



ISSUE IN FOCUS

U.S. EMBASSY LINCOLN RESOURCE CENTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

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"Progress in America has not come easily, but has resulted from the collective efforts of generations. For centuries, African American men and women have persevered to enrich our national life and bend the arc of history toward justice. From resolute Revolutionary War soldiers fighting for liberty to the hardworking students of today reaching for horizons their ancestors could only have imagined, African Americans have strengthened our Nation by leading reforms, overcoming obstacles, and breaking down barriers. During National African American History Month, we celebrate the vast contributions of African Americans to our Nation's history and identity.

This year's theme, "African Americans and the Civil War," invites us to reflect on 150 years since the start of the Civil War and on the patriots of a young country who fought for the promises of justice and equality laid out by our forebearers." [Full text of President Barack Obama's Proclamation on African American History Month 2011.](#)

LEGACY OF STRUGGLE AND TRIUMPH

[Celebrating Black History Month Series – White House](#)

The White House celebrates Black History Month 2011 by highlighting contributions of African Americans work is helping advance the President's goal of winning the future.

[Ursula Burns' Path to Success in the Fortune 500](#)

There are four African Americans serving as chief executives in the Fortune 500, *Fortune* magazine's ranking of the top U.S. companies. Among this small group of trailblazers, Ursula Burns of Xerox Corporation has the distinction of being the only black female to serve as the chief executive of a Fortune 500 company.

[Black History Month Honors Legacy of Struggle and Triumph](#)

Each February, Black History Month honors the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles — slavery, prejudice, poverty — as well as their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life.

NOTABLE AFRICAN AMERICANS

[Adam Clayton Powell, Jr](#) - An unapologetic activist, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., left his mark on Congress during his 12 terms in the House of Representatives. Viewed by his Harlem constituents as a dedicated crusader for civil rights, Powell earned the loyalty and respect of many African Americans with his confrontational approach to racial discrimination.

[Justice for All: The Legacy of Thurgood Marshall](#) - Thurgood Marshall stands as one of the great American heroes of the 20th century: He was the attorney who ended legal segregation in the United States with his victory in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and the U.S. Supreme Court justice who championed expanded rights for every individual American -- minorities, women, and immigrants, among many others.

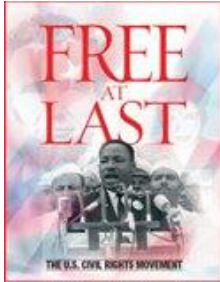
[Beyond Dr. King](#) - This living book profiles a less recognized African American figure of importance, introducing figures like Claudette Colvin (the 15 year old African American woman who refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus months before Rosa Parks did the same thing), Bishop Richard Allen, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Read stories of African American achievement and check back on the first day of each month to read new profiles of inspiring African Americans.

FUN FACTS

[African Americans of the Senate](#) - The role of African Americans in Senate history is not limited to those who served in elected office. In fact, one of the earliest and most enduring roles of African Americans in Senate history came with the construction of the U.S. Capitol.

[Facts for Features: Black History Month](#) - Collections of statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau's demographic and economic subject area intended to commemorate Black History Month.

ONLINE READING



[Free At Last - The U.S. Civil Rights Movement](#) - This book recounts how African-American slaves and their descendants struggled to win — both in law and in practice — the civil rights enjoyed by other Americans. It is a story of dignified persistence and struggle, a story that produced great heroes and heroines, and one that ultimately succeeded by forcing Americans to confront squarely the shameful gap between their universal principles of equality and justice and the inequality, injustice, and oppression faced by millions of their fellow citizens.

[The South and Slavery](#) - The South's economy relied on the labor of slaves, a fundamental contradiction of the principle of equality on which America was founded. Congress outlawed the importation of slaves in 1808 but not slavery itself, and the domestic slave population kept expanding.

PHOTO GALLERIES



[Visionaries: African Americans Tell Their Stories](#)

[The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)



[The U.S. Civil Rights Movement](#)



[Black Economic Empowerment in America](#)

[Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)

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