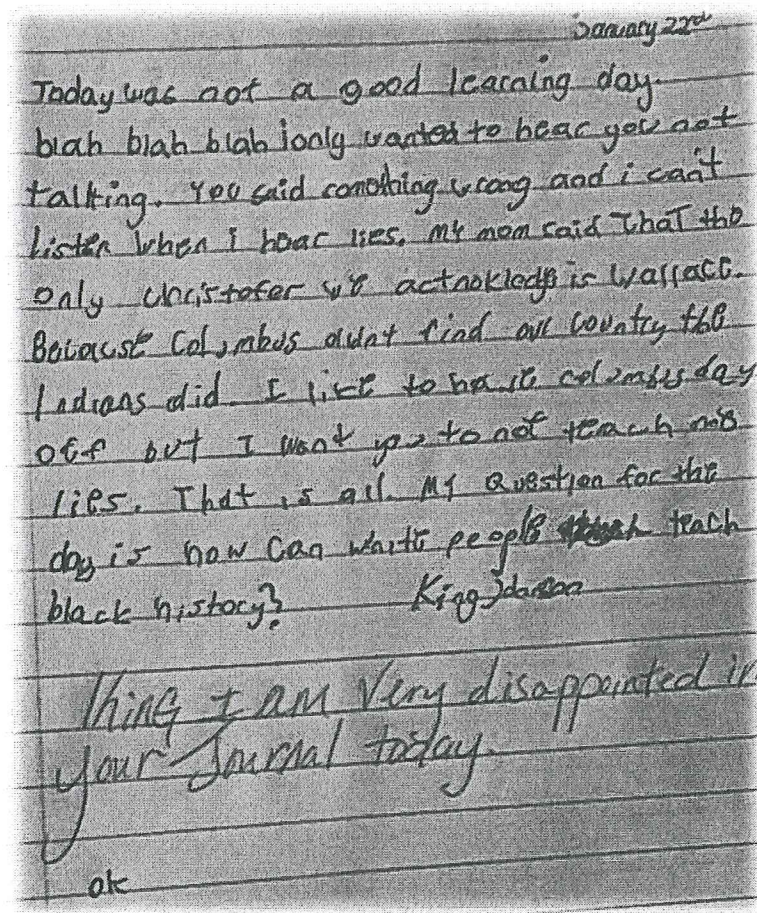


Tell the Truth

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

Week 5: February 26 - March 4, 2018



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

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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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- 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

Lincoln's Panama Plan

By **Rick Beard**, opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com

August 16th, 2012

Disunion follows the Civil War as it unfolded.

On Aug. 14 1862, Abraham Lincoln hosted a “Deputation of Free Negroes” at the White House, led by the Rev. Joseph Mitchell, commissioner of emigration for the Interior Department. It was the first time African Americans had been invited to the White House on a policy matter. The five men were there to discuss a scheme that even a contemporary described as a “simply absurd” piece of “charlatanism”: resettling emancipated slaves on a 10,000-acre parcel of land in present-day Panama.

Lincoln immediately began filibustering his guests with arguments so audacious that they retain the ability to shock a reader 150 years later. “You and we are different races,” he began, and “have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races.” The African-American race suffered greatly, he continued, “by living among us, while ours suffers from your presence.” Lincoln went on to suggest, “But for your race among us, there could not be war,” and “without the institution of Slavery and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence.” The only solution, he concluded, was “for us both ... to be separated.”

The president next turned to what he wanted from the five-man delegation. It was selfish, he suggested, that any of them should “come to the conclusion that you have nothing to do with the idea of going to a foreign country.” They must “do something to help those who are not so fortunate as yourselves,” for the colonization effort needed “intelligent colored men” who are “capable of thinking as white men, and not those who have been systematically

oppressed.” In asking them to “sacrifice something of your present comfort,” Lincoln invoked George Washington’s sacrifices during the American Revolution. He then asked for volunteers. “If I could find twenty-five able-bodied men, with a mixture of women and children,” he said, “I think I could make a successful commencement.”

It is hard to imagine what Lincoln’s guests, all well-educated, well-to-do leaders of Washington’s African-American community, made of this presidential monologue. Edward Thomas, the delegation’s chairman, merely promised to “hold a consultation and in a short time give an answer,” to which Lincoln replied: “Take your full time — no hurry at all.”

Lincoln, like several other antislavery Republicans and activists, had a long, deep attachment to colonization. Proponents of colonization included two of Lincoln’s political heroes, Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay, as well as John Marshall, James Madison, Daniel Webster and even Harriett Beecher Stowe. Since its founding in 1816, the American Colonization Society had sought to relocate free blacks to Africa, where, it was argued, they would enjoy greater freedom.

Dominated by planters and politicians from the Upper South whose commitment to slavery was suspect, the A.C.S. enjoyed only modest success: between 1816 and 1860, the organization transported around 11,000 blacks, most of them manumitted slaves, to Africa. By contrast, as many as 20,000 African-Americans left of their own accord during the American Revolution and thousands more found their way along the Underground Railroad to Canada during the first half of the 19th century.

“For many white Americans,” the historian Eric Foner has written, “colonization represented a middle ground between the radicalism of the abolitionists and the prospect of the United States’ existing permanently half

slave and half free.” Needless to say, few blacks agreed, seeing colonization efforts as, at best, a distraction from abolition and, at worst, a form of slavery by other means.

Opposition did nothing to diminish Lincoln’s belief in the merits of colonization. As early as April 10, 1861, two days before the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the new president met with Ambrose W. Thompson, head of the Chiriquí Improvement Association, to explore the creation of a colony for emigrants in Panama, where newly arrived emancipated slaves would earn a living by mining coal for the Navy. Gideon Welles, the secretary of the navy, opposed Lincoln’s scheme, but three other members of the cabinet — Interior Secretary Caleb Smith, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair and Attorney General Edward Bates — supported the plan.

As the war progressed, Union policy makers faced increased pressure to develop strategies for how to manage the growing number of slaves who fled to Union lines, were freed by the advancing federal armies or were emancipated by federal legislation, like the two confiscation acts or the abolition of slavery in the nation’s capital and the federal territories.

When Congress passed the District of Columbia Act emancipating slaves in Washington in April 1862, it also appropriated \$100,000 to resettle “such free persons of African descent now residing in said District, including those liberated by this act, as may desire to emigrate.” Two months later, Congress appropriated an additional \$500,000 to colonize slaves whose masters were disloyal to the United States. And on July 16, the House Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization recommended \$20 million for settling confiscated slaves beyond United States borders.

No doubt buoyed by these signs of Congressional support, Lincoln pushed forward with the Chiriquí plan and instructed Mitchell to arrange the Aug. 14 meeting. The five delegates included Edward Thomas, the delegation chair and

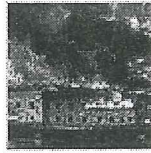
a prominent black intellectual and cultural leader; John F. Cook Jr., an Oberlin-educated teacher who ran a church-affiliated school; Benjamin McCoy, a teacher and the founder of an all-black congregation; John T. Costin, a prominent black Freemason; and Cornelius Clark, a member of the Social, Civil, and Statistical Association, an important black social and civic organization that had recently sought to banish several emigration promoters from Washington.

Mitchell's own views on the desirability of colonization mirrored those of the president he served. The delegates he recruited were not at all convinced. The men had been wary of the president's intentions and had agreed to attend only after adopting two resolutions criticizing the plans, as a way to provide political cover. Lincoln's strategy at the meeting prevented any of these men from voicing their own opinions on the matter of colonization, and the delegation never responded formally to Lincoln's plan.

Nevertheless, the publication of Lincoln's remarks at the meeting generated a furious response from all corners of the anti-slavery world. To Senator John P. Hale, a Radical Republican from New Hampshire, "The idea of removing the whole colored population from this country is one of the most absurd ideas that ever entered into the head of man or woman." Lincoln's treasury secretary, Salmon P. Chase, wrote in his diary, "How much better would be a manly protest against prejudice against color! — and a wise effort to give freemen homes in America!" On Aug. 22 William Lloyd Garrison editorialized that "the nation's four million slaves are as much the natives of this country as any of their oppressors," and two weeks later *The Pacific Appeal* noted that Lincoln's words "made it evident that he, his cabinet, and most of the people, care but little for justice to the negro." And Frederick Douglass said that "the President of the United States seems to possess an ever increasing passion for making himself appear silly and ridiculous, if nothing worse."

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Lincoln's hopes for the Chiriquí venture barely outlasted the summer. On Aug. 28 he accepted an offer from Kansas Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy to organize black emigration parties to Central America, and on Sept. 11 he authorized Caleb Smith to sign an agreement with Thompson advancing money to develop the mines. But on Sept. 24, two days after issuing the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln abruptly suspended Pomeroy's operation.

The Chiriquí venture was, in retrospect, doomed from the start. Ambrose Thompson's title to the coal lands proved questionable, and a report by the Smithsonian Institution's Joseph Henry found that the Chiriquí coal was almost worthless as fuel. Several Central American governments also opposed the plan: Luis Molina, a diplomat representing Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, characterized the plans as a thinly disguised effort to make Central America the depository for "a plague of which the United States desired to rid itself."

The failed venture hurt hundreds of people who had volunteered to go on the first trip. "Many of us have sold our furniture" and "have given up our little homes to go," wrote one emigrant. The uncertainty and delay are "reducing our scanty means" and "poverty in a still worse form than has yet met us may be our winter prospect." In response, Lincoln could do no more than ask for their forbearance. After issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, the president never again issued any public statements on colonization

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Sources: Frederick Douglass, "The President and His Speeches," Douglass Monthly, September 1862; Paul D. Escott, "What Shall We Do With the Negro? Lincoln, White Racism, and Civil War America"; Eric Foner, "Lincoln and Colonization" in "Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World"; Doris Kearns Goodwin, "Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln"; Harold Holzer, "Emancipating Lincoln: The Proclamation in Text, Context, and Memory"; Abraham Lincoln, "Address on Colonization to a Deputation of Negroes, August 14, 1862" in "Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln," vol. 5; Kate Masur, "The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal," in Civil War History, vol. 56, no. 2; James Oakes, "The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics"; Benjamin Quarles, "The Negro in the Civil War"; Michael Vorenberg, "Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Black Colonization," in Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, vol. 14, Issue 2, Summer 1993.

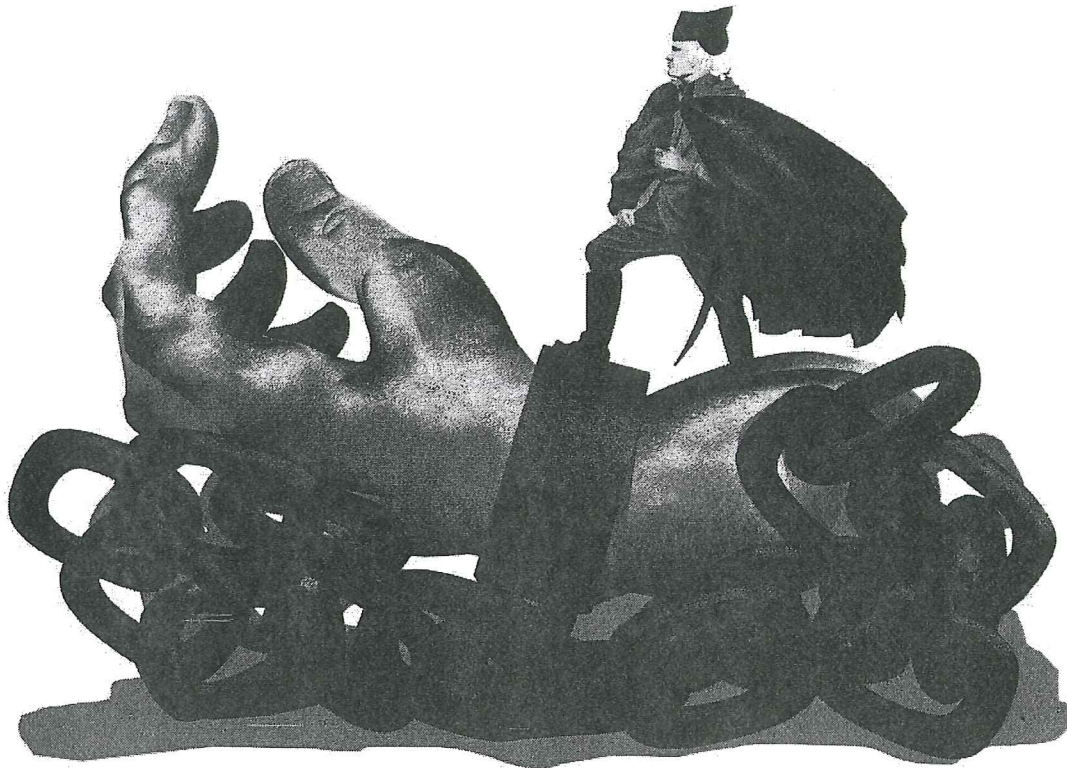
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George Washington, Slave Catcher

By Erica Armstrong Dunbar, www.nytimes.com

February 20th, 2015



Credit Brian Stauffer

Photo by: Brian Stauffer

AMID the car and mattress sales that serve as markers for Presidents' Day, Black History Month reminds Americans to focus on our common history. In 1926, the African-American historian Carter G. Woodson introduced Negro History Week as a commemoration built around the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Now February serves as a point of collision between presidential celebration and marginalized black history.

While Lincoln's role in ending slavery is understood to have been more nuanced than his reputation as the great emancipator would suggest, it has taken longer for us to replace stories about cherry trees and false teeth with narratives about George Washington's slaveholding.

When he was 11 years old, Washington inherited 10 slaves from his father's estate. He continued to acquire slaves — some through the death of family members and others through direct purchase. Washington's cache of enslaved people peaked in 1759 when he married the wealthy widow Martha Dandridge Custis. His new wife brought more than 80 slaves to the estate at Mount Vernon. On the eve of the American Revolution, nearly 150 souls were counted as part of the property there.

In 1789, Washington became the first president of the United States, a planter president who used and sanctioned black slavery. Washington needed slave labor to maintain his wealth, his lifestyle and his reputation. As he aged, Washington flirted with attempts to extricate himself from the murderous institution — “to get quit of Negroes,” as he famously wrote in 1778. But he never did.

During the president's two terms in office, the Washingtons relocated first to New York and then to Philadelphia. Although slavery had steadily declined in the North, the Washingtons decided that they could not live without it. Once settled in Philadelphia, Washington encountered his first roadblock to slave ownership in the region — Pennsylvania's Gradual Abolition Act of 1780.

The act began dismantling slavery, eventually releasing people from bondage after their 28th birthdays. Under the law, any slave who entered Pennsylvania with an owner and lived in the state for longer than six months would be set free automatically. This presented a problem for the new president.

Washington developed a canny strategy that would protect his property and allow him to avoid public scrutiny. Every six months, the president's slaves would travel back to Mount Vernon or would journey with Mrs. Washington outside the boundaries of the state. In essence, the Washingtons reset the clock. The president was secretive when writing to his personal secretary Tobias Lear in 1791: "I request that these Sentiments and this advise may be known to none but yourself & Mrs. Washington."

The president went on to support policies that would protect slave owners who had invested money in black lives. In 1793, Washington signed the first fugitive slave law, which allowed fugitives to be seized in any state, tried and returned to their owners. Anyone who harbored or assisted a fugitive faced a \$500 penalty and possible imprisonment.

Washington almost made it through his two terms in office without a major incident involving his slave ownership. On a spring evening in May of 1796, though, Ona Judge, the Washingtons' 22-year-old slave woman, slipped away from the president's house in Philadelphia. At 15, she had joined the Washingtons on their tour of Northern living. She was among a small cohort of nine slaves who lived with the president and his family in Philadelphia. Judge was Martha Washington's first attendant; she took care of Mrs. Washington's personal needs.

What prompted Judge's decision to bolt was Martha Washington's plan to give Judge away as a wedding gift to her granddaughter. Judge fled Philadelphia for Portsmouth, N.H., a city with 360 free black people, and virtually no slaves. Within a few months of her arrival, Judge married Jack Staines, a free black sailor, with whom she had three children. Judge and her offspring were vulnerable to slave catchers. They lived as free people, but legally belonged to Martha Washington.

Washington and his agents pursued Judge for three years, dispatching friends, officials and relatives to find and recapture her. Twelve weeks before his death, Washington was still actively pursuing her, but with the help of close allies, Judge managed to elude his slave-catching grasp.

George Washington died on Dec. 14, 1799. At the time of his death, 318 enslaved people lived at Mount Vernon and fewer than half of them belonged to the former president. Washington's will called for the emancipation of his slaves following the death of his wife. He completed in death what he had been unwilling to do while living, an act made easier because he had no biological children expecting an inheritance. Martha Washington lived until 1802 and upon her death all of her human property went to her inheritors. She emancipated none of her slaves.

When asked by a reporter if she had regrets about leaving the Washingtons, Judge responded, "No, I am free, and have, I trust, been made a child of God by the means." Ona Judge died on Feb. 25, 1848. She has earned a salute during the month of February.

Correction: February 20, 2015

An Op-Ed article on Monday referred imprecisely to Martha Washington's handling of George Washington's slaves after his death in 1799. While she did not emancipate her own slaves, as the essay noted, in 1801 she freed all of his slaves, as he had requested.

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'Nurse, Spy, Cook:' How Harriet Tubman Found Freedom Through Food

www.npr.org
April 27th, 2016



Harriet Tubman, who will soon be the first African-American to grace a U.S. currency note, spent her whole adult life raising money either to rescue slaves or help them start life afresh on free soil. While her abolitionist friends in the North were generous contributors to the cause, Tubman also self-funded her heroic raids through an activity she enjoyed and excelled at: cooking.

Tubman's role as a professional cook, which provided her with a much-needed source of money in her long and poverty-stricken life, has often been overlooked.

Tubman was the daughter of a cook. Her mother, Rit Ross, worked in the "big house" on the plantation in Dorchester County, Md., where Tubman was raised. An early food-related incident is testimony to the future General Tubman's strong-willed character. When she was about 6, Tubman was hired out to a neighboring farm - a common practice at the time - run by James and Susan Cook. When she got there, writes biographer Kate Clifford Larson in *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*, the hungry little girl was so nervous in the company of a white family, she refused the milk offered by her new mistress.

Article continues after sponsorship

"I was fond of milk as any young shoot," Tubman later said to her first biographer, Sarah Bradford. "But all the time I was there I stuck to it, that I didn't drink sweet milk."

She spent almost two unhappy years with the family, during which she was regularly flogged and finally sent home after she fell seriously ill.

In 1849, fearing she would be sold like her two older sisters had been, Tubman escaped to Philadelphia. She travelled to Baltimore and New Jersey, where in order to support herself and raise money to go back to rescue her family, she spent the summer of 1852 working as a cook in a resort at fashionable Cape May, N.J. She used her wages to pay for a raid that freed nine slaves.

On the roughly 13 raids Tubman conducted "down into Egypt" over the course of a decade, one of the many challenges she faced was keeping her party of rescued slaves fed on their long and arduous journey - often through snow, icy rain and swamps, with teams of armed men and dogs searching for the runaways. To keep babies from crying and attracting attention, she dosed their bread with laudanum to put them to sleep.

She may have been hailed as the Black Moses, but unlike that ancient prophet, she couldn't wave her staff and produce manna from heaven. Instead, she simply used her ingenuity. Once, after buying two chickens at a market, she almost came face to face with a former overseer. So she quickly released one of the chickens she was carrying, and pretended to give chase, creating a comic kerfuffle that allowed her to slip away unnoticed, even though, ironically, everyone's eyes were on her.

Otherwise, Tubman went foraging in the forest. "While the woods were rich with resources like sassafras, black cherry, and paw-paw, not everything was safe to eat," Clifford Larson told me. "One of the conductor's chief duties was finding nourishment - those slaves who didn't have the benefit of a conductor were on their own. One slave recalled wandering through the woods all day eating acorns."

What made foraging doubly difficult was that many slaves fled in the winter, shortly after Christmas. "They knew they would probably be sold off at the end of the year, so this was when they would have to run," says Robyn Affron of Adkins Arboretum, who worked on an audio tour of the Underground Railroad with Clifford Larson. "In winter in the mid-Atlantic, they had little or no food. If they were lucky they could seek refuge and food from the Quaker community. Sacks would be hidden in holes in trees with warm socks and hardtack biscuits."

But no matter how dire the situation, Tubman, who was deeply religious, operated on the unshakable belief that God would provide. An abstemious eater, she fasted on Fridays, a practice she learned from her father Ben Ross. He also taught her some invaluable survival skills.

"An expert lumberjack, Ross spent much time living off the land, navigating through forests, fields and waterways," says Clifford Larson. "He passed that knowledge to his gifted daughter, and she put it to good use while traveling along the Underground Railroad."

Tubman grew up on a farm, and through her life, she reached for earthy food metaphors to express herself. "I felt like a blackberry in a pail of milk," she said when she, an illiterate black woman, bid for and bought a parcel of land in Auburn, N.Y., that would eventually house the Harriet Tubman Home for Aged and Infirm Negroes.

"I threw him acrossed my shoulder like a bag o' meal and took him away out of there," was how she described her audacious 1860 rescue of a fugitive slave named Charles Nalle in Troy, N.Y., in the midst of a whirl of police batons and bullets.

And in response to a group called the African Civilization Society, whose mission it was to repatriate all Negroes - free and slave alike - to Africa, Tubman related the parable of a farmer who sowed onions and garlic on his land, but when he found his cow's butter too strong and unsellable, returned to planting clover. By then it was too late - the wind had blown the onions and garlic all over the field. White people, she said, had got slaves to do their hard work for them, but now that their presence didn't suit them, they wanted to pack them off to Africa. "But they can't do it," she said in a public speech in Boston that drew loud applause. "We're rooted here, and they can't pull us up."

During the Civil War, Tubman worked as a nurse and a spy, but supplemented her income by running an eating-house in Beaufort. There, she sold Union soldiers root beer, pie and ginger bread, which she baked during the night, after her day's work. When she put in a claim for a Civil War pension, her role was described as "nurse, spy and cook."

Tubman's earliest childhood memory had to do with food. She recalled how, when she had to babysit her younger brother - she was barely 4 or 5 years old herself - she used to "cut a fat chunk of pork and toast it on the coals and put it in his mouth. One night he went to sleep with that hanging out, and when my mother come home she thought I'd done kill him. I nursed that there baby till he was so big I couldn't tote him any mo'."

Indeed, the dramatic arc of Tubman's life story, from slave to national hero, can be captured in her tragicomic relationship to pigs. Caught stealing a lump of sugar at the Cooks' house, she saw the mistress reach for the whip, and fled to a neighboring farm. For the next five days, she hid in a pigpen and fought with "an ole sow, an' perhaps eight or ten little pigs" for the potato peelings and other pigswill. Finally, starved and afraid of the belligerent mother pig, she went back. James Cook whipped her.

Over three decades later, when Tubman made history by leading three Union gunboats in the famous 1863 Combahee River Raid that freed 700 slaves in South Carolina, she described how the throngs of slave women came streaming towards "Lincoln's gunboats" with their babies, baskets, chickens and pigs.

"I nebber see such a sight," she is quoted saying in Bradford's 1869 biography. "We laughed, an' laughed, an' laughed. Here you'd see a woman wid a pail on her head, rice a smokin' in it jus' as she'd taken it from de fire, young one hangin' on behind, one han' roun' her forehead to hold on, 'tother han' diggin' into de rice-pot, eatin' wid all its might; hold of her dress two or three more; down her back a bag wid a pig in it."

One woman brought along two pigs, one white, one black. All three were taken on board, and the pigs promptly christened after a Confederate Civil War general and the president of the Confederate States of America: "de white pig Beauregard, and de black pig Jeff Davis."

Nina Martyris is a freelance journalist based in Knoxville, Tenn.

The Black Woman And The Black Church That Birthed Rock Music

By **Mtv News Staff**, www.mtv.com

March 16th, 2016

By **William C. Anderson**

"The Sanctified Church is a protest against the high-brow tendency in Negro Protestant congregations as the Negroes gain more education and wealth." -Zora Neale Hurston, The Sanctified Church

When Sister Rosetta Tharpe was born on March 20, 1915, black America was in the midst of a populist religious awakening. A decade earlier, in 1906, the Azusa Street Revival birthed the Pentecostal church movement in Los Angeles, setting off sparks around the nation. This was the foundation of a global Pentecostal movement, a spiritual reinvigoration of conviction that's still continuing to this day. The *Los Angeles Times* greeted this development with perplexed racist diatribes, labeling it a fanatical sect engaging in a "Weird Babel of Tongues." These particular churchgoers were calling themselves "saved and sanctified" while refusing to be associated with the oppressive confines of the denominations they had abandoned for the Pentecostal church. The musical styles that were birthed out of what many have come to know as the Sanctified church or Holiness church would later be adapted and appropriated to create blues, jazz, and rock - the very bedrock of American music.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe embodied the explosion that was black music at the turn of the last century. A stunning black woman of 23 years of age, just beginning her career with a rich voice, she sang gospel music while accompanying herself on electric guitar. Tharpe, in her time, was a vital presence in American

music, her playing as crucial and influential as T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters. The difference was that she was mostly playing in churches, to the devoted critical ears of the black sanctuary.

Not much is known about Tharpe's father, who was said to be a talented singer. Her mother was a learned musician who greatly influenced Rosetta - but the greater influencer of both Rosetta and her mother was the Holiness Church of God in Christ (COGIC), for which Rosetta's mother was an evangelist. The city of Cotton Plant, Arkansas, where Rosetta was born, is only an hour from the musical mecca of Memphis, where the COGIC was based. This area of the South, along with the Mississippi Delta, forms a Bermuda Triangle of black music where heads may get lost in the rapture. Tharpe's upbringing here is crucial in context to the sound she perfected and brought to her secular audience.

As a child, Rosetta played various instruments at church and in her travels, accompanying her mother. Multi-instrumentalists are common in the Holiness church, which fully embraces music as a part of its doctrine. My own father, who is an elder in the church, regularly quotes the 150th Psalm's third verse: "Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!" Services offer praise to the heavens with guitar, drums, and outcrying, boisterous vocals that are recognized the world over - a sound whose excited dynamics clearly informed Tharpe's development as an artist.

Rosetta's secular career venturing outside the church began to blossom in 1938, when she moved to New York with her mother after her first marriage to a COGIC preacher came to an end. That year, she began recording for Decca Records and released multiple hits: "My Man and I," "The Lonesome Road," "That's All." These songs positioned her as something that other gospel artists traditionally hadn't been — aligning her with jazz and blues musicians as a talented contemporary and available collaborator. This would alienate her

from many churchgoers, who objected to this sort of integration into what's called "worldly" music, as well as rumors of her bisexuality. Yet concerns over the prurience of her work did little to impede her career.

Rosetta would perform at the world famous Cotton Club and Carnegie Hall, singing songs such as her major hit "Rock Me," which had gospel lyrics begging, "Wash my soul with water from on high," and an almost secular delivery of the line "Rock me in the cradle of thy love." She packed clubs and concert venues while delivering showy efficiency with her superb guitar picking. In archival footage of her performances, her eyes often seem transfixed, gazing above her audience, perhaps witnessing something everyone else cannot see. Occasional twitches of her neck, hunching of her shoulders, and kicking her feet up as if she's pushing dirt at Satan creeping up behind her are staples of the Holiness church. Her performative movement in these clips resembles the COGIC sisters and mothers who moved, danced, and shouted like her while "catching the holy ghost" or "getting the spirit." This is when churchgoers are overtaken by the spirit of God, known as the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, and become overwhelmed by the emotion of their spirituality. During these moments people often "speak in tongues," which is a principal expression of the Pentecostal movement that separates them from other faiths.

Zora Neale Hurston wrote about this this in her epic ethnography, *The Sanctified Church*:

There is the expression known as "shouting" which is nothing more than a continuation of the African "Possession" by the gods. The gods possess the body of the worshipper and he or she is supposed to know nothing of their actions until the god decamps. This is still prevalent in most negro protestant churches and is universal in the Sanctified churches. They protest against the more highbrow churches' efforts to stop it. It must be noted that the sermon in these churches is not the set thing that is in the other protestant churches. It is loose and formless and is in reality merely a framework upon which to hang more songs. Every opportunity to introduce new rhythm is eagerly seized upon. The whole movement of the Sanctified church is a rebirth of song-making!

The rock music that Sister Rosetta Tharpe created is the unwanted child of sanctification and the Holiness church. As black artists have often done, she took this sound beyond the church walls where it was conceived. After all, dancing, singing, racial integration, black protest and many of the sounds we've come to know as blues or rock were already happening in the Holiness church long before the secular genres that followed were established. Elvis Presley and his white contemporaries knew this well; many of them attended black churches and later copied what they were hearing. Too often, writers and historians have located the birth of rock and roll within other voices, without explicitly naming this black woman as the musical genius and crucial originator that she was. This only serves to undermine her talent and efficacy, and the exquisiteness of black history.

Tharpe toured relentlessly, performing with jazz and blues artists in both secular and religious settings. She went back to recording more gospel-themed music in the late 1940s. In 1947, she started a singing duet with fellow gospel performer Marie Knight (also from COGIC), and together they recorded traditional hymns such as "Oh When I Come to the End of My Journey" and

gospel tunes including "Up Above My Head." She experimented with explicitly secular blues music in the early 1950s, which turned out to alienate her ever further from her fan base. She would remarry again and continue touring throughout her life in the '60s and on into the early '70s. While she was on a blues tour in Europe with Muddy Waters in 1970, Tharpe would develop health complications that hastened her death. She died on October 9, 1973 at the age of 58.

It's important to remember Tharpe. She has historically been under-recognized, as women often are. It would serve us well to attend her contributions to music and not further discredit her in death. Though she graced many musical icons with her presence, her name remains much less known than it should be. Sister Rosetta Tharpe was the product of a church that helped her craft style, and a race and gender that has to be twice as good at everything to be recognized as good at all. She did all this during a time when things were much harder. If we look back on her life, we'll be obliged to honor a black woman who took the world where it had never been.

