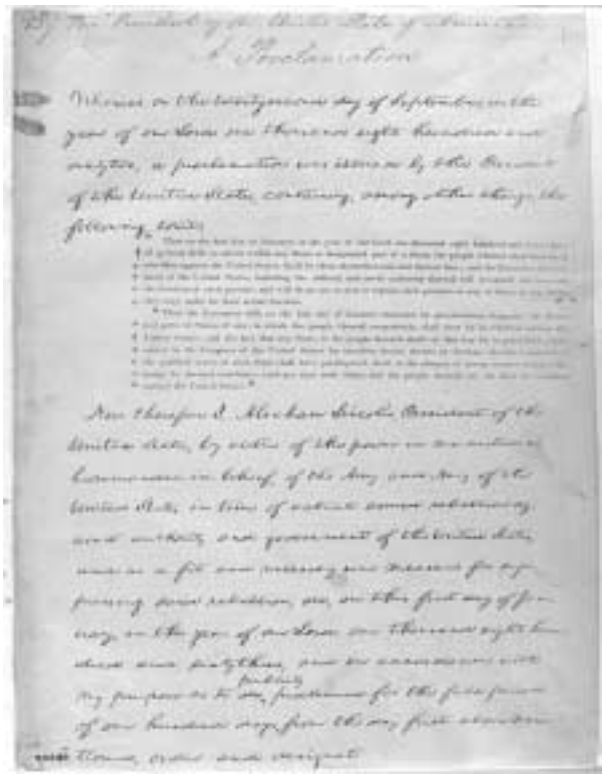
African-American History Month 2001

Creating and Defining the African-American Community:

Family, Church, Politics, and Culture



A Proclamation

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PREFACE

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PROGRAM

The Topical Research Intern Program provides an opportunity for servicemembers and Department of Defense civilian employees to work on diversity or equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile a review of data or research pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DoD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

On the cover:
Top: A U.S. Army sergeant and his family. (Photo courtesy of individual)
Clockwise: King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, circa. 1923. Honore Dutrey, Baby Dodds, Louis Armstrong, Oliver, Lil Hardin, Bill Johnson, and Johnny Dodds. (Photograph courtesy of the Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University)
The Emancipation Proclamation (Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)
Richard Allen, founder of the first church for Blacks in the United States. In 1787. Allen converted an old blacksmith shop into the African Methodist Episcopal Church. (Picture from Britannica.com)
The cross is from an African Methodist Episcopal Church web site.

February 2001

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INTRODUCTION

African-American History Month is celebrated each February to affirm, recognize, and appreciate the rich heritage, struggles, achievements, progress, and diversity of African-American peoples. An African-American scholar, Carter G. Woodson, created and promoted Negro History Week in February in 1926. He chose the week in February to correspond to the respective birthdays of Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave and slavery Abolitionist, and Abraham Lincoln, the signer of the document granting slaves in the United States freedom, the Emancipation Proclamation. In 1976, the year of our nation's Bicentennial, the week-long celebration expanded to one month. Today, our annual observance provides an opportunity to highlight features of the overall African-American experience. This year's theme, is Creating and Defining the African-American Community: Family, Church, Politics, and Culture. The topic allows us to recognize and address the range and diversity of experiences in some of the main social institutions in American society.

Defining the African-American Community

Defining the African-American community is a difficult task. Today, the contemporary African-American community is as diverse as the European-American or Hispanic-American community. There is no one African-American community. The chart in Appendix 1 provides a bird's eye view of the distribution of Black people in the United States by county. On average, African Americans make-up about 12 percent of the U.S. population. As the chart shows, Blacks comprise the highest percentages of the population in the Southeast and Eastern seaboard counties. However, African Americans live, work, and play throughout the United States. Their experiences are diverse and multifaceted and as history shows us, this has been the case for the past 400 years.

FAMILY

> On the whole, the Negro has few family festivals; birthdays are not often noticed, Christmas is a time of church and general entertainments, Thanksgiving is coming to be widely celebrated, but here again in churches as much as in homes. The home was destroyed by slavery, struggled up after emancipation, and is again not exactly threatened, but neglected in the life of city Negroes. Herein lies food for thought.
>
> W.E.B. DuBois
> *The Philadelphia Negro*, 1899

History: Coping with Change

The above quote depicts the African-American family at the turn of the century. (7) Slavery, Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Great Black Migration North to urban cities of the north from the rural south served to destabilize many Black families. (22:106) Some people argue that change is the only constant of the Black family for the past 400 years. Slavery was

cruel to the Black family. For the most part, slavery worked against the stability of the Black family. First, slave owners controlled both sexual reproduction and the living situations of Black families. For example, they would mate couples to breed children for the slave market. Likewise, family members, either children, a grandmother, or a husband and father would often be sold to other plantations. Other factors working against the stability of the Black family involved slave owners raping Black women and not supporting or encouraging marriage between slaves. As a consequence, absent Black fathers (at least biological ones), promiscuous White slave owners, and uncommitted White fathers of interracial children created the poorest possible role models for Black children and contributed to the next generation of unstable Black families.

Emancipation brought more instability for former slaves who became somewhat free to pursue new life situations. Many groups of the time, including the U.S. military and the Freedman's Bureau attempted to assist families by normalizing marriage and encouraging traditional family practices. (22:106) Economic barriers, in the form of Jim Crow laws, greatly inhibited the African-American family, especially the male, and he lacked the resources to be a successful father or husband in what most would consider the traditional ways.

Finally, urbanization through the Great Black Migration North further undermined the Black family in many cases. However, some significant stability began to emerge for those Blacks achieving economic and social success among the new Black middle class. (22:106)

On the other hand, recent studies have uncovered documents and archives that challenge some of our ideas about the African-American experience. With this new research, we have found that despite the inhuman obstacles facing African Americans during the 17th, 18th, and 19th century, many families were much more stable than we had previously thought. (26:22-23) For example, the limited freedom that slaves had from their slave master created opportunities to develop rich family and community traditions in and around the slave quarters.

> . . . the relative freedom from white control which slaves enjoyed in their quarters enabled them to create and sustain a rather complex social organization that incorporated "norms of conduct, defined roles and behavioral patterns" and provided for traditional functions of group solidarity, defense, mutual assistance, and family organization, including child rearing practices. (26:22)

The new historical research uncovers that some slave masters actually encouraged monogamy because it served to protect against runaways—married slaves are less likely to abandon their partners or children. Also, Black males were more involved in families than previously thought. They often taught children how to fish, hunt, and garden to supplement food on the plantations. Some scholars even indicate that Black families during the period of slavery were more egalitarian than their White family counterparts. For example, Black women slaves worked outside the home and Black male slaves shared in socializing children and performing many of the household chores. Most White males of the time would have considered these activities to be "women's work."

The most significant and impressive coping strategy coming out of slavery for Blacks was enlarged kinship networks. This tradition survives today. Forced family separation and

early deaths, especially for Black male slaves, created a host of kinfolk relationships. Uncles, sisters, cousins, and neighbors stepped up to become guardians or immediate family member to help sustain families and often simply helped them survive. (26:24) The value placed on extended or "fictive" kinship—non-blood or marriage "family" relationships--has survived 400 years of African-American experience and into the 21st century.

Contemporary Families in Black and White

The data in Table 1 show many different forms of American families by race across roughly four roughly decades. It is a snapshot of the numbers and percentages of both Black and White families in the United States. Overall, the number of families has increased in the past 28 years for both groups. It almost doubled for Black families during this period. Married-couple families have declined markedly for Black families (almost 22%) but less so for Whites (7.8%). The gap between Black and White married-couple families is not narrowing.

Black female-headed (i.e., no husband present) households are very high. In 1998, they are almost seven times higher than Black male-headed (i.e., no wife present) households (47% versus 7%); more than three times higher than White female headed households (47% versus 14%); and they have almost doubled since 1970 (47% versus 28%). Male headed households for both groups are relatively small, but they too have doubled for both groups in the past 28 years.

In 1998, the pattern of children living with both of their parents was markedly low for Black families compared to White families (36% versus 74%). Likewise, one of the most noticeable percentages for children from Black families living only with a mother (51%). Children living only with the father remains low across the 28-year period. The number of Black children living with neither parent is three times higher than for Whites in 1998 (9% versus 3%). In 1999, 1.4 million children resided in a grandparent's home (27).

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Families, by Race, March 1998, 1990, 1980, and 1970 (numbers in thousands).

CHARACTERISTICS	1998[a]		1990		1980		1970	
	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE
Type of Family								
All Families	8,408	59,511	7,470	56,590	6,184	52,243	4,856	46,166
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Married-couple families	47	81	50.2	83	55.5	85.7	68.3	88.9
Female householder, no husband present	47	14	43.8	12.9	40.3	11.6	28.0	8.9
Male householder, no wife present	7	5	6.0	4.1	4.1	2.8	3.7	2.2
Children under 18 years by presence of parents[b]								
Children in families	11,414	56,125	10,018	51,390	9,375	52,242	9,422	58,790
Percent living with								
Both parents	36	74	37.7	79.0	42.2	82.7	58.5	89.5
Mothers only	51	18	51.2	16.2	43.9	13.5	29.5	7.8
Father only	4	5	3.5	3.0	1.9	1.6	2.3	0.9
Neither parent	9	3	7.5	1.8	12.0	2.2	9.7	1.8

a1998 percents rounded to the nearest percent.
bExcludes persons under 18 years of age who were maintaining households or family groups.
Source: Adopted from Alphonso Pinkney (22:107) and the U.S. Bureau of Census. (28:51)

The data in the above table support the idea that Black families are diverse. There is a wide variety of family arrangements among Black families in the United States, but married couple families continue to be the most common. (26:26) Despite the resilience among Black families throughout history and in more contemporary times, a number of historical patterns remain more likely among African-American families. (22:109-110) They include the following:

- Households headed by women
- Families living in poverty
- Children living in poverty
- Teenage mothers
- Decline of males available for marriage
- Higher homicide rate for males
- Women unaware of child rearing literature

Despite all this, there are a number of strengths associated with the African-American family that emerge from the history and the current social condition. (22:111-112) Collectively, these qualities set the African-American family apart from their ethnic peers and include the following:

- Very strong extended kinship bonds

- Strong work orientation
- Adaptability and flexibility in family roles and responsibilities
- Strong religious orientation
- Low divorce rate

Profiles of Black Families

There is no one Black family. More typically, there is a range of Black family types with a host of variances specific to the group. Below are examples of three Black family types:

Black Middle Class Families: The Black middle class family has existed since before the Civil War (10:269-270), and African-American business has proven to be one avenue of success for such families. (8) A person's social class position evolves around occupation, income, and business practices. Typical characteristics of the Black middle class include being a dual income family, being the first generation identified as a middle-class family, maintaining a slightly lower living standard compared to Whites, and having a greater likelihood of dropping out of the middle class than others.

Haitian-American Families: Between 1981 and 1990, over 140 thousand immigrants from the small Caribbean island known as Haiti resided in the United States. (28:11) In subsequent years, more immigrants have arrived. Below are the numbers:

- 1991-1995 = 96,000
- 1996=18,400
- 1997=15,100

Haitians tend to establish households in a range of large metropolitan areas such as Miami, Boston, Washington (DC), and New York City, and their family incomes differ widely depending on their geographic location in the United States. (12:61-62) First or second generation Haitian-American households are highly supportive of their remaining family members in Haiti via frequent telephonic contact, financial support, and administrative assistance. (12:64)

West Indian American Families: The West Indies is the English-speaking Caribbean. People from the West Indies began migrating to the U.S. as early at 1820. In 1970, they comprised roughly one million people. (15:47) According to researchers, there are three very different types of West Indian households in the U.S.—*Maintainers*, *Social Isolates*, and *Strivers*. (15:52-56) The *Maintainers* attempt to hold-on to the traditional ways of the Caribbean, that may conflict with American norms and values. *Strivers* completely embrace the ways of American society resulting in high levels of marital conflict. *Social Isolates* appear to have found a balance between the family practices of both the Caribbean and the U.S. and have adjusted the best.

RELIGION

History: The Invisible Institution Becomes Visible

Religion is the most cohesive Black institution to come out of slavery. The sociologist and first African-American president of the American Sociological Association, E. Franklin Frazier, referred to religion during slavery as the "invisible institution." (17:xxxi) For the most part, many of the religious traditions from Africa were lost in slavery and many slaves converted to Christianity. However, conversion proved slow via baptism. (22:119) There was some concern among Whites to discourage slaves from complete conversion, because religious beliefs might inspire revolt on the part of slaves. Such concerns on the part of Whites came to life in a 1831 Virginia slave uprising led by the clergyman, Nat Turner. (22:10) Although they were new Christians, Blacks continued to be excluded from White churches. Blacks responded by forming their own religious institutions such as the Free African Society in 1787. In addition to religious services, the church was involved in the community through a mutual aid society, economics, education, and politics. After the Civil War, the Black church became the center of most community life in African-American communities. After slavery was abolished, Blacks created their own churches and congregations. Black churches came to address a host of other and real-world needs and functions. (22:120) Below is a list:

- Center of social life
- Source of leadership
- Contact with larger community
- Education
- Political activity
- Source of political leaders
- Contained the Black masses
- Outlet for social frustration
- Outlet for emotional needs

Contemporary

Today, African Americans are more likely to associate with a church than White Americans. (22:123) African-American church services are often emotionally charged experiences with the congregation actively involved in the service, especially among the working classes and the poor. It is difficult to obtain data on church affiliation because counts are often difficult to obtain from churches. We do know there are seven major Black denominations reporting the largest numbers of members. They include (22:122):

- National Baptist Convention, U.S.A.
- National Baptist Convention of America
- National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
- Progressive National Baptist Convention
- The African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Christian Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

- Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

There are many other Black churches and religious groups. They too are diverse and varied and include: Pentecostal; Apostolic; Holiness; Deliverance; the Catholic Church; the Churches of Christ; Church of God-Black Jews; House of Judah; Nation of Yahweh; the Original Hebrew Israelite Nation; Rastafarians; the American Muslim Mission; Moorish Science Temple Divine; various branches of the Nation of Islam; Afro-American Vodun movement; the First Church of Voodoo, and the Yoruba Village of Oyotunji among many others. (22:122) There are also non-denominational churches such as the Peace Mission. Of course, large Black followings can be located in predominately White denominations such as the Lutheran church, Unitarian Universalists, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Profiles of Black Religions

Muslims: African Muslims were first brought to the United States as slaves. (13:263) Islam played no major role in the United States until leaders emerged during the Great Migration North, especially during the Great Depression. The most dominant group—the Nation of Islam--emerged in the 1930s. Founded by Master Farad Muhammad, the charisma of the Honorable Elijah Muhammed led the Nation of Islam from 1934 to 1975. Through Minister Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam had its greatest impact on the Black community. A number of splinter groups emerged in 1975, with two groups having the most members. (13:264) Sunni Islam, under Imaam Warith Deen Muhammad, has the largest following. The Black Nationalist Group, under Minister Louis Farrakhan, has the second largest following. Black males are attracted to Islam for a number of reasons: 1) the cultural hero status of Malcolm X; 2) the "eye for an eye" influence of the Koran; 3) the influence of sports figures such as Muhammad Ali, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, and others; and 4) Muslins are active in areas that traditional churches are not: prisons and on the streets of the inner city. (13:264)

African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church:

> In November 1787, Richard Allen and a number of Black Methodists arrived at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to attend Sunday Services. They were directed toward a newly built seating gallary and mistakenly sat in the "white" section. During a prayer, white ushers pulled the black worshippers to their feet and demanded that they sit in the "proper" section. Humiliated, Allen . . . eventually became a licensed Methodist preacher. (2:28)

So began one of the oldest and largest Black Churches in the United States. The A.M.E. Church is an independent African-American Methodist organization. It remains dedicated and active in Black self-improvement, political activism, education, evangelism, and social activity while maintaining the traditions of the original Methodist Church, including baptisms, communion practices, and singing hymns. Black Americans added spirituals, spontaneous praying, shouting, and confirmatory remarks (for example "Yes" and "Amen") during services. The A.M.E. Church participated directly in two significant historical events in African-American history: *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* and the Civil Rights Movement.

POLITICS

Can't we all just get along?

Rodney King
Los Angeles, California 1992

History: "We Shall Overcome

Blacks in the United States have been involved in an ongoing civil rights struggle since first arriving in America on the shores of Virginia in 1619. The experience has been one of intense change across the past 400 years. From 1600 through the period of slavery and until 1865, Blacks had few, if any, citizenship entitlements in the United States. The Civil War brought sweeping changes. The 1866 Civil Rights Act made Black men (not women) full citizens. The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed that Black men (not women) would now have the right to vote. During the period of reconstruction immediately after the Civil War, Blacks participated in state constitutional conventions and a number of Black men served in both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. (9:262) The first African Americans to serve in the U.S. Senate were both from Mississippi—Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce. The *Plessey versus Ferguson* ruling in 1896 by the U.S. Supreme court upheld the right of Louisiana railroad cars to be "separate but equal" and represented a major drawback in race relations in the United States.

Segregation, racial exclusion, discrimination, and lynchings remain horrific historical legacies of the United States dating back to the late 1800s. As Blacks began migrating from the rural South to the urban cities of the North and becoming concentrated in communities, they developed a degree of political power through grassroots efforts. A number of leaders, such as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., emerged in various U.S. cities. Black representation in political office increased dramatically across the 20th century and culminating with the 1990 election of the first Black governor in the nation's history, L. Douglas Wilder, the Governor of Virginia. Other Black political firsts include the following (9:266):

- Robert Weaver – first Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Andrew Drimmer – first member of the Federal Reserve
- Thurgood Marshall – first Supreme Court Justice
- Patricia Harris – first Ambassador
- Jesse Jackson – first candidate for the U.S. Presidency
- Carol Moseley Braun – first female Senator

Voting Behavior: From Disenfranchisement to Political Clout:

History confirms the lack of impact of the African-American vote for much of America's past. (1:75-76) Prior to 1865 only five northern states granted Blacks the right to vote. During the Reconstruction, an increase in Black voters impacted politics. By the 1870s, a few years

later, Blacks were *discouraged* from voting through tactics such as poll taxes, educational requirements, intimidation, and violence.

In many cases, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in and outlawed such practices, but not until elections were over. Many of these practices continued throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century. One of the largest increases in Black voter registration occurred immediately after the Voting Rights Act of 1965. (9:264) The Black vote had played an important role in the elections of two Democratic presidents—Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1944 and Harry S. Truman in 1948. Indeed, it was Truman who appealed to Black voters by suggesting and then following through with Executive Order 9981--the Armed Forces Integration Act, stipulating the desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces on July 26, 1948. The U.S. Armed Forces thus became the first major American institution to desegregate, remain so, and do it successfully. (16:29-30) Over time, and with constant struggle, the Black vote eventually contributed to a number of other democratic presidential victories: John F. Kennedy (1960); Lyndon B. Johnson (1964); Jimmy Carter (1976); and William Jefferson Clinton (1992 and 1996).

Political Protest and Activism

Black churches have always addressed both "other world" and "real world" needs and functions for their flocks. Among the more prominent interventions are political protests and activism usually resulting in a source of political leaders. African-American political protest and activism has been diverse across history, relying on a number of strategies including legal measures, voting, nonviolence, and violent resistance.

Legal action to fight for the rights of African Americans has resulted in many prominent laws and cases. A number of acts have already been described above including the Emancipation Proclamation which freed slaves, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968. In addition, a number of landmark cases changed the African-American experience for the better. The cases include *Buchanan versus Warley* (1917), ruling against residential segregation, and *Brown versus the Board of Education* (1954), ruling against educational segregation. An important, but lesser known achievement involved a Black labor leader, A. Philip Randolph, the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. In 1941, Randolph encouraged President Roosevelt to set up an agency, the Fair Employment Practices Commission, to curb discrimination in the workplace, especially in the growing defense industry. (10:256)

Similarly, the ballot box provided an avenue for Blacks to be politically active. Blacks voted for elected officials from national to local politics. Today, roughly 300 U.S. mayors are African American. They represent not only large American cities with significant Black populations such as Washington, DC, and Baltimore, Maryland, but cities with smaller African-American populations, such as Seattle, Washington. (1:76-77) During the mid 1990s, approximately 8,000 people of African-American descent were serving in public office as a result of being elected (10:283) with most serving in the South. (22:117)

Violent protest in the African-American community dates back to slavery uprisings. About 250 slave revolts or conspiracies to revolt have been recorded. (9:240) Slave revolts

took the form of violence against property such as farms and livestock and violence against people, mostly White masters and slave overseers. (9:240) As America urbanized, riots in large U.S. cities involving Blacks evidenced violent resistance. It should be noted here that African Americans did not invent rioting in the United States--White mob violence and riots came before Black riots and usually took the form of Whites brutalizing Blacks. (9:25) Looking back, most riots by African Americans were triggered by conditions of racial discrimination, poverty, unemployment, poor housing, police brutality, job discrimination, or restrictions on political participation. (9:250-251) Some of the earliest urban riots by Blacks occurred in the 1930s, with most occurring during the 1960s. A handful occurred during the 1990s.

Non-violent protest and resistance in the Black community has been very successful. Three forms of non-violent protest and resistance were undertaken--flight, work stoppage, and education. Flight involved slaves running away from slave owners to free states. The most famous network to help runaway slaves between the 1830s and Civil War was the Underground Railroad, a network of safe places between the Southern and Northern states arranged for fugitive slaves. (9:240) One of the principal "conductors" of the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman, an African-American woman and former slave who helped smuggle hundreds of people to freedom. Known as *Moses*, she carried a weapon to deal with slaves who became fearful or wanted to return. What is less known about Harriet Tubman are her Civil War experiences. Tubman served selflessly as a volunteer in the Union Army. She was a liaison between the Army and newly freed slaves, nursed wounded soldiers, trained army scouts, and participated in a leadership role in a raid on Confederate troops. (2:1892 and 21:226-227) You can visit *The Harriet Tubman Home* in New York online at http://www.nyhistory.com/harriettubman/.

A second form of resistance was work stoppage. Work stoppage could be individual or collective. Work stoppage resistance included actions to slow the working pace, pretended illness, and strikes. (9:240)

The last form of resistance involved education. Influential African Americans such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth and others used writing, lecturing, and speeches to protest the institution of slavery.

After the Civil War, change became a normal part of the African-American experience. While some equality emerged in some areas, Jim Crow laws and other forms of racial oppression emerged in other places. By the turn of the century, Black leaders were beginning to stand out in significant ways and make strong suggestions about how African Americans should live in America.

Profiles of African-American Leadership: Five Giants

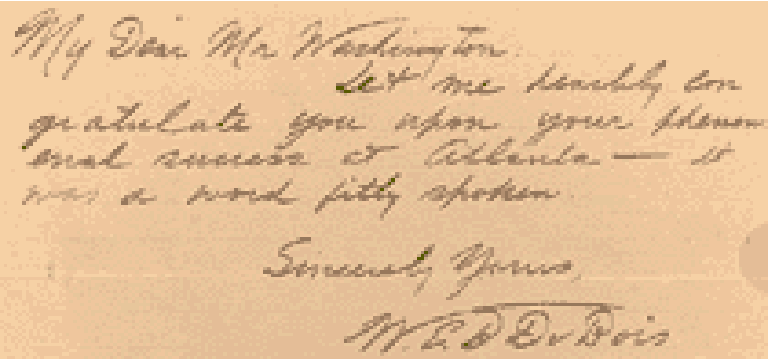
The African-American community has a rich heritage of brilliant, prominent, and committed leaders. Yet, even at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a great deal of disagreement among African-American leaders as how to best deal with the problems associated with race relations in the United States at the time. Three prototypical leaders are profiled below all giants both then and now: an assimilationsist (Washington), a pluralist (DuBois), and a

separatist (Garvey). (10:254-255) Also, because of their key contributions Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are profiled.

Booker T. Washington

Photograph from Library of Congress

Booker Taliaferro Washington: Booker T. Washington is best known for establishing the Tuskegee Institute, a college in Alabama dedicated to the practical education of African Americans. Washington first gained national prominence among both Blacks and Whites following a speech he delivered in Atlanta, Georgia in 1895. In that speech he said: "We can be separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." (2:1959) The short-letter below from W.E.B. DuBois to Washington congratulates him on that important speech. (5) DuBois would later come to disagree with Washington on race relations.



My Dear Mr Washington
Let me kindly congratulate you upon your phenomenal success at Atlanta — it was a word fitly spoken.
Sincerely Yours,
W. E. B. DuBois

The newspaper clip below, taken from the Library of Congress archives, is an example of Washington's individual approach to racism. (4:4) Called "Booker T. Washington Conversation with Young Negro" and printed in the *Cleveland Journal*, it further shows the assimilationist orientation of Booker T. Washington in terms of dealing with being Black. Washington advocated economic success and skills for Blacks.

Dr. Booker T. Washington in a recent conversation with an ambitious young Negro of New York, made this observation: "My boy, if you would think less and say less about your color, perhaps other people might say less and think less about it. Ask for success and advancement because you are a deserving man instead of a desiring black man. Think it over."

—J—C—

W.E.B. DuBois

Photograph from National Archieves

W.E.B. DuBois: Considered by some to be the Black intellectual of the 20th century (30:1967), William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) DuBois became the first Black American to earn and receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. (1895) DuBois was a teacher, scholar, and social reformer. He taught at Wilberforce University and Atlanta University. He published many scholarly books examining the sociology of African Americans at the time including *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) and *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). In 1905, as a social reformer, he set the foundation for what would become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He also published a magazine called The Crisis to keep Black people informed about issues they faced. DuBois was a keen observer of social relations. Below is an excerpt of a letter he wrote to Major Charles Young regarding the appropriate attire for receiving an award from the NAACP. (6) Young was a Black West Point graduate and would later become the first African American to reach the rank of colonel.

My dear Young:

Thank you for your good and encouraging words. I think we will make the dinner on the twenty-third. The case of the full dress is this: If a colored man dresses up when the occasion does not call for it then white people criticize him. On the other hand, if he should not dress when the occasion did call not only would white people say that he did not know any better, but the colored people would feel hurt. In Boston undoubtedly there are going to be present some army or staff officers in uniform. If you do not appear in uniform the colored people will especially resent it. Personally I always follow that rule. For instance, at Wilberforce I put on all my silken academic gown for the Commencement procession. On the other hand, of course, I am very careful not to dress when occasion does not call for it. Please then follow my advice this time and bring along the full dress uniform. I am waiting anxiously for the pictures. I wish the wife could come along with you. With best love to all,

Sincerely, Major Charles Young.

W.E.B. DuBois

DuBois was a much stronger advocate for racial pluralism than Booker T. Washington. He made strong public statements about racial inequality and equality and wanted change now rather than later. He criticized Washington's accomodationist and patient approach and actively advanced an agenda to stamp out segregation through his writings, speeches, and lawsuits. (10:255)

Marcus Mosiah Garvey

Marcus Mosiah Garvey: Marcus M. Garvey was born in Jamaica, became a leader in America and died in England. He is best known for establishing and leading the Universal Negro Improvement Association headquartered in Harlem, NYC in 1917. He is also very well known for the back-to-Africa movement. He advocated Black economic self-reliance, political self-determination, and social and geographic separatism through the establishment of a new Black nation on the western coast of the continent of Africa. (2:818-819) To this end, he acquired a fleet of ships known as the Black Star Steamship Line to both transport Blacks back to Africa and to begin trading goods and resources with other nations. He is Jamaica's first national hero.

Rosa Parks

By the mid-1950s, Black protests often became the rule rather than the exception. A major turning point in Black civil rights was the Montgomery, Alabama public bus boycott. Rosa Parks triggered the boycott. A seamstress and NAACP member, she refused to give up her seat to a White person on a segregated public bus. The boycott lasted for 382 days from December 1, 1955 to December 26, 1956 and proved successful not only for the citizens of

Montgomery, Alabama, but for the Civil Rights Movement and its emerging leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Photograph from Library of Congress

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is the most prominent leader of the 20th century. King was a Baptist minister. Like Black ministers before him, such as Gabriel Prosser, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey, his movement was rooted in the African-American church. (22:125) At 15 he enrolled at Morehouse College and earned a B.A. degree in Sociology in 1948. He earned a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University in 1955. King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 and led some of the most important protests in our nation's history in places such as Albany, Georgia; Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama; Memphis, Tennessee; and Washington, DC. He received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964. King's idealism and leadership are celebrated in a national holiday on January 15. Visit the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site on-line at http://www.nps/gov/amlu/.

Other prominent non-violent activists are important to African-American history as well. Such people include Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and Reverend Al Sharpton among others.

CULTURE

What is culture?

What is culture? On the surface, this question is common sense. However, with some thought, culture is a complicated idea. It may be simple to provide examples of culture, but it is more difficult to define it. Sociologists and anthropologists view culture as *the way of life of a particular group of people*. Aspects of culture can include language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and artifacts (e.g., a flag) passed from one generation to the next. (11:35) From this definition, one can see there are many variants on culture and even cultures within cultures, known as subcultures.

One universal feature of a culture or subculture is language. To provide an example of how important language is to culture, the so-called "test" below is a play on how IQ tests are said to be culturally biased. (19:369) The test below is an opportunity to test your "cultural background" (the answers are located in the back in Appendix 2).

Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogenity
By Robert L. Williams, Ph.D.

1. Alley Apple is a
   a. brick
   b. piece of fruit
   c. dog
   d. horse

2. CPT means a standard of
   a. time
   b. tune
   c. tale
   d. twist

3. Deuce-and-a-quarter is
   a. money
   b. a car
   c. a house
   d. dice

4. The eagle flies means
   a. the blahs
   b. a movie
   c. payday
   d. deficit

5. Gospel Bird is a
   a. pheasant
   b. chicken
   c. goose
   d. duck

6. "I know you, shame" means
   a. You don't hear well
   b. You are a racist
   c. You don't mean what you're saying
   d. You are guilty

7. Main Squeeze means
   a. to prepare for battle
   b. a favorite toy
   c. a best girlfriend
   d. to hold up someone

8. Nose Opened means
   a. flirting
   b. teed off
   c. deeply in love
   d. very angry

9. Playing the dozens means
   a. playing the numbers
   b. playing baseball
   c. insulting a person's parents
   d. playing with women

10. Shucking means
   a. talking
   b. thinking
   c. train of thought
   d. wasting time

11. Stone fox means
   a. bitchy
   b. pretty
   c. train of thought
   d. wasting time

12. T.C.B. means
   a. that's cool baby
   b. taking care of business
   c. they couldn't breathe
   d. took careful behavior

In addition to various forms of language, African Americans have made lasting contributions to the culture heritage of the United States and in a multitude of areas. In this section, three aspects of culture are examined in subsections--art, music, and literature--and within each, features and people are profiled.

Art

African-American art can be viewed as individualistic, changing, and improvisational. (29:5) African Americans artistic expression occurs in the context of unique social and historical situations. Below, two African-American artists are featured: Meta vaux Warick Fuller, a sculptress, and Jean-Michel Basquait, a painter.

Meta Vaux Warick Fuller: Born in Philadelphia, Meta Vaux Warick Fuller was an accomplished sculptor and lived from 1877 until 1968. In 1900, W.E.B. DuBois saw Fuller's sculptures on display at the Paris Universal Exposition. At the time, she had been studying with the French artist, Auguste Rodin. (24:84) Meeting DuBois in Paris became a turning point in her career, and by 1902 she became one of the first African-American studio artists to depict African-American faces. (2:794-795) In 1907, she became the first Black woman commissioned to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the colonial Jamestown settlement at the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition. She created 15 tableaux highlighting the progress of African Americans. A few years later, in 1913, DuBois commissioned her to create a sculpture to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation--an eight-foot high piece called the *Spirit of Emancipation*. She continued her move away from a more classical, non-African-American creations, to more exclusively African-American works in the second half of her professional life. Another important work of hers is titled *The Crucifixion*. It was inspired and in reaction to the Black girls killed by a bomb thrown into a Birmingham, Alabama church in 1963. It portrays Christ on the cross, with his head raised.

Jean-Michel Basquait: Although he died at 27, he was a very prolific artist for 10 years. Basquait left an artistic legacy. He experienced art from humble and desperate beginnings. He was foremost a graffiti artist in New York City in 1977 with the tag signature SAMO. He soon achieved international recognition and acclaim and became the youngest artist ever to be included in the Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. (2:202-203) Basquait was multi-ethnic, a Haitian father and a first generation Puerto Rican-American mother, growing up in both Brooklyn, New York and Puerto Rico. During his brief artistic career, he lived on the streets of New York City. He had a one-man show at 21 at the famous Annina Nosei Gallery and worked directly under the mentorship of Andy Warhol, the most famous pop artist of the 20th century. In his short career, he produced over 600 works with most owned by the Whitney Museum of American Art in NYC. Today they are valued in the millions of dollars. (14:1010-1011) Basquait's work is labeled “abstract graffiti expressionism.” For example, his self-portrait includes acrylic, oil, and spray paint on canvas and can be viewed at http://www.artchive.com/artchive/B/basq…/basquiat_self-portrait_1982.jpg.htm.

Music

African-American musical styles have consistently been innovative, creative, influential, and lasting in the United States and the world. Jazz, Spirituals, Soul, Bop, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Rock and Roll, and Ragtime are diverse musical styles originated and innovated by African Americans and embraced by the world. (20) Newer forms have blasted onto the music

scene as well including Zydeco, Reggae, and Rap. Two types of musical styles from the African-American community are profiled below: Rap and Jazz.

Rap: Rap music emerged like a steamroller from the Hip Hop Movement in the South Bronx neighborhood of New York City in the 1970s. The Hip Hop Movement was a youth subcultural movement and included creative expression through graffiti art, fashion, dancing, and music. (2:1589-1591) Rap, as the music of Hip Hop was first referred to, has been around for 30 years but can be linked to African-American traditions from Africa and slavery. As Eric Bennett notes in Appiah and Gates' (2:1589) encyclopedia:

> The thematic content of many rap songs--egoistic self-assertion and playful attack on one's competitor--follows traditions of African and African American "tasting" and "signifying." The value that some African tribes assign to oral humor, confidence and divisions has its analog on North American streets.

Rap music is rooted in African-American culture and is diverse within its style. Today, rap embraces a range of different styles and offshoots such as the style of "gangsta rap." Below are a number of different types of rap and the artists associated with the form. (2:1590-1591)

- Political rap: addressing social problems--*Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five* and *KRS-One.*
- Gangsta rap: addressing violence, drug use, and sex--*N.W.A.* and *Ice-T*.
- White rap: a more popular form of rap oriented to the suburban middle class--*Vanilla Ice* and *Beastie Boys*.
- Women rappers: women addressing women's issues--*Queen Latifah, Lauryn Hill, Sister Souljah*, and *Salt 'n' Pepa.*
- Alternative rap: addressing social issues without the violence--*Arrested Development, KRS-One*, and *The Fuguees*.
- Artistic rap: addressing innovative musical style--*A Tribe Called Quest and De La Soul.*
- Popular rap: addressing more general themes--*DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince*.
- International rap: addressing issues of various themes beyond the U.S. borders--The *Fugees, Wu Tang Crew*, and *MC Solar*.

Despite the various forms of rap, the music has maintained the fundamentals of a Master of Ceremonies, the *MC*, and a Disk Jockey, the *DJ*. The DJ is responsible for laying down a musical beat through mixing and sampling by spinning records, often working two at a time for the MC. The DJ is usually toward the back of the stage in performances. The MC relies on the DJ to coordinate his or her raps verbally with the microphone, usually from the center of the stage and sometimes with more than one MC. Rap performances include a host of others or "crews" or "possés" including dancers, other MCs, musical instruments, and other performers such as *Puff Daddy* integrating the musician Sting into his performances. Both Hip Hop and Rap music culminated with *Lauryn Hill's* compact disk recording titled, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill.* Her CD received five Grammy Awards in 1998--the most prestigious being the Album of the Year in the "General" genre category.

Jazz: Jazz is defined as:

> . . . a twentieth-century African American music characterized by improvisation, a rythmic conception termed *swing*, and the high value placed on each musician achieving a uniquely identifiable sound. Jazz musicians have consistently challenged musical boundaries . . . (2:1035)

Like rap music coming some 70 years after it, jazz can claim numerous forms including New Orleans Jazz, Swing, Bop, Cool Jazz, Hard Bop, Free Jazz, and Jazz-Rock among others. Some of the more famous African-American jazz musicians include Louis Armstrong, Sara Vaughan, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and more recently, Winton Marsalis.

Turn of the 20th century New Orleans is the birthplace of Jazz. (3:7) It developed from the collective of African Americans and Creoles, people of mixed race ancestry including European, Spanish, and African. Jazz continued to develop in large cities populated mainly by large numbers of African-American supporters, especially the Northeast United States, where the musicians found an earnest following among both Blacks and Whites. The invention of recorded music spread jazz further. By the 1930s, bands and ensembles headed by big name leaders such as Duke Ellington began making a mark, and White bands desegregated by including such notable African Americans as Billie Holiday and Lionel Hampton. Since the 1930s, jazz has gone through a number of forms. Today, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis is a major proponent of "old school" jazz music as a teacher, composer, and spokesperson for the world of jazz.

Literature

The first and perhaps most celebrated African-American writer is Phillis Wheatley. She learned to read and write as a slave and at the age of 19 published the first book, in 1773, by an African-American writer (she was only the second American woman to publish a book!). The book is titled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Another honor bestowed on Wheatley was an opportunity to meet General George Washington. She wrote a poem for the general upon his appointment to commander-in-chief of the military forces and he invited her to visit him. (23:148)

Since that first published volume in 1773, a number of important, powerful, influential, and now even classical, publications have emerged from among African Americans. The list below is a chronology of a sample of important African-American literary works, firsts, and their titles and authors.

♦ 1827 *Freedom Journal*	1st newspaper
♦ 1845 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*	Frederick Douglass
♦ 1858 *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom*	1st drama written by an African American William Wells Brown

♦ 1859	*Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*	1st novel in the US by a Black woman Harriet Wilson
♦ 1861	*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*	Harriet Jacobs
♦ 1893	*The History of the Negro Race in America from 1619-1880*	George Washington Williams
♦ 1901	*Up from Slavery*	Booker T. Washington
♦ 1903	*The Souls of Black Folks*	W.E.B. DuBois
♦ 1912	*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*	James Weldon Johnson
♦ 1923	*Cane*	Jean Toomer
♦ 1925	*The New Negro*	Alain Locke
♦ 1930	*Not Without Laughter*	Langston Hughes
♦ 1937	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	Nora Neole Hurston
♦ 1940	*Native Son*	Richard Wright
♦ 1946	*The Street*	Ann Petry
♦ 1952	*Invisible Man*	Ralph Ellison
♦ 1953	*Go Tell it on the Mountain*	James Baldwin
♦ 1959	*A Raisin in the Sun*	Lorraine Hansberry
♦ 1968	*The Black Arts Movement*	Larry Neal
♦ 1970	*The Bluest Eye*	Toni Morrison
♦ 1970	*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*	Maya Angelou
♦ 1971	*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*	Ernest J. Gaines
♦ 1983	*The Color Purple*	Alice Walker
♦ 1992	*Waiting to Exhale* (Pulitzer Prize for Fiction)	Terry McMillan

The fact that some of the more recent and important celebrated African-American writers are women is notable. Two of those writers are profiled below, Toni Morrison and Maya Angelou.

Toni Morrison: Born to working class parents in Lorain, Ohio, Toni Morrison earned a bachelor's degree in 1953 from Howard University and a master's degree in English Literature from Cornell University. As a teacher, she has taught at Texas Southern University, Howard University, and Princeton University. In 1970, at the age of 39, she published her first book, *The Bluest Eye*. She published six more novels by 1998. They include:

♦ 1973	*Sula*	nominated for the National Book Award
♦ 1977	*Song of Solomon*	National Book Critics Award
♦ 1981	*Tar Baby*	National Best-seller
♦ 1987	*Beloved*	Pulitzer Prize for Literature
♦ 1992	*Jazz*	
♦ 1998	*Paradise*	

The combined effort of these works secured her a the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998. She is the first African American and the first African-American female of any country to receive this international honor.

Maya Angelou: Maya Angelou was born in 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri but spent most of her formative years in Stamps, Arkansas living with her grandmother. High school was spent in San Francisco where at 15 she became the first African-American cable car conductor for The Market Street Railroad Company. This experience was the beginning for a Renaissance woman—cocktail waitress, madam, dancer, activist, mother, teacher, journalist, writer, actress, film producer, playwright, Creole cook, and of course, a poet. (23:157-158) Her most popular book to date, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, is an autobiography of her first 16 years of life. Like so many African-American books before and after, it earned a place in the Book-of-the-Month Club. Another first for African-American women involved her screenplay *Georgia, Georgia*. Written by Maya Angelou, it became the first to be made into a film by an African-American woman. A culminating moment came in the early 1990s, when President Clinton requested Angelou create a poem for his January 1993 Presidential Inauguration. She wrote and read the poem title: *The Pulse of the Morning.* The poem is below:

"On the Pulse of the Morning" (1993)
http://www.luminet.net/~tgort/angelou.htm

A Rock, A River, A Tree.
Hosts to species long since departed,
Marked the mastodon.
The dinosaur, who left dry tokens
Of their sojourn here
On our planet floor,
Any broad alarm of their hastening doom
Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages.
But today, the Rock cries out to us, clearly, forcefully,
Come, you may stand upon my
Back and face your distant destiny,
But seek no haven in my shadow.
I will give you no more hiding place down here.
You, created only a little lower than
The angels, have crouched too long in
The bruising darkness,
Have lain too long
Face down in ignorance.
Your mouths spilling words
Armed for slaughter.
The Rock cries out today, you may stand on me,
But do not hide your face.
Across the wall of the world,
A River sings a beautiful song,
Come rest here by my side.
Each of you a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.
Your armed struggles for profit

Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.
Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more. Come,
Clad in peace and I will sing the songs
The Creator gave to me when I and the
Tree and the stone were one.
Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your
Brow and when you yet knew you still
Knew nothing.
The River sings and sings on.
There is a true yearning to respond to
The singing River and the wise Rock.
So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew
The African and Native American, the Sioux,
The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek
The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh,
The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher,
The privileged, the homeless, the Teacher.
They hear. They all hear
The speaking of the Tree.
Today, the first and last of every Tree
Speaks to humankind. Come to me, here beside the River.
Plant yourself beside me, here beside the River.
Each of you, descendant of some passed
On traveller, has been paid for.
You, who gave me my first name, you
Pawnee, Apache and Seneca, you
Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then
Forced on bloody feet, left me to the employment of
Other seekers--desperate for gain,
Starving for gold.
You, the Turk, the Swede, the German, the Scot ...
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought
Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare
Praying for a dream.
Here, root yourselves beside me.
I am the Tree planted by the River,
Which will not be moved.
I, the Rock, I the River, I the Tree
I am yours--your Passages have been paid.
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, and if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.

Lift up your eyes upon
The day breaking for you.
Give birth again
To the dream.
Women, children, men,
Take it into the palms of your hands.
Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts
Each new hour holds new chances
For new beginnings.
Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.
The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out upon me, the
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.
No less to Midas than the mendicant.
No less to you now than the mastodon then.
Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out
And into your sister's eyes, into
Your brother's face, your country
And say simply
Very simply
With hope
Good morning.

CONCLUSION

African Americans continue to make a mark through individual and collective contributions to community life in the United States and around the globe. The rich and diverse experiences of African Americans permeate every facet of American institutions and our cultural life. There is no question that African Americans will continue to make in-roads on the cultural landscape of the planet, the United States, and in the African-American community. This includes future communities as well. For example, African Americans have established in-roads on the information superhighway. One such entrepreneur is Omar Wason. He founded BlackPlanet.com in September 1999 as an on-line community for African Americans on the World Wide Web (WWW). At the beginning of the 21st century, his website is reported to have been the number one community site for Blacks on the WWW. (25:48) We close with quotes from two African Americans—one looking to the past, the other to the future. (18:151)

There is no future for a people who deny their past.

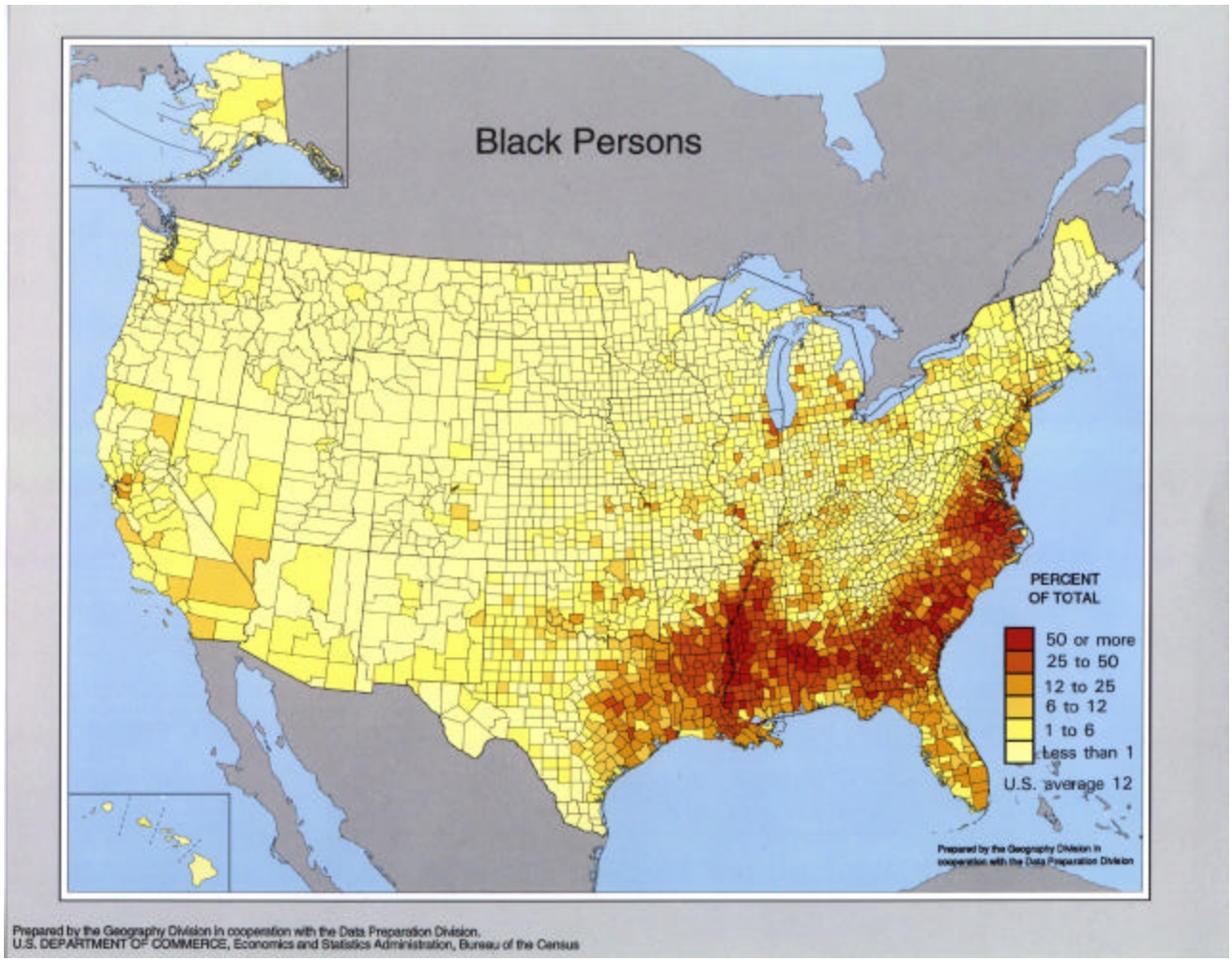
Adam Clayton Powell Jr., 1908-1972
Minister and U.S. Congressperson

When I look to the future, it's so bright it burns my eyes.

Oprah Winfrey, 1954-
Entertainer

APPENDIX 1

Geographical populations of Blacks in the United States.



APPENDIX 2

Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity By Robert L. Williams, Ph.D. ANSWERS	
1. Alley Apple is a a. brick	7. Main Squeeze means c. a best girlfriend
2. CPT means a standard of a. time	8. Nose Opened means c. deeply in love
3. Deuce-and-a-quarter is b. a car	9. Playing the dozens means c. insulting a person's parents
4. The eagle flies means c. payday	10. Shucking means d. wasting time
5. Gospel Bird is a b. chicken	11. Stone fox means b. pretty
6. "I know you, shame" means d. You are guilty	12. T.C.B. means b. taking care of business

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