



Black People & Their Place In World History

5 BLACK PRESIDENTS

The Truth About:

**The Five Black Presidents of
The United States Of America**

		
<u>Thomas Jefferson</u>	<u>Andrew Jackson</u>	<u>Abraham Lincoln</u>
		WHO IS NEXT?
<u>Warren Harding</u>	<u>Calvin Coolidge</u>	

Joel A. Rogers and Dr. Auset Bakhufu have both written books documenting that at least five former presidents of the United States had Black people among their ancestors. If one considers the fact that European men far outnumbered European women during the founding of this country, and that the rape and impregnation of an African female slave

was not considered a crime, it is even more surprising that these two authors could not document Black ancestors among an ever larger number of former presidents. The president's names include Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Warren Harding, and Calvin Coolidge.

The best case for Black ancestry is against Warren G. Harding, our 29th president from 1921 until 1923. Harding himself never denied his ancestry. When Republican leaders called on Harding to deny the "Negro" history, he said, "How should I know whether or not one of my ancestors might have jumped the fence." William Chancellor, a White professor of economics and politics at Wooster College in Ohio, wrote a book on the Harding family genealogy and identified Black ancestors among both parents of President Harding. Justice Department agents allegedly bought and destroyed all copies of this book. Chancellor also said that Harding's only academic credentials included education at Iberia College, which was founded in order to educate fugitive slaves.

Andrew Jackson was our 7th president from 1829 to 1837. The Virginia Magazine of History Volume 29 says that Jackson was the son of a White woman from Ireland who had intermarried with a Negro. The magazine also said that his eldest brother had been sold as a slave in Carolina. Joel Rogers says that Andrew Jackson Sr. died long before President Andrew Jackson Jr. was born. He says the president's mother then went to live on the Crawford farm where there were Negro slaves and that one of these men was Andrew Jr's father. Another account of the "brother sold into slavery" story can be found in David Coyle's book entitled "Ordeal of the Presidency" (1960).

Thomas Jefferson was our 3rd president from 1801 to 1809. The chief attack on Jefferson was in a book written by Thomas Hazard in 1867 called

"The Johnny Cake Papers." Hazard interviewed Paris Gardiner, who said he was present during the 1796 presidential campaign, when one speaker states that Thomas Jefferson was "a mean-spirited son of a half-breed Indian squaw and a Virginia mulatto father." In his book entitled "The Slave Children of Thomas Jefferson," Samuel

BLACK (NEGRO) WALL STREET

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he "Black (Negro) Wall Street" was the name given to Greenwood Avenue of North Tulsa, Oklahoma during the early 1900's. Because of strict segregation, Blacks were only allowed to shop, spend, and live in a 35 square block area called the Greenwood district. The "circulation of Black dollars" only in the Black community produced a tremendously prosperous Black business district that was admired and envied by the whole country.

Oklahoma's first African-American settlers were Indian slaves of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes": Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles. These tribes were forced to leave the Southeastern United States and resettle in Oklahoma in mid-winter over the infamous "Trail of Tears." After the Civil War, U.S.-Indian treaties provided for slave liberation and land allotments ranging from 40-100 acres, which helps explain why over 6000 African-Americans lived in the Oklahoma territory by 1870. Oklahoma boasted of more All-Black towns and communities than any other state in the land, and these communities opened their arms to freed slaves from all across the country. Remarkably, at one time, there were over 30 African-American newspapers in Oklahoma.

Tulsa began as an outpost of the Creek Indians and as late as 1910, Walter White of the NAACP, described Tulsa as "the dead and hopeless home of 18,182 souls." Suddenly, oil was discovered and Tulsa rapidly grew into a thriving, bustling, enormously wealthy town of 73,000 by 1920 with bank deposits totaling over \$65 million. However, Tulsa was a "tale of two cities isolated and insular", one Black and one White. Tulsa was so racist and segregated that it was the only city in America that boasted of segregated telephone booths.

Since African Americans could neither live among Whites as equals nor patronize White businesses in Tulsa, Blacks had to develop a completely separate business district and community, which soon became prosperous and legendary. Black dollars invested in the Black community also produced self-pride, self-sufficiency, and self-determination. The business district, beginning at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and Archer Street, became so successful and vibrant that Booker T. Washington during his visit bestowed the moniker: "Negro Wall Street." By 1921, Tulsa's African-American population of 11,000 had its own bus line, two high schools, one hospital, two newspapers, two theaters, three drug stores, four hotels, a public library, and thirteen churches. In addition, there were over 150 two and three story brick commercial buildings that housed clothing and grocery stores, cafes, rooming houses, nightclubs, and a large number of professional offices including doctors, lawyers, and dentists. Tulsa's progressive African American community boasted some of the city's most elegant brick homes, well furnished with china, fine linens, beautiful furniture, and grand pianos. Mary Elizabeth Parrish from Rochester, New York wrote: "In the residential section there were homes of beauty and splendor which would please the most critical eye." Well known African American personalities often visited the Greenwood district including: educators Mary McCloud Bethune and W.E.B. DuBois, scientist George Washington Carver, opera singer Marian Anderson, blues singer Dinah Washington, and noted Chicago chemist Percy Julian.

T.P. Scott wrote in "Negro City Directory": "Early African American business leaders in Tulsa patterned the development of Tulsa's thriving Greenwood district after the successful African American entrepreneurial activity in Durham, North Carolina."

After the Civil War, former slaves moved to Durham from the neighboring farmlands and found employment in tobacco processing plants. By 1900, a large Black middle class had developed which began businesses that soon grew into phenomenally successful corporations, especially North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company. Charles Clinton Spaulding was so successful with the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company that he was able to create a real estate company, a textile and hosiery mill, and the "Durham Negro Observer" newspaper. Durham Blacks also created a hospital, Mechanics and

Farmers Bank (1908), North Carolina Training College (1910), Banker's Fire Insurance Company (1920), and the National Negro Finance Company (1922). However, living conditions in Durham were so substandard and working conditions so poor that the 1920 mortality rate among Blacks in Durham was three times higher than the White rate. As of 1926, 64% of all African Americans in Durham died before the age of 40. These perilous working and living conditions were not present in Tulsa.

Burning

Black

Wall

Street



Art by
Sherwood
Akuna

**On May 31, 1921,
the successful
Black Greenwood district
was completely destroyed
by one of the worse race riots
in U.S. history.**

A 19 year old Black male accidentally stumbled on a jerky elevator and bumped the 17-year-old White elevator operator who screamed. The frightened young fellow was seen running from the elevator by a group of Whites and by late afternoon the "Tulsa Tribune" reported that the girl had been raped. Despite the girl's denial of any wrongdoing, the boy was arrested and a large mob of 2000 White men came to the jail to lynch the prisoner.

About 75 armed African Americans came to the jail to offer assistance to the sheriff to protect the prisoner. The sheriff not only refused the assistance but also deputized the White mob to disarm the Blacks. With a defenseless Black community before them, the White mob advanced to the Greenwood district where they first looted and then burned all Black businesses, homes, and churches. Any Black resisters were shot and thrown into the fires. When the National Guard arrived, they assisted the others by arresting all Black men, women, and children, and herding them into detention centers at the Baseball Park and Convention Hall. As many as 4,000 Blacks were held under armed guard in detention.

Dr. Arthur C. Jackson, a nationally renowned surgeon and called by the Mayo brothers (of Mayo Clinic fame) "the most able Negro surgeon in America", was shot at the Convention Hall and allowed to bleed to death.



(click graphic above for Microsoft PowerPoint 2000 Slide Show)
(Bombing Black Wall Street by [Sherwood Akuna](#))

The "Chicago Tribute" Newspaper reported that Whites also used private airplanes to drop kerosene and dynamite on Black homes. By the next morning the entire Greenwood district was reduced to ashes and not one White was even accused of any wrongdoing, much less arrested.

The race riot of Tulsa, Oklahoma was not an isolated event in American history. On May 28, 1917 a White mob in East St. Louis, Illinois of over 13,000, ravaged African American stores, homes, and churches. Eyewitnesses reported that over 100 Blacks were gunned down as they left their burning homes including a small Black child who was shot and thrown back into the burning building to die. Seven white police officers charged with murder by the Illinois Attorney General were collectively fined \$150. During the "Red Summer" of 1919, over 25 race riots were recorded (white mobs attacking black neighborhoods). In the 1919 race riot at Elaine, Arkansas, White mobs killed over 200 African Americans and burned their homes and businesses. Federal troops arrested hundreds of Blacks trying to protect their possessions and forcibly held them in basements of the city's public schools. Twelve Blacks were indicted (no Whites) and convicted of inciting violence and sentenced to die. The NAACP persuaded the U.S. Supreme Court for the first time in history to reverse a racially biased southern court. Director John Singleton exposed the horror of the Rosewood, Florida massacre of 1922 in his film entitled "Rosewood". A White mob burned down the entire town and tried to kill all of its Black inhabitants. In April 1994, the Florida legislature passed the "Rosewood Bill", which awarded \$150,000 to each of the riot's nine eligible Black survivors.

After the Tulsa riot, the White inhabitants tried to buy the Black property and force Black people out of town. No Tulsa bank or lending institution would make loans in the riot-marred Greenwood district, and the city refused all outside assistance. However, racial pride and self-determination would not

permit the Greenwood owners to sell, and they doggedly spend the entire winter in tents donated by the American Red Cross. Rebuilding was a testament to the courage and stamina of Tulsa's pioneers in their struggle for freedom.



Photo By
Sherwood Akuna

Most of the buildings along the first block of Greenwood Avenue were rebuilt within one year. Henry Whitlow wrote: "A little over a decade after the riot, everything was more prosperous than before." In 1926, W. E. B. DuBois visited Tulsa and wrote: "Black Tulsa is a happy city. It has new clothes. It is young and gay and strong. Five little years ago, fire and blood and robbery leveled it to the ground. Scars are there, but the city is impudent and noisy. It believes in itself. Thank God for the grit of Black Tulsa."

Like Black Tulsa, African Americans can continue to survive by self-pride, self-help, and self-determination.

BLACK INVENTORS

The Bible states in Proverb 22:1 "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." The good name of African people has been successfully stolen and destroyed.

When the famous anthropologist Dr. Richard Leakey discovered bones in Africa in 1956, which were millions of years old, his accomplishment was belittled by people who regularly asked the question, "but what has Africa contributed to world progress?" He could not understand why people were so poorly informed, since he knew that the collective contributions of Black people to civilization, science, and invention are so extensive that it is not possible to live a full day in the United States, or any other part of the world without sharing in the benefits of those contributions. Still the genius of the Black imagination that has influenced every aspect of life in the United States and elsewhere is virtually unknown to most people.

Very few homes in America have as many as two books which discuss the achievements of the Black race, either past or present. During the slave trade, many of the slaves from the former Songhay Empire were highly educated and were

credited with teaching Caribbean and American farmers successful agricultural techniques. They also invented various tools and equipment to lessen the burden of their daily work. Most slave inventors were nameless, such as the slave owned by the Confederate President Jefferson Davis who designed the ship propeller used by the entire Confederate Navy.

Following the Civil War, the growth of industry in this country was tremendous and much of this was made possible with inventions by ethnic minorities. By 1913 over 1,000 inventions were patented by Black Americans. Among the most notable inventors were Jan Matzeliger, who developed the first machine to mass-produce shoes, and Elijah McCoy, who invented automatic lubrication devices for steam engines. Granville Woods had 35 patents to improve electric railway systems including the first system to allow moving trains to communicate. He even sued Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison for stealing his patents and won both cases. Garrett Morgan developed the first automatic traffic signal and gas mask, and Norbert Rilleux who created the technique for converting sugar cane juice into white sugar crystals. Lewis Latimer created an inexpensive cotton-thread filament, which made electric light bulbs practical because Edison's original light bulb only burned for a few minutes. More recent inventors include McKinley Jones, who invented the movable refrigeration unit for food transport in trucks and trains and Lloyd Quarterman who worked on the creation of the atomic bomb along with six other Black scientists (code named the Manhattan Project.) He also helped develop the first nuclear reactor, which was used in the atomic powered submarine called the Nautilus.

I'd like to conclude with two current contributors. I guess it should not be surprising that we don't know about the wonderful contributions of Blacks in the past because we are not even made aware of the startling scientific achievements during our own lifetime. For example, Otis Bodkin invented an electrical device used in all guided missiles and all IBM computers, and Colonel Frederick Gregory, who was not only the first Black astronaut pilot but the person who also redesigned the cockpits for the last 3 space shuttles. Gregory was also on the team that pioneered the microwave instrumentation landing system. Bendix Aircraft Company will be promoting this system worldwide to land planes without a pilot, using this computer based microwave system.

Carter G. Woodson wrote: "If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated." In order for us to avoid extermination, we Black people must rediscover our history and our good name. I look forward to the day when someone asks: "What have Blacks contributed to mankind?" and any 1st grade child can answer: "We gave you the human race, and then we helped to civilize it."

SHORT LIST

BLACK INVENTORS

Product	Inventor	Date
AIR CONDITIONING UNIT	FREDERICK M. JONES	July 12, 1949
ALMANAC	BENJAMIN BANNEKER	1791
AUTO CUT-OFF SWITCH	GRANVILLE T. WOODS	January 1, 1889
AUTO FISHING DEVISE	G. COOK	May 30, 1899
AUTOMATIC AIR BRAKE	G. T. WOODS	June 10, 1902
AUTOMATIC GEAR SHIFT	RICHARD SPIKES	December 6, 1932
BABY BUGGY	W. H. RICHARDSON	June 18, 1899
BICYCLE FRAME	I. R. JOHNSON	October 10, 1899
BISCUIT CUTTER	A.P. ASHBOURNE	November 30, 1875
BOTTLE	A. C. RICHARDSON	December 12, 1899
BOTTLE CAPS	JONES & LONG	September 13, 1898
BRIDGE SAFETY GAUGES	H. H. REYNOLDS	October 7, 1890
BRIDLE BIT	L. F. BROWN	October 25, 1892
CASKET LOWERING DEVICE	A. C. RICHARDSON	November 13, 1894
CELLULAR PHONE	HENRY T. SAMPSON	July 6, 1971
CHAMBER COMMODE	T. ELKINS	January 9, 1872
CISTERN CLEANERS	R. H. GREY	April 9, 1895
CLOTHES DRYER	G. T. SAMPSON	June 7, 1892
COMPUTER KEYBOARD STAND	J. HARDIN	February 23, 1993
COCONUT OIL REFINING	A. P. ASHBOURNE	July 27, 1880
CURTAIN ROD	S. R. SCOTTRON	August 30, 1892
CURTAIN ROD SUPPORT	WILLIAM S. GRANT	August 4, 1896
DOOR STOP	O. DORSEY	December 10, 1878
DUST PAN	LAWRENCE P. RAY	August 3, 1897
EGG BEATER	WILLIE JOHNSON	February 5, 1884
ELECTRIC LAMP	LATIMER 7 NICHOLS	Sept. 13, 1881
ELECTRIC RAIL TROLLY	E.R. ROBINSON	September 19, 1893
ELEVATOR	ALEXANDER MILES	October 11, 1887
EYE PROTECTOR	P. JOHNSON	November 2, 1880
FIRE ESCAPE LADDER	J.B. WINTERS	May 7, 1878
FIRE EXTINGUISHER	T. MARSHALL	May 26, 1872
FOLDING BED	C. BAILEY	July 18, 1899
FOUNTAIN PEN	W. B. PURVIS	January 7, 1890
FURNITURE CASTER	D. A. FISHER	March 14, 1876
GAS BURNER	B. F. JACKSON	April 4, 1899
GAS MASK	GARRETT MORGAN	October 13, 1914
GAUGE	E. H. HOLMES	November 12, 1895
GOLF TEE	G. F. GRANT	December 12, 1899

GUITAR	ROBERT F. FLEMMING, JR.	March 3, 1886
HAIR BRUSH	LYDIA O. NEWMAN	November 15, 1898
HAMMOCK & STRETCHER	C. V. RICHEY	December 13, 1893
HAND STAMP	WALTER B. PURVIS	February 27, 1883
HEATING APPARATUS	B. F. JACKSON	March 1, 1898
HORSESHOE	J. RICKS	March 30, 1886
ICE CREAM SCOOPER	A. L. CRALLE	February 2, 1897
INSECT-DESTROYER GUN	A. C. RICHARDSOM	February 28, 1899
IRONING BOARD	S. BOONE	April 26, 1892
KITCHEN TABLE	H. A. JACKSON	October 6, 1896
KNEADING MACHINE	J. LEE	August 7, 1895
LAWNMOWER	J. A. BURR	May 9, 1899
LEMON SQUEEZER	J. T. WHITE	December 8, 1886
LIBRARY TABLE	W. DAVIS, JR.	September 24, 1878
LOCK	W. A. MARTIN	July 23, 1889
LUBRICATOR	E. J. MC COY	June 16, 1885
LUGGAGE CARRIER	J. W. BUTTS	October 10, 1899
MOTOR	J. GREGORY	April 26, 1887
NAILING MACHINE	J. E. MATZELIER	February 25, 1896
OIL CUP	E. J. MC COY	November 15, 1898
OIL STOVE	J. STANDARD	October 29, 1889
PENCIL SHARPENER	J. L. LOVE	November 23, 1897
PHOTO EMBOSsing MACHINE	C. J. DORTICUS	April 16, 1895
PHOTO PRINT WASH	C. J. DORTICUS	April 23, 1895
PORTABLE SCALES	J. H. HUNTER	November 3, 1896
PRINTING PRESS	W. A. LAVALETTE	September 17, 1878
PROPELLER FOR VESSELS	G. TOLIVER	April 28, 1891
RAILROAD SWITCH	C. V. RICHEY	August 3, 1897
RAILWAY SIGNAL	A. B. BLACKBURN	January 10, 1888
REFRIGERATOR	J. STANDARD	July 14, 1891
REGISTERS	A. F. HILYER	October 14, 1890
RIDING SADDLES	W. D. DAVIS	October 6, 1896
ROTARY ENGINE	A. J. BEARD	July 5, 1892
SHAMPOO HEADREST	C. O. BAILIFF	October 11, 1898
SHOE LASTING MACHINE	J. E. MATZELIGER	September 22, 1891
SHUTTER & FASTENING	J. COOPER	May 1, 1883
SNOW MELTING APPARATUS	F. J. FERRELL	May 27, 1890
SPRINKLER FOR LAWNS	J. W. SMITH	May 4, 1897
STEAM BOILER FURNACE	G. T. WOODS	June 3, 1884
STOVE	T. A. CARRINGTON	July 25, 1876
STRAIGHTENING COMB	MADAM C. J. WALKER	Approx 1905
STREET CAR FENDER	M. A. CHERRY	January 1, 1895
STREET LETTER BOX	P. B. DOWNING	October 27, 1891
STREET SPRINKLING	M. W. BINGA	July 22, 1879
STREET SWEEPER	CHARLES B. BROOKS	March 17, 1896
SUGAR EVAPORATING PAN	NORBERT RILLIEUX	December 10, 1846

TELEPHONE TRANSMITTER	GRANVILLE T. WOODS	December 2, 1884
THERMOSTAT CONTROL	FREDERICK M. JONES	February 23, 1960
TICKET DISPENSING MAC.	FREDERICK M. JONES	June 27, 1939
TRAFFIC LIGHT	GARRETT MORGAN	November 20, 1923
TRAIN ALARM	R. A. BUTLER	June 15, 1897
UMBRELLA STAND	W. C. CARTER	August 4, 1885
WAGON	J. W. WEST	October 18, 1870