

2006
 Commemorate &
CELEBRATE

ICONS

of BLACK HISTORY



ENTERTAINERS



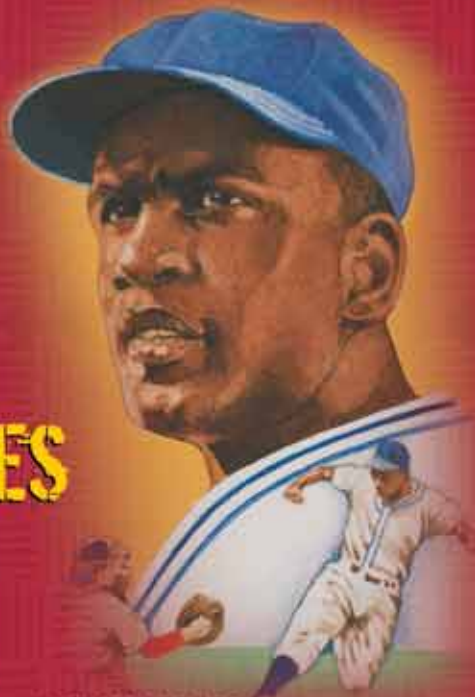
ABOLITIONISTS



POETS, WRITERS & HISTORIANS



ATHLETES



INVENTORS & ENTREPRENEURS

2006
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A US POSTAL SERVICE
SALUTE TO SIGNIFICANT
AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACHIEVERS
IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY

ENTERTAINERS

Scott Joplin

Composer and pianist, Scott Joplin is known as the "King of Ragtime". With a lifetime repertoire of more than sixty compositions, Joplin's creativity and virtuosity paved the way for the evolving American musical form of jazz, and for the widespread acceptance of African-American musicians as serious artists. Composer of the first opera by an African American, Joplin's genius was not recognized in his lifetime. He was awarded a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for his contributions to American music in 1976.

Marian Anderson

One of the finest contralto singers of all time, Marian Anderson was also a key figure in the struggle of blacks for civil rights in the 20th century. She was banned by the Daughters of the American Revolution from performing at Constitution Hall, which led to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's resignation from the DAR. Anderson instead gave a stunning and symbolic performance before 75,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial. Anderson was active in politics, and was honored with an appointment as goodwill ambassador to Asia, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, a Congressional Gold Medal, and the National Medal of Arts.

Hattie McDaniel

A gifted singer and prolific actress, Hattie McDaniel appeared in more than ninety films, and was one of America's great character actresses. McDaniel was the first African-American woman to sing on network radio. As star in the title role of the nationally broadcast radio program, *The Beulah Show*, Hattie became the first African American to star in a sitcom when the program crossed media form from radio to television. Her 1939 performance in *Gone With the Wind* is her best-known role, and earned Ms. McDaniel the first Academy Award bestowed upon an African American.

ABOLITIONISTS

Sojourner Truth

One of the most inspirational and well known African Americans of the 19th century, Sojourner Truth was born into slavery as Isabella Baumfree in New York in 1797. She gained her freedom in 1828 and began an evangelical life of traveling and preaching under the name Sojourner Truth. Her autobiography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*, was published in 1850 and her speeches against slavery and for women's suffrage drew large crowds. She was received by President Lincoln at the White House and spent her later years counseling former slaves as they started their new lives.

Harriet Tubman

Born into slavery, abolitionist Harriet Tubman was the first African-American woman to be honored on a United States postage stamp. Ms. Tubman was a conductor for the famed Underground Railroad during the Civil War, leading hundreds of slaves to freedom in the North along an elaborate secret network of safe houses. Ms. Tubman's extraordinary courage, ingenuity and persistence, gained more than 300 fugitive slaves their freedom.

James Weldon Johnson

A noted writer, lawyer, educator and civil rights activist, James Weldon Johnson is credited with authoring *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, long recognized as the African-American National Anthem. Johnson was also a revered poet, editor and mentor during the Harlem Renaissance, a period of outstanding literary vigor and creativity that took place in the 1920s. He further served as a U.S. diplomat to Nicaragua and Venezuela, and as general secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

A. Philip Randolph

A trade unionist and civil rights leader, A. Philip Randolph was a dedicated leader in the struggle for justice and parity for the black American community. In 1925, as founding president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Randolph organized the group of black workers and, at a time when half the affiliates of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) barred blacks from membership, took his union into the AFL. He was the first president of the Negro American Labor Council, which he co-founded to fight discrimination within the AFL-CIO.

POETS, WRITERS & HISTORIANS

Ethel L. Payne

Journalist, publisher, civil rights leader, and educator, Ethel L. Payne was often called the "First Lady of the Black Press." Payne was a syndicated columnist and long-time reporter for the *Chicago Defender*, a leading African-American newspaper. She was the first African-American woman to receive accreditation as a White House correspondent, and in 1966 provided on-site coverage of African-American troops in Vietnam. When hired by CBS in 1972, Payne became the first black female radio and television commentator at a national news organization.

Carter G. Woodson

Carter Godwin Woodson was an American historian who first opened the field of black studies to scholars and popularized the field in black schools and colleges. To focus attention on black contributions to civilization, he founded Negro History Week in 1926. This celebration and remembrance later evolved into Black History Month. Woodson was dean of the College of Liberal Arts and head of the graduate faculty at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and dean at West Virginia State College. While there, he founded Associated Publishers, to publicize and promote books on black life and culture.

James Baldwin

Essayist, novelist, poet and playwright, James Baldwin's unique voice addressed American race relations from a personal and psychological perspective. Baldwin's best known works include the novels *Go Tell It On the Mountain* and *The Amen Corner*, in which he suggests that all people, not just minorities, suffer in a racist climate. Baldwin's later works openly and frankly address homosexuality and interracial romance. Although he spent most of his adult life in Europe, Baldwin never forsook his American citizenship and is buried in Harlem, New York.

INVENTORS & ENTREPRENEURS

Jan Matzeliger

Working as a cobbler apprentice in Lyn, Massachusetts, Jan Matzeliger helped manufacture shoes by hand. After observing the slow and intricate process of "lasting" shoes — joining the top of a shoe to the sole — Matzeliger developed a machine in the 1880s that would duplicate and automate this tedious task. In the same time that an expert shoe laster could produce 50 pairs of shoes by hand, Matzeliger's "shoe lasting" machine could produce up to 700 pairs. Jan Matzeliger's invention made it possible for ordinary citizens to purchase shoes.

Benjamin Banneker

Mathematician and astronomer Benjamin Banneker first achieved national recognition for his scientific work in the 1791 survey of the Federal Territory (now Washington, D.C.). In 1753, he built the first watch made in America, a wooden pocket watch. Twenty years later, Banneker began making astronomical calculations that enabled him to successfully forecast a 1789 solar eclipse. He is best known for his six *Farmer's Almanacs*, published between 1792 and 1797, and has been referred to as the first African-American scientist.

Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable

A pioneer settler of Chicago Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable landed on the banks of the Chicago River in land that was still a part of the British Empire. Du Sable operated a farm and thriving trading post serving Native Americans, British, and American explorers, as well as Frenchmen. Du Sable was an entrepreneur and a diplomat, speaking several Indian dialects, as well as English, French and Spanish. He and his family were detained by the British for five years during the American Revolution because of their American and French sympathies. Du Sable was recognized by the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago as the Founder of Chicago on October 26, 1968.

ATHLETES

Sugar Ray Robinson

Considered by many to be the best boxer of all time, Sugar Ray Robinson was the first boxer in history to win a divisional world championship five times. When he retired from the ring, Robinson had boxed in 202 professional bouts with a record of 175 wins, 19 losses, 6 draws and 2 no-contests, with 109 knockout wins. Despite being an insulin-dependent diabetic, Robinson is ranked among the most prolific knockout winners of all time. He is a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Wilma Rudolph

A four-time Olympic champion, Wilma Rudolph is the first American woman to win three Olympic gold medals. Dubbed the "world's fastest woman," Rudolph achieved her great success despite suffering from polio and wearing leg braces for several years as a child. She was named by the Associated Press as the U.S. Female Athlete of the Year and also won United Press Athlete of the Year honors. After retiring from the track, Rudolph served as a teacher, a track coach, and a noted goodwill ambassador.

Jackie Robinson

The first African American to join modern Major League Baseball, Jackie Robinson had a ten-year, all-star career with the Brooklyn Dodgers, winning seven National League Pennants, and leading the team to their only World Series win over the New York Yankees. He was the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and his number (42) was retired by Major League Baseball in 1997. After retiring from baseball in 1956, Robinson became an active civil rights defender, working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and on several political campaigns.