

“I, Too, Sing America”

AFRO-AMERICANS IN AMERICA

A PRESENTATION BY RELI ZAKHEIM

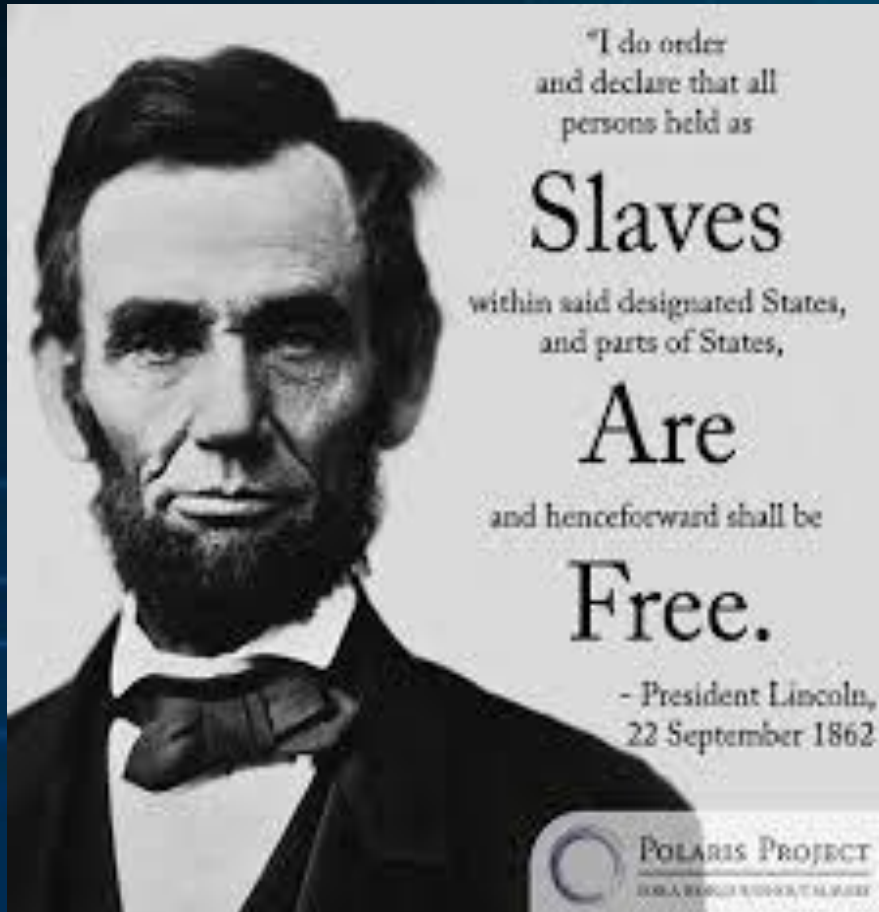
1619: First enslaved Africans arrive in North America



- In 1619, “20 and odd” Angolans, kidnapped by the Portuguese, arrive in the colony of Virginia and are then bought by the colonists.
- The arrival of the enslaved Africans in the New World marks the beginning of two and a half centuries of slavery in North America.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865)

The Emancipation Proclamation



- Lincoln personally hated slavery, and considered it immoral. But Lincoln didn't believe the Constitution gave the federal government the power to abolish it in the states where it already existed.
- On September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that as of January 1, 1863, all enslaved people in the states currently engaged in rebellion against the Union "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."
- By that time, however, seven Southern states had already seceded from the Union, forming the Confederate States of America and setting the stage for the Civil War.

(<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/emancipation-proclamation>)

THE CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)

- Slavery played the central role during the **American Civil War**. In the North, industry was well established. The agricultural South depended on slavery for growing cotton and tobacco. In light of the opposition to slavery and the abolitionist policy, the southerners thought their economy was in danger.
- The Civil war was fought between **the Union States (Northerners states)** and the states of the **Confederacy (Southern states)**. It was the costliest and deadliest **war** ever fought on American soil, with some 620,000 of 2.4 million soldiers killed, millions more injured and much of the South left in ruin.
- On January 1st, 1863, in the 3rd year of Civil War, Lincoln issued **the Emancipation Proclamation**, declaring “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are and shall be free”.
- On April 9, 1865, Abraham Lincoln is assassinated by a Confederate.
- On April 26, 1865 the Confederates surrender.
- After the Civil war **The Jim Crow Laws** started to be enforced against the Black population

(<https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/american-civil-war-history>)

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Langston Hughes
(1902-1967)



- In the first wave of the Great Migration, between 1910-1940, 1.5 million black Americans migrated from the South to Northern cities. Many of them found a place to live in Harlem that became a black cultural mecca in the early 20th century.
- Known as the Harlem Renaissance and covering a period from 1910 through the mid 1930s, the period is considered **a golden age in African American culture, manifesting in literature, music, stage performance and art.**

(<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/on-african-american-migrations/>)

Afro-Americans during and after WWI (The Great War) 1914 – 1918



- More than 350,000 African Americans served **in segregated units** during World War I, mostly as support troops.
- By the end of the 1920 some 1.5 million blacks left the rural South for the factories in the North.

(WWI and Postwar Society

<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart7.html#:~:text=More%20than%20350%2C000%20African%20Americans,the%20French%20Legion%20of%20Honor.>)

Afro-Americans during the Great Depression (1929-1940)



- In 1930 more than 4 out of 5 American blacks still lived in the South.
- **The Jim Crow system** held them back till 1965
- Blacks could not vote. They lived in social and economic segregation; Blacks sat in separate waiting rooms in railroad and bus stations, drank from separate drinking fountains, worshiped in separate churches, and attended strictly segregated and abysmally inferior schools. The few industrial jobs were barred to them.
- **Infant mortality rates** for blacks were nearly double those for whites.
- Blacks had **an average life expectancy** 15 years shorter than whites (45 vs 60)

(Freedom From Fear, p. 18-19)

Afro-Americans during WWII (1941-1945)

- The Invisible Soldiers



- The continued isolation of black Americans translated into **segregation in the Army**: “We will not employ Negroes” the president of the North American Aviation flatly declared. “It is against company policy”.
- In 1941 Roosevelt issues **Executive Order 8802 against discrimination** “in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin”.
- “**Hate strikes**” against black workers were common in defense plants in 1942/43
- The army persisted in ghettoizing Negro recruits in **all-black outfits** and assigning them almost exclusively **non-combat roles**.

(Freedom From Fear, Chapter 21 “The Cauldron of the Home Front, p. 746-797)

“I Have a Dream” 1963 Martin Luther king Jr.



"I Have a Dream" is a public speech that **was** delivered by American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, in which he called for civil and economic rights and an end to racism in the United States.

Barack Obama

The first Afro-American President (2009-2017)



Today: Black Lives Matter (BLM)

IMAGINING AND CREATING A WORLD FREE OF ANTI-BLACKNESS, WHERE EVERY BLACK PERSON HAS THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL POWER TO THRIVE.

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