



AFRICAN AMERICANS ON STAMPS
A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE

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For more than 125 years, the U.S. Postal Service's® stamp program has celebrated the people, events, and cultural milestones that are unique to the history of our great nation.

African Americans have always played a vital role in shaping that history. Our Black Heritage stamp series, which began in 1978 with a stamp honoring Harriet Tubman, along with many other stamps, has paid tribute to African-American leaders, inventors, educators, scientists, entrepreneurs, entertainers, and athletes.

The Postal Service remains committed to educating and informing America — and the world — about the many achievements and contributions of noted African Americans. As we work to transform the Postal Service™ to serve America in a new century, our stamp program will continue to highlight the individuals and accomplishments that have transformed our nation. Our celebrated Black Heritage stamp series is one way we do that.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Potter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

John E. Potter
Postmaster General



ALVIN AILEY

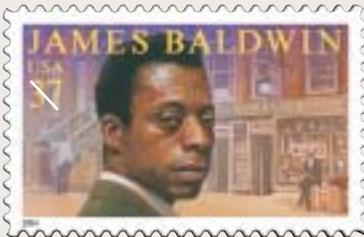
Alvin Ailey is one of the four masters of choreography featured on the American Dance stamp. He began his career as a dancer and established the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1959. Among his signature works are “Revelations,” a piece that integrates the music of jazz composer Duke Ellington; “Blues Suite;” and “Cry.” In 1979, Ailey received the Capezio Award and the Springarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He also won the Kennedy Center Honors Prize in 1988 and received numerous honorary degrees. He worked as a pioneering modern dance choreographer until his death in 1989. The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater continues to tour. This stamp will be issued in 2004.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

Even before he was a teenager, Louis Armstrong learned to play the trumpet and the cornet. His mentor was Joe “King” Oliver, and at the age of 17 he joined “Kid” Ory’s New Orleans band. In 1925, Armstrong started recording with his own band, and in the 1930s he and his band became very popular and successful and toured throughout the United States and Europe. Armstrong’s popularity continued into the 1960s, with the number-one hits “Hello Dolly” in 1963 and “What a Wonderful World” in 1968. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.



JAMES BALDWIN



James Baldwin was born in Harlem on August 2, 1924. His greatest achievement as a writer was his ability to address American race relations from a psychological perspective. In his essays and fiction he suggested repeatedly that all people suffer in a racist climate. Two of his best-known works are the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and the play *The Amen Corner*. Later Baldwin novels deal frankly with homosexuality and interracial love affairs. Although he mostly lived in Europe, Baldwin never gave up his American citizenship. In France, he was named Commander of the Legion of Honor. He died in Saint-Paul-de-Vance, France on November 30, 1987, and was buried in Harlem. This stamp will be issued in 2004.



BENJAMIN BANNEKER

A self-taught mathematician and astronomer, Benjamin Banneker was probably the most accomplished African American of America's colonial period. In 1753, he constructed the first wooden striking clock made in America. His studies and calculations in astronomy allowed him to successfully predict a solar eclipse in 1789 and to publish farmer's almanacs in the 1790s. In 1791 he helped design and survey the city of Washington, D.C. This stamp was issued February 15, 1980.

COUNT BASIE

Born William Basie in 1904, "The Count" was a renowned jazz pianist, bandleader, and composer. His band included some of the greatest musicians of all time. He brought the improvisational sound of jazz into the swing era of the late 1930s and 1940s. This stamp was issued September 11, 1996.



JIM BECKWOURTH

During his life as a frontiersman, James P. "Jim" Beckwourth was a miner, guide, fur trapper, company agent, army scout, soldier, and hunter. On a scouting expedition in the early 1850s, he discovered a pass through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Sacramento Valley, opening a clear pathway to California. This stamp was issued October 18, 1994.

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE

Mary McLeod Bethune was consumed with her life's central mission — education. She was a simple, straightforward woman who learned to be shrewd, strong-willed, and forceful as she pursued her ideals. She founded the National Council of Negro Women and what is now known as Bethune-Cookman College. This stamp was issued March 5, 1985.



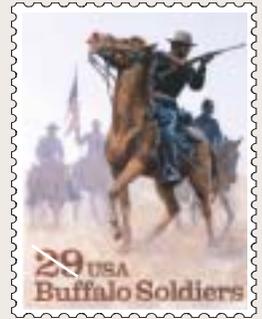


EUBIE BLAKE

As a child, James Hubert “Eubie” Blake studied music theory and the organ. Along with his bandleader and partner, Noble Sissle, Blake became a successful songwriter in the 1920s. Together they wrote the hit Broadway show *Shuffle Along* in 1921. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.

BUFFALO SOLDIERS

Courageous African-American soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments helped patrol the West after the Civil War. Their bravery and toughness won them respect from Native Americans, who honored them with the name “Buffalo Soldiers” after the rugged plains animal that they revered. Buffalo Soldiers also served with Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in the battle of San Juan in the Spanish-American War. This stamp was issued April 22, 1994.



RALPH BUNCHE

While working as a diplomat for the newly created United Nations, Ralph Bunche conducted the seemingly impossible negotiations resulting in the 1949 armistice between the year-old nation of Israel and its Arab neighbors. His efforts demonstrated that nations can resolve issues peaceably and also that the United Nations can serve as an effective facilitator among nations. For this exemplary accomplishment, Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. This stamp was issued January 12, 1982.



GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

George Washington Carver improved the quality of life for millions of people through his scientific contributions in agriculture. The many products he developed from peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans helped relieve southern agriculture of one-crop dependency, increased agricultural productivity,

aided diet and nutrition, and raised poor farmers' hopes. The 3-cent stamp was issued January 5, 1948, and the 32-cent stamp was issued February 3, 1998.

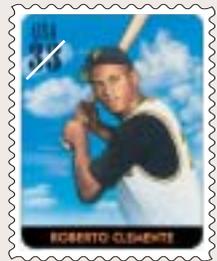


ROBERTO CLEMENTE



Proud of his African-American and Hispanic roots, Roberto Clemente relied on his upbringing to weather incidents of racial prejudice that occurred early in his baseball career. He said, "I don't believe in color, I believe in people. My mother and father taught me never to hate ... someone because of their color." He was known for his zeal and passion for his sport, his inclusive attitude, and his devotion to serving the poor and underprivileged. He was not just a great baseball player but a great humanitarian too — he died tragically in an airplane crash while attempting to deliver supplies to

earthquake victims in Nicaragua on December 31, 1972. The 20-cent stamp was issued August 17, 1984, and the 33-cent stamp was issued July 6, 2000.



NAT KING COLE

Starting his musical career as a jazz pianist, Nat King Cole became one of the most popular vocalists of all time. He attained lasting acceptance from audiences around the world from his many recordings and his popular national television show, the first one hosted by an African-American artist. This stamp was issued September 1, 1994.



BESSIE COLEMAN

Bessie Coleman was the first African American to receive a pilot's license, which she earned in France after being denied entry into flight schools in the United States. She returned to the United States and performed in air shows as a stunt flyer. Her goal was to establish a flight school for African Americans, but she died tragically in a plane crash on April 30, 1926, before she could realize her dream. This stamp was issued April 27, 1995.

JOHN COLTRANE

John Coltrane is considered to be one of the leading jazz artists from the 1950s and 1960s. Well known for his improvised, free-form solos on the saxophone, he performed with such noted musicians as Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk. In the early 1960s, Coltrane formed his own group, and it became one of the most innovative and celebrated groups in the history of jazz. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.



DR. ALLISON DAVIS

An anthropologist and educator, Dr. Allison Davis served the Johnson and Nixon administrations as a member of the President's Commission on Civil Rights and as the vice chairman of the Department of Labor's Commission on Manpower Retraining. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education. This stamp was issued February 1, 1994.

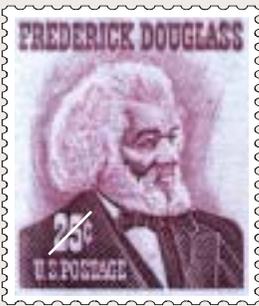
BENJAMIN O. DAVIS, SR.

Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. distinguished himself in a long military career that saw him become the nation's first African-American brigadier general. He was a driving force in the eventual integration of the U.S. armed forces. This stamp was issued January 28, 1997.



DESEGREGATING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” Segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race deprives children of minority groups equal educational opportunities, even when physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal. Such practices violate the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The decision effectively denied the legal basis for segregation in Kansas and 20 other states with segregated classrooms and would forever change race relations in the United States. This stamp was issued May 26, 1999.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

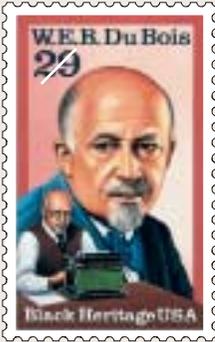
Frederick Douglass argued against slavery and for equal rights with such clarity and precision that he earned a reputation as America’s predominant African-American abolitionist and agitator during the 19th century. As founder and editor of the *North Star* and a leading proponent of the antislavery

movement, he convincingly expressed the moral issues of human freedom and equality. He believed that the status of African Americans was the touchstone of American democracy. Because of these beliefs, he became known as the “father of the civil rights movement.” The 25-cent stamp was issued February 14, 1967, and the 32-cent stamp was issued June 29, 1995.



DR. CHARLES R. DREW

Any person who has received a lifesaving blood transfusion owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Charles Drew, an eminent surgeon, teacher, and scientist. In 1940, Dr. Drew devised the system to process and store large amounts of plasma, and that system is still used today. For his work in the blood plasma projects, Dr. Drew received the Spingarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1944. This stamp was issued June 3, 1981.



W.E.B. DU BOIS

W.E.B. Du Bois was a critic, editor, scholar, author, civil rights leader, and one of the most influential African Americans of both the 19th and 20th centuries. He is often called the “father of social science” for his trail-blazing approach to studying social systems and phenomena. He was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, and he served for 25 years as the editor-in-chief of the NAACP’s *Crisis* magazine. The 29-cent stamp was issued January 31, 1992, and the 32-cent stamp was issued February 3, 1998.

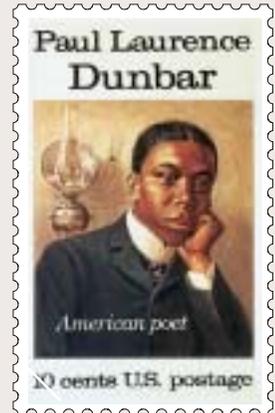


JEAN BAPTISTE POINTE DU SABLE

A pioneer and entrepreneur, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable is acknowledged as the founder of Chicago for having established the first permanent trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River in 1779. At his settlement, Du Sable exhibited skill and knowledge as a merchant, fur trader, farmer, and businessman. This stamp was issued February 20, 1987.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Poet and author Paul Laurence Dunbar was so adept at writing verse in African-American dialect that he was called the “poet of his people.” He had such talent and versatility that his brilliant work crossed racial barriers and won him both critical and popular success. This stamp was issued May 1, 1975.





DUKE ELLINGTON

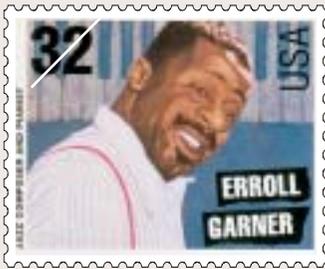
Edward K. “Duke” Ellington is considered one of the greatest composers and orchestra conductors of the 20th century. Primarily associated with jazz, Ellington became nationally known through live broadcasts from the Cotton Club in New York City, and some of his most famous compositions include “Mood Indigo,” “Take the ‘A’ Train,” and “Satin Doll.” One of his most celebrated works is *Black, Brown, and Beige*, a musical history of African Americans. In 1969, Ellington received the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This stamp was issued April 29, 1986.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

It is fitting that an African-American artist, George Olden, designed the stamp commemorating the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. Olden was the first African American to design a U.S. postage stamp. This stamp was issued August 16, 1963.



ERROLL GARNER



Jazz pianist Erroll Garner began playing piano when he was 3 years old and composed more than 200 works without ever learning to read music. He is considered a major jazz innovator, especially for his approach to melody, harmony, and rhythm. Garner is also renowned for playing with a spirit and joy that was infectious to his audiences. His best-known song is “Misty.” This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.

JOSH GIBSON



Legendary baseball figure Josh Gibson was one of the greatest power hitters in Negro League baseball. He regularly hit home runs when he played for the Homestead Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Gibson was never able to display his greatness in major league baseball; he died January 20, 1947, only a month after he turned 35 and a few months before Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play in major league baseball. Gibson was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972. He was the second Negro League player, after Satchel Paige, to be so honored. This stamp was issued June 6, 2000.

W.C. HANDY

W.C. Handy is known as the “father of the blues.” He felt that the music from poor rural African Americans living in the Mississippi Delta was worth writing down and arranging in properly harmonized versions. In the early 1900s he established his own band in Memphis and wrote such songs as “Memphis Blues,” “Beale Street Blues,” and the world-famous “St. Louis Blues.” This stamp was issued May 17, 1969.



PATRICIA ROBERTS HARRIS



Patricia Roberts Harris had a long, distinguished career as a lawyer, educator, and public administrator. Harris' career in education centered around Howard University, where she served as a full professor and later as the dean of the law school. She later served as the U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg and as an alternate delegate to the United Nations General Assembly and Economic Commission for Europe. She also served as the secretary of two federal departments, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health and Human Services. This stamp was issued January 27, 2000.



COLEMAN HAWKINS

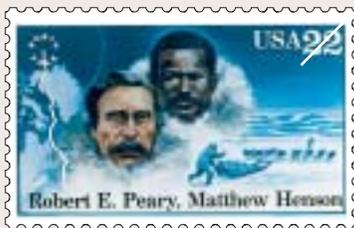
Coleman Hawkins became the first artist to raise the tenor saxophone to the status of a solo instrument in jazz. He toured Europe from 1934 to 1939. “Body and Soul” was his most famous record in a long and distinguished career. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.

JOHN HENRY

John Henry is an African-American folk hero who symbolizes strength and determination. The stories about John Henry are not just “tall tales,” for they are based on the life of a real person, a former slave working on the railroads after the Civil War, but time has blurred fact and fiction. In the stories, John Henry, a strong “steel-driving man,” accepted the challenge of trying to outperform a steam-powered drill. Swinging a heavy hammer in each hand, he beat the machine but died soon after — some say from exhaustion, others say from a broken heart on realizing that machines would replace muscle and spirit. This stamp was issued July 11, 1996.



MATTHEW HENSON



Matthew Henson was Admiral Robert Peary’s most trusted member of the expedition that discovered the North Pole. Born in Charles County, Maryland, in 1866, Henson went to sea at age 13 and for several years traveled all around the world. When he first met Peary, Henson was in his early twenties, and their shared sense of adventure bound them together for more than 20 years. Henson accompanied Peary on several attempts to reach the North Pole, which they finally reached together on April 6, 1909. This stamp was issued May 28, 1986.



BILLIE HOLIDAY

Born Eleanora Fagan, Billie Holiday was one of the most influential jazz singers of all time. Known as “Lady Day,” she had a distinctive light timbre and graceful phrasing, even when singing popular jazz tunes dealing with heartbreak, despair, and loneliness. But whether the song was heavy and sorrowful or light and lively, Holiday’s presentation always seemed to carry a somber, wounded sadness and powerful emotional intensity. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.

HOWLIN’ WOLF

Born Chester Arthur Burnett, “Howlin’ Wolf” learned his harmonica virtuosity from Sonny Boy Williamson and changed his name soon after learning his guttural, howling vocal style from country blues man Charley Patton. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.



LANGSTON HUGHES

Langston Hughes was an African-American poet, novelist, and playwright who became one of the foremost interpreters of racial relations in the United States from the 1920s through the 1960s. Hughes had one of the leading voices in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. His poems embraced radical politics, poverty, prejudice, violence, and a host of other socio-economic issues that chronicle the African-American experience. Hughes wrote children’s stories, non-fiction, and numerous works for the stage. Hughes published more than 35 books, and his influence is seen in the writings of authors from his generation to the present. This stamp was issued February 1, 2002.



ZORA NEALE HURSTON

American writer, folklorist, and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston was one of America's most original and accomplished writers and a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and early 1930s. She studied African-American heritage at a time when African-American culture was not a popular field of study. Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama, but moved to Eatonville, Florida, at an early age. Eatonville was the first incorporated all-black town in the United States and the location that influenced the folklore and fiction that Hurston later wrote. As a fiction writer, Hurston is noted for her metaphorical language, her story-telling, and her interest in and celebration of Southern, African-American culture in the United States. Her best known novel is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). In the 1970s, a new generation of African-American writers, most notably Alice Walker, rediscovered and republished many of Hurston's writings. This stamp was issued January 24, 2003.

MAHALIA JACKSON

Known as the "queen of gospel music," Mahalia Jackson started singing in church choirs as a young child. She began recording in her early twenties, and received national recognition by appearing at Carnegie Hall and on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. An active participant in the civil rights movement, she sang at the March on Washington in 1963 and at the funeral for Martin Luther King, Jr. This stamp was issued July 15, 1998.



JAZZ FLOURISHES

Between the 1890s and 1910s, African Americans in the South developed a new style of music that came to be known as jazz. The roots of jazz are planted in ragtime, blues, spirituals, work songs, and even military marches. Born in New Orleans and elsewhere in the Deep South, jazz quickly spread to Chicago, New York, Kansas City, St. Louis, and all over the United States. Before long, the new unstructured musical style caught on around the world. Jazz was hot in the 1920s and continues to be popular as it evolves into distinct styles for diverse generations. This stamp was issued May 28, 1998.



JAMES P. JOHNSON

Known as the “father of stride piano,” James P. Johnson was a great pianist and composer. In 1923 he composed “The Charleston,” perhaps the most famous musical piece to come out of the “Roaring Twenties.” His innovative use of the left hand to provide rhythmic, recurrent, and harmonic intensities influenced Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Erroll Garner, and Thelonious Monk. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

James Weldon Johnson was a noted writer, lawyer, educator, and civil rights activist. His composition “Lift Every Voice and Sing” has long been considered the African-American national anthem, and he was a leading poet, editor, and mentor during the Harlem Renaissance. He served as a U.S. diplomat to Venezuela and Nicaragua and as the general secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This stamp was issued February 2, 1988.



ROBERT JOHNSON



Despite his short life and limited recording history (he recorded only 29 songs before he died at age 27), Robert Johnson had a tremendous impact on the blues. He is best known for a unique blues guitar style that influenced his contemporaries in the 1930s as well as modern blues artists and even rock guitarists. Johnson is a member of both the Blues Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.



SCOTT JOPLIN

A composer and pianist, Scott Joplin is known as the “king of ragtime,” a significant development in modern music that combined African-American harmonies and rhythms with other musical styles. In 1899, Joplin composed “Maple Leaf Rag,” which was the genre’s biggest hit. He included ragtime songs in his opera *Treemonisha*, the first opera composed by an African American. In 1976, almost 60 years after his death, Joplin was awarded a special posthumous Pulitzer Prize for his contributions to music. This stamp was issued June 9, 1983.

PERCY LAVON JULIAN

Percy Lavon Julian won fame as a research chemist. He synthesized cortisone for arthritis, a drug for glaucoma, and progesterone. For his outstanding contribution to chemistry and medical science, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1990. This stamp was issued January 29, 1993.



ERNEST E. JUST



Ernest E. Just is known primarily for his research in marine biology. He pioneered experiments in the fertilization of marine invertebrates and studied the fundamental role of the cell surface in the development of organisms. In 1915 he was the first recipient of the Spingarn Medal awarded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This stamp was issued February 1, 1996.



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most powerful and popular leader of the African-American protest movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He spearheaded mass action through marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and nonviolent demonstrations that profoundly and positively affected America's attitudes toward racial prejudice and discrimination.

In 1963, he became the first African American honored as *TIME* magazine's Man

of the Year, and he was presented the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. The 15-cent stamp was issued January 13, 1979, and the 33-cent stamp was issued September 17, 1999.



KWANZAA

Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday symbolizing the need for a harmonious and principled togetherness in the family, the neighborhood, the nation, and the world. The seven guiding principles that Kwanzaa celebrates are unity,

self-determination, collective work

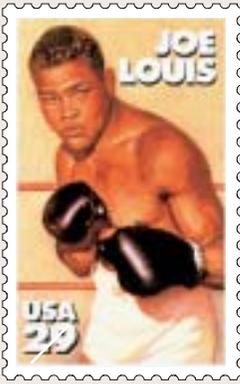
and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. This stamp was first issued October 22, 1997, as part of the Holiday Celebration series, and it was reissued as a 33-cent stamp October 29, 1999, as a 34-cent stamp October 21, 2001, and as two 37-cent stamps. The first was issued on October 10, 2002, and the second will be issued in 2004.



LEADBELLY

Born Huddie William Ledbetter, "Leadbelly" was a folk and blues artist who was known as the "king of the 12-string guitar." He was also a powerful singer of field and prison hollers and, as a participant in the trade union movement in the 1930s, of political protest songs. He never had much commercial success during his lifetime, but after his death

in 1949, several of his songs — including "The Midnight Special," "Cotton Fields," "Rock Island Line," and his trademark song, "Goodnight Irene" — became popular hits when sung by other artists. This stamp was issued June 26, 1998.



JOE LOUIS

Known as the “Brown Bomber,” Joseph Louis Barrow won the world heavyweight boxing title in 1937 and held it until he retired in 1949. He defended his title more than 20 times before he joined the Army in World War II, and defended it several more times after the war. Two of his most famous fights were against Max Schmeling — Louis lost in 1936 (his only loss as a professional before he retired), but he knocked out Schmeling in the first round in the rematch in 1938. This stamp was issued June 22, 1993.

MALCOLM X

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, the son of a Baptist preacher. In 1931, Malcolm’s father was killed, probably murdered because of his political and social activism. For Malcolm, this started a spiral into a life of crime that ended with his being sentenced to prison for burglary. While in prison, Malcolm became a militant activist and a follower of the Nation of Islam, a black nationalist religious movement based on traditional Islamic teachings and Marcus Garvey’s principles of black nationalism. After his release from prison, Malcolm became a powerful spokesman for the movement, one who was both popular yet polarizing. But in 1964 he split from the movement and started the Organization of Afro-American Unity, and after a trip to Mecca, he took the name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz and came to believe that the world’s people could live in fellowship. This stamp was issued January 20, 1999.



ROBERTA MARTIN

Many African-American gospel singers have contributed to American music. Roberta Martin was the founder of the Roberta Martin Singers and operator of her own gospel music publishing house. This stamp was issued July 15, 1998.



THURGOOD MARSHALL

Famed civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall was one of the best known lawyers in the history of civil rights in America. He became the first director-counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. In 1954, Marshall and his legal team prevailed in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that struck down segregation in public schools. President Kennedy appointed him to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in 1961. In 1965 President Johnson appointed him the first African-American solicitor

general of the United States. Marshall made history again in 1967, when he was sworn in as the first African-American justice of the Supreme Court. His 24-year tenure was marked by his commitment to defending constitutional rights and affirmative action and by his strong opposition to the death penalty. Thurgood Marshall died on January 24, 1993, at the age of 85. On November 30, 1993, he was awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom — our country's highest civilian honor. This stamp was issued January 7, 2003.

JAN MATZELIGER

Jan Matzeliger revolutionized the shoe making industry when he patented the “shoe lasting” machine in 1883. His invention was able to duplicate and automate the previously slow, intricate process of “lasting” shoes — joining the upper parts of a shoe to the sole. In the same time that an expert shoe laster could produce 50 pairs of shoes, Matzeliger's machine was able to produce up to 700 pairs. This stamp was issued September 15, 1991.



CLYDE MCPHATTER

As the original lead singer of the Drifters, Clyde McPhatter brought gospel-style vocals to popular music. After serving in the armed forces, he returned as a solo performer and recorded “A Lover’s Question” in 1958 and “Lover Please” in 1962. This stamp was issued June 16, 1993.





CHARLES MINGUS

A talented bass player, pianist, composer, and bandleader, Charles Mingus was a notable 20th century musician. He toured with some of the famous big bands of the 1940s (including the Louis Armstrong Orchestra), accompanied many pioneering jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker and

Thelonious Monk, and led diverse ensembles. In the 1950s, to safeguard and archive his enlarging collection of original music, Mingus created his own recording and publishing companies. He toured extensively in the United States and abroad until 1977, when he was diagnosed with the rare nerve disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as “Lou Gehrig’s disease”). This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.

THELONIOUS MONK

A brilliantly unorthodox pianist and composer, Thelonious Monk was studied by musicians years before he was accepted by the public. His audacious use of dissonant chords and haunting melodies was unprecedented. His most famous composition is “Round Midnight.” This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.



JELLY ROLL MORTON



Born Ferdinand Joseph La Menthe, “Jelly Roll Morton” was a composer, vocalist, pianist, and arranger. He made a permanent mark on the world of jazz music with compositions that include “Wolverine Blues,” “Dead Man Blues,” “Jelly Roll Blues,” and “Harmony Blues.” This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.



OLYMPIC GAMES AND SPORTS

African Americans have made many contributions to the Olympic Games in many different sports. The javelin throw is an event in the men's decathlon and the women's heptathlon. Milton Campbell and Rafer Johnson each won gold and silver medals in the decathlon, and Jackie Joyner-Kersey won two gold medals and one silver medal in the heptathlon. In boxing, Olympic gold medals have been won by Floyd Patterson, Muhammed Ali (at the time known as Cassius Clay), Joe Frazier, George Foreman,

and "Sugar Ray" Leonard. The 10-cent stamp was issued September 5, 1979, and the 29-cent stamp was issued January 6, 1994.



JESSE OWENS



Although a frail, sickly child, Jesse Owens developed into a strong runner, winning national high school titles in three events. Pursued by dozens of colleges, he chose to go to Ohio State University, where he worked his way through school. At the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Owens stunned the world by capturing four gold medals in track and field. He

shattered Olympic records as well as Hitler's false theories of racial superiority. The 25-cent stamp was issued July 6, 1990, and the 32-cent stamp was issued September 10, 1998.





SACHEL PAIGE

Leroy Robert “Satchel” Paige is considered the most dominating and crowd-pleasing pitcher to play in the Negro Leagues. He started his professional baseball career in 1926 and played for many teams over the years, and he helped the Kansas City Monarchs to four consecutive Negro American League pennants from 1939 to 1942 and again in 1946. Before professional baseball was integrated, he played many exhibition games against major league players and often astonished and stilled them with his wide assortment of pitches. In 1948, at the reported age of 42, Paige signed with the Cleveland Indians and had a 6-1 record while helping the team win the World Series. In addition to being the oldest rookie to play in the majors, he also became the oldest man to pitch in a major league game, returning in 1965 to pitch three scoreless innings for the Kansas City Athletics. This stamp was issued July 6, 2000.

CHARLIE PARKER

Born Charles Christopher Parker, Jr. in 1920, Charlie Parker was an innovative composer and jazz saxophonist. Known as “Yardbird” or “Bird,” he was a leader, along with Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Kenny Clark, in creating the bebop movement, an original and prominent evolution in jazz that emphasizes listening over dancing. This stamp was issued September 16, 1995.



ETHEL L. PAYNE



An internationally recognized writer and commentator, Ethel L. Payne was a syndicated columnist and long-time reporter for the *Chicago Defender*, one of the leading African-American newspapers in the United States. She was the first African-American woman to receive accreditation as a White House correspondent. In her honor, the prestigious annual Ethel L. Payne International Award for Excellence in Journalism was established in 1998. This stamp was issued September 14, 2002.



BILL PICKETT

William M. “Bill” Pickett invented the cowboy sport of steer wrestling, also called “bulldogging.” Employing a technique he saw ranch dogs use, Pickett would bite the steer’s lip to make it more docile and easier to control. Starring in this event, he and his horse Spradley became a box-office draw in rodeos at home and abroad. Pickett was voted into the National Cowboy and Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1971. This stamp was issued October 18, 1994.

SALEM POOR

Salem Poor earned his place in history during the Battle of Bunker Hill. For his deeds in that battle, he received a commendation extolling him as a “brave and gallant soldier.” He also served elsewhere with the American army during the Revolutionary War, including at Valley Forge. This stamp was issued March 25, 1975.



PORGY AND BESS

Porgy and Bess, George Gershwin’s legendary African-American folk opera, is featured on a stamp commemorating Broadway musicals. This stamp was issued July 14, 1993.

“MA” RAINEY

Born Gertrude Malissa Nix Pridgett, “Ma” Rainey was called the “mother of the blues.” She specialized in a down-home style of classic blues, and her fame grew simultaneously with the spread of the blues genre. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.





A. PHILIP RANDOLPH

Raised in abolitionist traditions by his minister father, A. Philip Randolph mirrored those beliefs for more than 60 years as a tireless champion of equal rights and equal opportunity. In 1925 he organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and in 1937, after 12 years of contentious and often bitter struggle with the Pullman Company, he achieved the first union contract signed by a white employer and an African-American labor union. This stamp was issued February 3, 1989.

OTIS REDDING

Born in Dawson, Georgia, in 1941, Otis Redding began his singing career in the church choir. As a teenager, he competed in local talent shows and started to work professionally. In the mid-1960s, Redding had a number of hit songs and his style and popularity were growing. But on December 10, 1967, he died in a plane crash. Just a few days before his death, he had recorded “(Sittin’ on) The Dock of the Bay,” which eventually reached the top spot on the pop charts. This stamp was issued June 16, 1993.



PAUL ROBESON

Paul Robeson was a tireless and uncompromising advocate for civil rights and social justice. At Rutgers University, he was a 2-year All-American in football, valedictorian, and a Phi Beta Kappa. Later, he earned a law degree at Columbia University, but soon turned to singing and acting. He was especially known for his renditions of black spirituals and also his stage role in *Othello*. By the late 1930s, he had become very active and outspoken on behalf of racial justice, social progress, and international peace. This stamp was issued in January 2004.



JACKIE ROBINSON

Jackie Robinson broke the Major League Baseball color barrier in 1947, had a 10-year all-star career, became the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, and had his number 42 retired by Major League Baseball in 1997. More important than his accomplishments in baseball are his contributions to racial equality in the United States, of which his many baseball “firsts” are just one part. After his retirement from baseball in 1956, he became very active in the civil rights movement, working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and on several political campaigns to help break barriers for all people, not just athletes. The 20-cent stamp was issued August 2, 1982, the 33-cent stamp of Robinson sliding was issued February 18, 1999, and the 33-cent stamp of him fielding was issued July 6, 2000.



WILMA RUDOLPH

Few people would have expected that a child who suffered from polio and wore leg braces for several years would one day be proclaimed “the world’s fastest woman,” but that’s the story of Wilma Rudolph, who at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Italy, won three gold medals in sprint events (the 100-meter, 200-meter, and 4-x-100-meter relay events). Rudolph, who also won a bronze medal in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia, won several awards and was inducted into the Black

Sports Hall of Fame in 1980. After retiring from competition, Rudolph worked as a teacher, track coach, and sports broadcaster. She also served in several government programs helping underprivileged youth. She also founded the Wilma Rudolph Foundation to promote community-based, youth-oriented athletic and academic programs. In her honor, the Women’s Sports Foundation annually presents the Wilma Rudolph Courage Award to a female athlete who exhibits fortitude, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and inspiration. This stamp will be issued in 2004.



JIMMY RUSHING

Linked with famed bandleaders such as Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Walter Page, and Buck Clayton, Jimmy Rushing established himself as one of the greatest singers of both jazz and the blues. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.

BESSIE SMITH

Bessie Smith, known as the “empress of the blues,” reigned in the 1920s across the United States and Europe. Her expansive range brought blues music to new audiences of all backgrounds. She made more than a hundred recordings, both of blues and popular songs, paving the way for future blues singers and jazz musicians. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.



HENRY O. TANNER

Henry O. Tanner possessed a powerful determination that was largely reflected in the passion of his renowned religious paintings. He spent most of his professional life in France, particularly Paris. As the first African-American artist to win international acclaim, Tanner became a source of inspiration for many young African-American painters in the United States. This stamp was issued September 10, 1973.

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE

Sister Rosetta Tharpe was one of many African-American gospel singers who contributed to American music. She was known for her signature guitar style, and she introduced gospel music into nightclubs as well as concert halls. This stamp was issued July 15, 1998.



13TH AMENDMENT

The 75th anniversary of the passage of the 13th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery, was commemorated on a stamp issued in 1940. This stamp was issued October 20, 1940.



SOJOURNER TRUTH

Sojourner Truth was one of the most inspirational and widely known African Americans of the 19th century. She was born Isabella Bomefree (also spelled "Baumfree") in 1797, a slave in New York, but received her freedom in 1828. In the 1830s, she became involved in evangelical movements, and in 1843 she changed her name to Sojourner Truth and began traveling and preaching. 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. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln received her at the White House, and from 1864 to 1868 she worked with the National Freedmen's Relief Association to advise former slaves as they started new lives. This stamp was issued February 4, 1986.



HARRIET TUBMAN

Born a slave, abolitionist Harriet Tubman was the first African-American woman to be honored on a U.S. postage stamp. She was a conductor for the famed Underground Railroad, which helped many slaves escape to freedom before and during the Civil War. The 13-cent stamp was issued February 1, 1978, and the 32-cent stamp was issued June 29, 1995.





MADAM C.J. WALKER

Born Sarah Breedlove in 1867, Madam C.J. Walker became a beauty products pioneer and one of the nation's first female millionaires. In the early 1900s, using her husband's name (Charles Joseph Walker), she developed a very successful business manufacturing hair goods and preparations, and her company eventually became one of the country's largest businesses owned by an African American. Walker also became one of the era's leading African-American philanthropists and political activists, strongly supporting education, charitable institutions, political rights, and economic opportunities for African Americans and women. This stamp was issued January 28, 1998.

CLARA WARD

Clara Ward was the creative force behind the Ward Singers, often acknowledged as America's greatest gospel group. She was a celebrated and accomplished composer, pianist, singer, and arranger, and she and her group helped transform the gospel genre by using creative arrangements, wearing colorful costumes, and playing at unconventional venues. Her song "Surely God Is Able" became one of the highest selling gospel records of all time. This stamp was issued July 15, 1998.



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

In 1881, Booker T. Washington became the first principal at Alabama's Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University), and over the next several decades, he emerged as the foremost educator and spokesman for African Americans. Washington also helped found the National Negro Business League in 1900 and served as an advisor to presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. This stamp — the first U.S. postage stamp to commemorate an African American — was issued April 7, 1940.



DINAH WASHINGTON

Born Ruth Jones in 1924, Dinah Washington became one of America's most popular and versatile singers. She began her career as a gospel singer, established herself as the "queen of the blues," and also made recordings of jazz, pop, rhythm and blues, and even country songs. Her signature song was "What a Difference a Day Makes." Unfortunately, her life was tragically cut short when she died after an accidental overdose of prescription drugs. This stamp was issued June 16, 1993.

ETHEL WATERS

As a singer, dancer, and dramatic actress, Ethel Waters pursued a career that exercised her musical creativity and dramatic expression. During her long career, she achieved prominence and critical acclaim both on the stage and in film. This stamp was issued September 1, 1994.



MUDDY WATERS

Born McKinley Morganfield in Mississippi in 1915, "Muddy Waters" was a leader in developing the Chicago blues sound that arose after World War II. His flair for transforming traditional Delta blues into electric blues helped him become a huge success throughout America and eventually around the world. This stamp was issued September 17, 1994.



IDA B. WELLS

Ida B. Wells devoted her life to educating people about the horrors of discrimination against African Americans and women. Her first job was as a teacher, but she became a journalist when she started to write about her experiences of suing a railroad company for discrimination. Much of her journalism career centered on the antilynching crusade and voting rights for women. She was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and she founded the first suffrage club for African-American women. This stamp was issued February 1, 1990.

JOSH WHITE

Josh White was one of the most popular and influential folksingers in America in the mid-20th century. His most famous song, "One Meat Ball," is about a poor man who has little money to buy dinner and who gets little sympathy from the waiter serving him. The folk music genre has often had a strong social and political foundation, and White's career is a clear example of that — he sang for President Franklin Roosevelt at the White House in the 1940s, he suffered from the effects of McCarthyism in the 1950s, and he was a featured performer at the 1963 March on Washington. This stamp was issued June 26, 1998.



ROY WILKINS

Roy Wilkins was a U.S. civil rights leader. In 1931, he was appointed assistant executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the largest civil rights organization in the United States. In 1955, he was named the NAACP's executive secretary, a position he held for the next 22 years. As a writer and spokesman for the civil rights movement, he inspired presidents and members of Congress to pay attention to the rights of African Americans. When asked to describe his greatest satisfaction in life, he pointed to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 that ended segregation in public schools. This stamp was issued January 24, 2001.



CARTER G. WOODSON

An educator, historian, writer, and publisher, Carter G. Woodson promoted the study of African- American people and a more thorough analysis and interpretation of their deeds and contributions. He founded the organization that eventually became the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History. In 1926, he started the observance of Negro History Week, which has expanded to the celebration of Black History Month. This stamp was issued February 1, 1984.

WHITNEY MOORE YOUNG, JR.

Whitney Moore Young, Jr. was a moderate civil rights leader who urged African Americans to work within the system. He served as executive director of the National Urban League for 10 years. In 1969, he received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom. This stamp was issued January 30, 1981.



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