

HIDDEN FIGURES ON THE ANACOSTIA RIVER TRAIL

ANACOSTIA SKATE PAVILION

FEB. 22 @NOON

How It Works:

18 Historical Figures: Pictures of notable African American figures will be posted throughout the park.

Match the Clues: Use the clues provided to identify each figure and match them to their photo.

Learn & Engage: Discover the impact and contributions of these trailblazers while enjoying the beauty of the park.



DC TRAIL RANGERS
WABA & DDOT URBAN FORESTRY

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BENJAMIN BANNEKER

BORN: NOVEMBER 7, 1731 — DIED: OCTOBER 19, 1806

BENJAMIN BANNEKER WAS A SELF-TAUGHT MATHEMATICIAN, ASTRONOMER, SURVEYOR, AND ALMANAC AUTHOR WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING WERE GROUNDBREAKING FOR HIS TIME. BORN A FREE AFRICAN AMERICAN IN MARYLAND, BANNEKER DEMONSTRATED EXCEPTIONAL INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES FROM AN EARLY AGE, EXCELLING IN MATHEMATICS AND MECHANICS DESPITE LIMITED FORMAL EDUCATION.

ONE OF HIS MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS WAS HIS ROLE IN SURVEYING THE LAND THAT WOULD BECOME WASHINGTON, D.C.. IN 1791, HE WAS APPOINTED BY MAJOR ANDREW ELLICOTT TO ASSIST IN MAPPING OUT THE NATION'S NEW CAPITAL, SHOWCASING HIS EXPERTISE IN ASTRONOMY AND LAND SURVEYING.

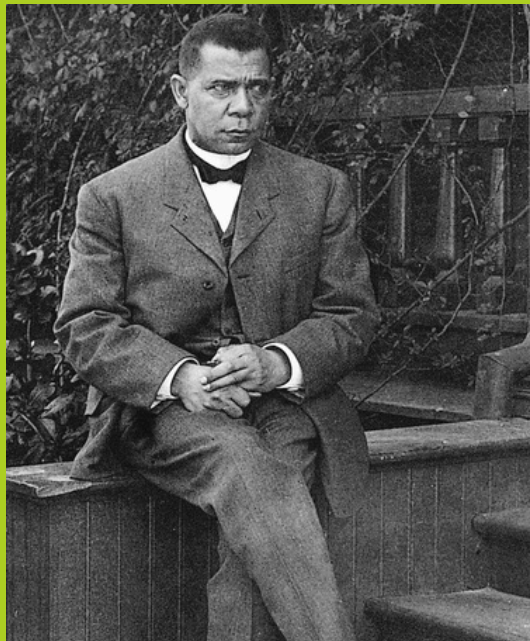
BANNEKER IS PERHAPS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ANNUAL ALMANACS, PUBLISHED FROM 1792 TO 1797. THESE ALMANACS CONTAINED ACCURATE ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATIONS, WEATHER PREDICTIONS, AND OTHER USEFUL AGRICULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC DATA. HIS WORK IN ASTRONOMY ALLOWED HIM TO SUCCESSFULLY PREDICT SOLAR AND LUNAR ECLIPSES, EARNING HIM WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION.

BEYOND HIS SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS, BANNEKER WAS ALSO A STRONG ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY. IN 1791, HE WROTE A FAMOUS LETTER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, CHALLENGING HIM ON THE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE IDEALS OF LIBERTY AND THE EXISTENCE OF SLAVERY. IN THE LETTER, BANNEKER URGED JEFFERSON TO RECOGNIZE THE INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS AND TO WORK TOWARD THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY. HIS ELOQUENT ARGUMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE MADE HIM ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

BANNEKER'S LEGACY AS A SCIENTIST, INVENTOR, AND ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE REMAINS AN INSPIRATION. HIS ABILITY TO OVERCOME RACIAL BARRIERS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EARLY FOUNDATION OF THE UNITED STATES HIGHLIGHTS HIS ENDURING IMPACT ON AMERICAN HISTORY.

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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

BORN: APRIL 5, 1856 — DIED: NOVEMBER 14, 1915

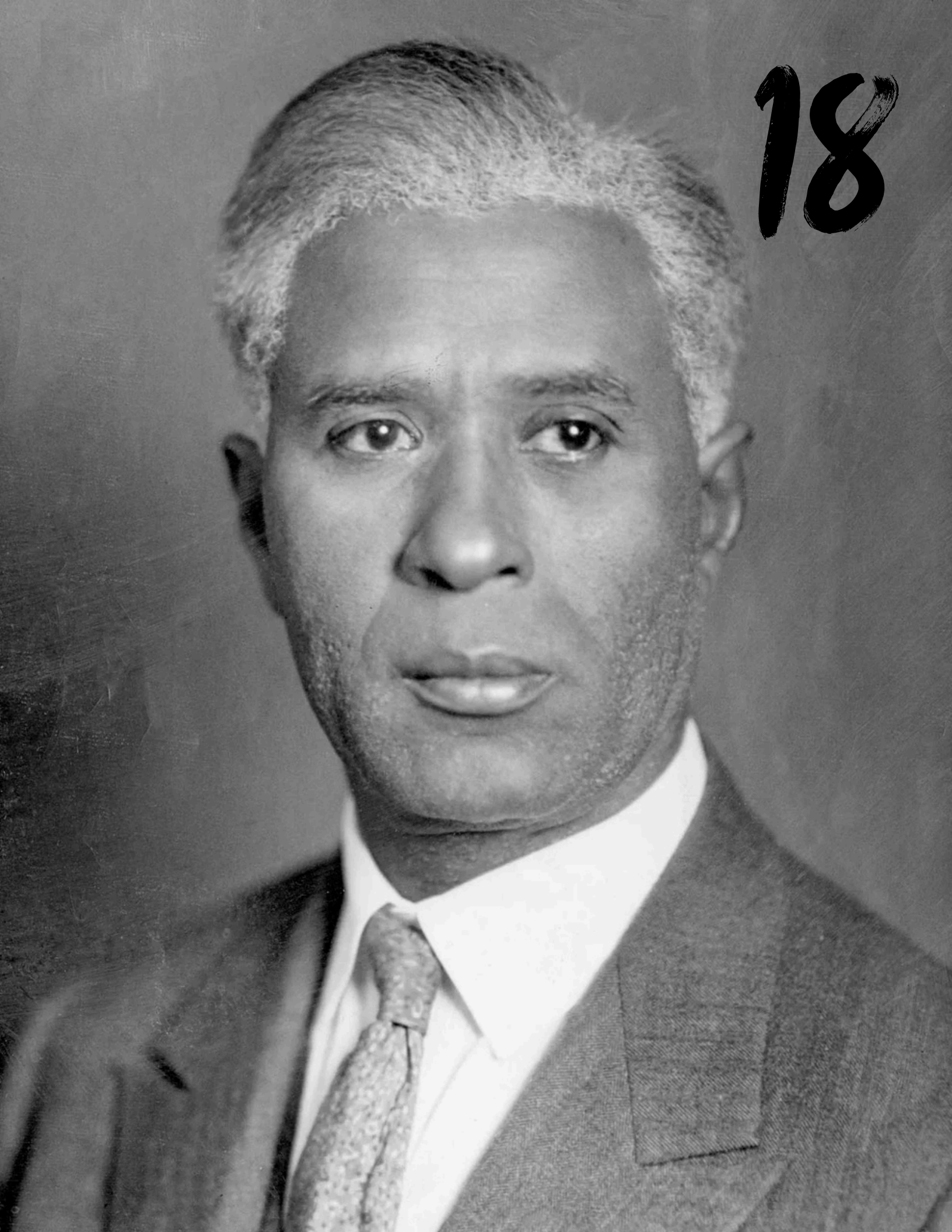
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON WAS AN EDUCATOR, AUTHOR, AND POLITICAL LEADER WHO PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ADVANCING AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES. BORN INTO SLAVERY IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, HE EXPERIENCED THE HARDSHIPS OF ENSLAVEMENT FIRSTHAND BUT, FOLLOWING EMANCIPATION, DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO EDUCATION AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

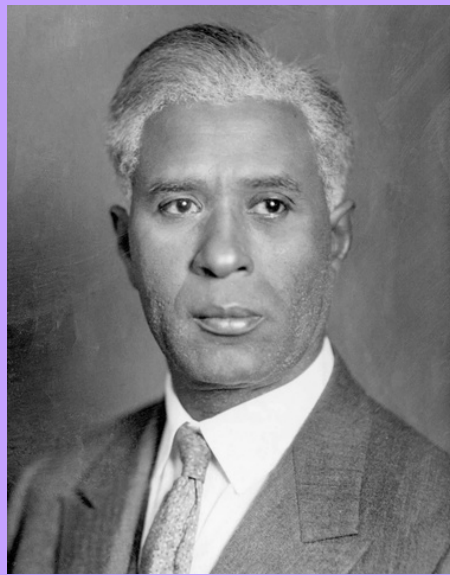
WASHINGTON IS BEST KNOWN AS THE FOUNDER OF THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE (NOW TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY) IN ALABAMA, AN INSTITUTION THAT PROVIDED VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO BLACK STUDENTS. HE BELIEVED THAT EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS WERE THE KEYS TO RACIAL UPLIFT AND WORKED TIRELESSLY TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS THROUGH PRACTICAL SKILLS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY. A WIDELY RESPECTED FIGURE, WASHINGTON BECAME AN INFLUENTIAL ADVISER TO U.S. PRESIDENTS, INCLUDING THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT. HOWEVER, HIS PHILOSOPHY OF RACIAL UPLIFT—ENCOURAGING BLACK AMERICANS TO FOCUS ON ECONOMIC STABILITY BEFORE SEEKING FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS—WAS MET WITH CRITICISM FROM OTHER BLACK LEADERS, INCLUDING W.E.B. DU BOIS, WHO ADVOCATED FOR IMMEDIATE CIVIL RIGHTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

DESPITE THESE IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES, WASHINGTON'S IMPACT ON BLACK EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT REMAINS PROFOUND. HE AUTHORED SEVERAL BOOKS, INCLUDING HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY *UP FROM SLAVERY*, WHICH DETAILED HIS JOURNEY FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE.

HIS LEGACY CONTINUES TO BE CELEBRATED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION, SELF-RELIANCE, AND ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS. THE INSTITUTIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES HE HELPED ESTABLISH CONTINUE TO SHAPE DISCUSSIONS ON RACIAL EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT TODAY.

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GARRETT MORGAN

BORN: MARCH 4, 1877 – DIED: JULY 27, 1963

GARRETT MORGAN WAS AN INVENTOR, BUSINESSMAN, AND COMMUNITY LEADER WHOSE INNOVATIONS SAVED LIVES AND SHAPED MODERN TECHNOLOGY. BORN IN CLAYSVILLE, KENTUCKY, TO FORMERLY ENSLAVED PARENTS, MORGAN DISPLAYED A NATURAL TALENT FOR MECHANICS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING FROM A YOUNG AGE.

AMONG HIS MOST NOTABLE INVENTIONS WAS THE THREE-POSITION TRAFFIC SIGNAL, PATENTED IN 1923, WHICH INTRODUCED THE YELLOW CAUTION LIGHT. THIS REVOLUTIONARY DESIGN IMPROVED TRAFFIC SAFETY AND LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR MODERN TRAFFIC SIGNALS USED WORLDWIDE. BEFORE THIS, TRAFFIC SIGNALS ONLY HAD "STOP" AND "GO," LEADING TO FREQUENT COLLISIONS. MORGAN'S DESIGN INTRODUCED A WARNING PHASE, PREVENTING ACCIDENTS AND ENSURING SAFER ROADS.

ANOTHER OF MORGAN'S LIFE-SAVING INVENTIONS WAS THE SAFETY HOOD, A DEVICE THAT BECAME THE PROTOTYPE FOR MODERN GAS MASKS. INITIALLY DESIGNED FOR FIREFIGHTERS, THE MASK GAINED NATIONAL ATTENTION IN 1916 WHEN MORGAN USED IT TO RESCUE WORKERS TRAPPED IN A COLLAPSED TUNNEL BENEATH LAKE ERIE. DESPITE ITS EFFECTIVENESS, RACIAL PREJUDICE LED SOME COMPANIES TO HESITATE IN BUYING A BLACK MAN'S INVENTION, FORCING MORGAN TO HIRE WHITE ACTORS TO DEMONSTRATE THE MASK'S BENEFITS.

IN ADDITION TO HIS INVENTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS, MORGAN WAS A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR AND ADVOCATE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN RIGHTS. HE FOUNDED THE CLEVELAND CALL, ONE OF THE CITY'S FIRST BLACK NEWSPAPERS, AND ACTIVELY SUPPORTED CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE NAACP. HIS WORK EARNED HIM NUMEROUS ACCOLADES, AND HIS INVENTIONS CONTINUE TO IMPACT EVERYDAY LIFE. GARRETT MORGAN'S LEGACY AS A BRILLIANT INNOVATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER ENDURES, SHOWCASING THE POWER OF PERSEVERANCE AND INGENUITY.

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LANGSTON HUGHES

BORN: FEBRUARY 1, 1902 — DIED: MAY 22, 1967

LANGSTON HUGHES WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WRITERS AND THINKERS OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE, A CULTURAL MOVEMENT THAT CELEBRATED AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. BORN IN JOPLIN, MISSOURI, HUGHES SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE CAPTURING THE EXPERIENCES, STRUGGLES, AND TRIUMPHS OF BLACK LIFE IN AMERICA THROUGH POETRY, ESSAYS, PLAYS, AND NOVELS.

HIS FIRST MAJOR POEM, THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS, PUBLISHED IN 1921, ESTABLISHED HIM AS A LITERARY FORCE. HIS POETRY, OFTEN WRITTEN IN A JAZZ-LIKE RHYTHM, REFLECTED THE EVERYDAY STRUGGLES AND JOYS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS. HIS WORKS, INCLUDING MONTAGE OF A DREAM DEFERRED AND THE WEARY BLUES, SHOWCASED HIS TALENT FOR BLENDING SOCIAL ACTIVISM WITH LITERARY ARTISTRY.

BEYOND POETRY, HUGHES WAS A PLAYWRIGHT, ESSAYIST, AND COLUMNIST, USING HIS WORK TO HIGHLIGHT RACIAL INJUSTICE AND ADVOCATE FOR EQUALITY. HE WAS A PROMINENT VOICE AGAINST RACIAL SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION, AND HIS WRITING PROVIDED A POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.

LANGSTON HUGHES' LEGACY ENDURES AS A SYMBOL OF ARTISTIC BRILLIANCE AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS. HIS ABILITY TO CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF BLACK CULTURE AND ITS RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY HAS MADE HIM A LASTING LITERARY ICON IN AMERICAN HISTORY.





IDA B. WELLS

BORN: JULY 16, 1862 — DIED: MARCH 25, 1931

IDA B. WELLS WAS A PIONEERING JOURNALIST, EDUCATOR, AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST BEST KNOWN FOR HER FEARLESS FIGHT AGAINST LYNCHING AND RACIAL INJUSTICE. BORN INTO SLAVERY IN HOLLY SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI, DURING THE CIVIL WAR, WELLS GREW UP IN A SOCIETY DEEPLY MARKED BY SEGREGATION AND RACIAL VIOLENCE. DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, SHE PURSUED EDUCATION AND BECAME ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BLACK WOMEN OF HER TIME.

WELLS BEGAN HER CAREER AS A TEACHER BUT QUICKLY TRANSITIONED INTO JOURNALISM AFTER EXPERIENCING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION FIRSTHAND. AS THE EDITOR OF THE MEMPHIS FREE SPEECH AND HEADLIGHT, SHE USED INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING TO EXPOSE THE WIDESPREAD LYNCHING OF BLACK AMERICANS, CHALLENGING THE FALSE NARRATIVES THAT OFTEN JUSTIFIED SUCH BRUTALITY. HER GROUNDBREAKING PAMPHLET, SOUTHERN HORRORS: LYNCH LAW IN ALL ITS PHASES (1892), DOCUMENTED THE TRUTH ABOUT LYNCHING AND CALLED FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF RACIAL VIOLENCE.

FACING VIOLENT THREATS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HER NEWSPAPER OFFICE, WELLS WAS FORCED TO FLEE MEMPHIS BUT CONTINUED HER ADVOCACY WORK ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD. SHE CO-FOUNDED SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN (NACW) AND LATER PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE FOUNDING OF THE NAACP.

A STAUNCH ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, WELLS FOUGHT FOR BLACK WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN THE BROADER WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT, CHALLENGING BOTH RACISM AND SEXISM WITHIN ACTIVIST CIRCLES. SHE CONTINUED TO WRITE, ORGANIZE PROTESTS, AND DEMAND JUSTICE UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1931.

HER LEGACY AS A FEARLESS JOURNALIST AND CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER ENDURES, INSPIRING GENERATIONS TO USE THE POWER OF TRUTH AND ACTIVISM TO FIGHT INJUSTICE.

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JAMES BALDWIN

BORN: AUGUST 2, 1924 — DIED: DECEMBER 1, 1987

JAMES BALDWIN WAS A GROUNDBREAKING NOVELIST, ESSAYIST, AND SOCIAL CRITIC WHOSE WORK EXPLORED THEMES OF RACE, IDENTITY, AND INJUSTICE IN AMERICA. BORN IN HARLEM, NEW YORK, BALDWIN GREW UP IN A WORLD SHAPED BY RACIAL INEQUALITY, AN EXPERIENCE THAT PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCED HIS WRITING. HIS LITERARY CAREER BEGAN IN THE 1940S, AND HE QUICKLY BECAME A LEADING VOICE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT THROUGH HIS ESSAYS, NOVELS, AND PUBLIC SPEAKING. HIS WORKS, INCLUDING *GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN*, *THE FIRE NEXT TIME*, AND *GIOVANNI'S ROOM*, CONFRONTED AMERICA'S RACIAL STRUGGLES AND PROVIDED SEARING CRITIQUES OF SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION. BALDWIN'S ABILITY TO INTERTWINE PERSONAL NARRATIVES WITH POLITICAL DISCOURSE MADE HIM ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WRITERS OF HIS TIME.

BALDWIN WAS ALSO A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS, AND HIS WRITING OFTEN ADDRESSED THE COMPLEXITIES OF SEXUALITY AND MASCULINITY, PARTICULARLY WITHIN BLACK COMMUNITIES. HIS ACTIVISM EXTENDED BEYOND THE PAGE—HE PARTICIPATED IN CIVIL RIGHTS PROTESTS, ENGAGED IN DEBATES WITH PROMINENT LEADERS LIKE MALCOLM X AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., AND USED HIS PLATFORM TO CHALLENGE INJUSTICE WHEREVER HE SAW IT.

SPENDING MUCH OF HIS LIFE AS AN EXPATRIATE IN FRANCE, BALDWIN CONTINUED TO INFLUENCE GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS ON RACE AND IDENTITY. HIS LEGACY AS A FEARLESS WRITER AND ACTIVIST REMAINS A GUIDING LIGHT FOR THOSE ADVOCATING FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE TODAY.

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JOHN LEWIS

BORN: FEBRUARY 21, 1940 — DIED: JULY 17, 2020

JOHN LEWIS WAS A LEGENDARY CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER, CONGRESSMAN, AND ACTIVIST WHOSE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE SHAPED THE MODERN FIGHT FOR EQUALITY IN AMERICA. BORN TO SHARECROPPERS IN TROY, ALABAMA, LEWIS GREW UP WITNESSING THE INJUSTICES OF SEGREGATION, WHICH INSPIRED HIS LIFELONG DEDICATION TO ACTIVISM.

AS A YOUNG MAN, LEWIS BECAME DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, SERVING AS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL 13 FREEDOM RIDERS WHO CHALLENGED SEGREGATION IN INTERSTATE TRAVEL. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SNCC), HE ORGANIZED SIT-INS AND PROTESTS, PLAYING A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE.

ONE OF THE DEFINING MOMENTS OF HIS ACTIVISM CAME ON MARCH 7, 1965, WHEN LEWIS LED OVER 600 MARCHERS ACROSS THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE IN SELMA, ALABAMA, DURING THE HISTORIC BLOODY SUNDAY MARCH FOR VOTING RIGHTS. THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE BRUTALLY ATTACKED BY STATE TROOPERS, BUT THEIR COURAGE GALVANIZED NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965, A LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

LEWIS CONTINUED HIS ADVOCACY AS A U.S. CONGRESSMAN, SERVING GEORGIA'S 5TH DISTRICT FOR OVER 30 YEARS. HE CHAMPIONED CAUSES SUCH AS VOTING RIGHTS, HEALTHCARE, AND RACIAL JUSTICE, EMBODYING THE PHILOSOPHY OF "GOOD TROUBLE"—THE IDEA THAT STANDING UP AGAINST INJUSTICE IS A MORAL DUTY. FOR HIS LIFELONG DEDICATION TO JUSTICE, LEWIS RECEIVED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM IN 2011. HIS LEGACY LIVES ON AS A SYMBOL OF COURAGE, ACTIVISM, AND THE ONGOING FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS.

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KATHERINE JOHNSON

BORN: AUGUST 26, 1918 — DIED: FEBRUARY 24, 2020

KATHERINE JOHNSON WAS A PIONEERING MATHEMATICIAN WHOSE GROUNDBREAKING CALCULATIONS HELPED LAUNCH THE UNITED STATES INTO SPACE. AS ONE OF NASA'S LEADING MATHEMATICIANS, SHE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE EARLY SPACE PROGRAM, BREAKING RACIAL AND GENDER BARRIERS ALONG THE WAY.

BORN IN WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, WEST VIRGINIA, JOHNSON DISPLAYED A REMARKABLE APTITUDE FOR MATH FROM AN EARLY AGE. SHE ATTENDED WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE AND BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST BLACK WOMEN TO DESEGREGATE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY. HER EXCEPTIONAL SKILLS LED HER TO JOIN NASA'S PREDECESSOR, THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AERONAUTICS (NACA), IN 1953.

AT NASA, JOHNSON PERFORMED COMPLEX CALCULATIONS FOR ORBITAL TRAJECTORIES, INCLUDING THOSE FOR JOHN GLENN'S 1962 FRIENDSHIP 7 MISSION, WHICH MADE HIM THE FIRST AMERICAN TO ORBIT THE EARTH. GLENN PERSONALLY REQUESTED THAT JOHNSON VERIFY THE CALCULATIONS BEFORE HIS LAUNCH, HIGHLIGHTING HER ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPACE EXPLORATION.

JOHNSON'S WORK CONTINUED THROUGH THE APOLLO MISSIONS, INCLUDING THE APOLLO 11 MOON LANDING IN 1969, WHERE HER CALCULATIONS HELPED ENSURE THE ASTRONAUTS' SAFE RETURN TO EARTH. SHE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM AND WORKED ON PLANS FOR FUTURE MARS MISSIONS.

DESPITE FACING RACIAL AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION, JOHNSON PERSEVERED AND PAVED THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN AND AFRICAN AMERICANS IN STEM FIELDS. HER EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS WERE FINALLY RECOGNIZED WHEN SHE WAS AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM BY PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA IN 2015.

KATHERINE JOHNSON'S LEGACY REMAINS A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF INTELLECT, DETERMINATION, AND BREAKING BARRIERS. HER STORY WAS WIDELY CELEBRATED IN THE FILM HIDDEN FIGURES (2016), BRINGING HER REMARKABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE.



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MAYA ANGELOU

BORN: APRIL 4, 1928 — DIED: MAY 28, 2014

MAYA ANGELOU WAS A RENOWNED POET, AUTHOR, PERFORMER, AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST WHOSE LITERARY WORKS AND POWERFUL STORYTELLING CAPTURED THE STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. BORN MARGUERITE ANN JOHNSON IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, ANGELOU OVERCAME CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND POVERTY TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL VOICES OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

HER GROUNDBREAKING AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS* (1969), WAS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WORKS THAT EXPLORED THEMES OF IDENTITY, RACISM, RESILIENCE, AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION. THROUGH HER WRITING, ANGELOU GAVE VOICE TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, EARNING WIDESPREAD ACCLAIM AND RESHAPING AMERICAN LITERATURE.

BEYOND LITERATURE, ANGELOU WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, WORKING ALONGSIDE BOTH DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND MALCOLM X. SHE SERVED AS A COORDINATOR FOR THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AND SPENT TIME IN GHANA, WHERE SHE ENGAGED WITH AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS AND REVOLUTIONARIES.

ANGELOU'S ARTISTIC TALENTS EXTENDED BEYOND THE PAGE—SHE WAS A SINGER, DANCER, AND ACTRESS WHO USED PERFORMANCE AS A FORM OF ACTIVISM. SHE BECAME THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WRITE AND PRESENT A POEM AT A U.S. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION WHEN SHE RECITED ON THE PULSE OF MORNING AT BILL CLINTON'S 1993 INAUGURATION. HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO LITERATURE, ACTIVISM, AND THE ARTS EARNED HER NUMEROUS ACCOLADES, INCLUDING OVER 50 HONORARY DEGREES AND THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM, AWARDED BY BARACK OBAMA IN 2011.

MAYA ANGELOU'S LEGACY LIVES ON AS A BEACON OF WISDOM, RESILIENCE, AND ARTISTIC BRILLIANCE. HER WORDS CONTINUE TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS, REINFORCING THE POWER OF STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE.

4





MADAM C.J. WALKER

BORN: DECEMBER 23, 1867 — DIED: MAY 25, 1919

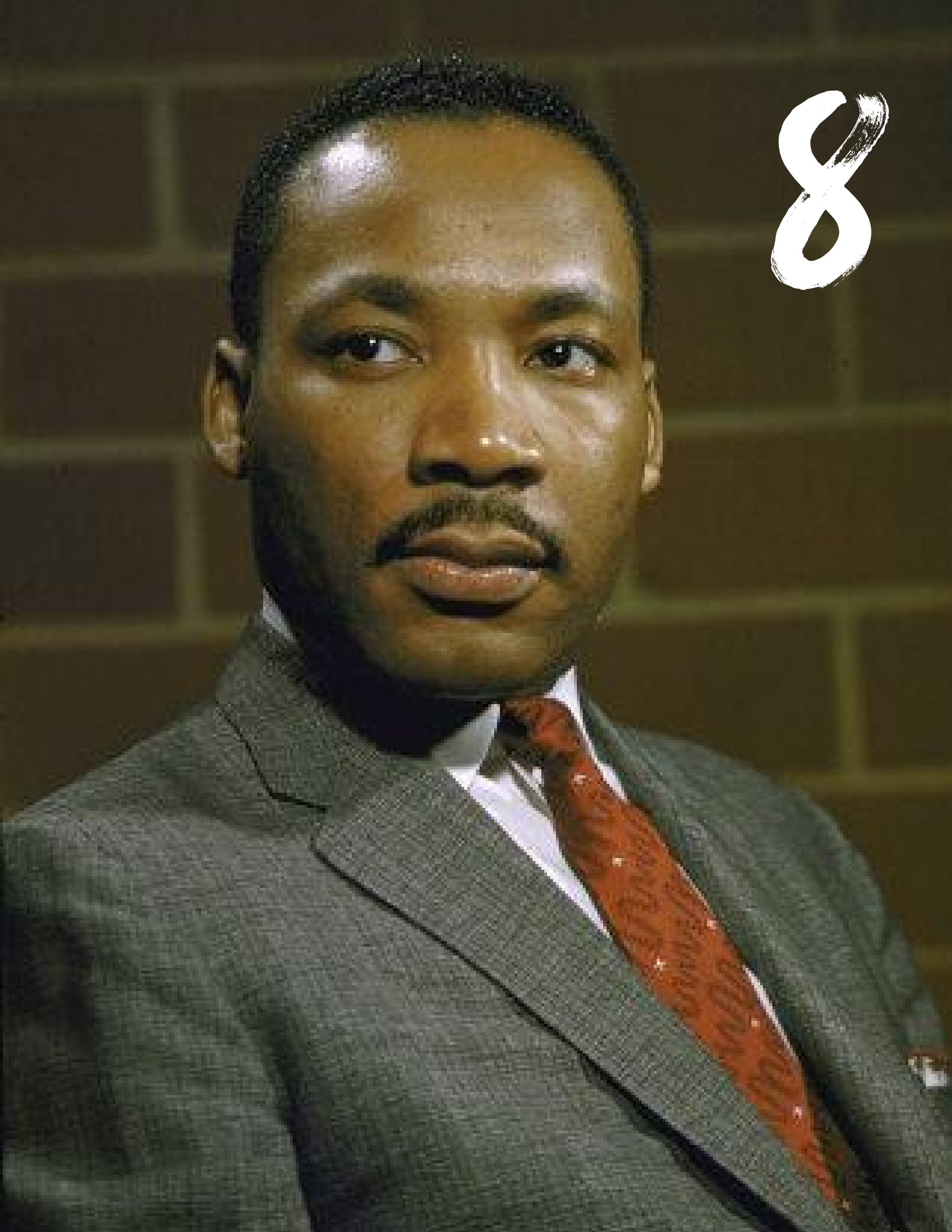
MADAM C.J. WALKER WAS A PIONEERING ENTREPRENEUR, PHILANTHROPIST, AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST WHO BECAME AMERICA'S FIRST SELF-MADE FEMALE MILLIONAIRE. BORN AS SARAH BREEDLOVE IN DELTA, LOUISIANA, SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF FORMERLY ENSLAVED PARENTS AND FACED IMMENSE HARDSHIP EARLY IN LIFE. AFTER EXPERIENCING SEVERE SCALP CONDITIONS, SHE DEVELOPED A REVOLUTIONARY HAIR CARE PRODUCT LINE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN, WHICH LED TO THE CREATION OF THE MADAM C.J. WALKER MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

WALKER'S BUSINESS NOT ONLY PROVIDED HIGH-QUALITY HAIR PRODUCTS BUT ALSO EMPOWERED BLACK WOMEN BY OFFERING THEM EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE. SHE TRAINED THOUSANDS OF WOMEN AS SALES AGENTS, KNOWN AS "WALKER AGENTS," WHO PROMOTED AND SOLD HER PRODUCTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. HER BUSINESS SUCCESS ALLOWED HER TO BECOME A MAJOR PHILANTHROPIST, SUPPORTING CAUSES SUCH AS EDUCATION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT.

BEYOND HER ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS, WALKER WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN SOCIAL ACTIVISM. SHE CONTRIBUTED GENEROUSLY TO THE NAACP, THE TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS FIGHTING FOR RACIAL EQUALITY. SHE ALSO USED HER WEALTH AND INFLUENCE TO SUPPORT ANTI-LYNCHING CAMPAIGNS AND PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS.

HER LEGACY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS OF BLACK ENTREPRENEURS, PARTICULARLY WOMEN STRIVING FOR SUCCESS IN BUSINESS AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM. THE IMPACT OF MADAM C.J. WALKER'S INNOVATIONS IN HAIR CARE AND BUSINESS LEADERSHIP REMAINS A POWERFUL TESTAMENT TO HER RESILIENCE, VISION, AND DEDICATION TO EMPOWERING OTHERS.

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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

BORN: JANUARY 15, 1929 — DIED: APRIL 4, 1968

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAS A BAPTIST MINISTER, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, AND LEADER OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT DURING THE MID-20TH CENTURY. BORN IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, KING ROSE TO PROMINENCE BY ADVOCATING FOR NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE TO RACIAL SEGREGATION AND SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS.

KING IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS PIVOTAL ROLE IN ORGANIZING EVENTS SUCH AS THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT (1955–1956), WHICH MARKED A TURNING POINT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY. HIS LEADERSHIP EXTENDED TO MONUMENTAL EVENTS LIKE THE 1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON, WHERE HE DELIVERED HIS FAMOUS "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH, A POWERFUL CALL FOR RACIAL HARMONY AND JUSTICE THAT RESONATED WORLDWIDE.

THE PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE SHOWS KING IN A MOMENT OF REFLECTION, HIS DEMEANOR EMBODYING THE COURAGE AND HOPE THAT DEFINED HIS LEADERSHIP. THROUGH PEACEFUL PROTESTS, SPEECHES, AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, KING INSPIRED MILLIONS AND BECAME A SYMBOL OF THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

IN 1964, MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAS AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HIS DEDICATION TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. TRAGICALLY, HIS LIFE WAS CUT SHORT WHEN HE WAS ASSASSINATED IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, ON APRIL 4, 1968. DESPITE HIS UNTIMELY DEATH, KING'S LEGACY ENDURES, WITH HIS WORK CONTINUING TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.

TODAY, MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IS CELEBRATED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST FIGURES IN AMERICAN HISTORY, AND HIS BIRTHDAY IS HONORED ANNUALLY AS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY IN THE UNITED STATES.

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ROSA PARKS

BORN: FEBRUARY 4, 1913 — DIED: OCTOBER 24, 2005

ROSA PARKS, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE "MOTHER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT," WAS A COURAGEOUS ACTIVIST WHOSE QUIET DEFIANCE IGNITED A NATIONWIDE PUSH FOR RACIAL JUSTICE. BORN IN TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA, PARKS GREW UP IN THE SEGREGATED SOUTH, WHERE AFRICAN AMERICANS FACED SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION UNDER JIM CROW LAWS. DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, SHE WAS DEEPLY INFLUENCED BY HER FAMILY'S STRONG VALUES AND COMMITMENT TO DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT.

PARKS BECAME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT EARLY IN HER LIFE. SHE JOINED THE MONTGOMERY CHAPTER OF THE NAACP IN 1943, WHERE SHE WORKED AS A SECRETARY AND AN INVESTIGATOR DOCUMENTING CASES OF RACIAL INJUSTICE. HER ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT WAS NOT JUST ADMINISTRATIVE—SHE WAS DEEPLY ENGAGED IN EFFORTS TO CHALLENGE SEGREGATION AND ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY.

ON DECEMBER 1, 1955, ROSA PARKS MADE HISTORY WHEN SHE REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT TO A WHITE PASSENGER ON A SEGREGATED BUS IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA. HER ARREST SPARKED THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT, A 381-DAY MASS PROTEST LED BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. THAT ULTIMATELY RESULTED IN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT DECLARING BUS SEGREGATION UNCONSTITUTIONAL. PARKS' ACT OF RESISTANCE WAS NOT JUST AN ISOLATED EVENT BUT PART OF A LARGER, STRATEGIC EFFORT TO FIGHT SEGREGATION. SHE HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED ON CASES OF RACIAL INJUSTICE, AND HER REFUSAL TO MOVE WAS A DELIBERATE CHALLENGE TO THE OPPRESSIVE LAWS OF THE TIME. HOWEVER, HER DEFIANCE CAME AT A COST—SHE LOST HER JOB, RECEIVED DEATH THREATS, AND WAS FORCED TO RELOCATE TO DETROIT FOR SAFETY.

DESPITE THESE HARDSHIPS, PARKS REMAINED COMMITTED TO THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE. SHE CONTINUED HER ACTIVISM IN DETROIT, WORKING FOR CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS AND ADVOCATING FOR DESEGREGATION, ECONOMIC JUSTICE, AND VOTING RIGHTS. SHE ALSO CO-FOUNDED THE ROSA AND RAYMOND PARKS INSTITUTE FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT, WHICH PROVIDED EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

PARKS RECEIVED NUMEROUS ACCOLADES FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVIL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM (1996) AND THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL (1999), TWO OF THE HIGHEST HONORS GIVEN TO AMERICAN CIVILIANS.

ROSA PARKS' LEGACY IS ONE OF COURAGE, RESILIENCE, AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE. HER REFUSAL TO GIVE UP HER SEAT WAS MORE THAN AN ACT OF DEFIANCE—IT WAS A PIVOTAL MOMENT THAT HELPED DISMANTLE RACIAL SEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, SHE IS REMEMBERED AS A HERO WHOSE BRAVERY CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY AND INSPIRED MILLIONS TO STAND UP AGAINST INJUSTICE.

2





SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

BORN: NOVEMBER 30, 1924 — DIED: JANUARY 1, 2005

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM WAS A TRAILBLAZING POLITICIAN, EDUCATOR, AND AUTHOR WHO MADE HISTORY AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN ELECTED TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IN 1968. REPRESENTING NEW YORK'S 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FOR SEVEN TERMS, CHISHOLM WAS A FIERCE ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL AND GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.

IN 1972, CHISHOLM BROKE NEW GROUND WHEN SHE BECAME THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AS A MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE. RUNNING UNDER THE SLOGAN "UNBOUGHT AND UNBOSSSED," SHE CHALLENGED THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT, ADVOCATING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, HEALTHCARE, AND EDUCATION REFORM. THOUGH SHE DID NOT SECURE THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION, HER CAMPAIGN PAVED THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF COLOR IN POLITICS.

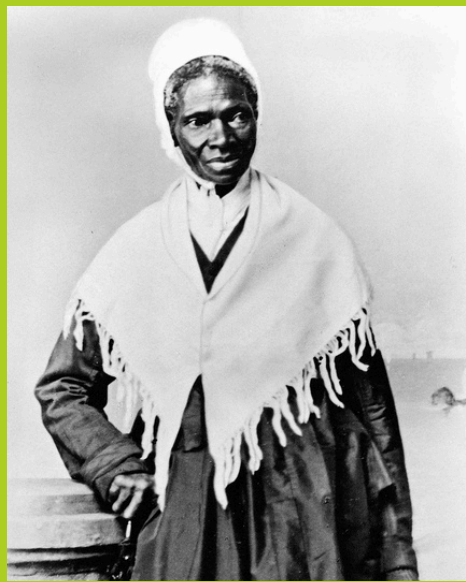
THROUGHOUT HER CAREER, CHISHOLM FOUGHT FOR POLICIES THAT BENEFITED MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING EDUCATION FUNDING, MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES, AND CHILDCARE PROGRAMS. SHE CO-FOUNDED THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS AND THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS, FURTHER CEMENTING HER LEGACY AS A CHAMPION FOR EQUALITY.

AFTER RETIRING FROM POLITICS, CHISHOLM REMAINED ACTIVE IN ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN LEADERSHIP ROLES. HER DEDICATION TO JUSTICE AND INCLUSION LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON AMERICAN POLITICS, INSPIRING COUNTLESS INDIVIDUALS TO PURSUE PUBLIC SERVICE. IN 2015, SHE WAS POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL CHANGE.

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM'S FEARLESS LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO EQUITY CONTINUE TO RESONATE TODAY. SHE IS REMEMBERED NOT ONLY AS A PIONEERING POLITICIAN BUT AS A POWERFUL VOICE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LONG BEEN UNDERREPRESENTED IN GOVERNMENT.

3





SOJOURNER TRUTH

BORN: C. 1797 — DIED: NOVEMBER 26, 1883

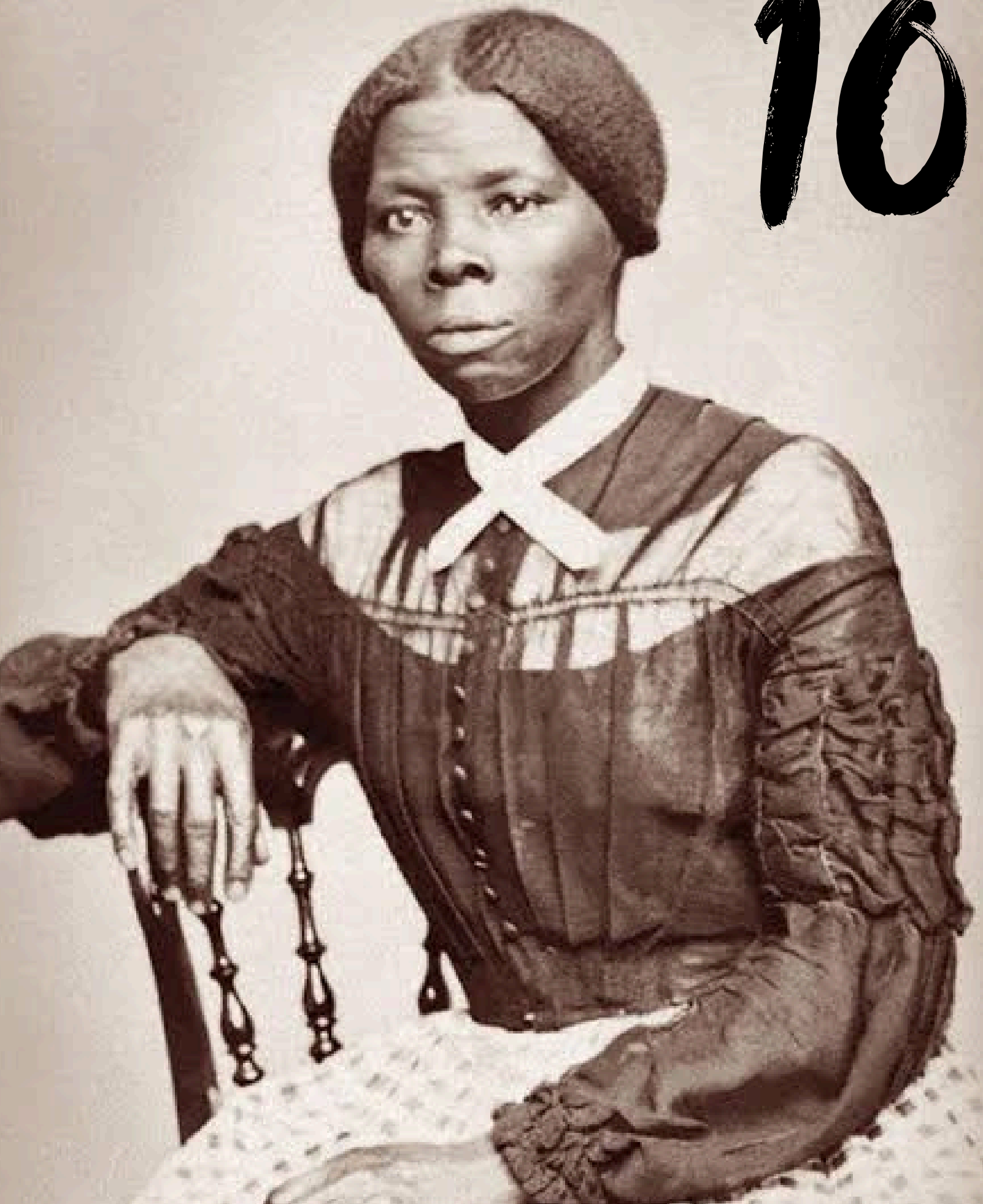
SOJOURNER TRUTH WAS AN ABOLITIONIST, WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST, AND POWERFUL ORATOR WHOSE SPEECHES AND ADVOCACY HELPED SHAPE THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICA. BORN INTO SLAVERY IN ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK, SHE WAS GIVEN THE NAME ISABELLA BAUMFREE. AFTER ENDURING YEARS OF ENSLAVEMENT AND FORCED LABOR, SHE ESCAPED TO FREEDOM IN 1826, LATER CHANGING HER NAME TO SOJOURNER TRUTH TO REFLECT HER MISSION TO "TRAVEL UP AND DOWN THE LAND" SPREADING TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

ONE OF TRUTH'S MOST FAMOUS MOMENTS CAME IN 1851 WHEN SHE DELIVERED HER "AIN'T I A WOMAN?" SPEECH AT THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION IN AKRON, OHIO. IN THIS SPEECH, SHE ELOQUENTLY CHALLENGED RACIAL AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION, ASSERTING THAT BLACK WOMEN DESERVED THE SAME RIGHTS AS WHITE WOMEN AND MEN. HER WORDS RESONATED ACROSS THE ABOLITIONIST AND SUFFRAGE MOVEMENTS, MAKING HER ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL VOICES OF HER TIME.

BEYOND PUBLIC SPEAKING, TRUTH WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SECURING FREEDOM FOR ENSLAVED PEOPLE, WORKING ALONGSIDE ABOLITIONISTS LIKE FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON. DURING THE CIVIL WAR, SHE ASSISTED THE UNION ARMY BY RECRUITING BLACK SOLDIERS AND ADVOCATING FOR BETTER CONDITIONS FOR FREED PEOPLE.

AFTER THE WAR, TRUTH CONTINUED TO CHAMPION EQUAL RIGHTS, PUSHING FOR LAND GRANTS FOR FORMERLY ENSLAVED INDIVIDUALS AND ADVOCATING FOR DESEGREGATION. HER TIRELESS ACTIVISM LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS, AND HER LEGACY AS A FEARLESS ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE ENDURES TODAY.

10





HARRIET TUBMAN

BORN: C. 1822 — DIED: MARCH 10, 1913

HARRIET TUBMAN, BORN ARAMINTA ROSS, WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY ABOLITIONIST, HUMANITARIAN, AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST WHO ROSE FROM THE DEPTHS OF ENSLAVEMENT TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC FIGURES IN AMERICAN HISTORY. BORN INTO SLAVERY IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND, TUBMAN ENDURED UNIMAGINABLE HARDSHIPS YET EXHIBITED REMARKABLE RESILIENCE AND BRAVERY.

IN 1849, TUBMAN ESCAPED FROM SLAVERY, EMBARKING ON A DANGEROUS JOURNEY TO FREEDOM VIA THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, A SECRET NETWORK OF SAFE HOUSES AND ROUTES. HER COURAGE DID NOT STOP THERE; SHE RETURNED TO THE SOUTH MULTIPLE TIMES, LEADING OVER 70 ENSLAVED PEOPLE, INCLUDING FAMILY AND FRIENDS, TO FREEDOM. HER UNPARALLELED EFFORTS EARNED HER THE NICKNAME "MOSES," LIKENING HER TO THE BIBLICAL FIGURE WHO LED HIS PEOPLE TO LIBERATION.

THE PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE DEPICTS HARRIET TUBMAN IN THE PRIME OF HER LIFE, SEATED WITH A CONFIDENT YET COMPOSED EXPRESSION. HER ATTIRE REFLECTS THE MODESTY OF HER ERA, BUT HER STEADFAST GAZE CAPTURES THE UNWAVERING DETERMINATION AND MORAL STRENGTH THAT DEFINED HER CHARACTER. THIS IMAGE IS ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVING PHOTOGRAPHS OF TUBMAN AND HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF HER INCREDIBLE LEGACY.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, TUBMAN WORKED FOR THE UNION ARMY AS A SCOUT, SPY, AND NURSE, FURTHERING THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND EQUALITY. HER EFFORTS EXTENDED BEYOND THE WAR, AS SHE BECAME AN ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND A SUPPORTER OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

HARRIET TUBMAN'S LEGACY REMAINS A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF COURAGE, FAITH, AND RESILIENCE. SHE IS CELEBRATED NOT ONLY FOR HER ROLE IN ABOLISHING SLAVERY BUT ALSO FOR HER LIFELONG DEDICATION TO JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. TODAY, HER STORY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE MILLIONS AROUND THE WORLD.





THURGOOD MARSHALL

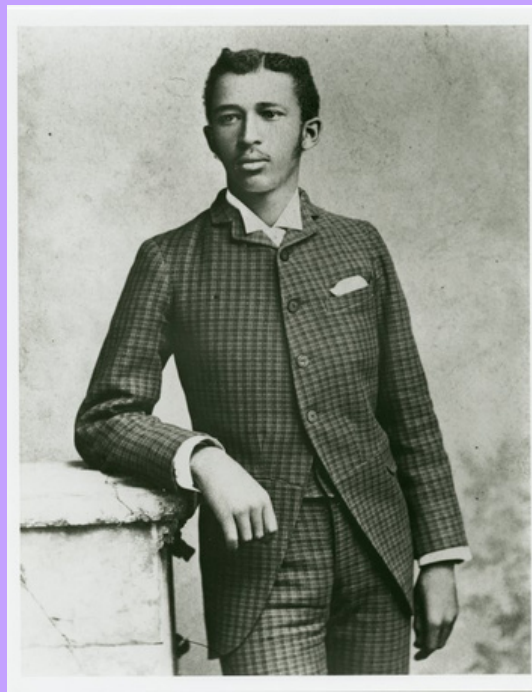
BORN: JULY 2, 1908 — DIED: JANUARY 24, 1993

THURGOOD MARSHALL WAS A PIONEERING CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER AND THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN SUPREME COURT JUSTICE. AS A LEGAL STRATEGIST, HE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN DISMANTLING SEGREGATION AND ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES. MARSHALL IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS VICTORY IN *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION* (1954), THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASE THAT DECLARED RACIAL SEGREGATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. AS THE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND, HE ARGUED AND WON NUMEROUS CASES THAT CHALLENGED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION, HOUSING, AND VOTING RIGHTS.

IN 1967, PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON APPOINTED MARSHALL TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT, MAKING HISTORY AS THE FIRST BLACK JUSTICE TO SERVE ON THE NATION'S HIGHEST COURT. DURING HIS 24-YEAR TENURE, HE CONSISTENTLY FOUGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW, AND THE RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES. MARSHALL'S LEGAL VICTORIES HELPED LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, SHAPING POLICIES THAT CONTINUE TO IMPACT AMERICA TODAY. HIS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND EQUALITY CEMENTED HIS LEGACY AS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL LEGAL MINDS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

5





W.E.B. DU BOIS

BORN: FEBRUARY 23, 1868 — DIED: AUGUST 27, 1963

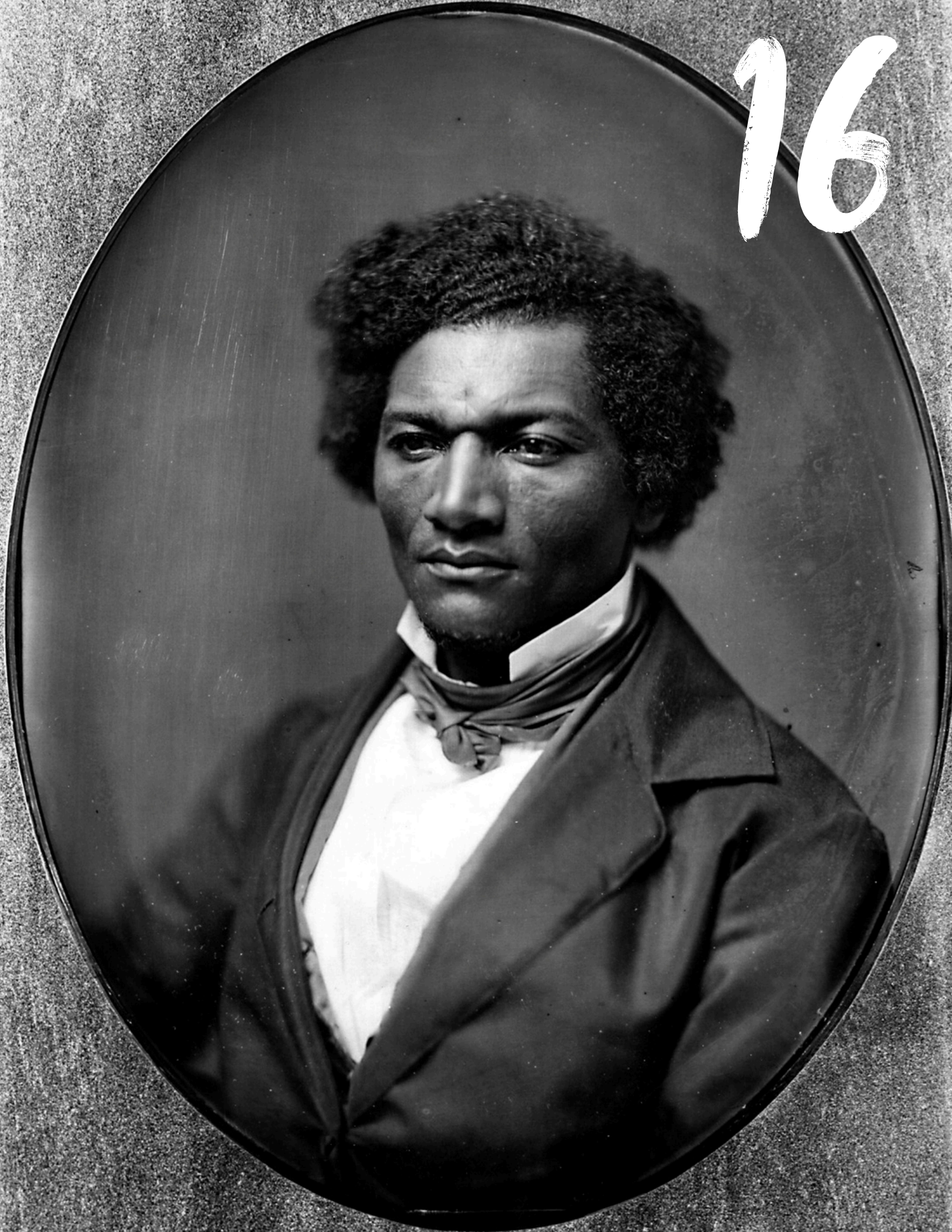
W.E.B. DU BOIS WAS A PIONEERING SOCIOLOGIST, HISTORIAN, AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST WHOSE WORK LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR THE MODERN STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY. BORN IN GREAT BARRINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS, DU BOIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICANS TO EARN A PH.D. FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY. HIS EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON RACE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES IN AMERICA PROVIDED GROUNDBREAKING INSIGHTS INTO SYSTEMIC RACISM AND THE NEED FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT.

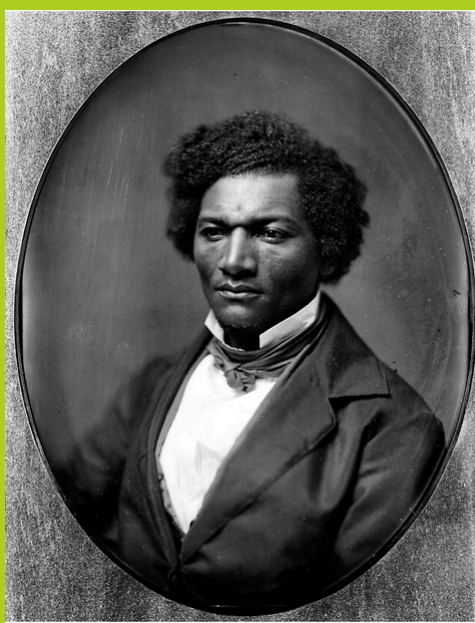
AS ONE OF THE CO-FOUNDERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP) IN 1909, DU BOIS USED HIS INFLUENCE TO FIGHT AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, PROMOTE HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, AND ADVOCATE FOR FULL CIVIL RIGHTS. HIS SEMINAL WORK, *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* (1903), INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF "DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS," DESCRIBING THE DUAL IDENTITY BLACK AMERICANS NAVIGATE IN A RACIALLY DIVIDED SOCIETY.

UNLIKE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, WHO PROMOTED VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GRADUAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS, DU BOIS INSISTED ON IMMEDIATE AND FULL EQUALITY FOR BLACK AMERICANS, EMPHASIZING HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP AS ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR RACIAL UPLIFT. HE PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT, A PRECURSOR TO THE NAACP, WHICH DEMANDED AN END TO SEGREGATION AND DISENFRANCHISEMENT. DU BOIS' INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS EXTENDED GLOBALLY, AS HE BECAME A LEADING VOICE IN THE PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT, ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF AFRICAN PEOPLE WORLDWIDE. LATER IN LIFE, HE BECAME DISILLUSIONED WITH AMERICAN POLITICS AND MOVED TO GHANA, WHERE HE SPENT HIS FINAL YEARS WORKING ON AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AFRICAN HISTORY.

HIS LEGACY AS A SCHOLAR, ACTIVIST, AND ADVOCATE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE REMAINS A CORNERSTONE OF THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY. DU BOIS' WORK CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS ON RACE AND IDENTITY.

16





FREDERICK DOUGLASS

BORN: FEBRUARY 1818 — DIED: FEBRUARY 20, 1895

FREDERICK DOUGLASS WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AFRICAN AMERICAN FIGURES OF THE 19TH CENTURY, A FORMER ENSLAVED MAN WHO BECAME A LEADING VOICE IN THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT, ADVOCATING FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND EQUALITY. BORN INTO SLAVERY IN TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, HE WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS MOTHER AT AN EARLY AGE AND ENDURED HARSH TREATMENT. DESPITE LAWS PROHIBITING ENSLAVED INDIVIDUALS FROM LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE, DOUGLASS SECRETLY TAUGHT HIMSELF LITERACY, WHICH WOULD BECOME A POWERFUL TOOL IN HIS QUEST FOR LIBERATION.

IN 1838, DOUGLASS ESCAPED SLAVERY AND FLED TO THE NORTH, WHERE HE QUICKLY BECAME A RENOWNED ORATOR AND WRITER. HIS FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS OF SLAVERY, INCLUDING HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE, PUBLISHED IN 1845, BECAME A GROUNDBREAKING TEXT THAT EXPOSED THE CRUELTY OF SLAVERY TO A WIDE AUDIENCE. HIS ELOQUENCE AND SHARP INTELLECT MADE HIM A SOUGHT-AFTER SPEAKER AT ABOLITIONIST MEETINGS, WHERE HE WORKED CLOSELY WITH LEADERS SUCH AS WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON AND HARRIET BEECHER STOWE. DOUGLASS WAS A FIRM BELIEVER IN USING EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM TO DISMANTLE INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM AND OPPRESSION. HE FOUNDED AND PUBLISHED SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS, INCLUDING THE NORTH STAR, WHICH PROVIDED A PLATFORM FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN VOICES AND ABOLITIONIST IDEAS. HE WAS ALSO A FIERCE ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND WAS ONE OF THE FEW MEN PRESENT AT THE HISTORIC SENECA FALLS CONVENTION IN 1848, WHERE HE SUPPORTED WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, DOUGLASS MET WITH PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND URGED HIM TO ENLIST BLACK SOLDIERS IN THE UNION ARMY, WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS. AFTER THE WAR, HE CONTINUED HIS ADVOCACY, HOLDING VARIOUS GOVERNMENT POSITIONS, INCLUDING U.S. MINISTER TO HAITI AND RECORDER OF DEEDS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS' LEGACY EXTENDS FAR BEYOND HIS TIME, AS HIS WRITINGS, SPEECHES, AND ACTIVISM CONTINUE TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS IN THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. HIS IMPACT ON THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT AND AMERICAN HISTORY REMAINS UNPARALLELED, AND HE IS REMEMBERED AS A SYMBOL OF RESILIENCE, INTELLIGENCE, AND THE POWER OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

HAPPY BLACK

HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING

BLACK EXCELLENCE

HAVE A VISION

BE DEMANDING