cut off and placed on poles along the river in order to frighten and intimidate the other slaves," writes Waters for the *Zinn Project*. "This display of heads placed on spikes stretched over 60 miles."

The suppression of the extent of the rebellion kept the uprising from historical attention for decades. Hall calls it a kind of "historical amnesia" in the *Times-Picayune* piece. However on the 200th anniversary of the revolt, area museums and historical sites in Louisiana organized a year-long commemoration of the event. In time, the uprising may gain the recognition it deserves, thanks to the efforts of historians willing to sort the fiction from the reality.

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Part Two

Original Collection of Historical Retrospectives

SLAVERY AND THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The Electoral College has its roots in the peculiar institution.

At the constitutional convention in Philadelphia, the founders came together to discuss how to frame a government for the people by the people. Only the government they framed was for the people but by them and those like them: White, male, protestant and property owners. Slaves were considered property in the sense that they were owned by White men. When constructing government representation and the electing of said representatives, slave owners were concerned with the population advantage of Northern states that outlawed slavery.¹ More representation in Congress from the Northern states was a disadvantage in the eyes of the South. Convention attendees from the South were worried that representatives from the North would side with abolitionists and call for an end to slavery. To ease the fears of the Southern representatives, Northern representatives came up with a compromise; a three-fifths compromise.

The three-fifths compromise counted all slaves as three-fifths of a persons. Put another way, if a state had 5 slaves within its population, they could count 3 of those slaves towards the population. Concerning the election of members of the House of Representatives, the Constitution states in article 1, section 2, clause 3:

“Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.”²

The Electoral College was constructed with article 1, section 2, clause 3 as its foundation. According to article 2, section 1, clause 2, the Constitution states:

“Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and

¹ <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~kmporter/slaverytimeline.htm>

² <http://constitutionus.com/>

Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.”

The Electoral College wasn't meant to protect small states. It was created to protect slave owners and slow the South's eventual arrival to secession.

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Resources

- National Museum of African American Museum History and Culture—<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/educators>
- Smithsonian Education—http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/african_american_resources.html
- National Education Association—<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm>
- National Archives—<https://www.archives.gov/research/aic/reference/black-history.html>
- PBS.com—<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2015/01/black-history-month-resources-for-the-classroom/>
- WHYY—<http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/black-history-month-facts-and-films/#.WnDa8KinE2w>
- Zinn Education Project—<https://zinnedproject.org/?s=black+history>
- Atlanta Black Star—<http://atlantablackstar.com/category/global-black-history/>
- Library of Congress—<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/commemorative-observations/african-american.php>
- Anti-Defamation League—<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/black-history-month>

Thank You

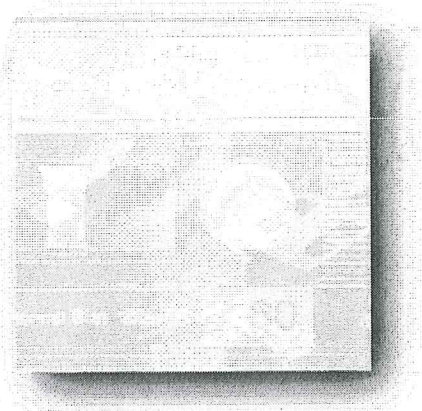
To the Ancestors,

For your relentless pursuit of freedom and for your righteous struggle for justice. The African Diaspora in the Americas is in debt to you for our strength, courage and resolve

To My Ancestors,

Thank you for enduring the whip, acres in Attapulgus, escape to the North and for South Jersey.

Thank you for America



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