



AUGUST

This Month in Black History

Fact Sheet

- 1 **Benjamin Elijah Mays**, an American Baptist minister, educator, and American rights leader who is credited with laying the intellectual foundation of the American Civil Rights Movement, was born in 1894.
- 2 **James Arthur Baldwin**, an American novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and activist, was born in 1924.
- 4 **Frederick Douglass** delivered an address on West India Emancipation on August 4, 1857, in which he declares, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."
- Barack Hussein Obama II**, an American politician and attorney who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017, was born in 1961. A member of the Democratic Party, Obama was the first African-American president of the United States. He previously served as a United States senator from Illinois from 2005 to 2008 and as an Illinois state senator from 1997 to 2004.
- 5 **James Hal Cone**, an American theologian, best known for his advocacy of black theology and black liberation theology, was born in 1938.
- 6 **The Voting Rights Act of 1965** was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson during the height of the Civil Rights Movement in 1965.
- 7 **Ralph Johnson Bunche**, an American political scientist, diplomat, and first person of African descent to be awarded a Nobel Prize, was born in 1903.
- 8 **Matthew Alexander Henson**, an American explorer best known for his participation in the 1908–1909 expedition that reached the geographic North Pole, was born in 1866. Henson was the first of the expedition party to reach the pole.
- 9 **James Cleveland "Jesse" Owens**, an American track and field athlete, won his four Olympic gold medals at the 1936 Summer Olympics. Owens' record-breaking performance of four gold medals at a single Olympics, was not equaled until Carl Lewis won gold medals in the same events in 1984.
- 10 **Anna Julia Haywood Cooper**, an American author, educator, sociologist, speaker, Black liberation activist, and one of the most prominent African-American scholars in United States history, was born in 1858.
- 11 **Alexander Murray Palmer Haley**, an American writer, and the author of the 1976 book *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, was born in 1921. ABC adapted the book as a television miniseries of the same name and aired it in 1977 to a record-breaking audience of one hundred thirty million viewers.
J. Rosamond Johnson, an American composer and singer during the Harlem Renaissance, was born in 1873. Born in Jacksonville, Florida, he had much of his career in New York City. Johnson composed the music for the hymn "Lift Every Voice and Sing," His brother, poet, and activist, James Weldon Johnson, wrote the song's lyrics.
- 12 **Victoria Jackson Gray Adams**, an American civil rights activist and founding member of the influential Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, dies in 2006.

- 13 **Minnie Joycelyn Elders**, an American pediatrician and public health administrator who served as Surgeon General of the United States from 1993 to 1994, was born in 1933. She was the second woman, second person of color, and the first African American to serve as Surgeon General.
- Kathleen Deanna Battle**, an American operatic soprano known for her distinctive vocal range and tone, was born in 1948.
- 14 **Ernest Everett Just**, a pioneering African-American biologist, academic, and science writer, was born in 1883.
- 15 **Maxine Moore Waters**, an American politician serving as the U.S. Representative for California's 43rd congressional district since 1991, was born in 1938.
- 16 **Carol Moseley-Braun**, an American diplomat, politician, and lawyer who represented Illinois in the United States Senate from 1993 to 1999, was born in 1947. Moseley Braun was the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, the first African-American U.S. Senator from the Democratic Party, the first woman to defeat an incumbent U.S. Senator in an election, and the first female U.S. Senator from Illinois.
- 17 **Marcus Mosiah Garvey Sr.**, a Jamaican political activist, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur, and orator, was born in 1887. Ideologically a black nationalist and Pan-Africanist, his ideas came to be known as Garveyism.
- 18 **Roberto Enrique Clemente Walker**, a Puerto Rican professional baseball right fielder who played eighteen seasons in Major League Baseball (MLB) for the Pittsburgh Pirates, was born in 1934. He was posthumously inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973, becoming both the first Caribbean and the first Latino-American player to be enshrined.
- 19 In 1791, **Benjamin Banneker** challenged the way blacks were seen and treated by whites in America in a public letter to Thomas Jefferson. In this letter, Banneker pointed to the contradictions between the principles laid out in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, and the continued existence of slavery.
- 20 In 1619, “20 and odd Negroes,” kidnapped from the “the Kingdom of Ndongo” in Angola, arrive in the British colony of Virginia and are then bought by English colonists. **The arrival of the enslaved Africans in the New World marks a beginning of two and a half centuries of slavery in North America.**
- In 1965, **Jonathan Myrick Daniels**, an Episcopal seminarian and civil rights activist, was murdered by a shotgun-wielding special county deputy, Tom Coleman, who was a construction worker in Hayneville, Alabama, while in the act of shielding seventeen-year-old Ruby Sales.
- 21 **William James "Count" Basie**, an American jazz pianist, organist, bandleader, and composer, was born in 1904.
- 22 **Huey Percy Newton**, an African-American revolutionary, most known for co-founding the Black Panther Party with Bobby Seale, dies in 1989.
- 23 **James Stone**, a light-skinned fugitive slave passing for white, enlisted in the Union Army as a part of the First Fight Artillery of Ohio (1861). By doing so, he became the first African-American Union soldier.
- Kobe Bean Bryant**, an American professional basketball player who is regarded as one of the greatest basketball players of all time, was born in 1978.
- 24 **Bayard Rustin**, an African-American leader in social movements for civil rights, socialism,

nonviolence, and human rights, dies in 1987. He helped to organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

- 25 **Althea Neale Gibson**, an American tennis player and professional golfer, and one of the first black athletes to cross the color line of international tennis, was born in 1927. In 1956, she became the first African American to win a Grand Slam title (the French Championships) and was voted Female Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press in 1957 and 1958. In all, she won eleven Grand Slam tournaments.
- 26 **Creola Katherine Johnson**, an American mathematician whose calculations of orbital mechanics as a NASA employee were critical to the success of the first and subsequent U.S. crewed spaceflights, was born in 1818. The space agency noted her “historical role as one of the first African-American women to work as a NASA scientist.” She was portrayed by Taraji P. Henson as a lead character in the 2016 film Hidden Figures.
- 27 **William Edward Burghardt Du Bois**, American sociologist, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer, and editor, dies in 1963. He was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. He opens *The Souls of Black Folk* with the central thesis of much of his life's work: “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.”
- 28 **Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream”** speech was delivered during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. He called for civil and economic rights and an end to racism in the United States. Delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the speech was a defining moment of the civil rights movement and among the most iconic speeches in American history.
- 29 **Michael Joseph Jackson**, an American singer, songwriter, and dancer who was dubbed the “King of Pop,” was born in 1958. He is the most awarded music artist in history.
- Charles “Bird” Parker Jr.**, an American jazz saxophonist, band leader, and composer, was born in 1920.
- 30 **Roy Ottoway Wilkins**, a prominent activist in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from the 1930s to the 1970s, was born in 1901. Wilkins most notable role was his leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- 31 **Frank Robinson**, an American professional baseball outfielder and manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) who played for five teams, was born in 1935. He is the only player to be named Most Valuable Player (MVP) of both the National League (NL) and the American League (AL). In 1975, Robinson became the first black manager in big league history.