

# From Prejudice to Pride:

## An African-American Journey



In 1926, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, an African-American historian, writer, and educator, established Negro History Week to honor the contributions of African-Americans to American History. Woodson chose February because the birthdays of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln fall in this month. During the early 1970s, the name of the celebration was changed to Black History Week and, in 1976, it was expanded to Black History Month. Woodson is known as the “father of Black History,” and his scholarly research and writings have made the study of Black history a legitimate and acceptable field of academic inquiry.



A Teacher Resource Guide to accompany the special temporary exhibit of the collections of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

### IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH...

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL) will be exhibiting a photographic display on African-American History, taken from the collections housed at the ALPL. The exhibit will be available for viewing from January 28-February 28, 2006 on the first and second floors of the Library Atrium. The exhibit covers a variety of topics relating to the history of African-Americans, including: plantation life, slavery and the underground railroad, family life, military service, arts and entertainment, politics and sports. This Teacher Resource Guide provides resources, activities and discussion questions to use in conjunction with the exhibit or in celebration of Black History Month.

### OBJECTIVES

*Upon visiting this exhibit and completing the activities in this Resource Guide, students will be able to:*

- Recognize the significant contributions African Americans have made to our state's history.
- Explain the significance of Black History Month.
- Identify at least three significant African Americans and their impact upon the history of Illinois.
- Critically analyze a historic photograph.
- Recognize how historic artifacts are powerful ties to the past and can be used in the understanding and telling of historic stories.
- Create a poem based upon their insights and feelings.

### LEARNING STANDARDS

*The activities in this packet address the following Illinois Learning Standards.*

#### Language Arts

*State Goal 3:* Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.  
*State Goal 5:* Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.

#### Social Sciences

*State Goal 14:* Understand political systems, with an emphasis on the United States.  
*State Goal 16:* Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.  
*State Goal 18:* Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

#### Fine Arts

*State Goal 25:* Know the language of the arts.  
*State Goal 26:* Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.  
*State Goal 27:* Understand the role of arts in civilizations, past and present.



Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum  
212 North Sixth Street  
Springfield, IL 62701  
[www.alplm.org](http://www.alplm.org)

# Illinois History Makers

Throughout Illinois' long history, African-Americans have made significant contributions in all areas of our social, political, cultural and economic past. A few of those individuals are highlighted here; more are featured in the ALPL exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride: An African-American Journey*. Their stories are an inspiration and an integral part of our shared history.

## Politics

### ROLAND BURRIS

Roland Burris was born in Centralia, Illinois. He graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with a degree in political science in 1959 and then studied at the University of Ham-

burg in Germany for a year. He earned his law degree at Howard University



in 1963. In 1963, Burris's career began with a position as a national bank examiner for the U. S. Treasury Department. He was the first African-American to be a bank examiner in the United States. From 1964 to 1973 he was vice President of Continental Illinois National Bank in Chicago. As a member of Illinois Governor Dan Walker's cabinet, he served as Director of the Department of General Services in 1973. He was elected as state comptroller in 1978 and served three terms. Again he made history, this time as the first African-American elected to state office. In 1990, he was elected attorney general for the state of Illinois and served from 1991 to 1995. He ran for Governor of Illinois three times, but was unsuccessful in his bids. Since leaving public office, he now works as an attorney with the law firm, Buford and

Peters LLC in Chicago. He specializes in environmental, consumer affairs, and estate law. He was managing partner of the Chicago-based law firm of Jones, Ware & Grenard, one of the largest minority law firms in the country prior to his move to Buford and Peters.

### HAROLD WASHINGTON

Harold Washington was the first African-American mayor of Chicago. His many accomplishments included:

- Creating the Ethics Commission
- Issuing an Executive Order increasing minority business contracts
- Opening government with a Freedom of Information Executive Order
- Leading the fight for Ward redistricting to provide more Black and Hispanic representation
- Fighting for equal provision of public services; neighborhood street, curb and gutter repair
- Encouraging neighborhood festivals and projects
- Leading the movement for Illinois' Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday bill.

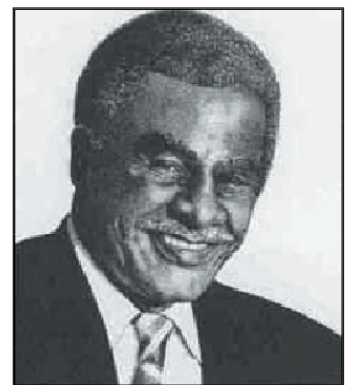
The youngest of four children, Washington was born at Cook County Hospital in Chicago on April 15, 1922. He attended schools in Chicago, but did not receive a high school diploma until after his military service. He was decorated for bravery for his service in World War II. Washington graduated from Roosevelt College (now Roosevelt University) in 1949 and earned his law degree in 1952 from Northeastern University in Evanston.

In 1942, Washington married Nancy Dorothy Finch. The couple had no children and later divorced. At the time of his death in 1987, he was engaged to Mary Ella Smith.

Washington's long career began in 1952 as an Assistant City Prosecutor. In 1965 he was elected as an Illinois State Representative for the 26<sup>th</sup> District and served until 1976. He moved on to the Illinois Senate, serving there from 1977 to 1980. He ran for Chicago Mayor in 1977 but received only 11% of the vote. He then ran for Congress in the 1<sup>st</sup> District and served from 1981 to 1983. In 1983, Washington won the Democratic primary, prevailing over the incumbent mayor, Jane Byrne. He won the general election and was inaugurated at Navy Pier on April 29, 1983. He was reelected in 1987.

On November 25, 1987, Harold Washington died of a heart attack at his desk in his Chicago office. Thousands of Chicago residents attended his wake in the lobby of City Hall. He is buried in Oak Woods Cemetery in Chicago.

The Chicago Public Library system named their new central branch building for Mayor Washington, and the Loop College, located in downtown Chicago, was renamed Harold Washington College as a memorial to him.



# Arts & Entertainment

## GWENDOLYN BROOKS

Gwendolyn Brooks was born on June 7, 1917 in Topeka, Kansas. She moved to Chicago as a child and stayed there until her death on December 3, 2000. Her fame was primarily for her poetry, but she also wrote a novel, an



autobiography, and other works of prose. Her poetry was first published in 1945 and in 1949, her book of poetry, *Annie Allen*, won a Pulitzer Prize,

the first won by an African-American woman.

Her poetry was based on the poor and the people of the South Side of Chicago. She began her work as a columnist for an African-American newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*. The style of her poems went from traditional ballads to sonnets to using blues and rhythms in free verse. One of her most famous poems, "We Real Cool," which is considered more "blues and rhythms," is used in many school textbooks. She was considered by many as a leading artist in the Black Arts movement.

According to editor, Elizabeth Alexander of the American Poets Project, "she is nothing short of a technical virtuoso. That technical virtuosity was matched by a restless curiosity about life all around her in all its explosive variety. By turns compassionate, angry, satiric, and psychologically penetrating, Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry retains its power to move and surprise."

In 1962 she was invited to a Library of Congress poetry festival by President John F. Kennedy. She taught at many colleges, including Columbia College Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University, Elmhurst College, Columbia University, Clay College of New York and the University of Wisconsin.

She was named Poet Laureate of Illinois in 1968. She received many other awards, including the Frost Medal, the Shelley Memorial Award, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, a National Endowment for the Arts award, fellowships from the Academy of American Poets and the Guggenheim Foundation, and from 1985 to 1986, she was a Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress.

The Illinois State Library in Springfield was renamed the Gwendolyn Brooks Building in 2003.

## ETTA MOTEN BARNETT

Etta Moten Barnett was born in Texas on November 5, 1901. She married in the 1920's but was later divorced. She and her three daughters moved in with her parents in Kansas so she could attend college at the University of Kansas where she majored in voice and drama. A recital performance her senior year earned her an invitation to join the celebrated Eva Jessy Choir in New York, which she did upon graduation.

She became



successful in the theater and performed in many legendary Broadway productions. She broke the stereo-typical portrayal of African-Americans with her role of a widowed housewife in the *Golddiggers (1933)*. The performance earned her the title of "The New Negro Woman" by the African-American press. As her fame grew, President and Mrs. Roosevelt invited her to sing at the White House in 1933.

It is said that that George Gershwin thought of Etta as he wrote the character of "Bess" in *Porgy and Bess* and wanted her to star in the play in 1935. She declined the role because she sang contralto and the role was for a soprano. She relented, taking the role in 1942 for which she became famous. She went on to perform at many international concerts and music festivals, and her last performance was at a Danish concert in 1952.

In 1933, she married Claude Barnett, founder of the Associated Negro Press. They were married for 33 years and traveled extensively in the 1950's as members of the U.S. delegation to Ghana, where in 1957, she interviewed a young Martin Luther King, Jr. on the occasion of Ghana's independence from Great Britain. She served as a delegate for the U.S. at other ceremonies of independence for the countries of Nigeria, Zambia, and Lusaka.

She received many accolades including honorary degrees from Spelman College, Lincoln University, and the University of Illinois. Other honors included for Contributions to American Music by Atlanta University and a scholarship in her name for minority students at the Chicago Academy for the Performing Arts. Etta Moten Barnett lived in Chicago until her death on January 3, 2004.

## KATHERINE DUNHAM

Katherine Dunham was born in 1909. She grew up in Chicago where she was influenced at an early age by her proximity to the theater and entertainment. Her desire to dance and perform began early, however her family urged her



to seek a career in teaching rather than dancing. Although she stayed with her dance studies, she majored in anthropology at the University of Chicago. As a result of her education in anthropology, and interest in dance, she searched for a way to combine the two fields. At the same time, she founded a company called, "Ballet Negre and the Negro Dance Group." She eventually completed a Ph.D. in anthropology and dance at the University of Chicago.

Dunham explored the ritual dances, music, and rhythm of the drums in Jamaican culture. She changed American dance by incorporating African and Caribbean elements into her choreography. With her use of the culture, geography, community, and rhythm as part of the dance, she established herself as one of the creators of dance as part of anthropology.

She appeared in seven films and choreographed many more. She left Hollywood to establish the Katherine Dunham Dance Company, where black dancers could emphasize their own culture through dance.

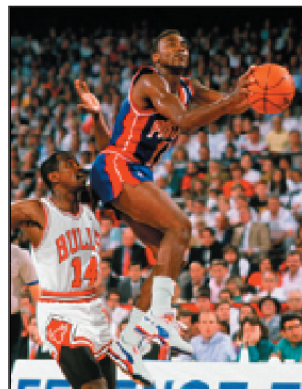
In 1965 she was named advisor to the cultural ministry of Senegal and

returned to the United States in 1967. She changed her focus again and moved to East St. Louis, Illinois to become an artist-in-residence at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. She began a decade of work with neighborhood and youth groups focusing on turning "hostility and anger into dance and expression." Among her many honors she has received are the Kennedy Center Honors in 1983, the Scripps American Dance Festival Award in 1986, the Dance Magazine Award, the plaque d'Honneur Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce Award, and the SIU Distinguished Service Award and her induction into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame. The theater and arts building at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has been named Dunham Hall in her honor.

## Sports

### ISIAH THOMAS

Born in Chicago in 1961, Isiah Thomas made a name for himself as a basketball player. Growing up in Illinois, he played for St. Joseph (Westchester) High School. He then played at Indiana University.



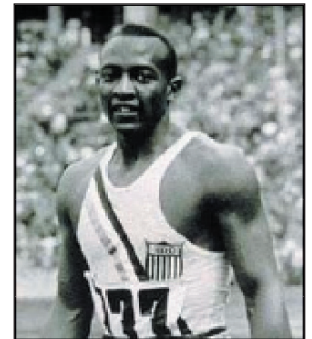
Drafted in 1981 by the Detroit Pistons, Thomas eventually played in 979 pro games. He helped Detroit win back-to-back NBA Championships. Individual honors include the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall

of Fame, twelve-time NBA All Star, Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award, and one of the fifty Greatest Players in NBA History. He is still active in professional basketball in managerial roles.

### JESSE OWENS

Jesse Owens was one of the greatest track-and-field athletes of all time. Born in 1913 in Alabama, he was the son of a sharecropper and the grandson of a slave. Owens began competing at Ohio State, where he established a world record in the running broad jump and in the 100-meter dash. He gained his greatest fame at the

Olympic Games in Berlin where he won four gold medals in the 100- and 200-meter, the running



broad jump, and as a member of the four hundred meter relay team. In each event he either set a world or Olympic record. His success helped counter Adolph Hitler's German supremacy theory of the "Master Race."

Later, Owens played an active role in youth athletic programs and ran his own public relations firm. Relocating to Chicago, he worked as a board member and director of the Chicago Boys' Club. In addition, he served as the Sports Specialist of the State of Illinois Youth Commission. In 1976, President Ford presented Owens with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom. Owens died in 1980.

# Medicine

## DR. DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS

Daniel Hale Williams was born on January 18, 1856 in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. In 1880, he entered what is now known as Northwestern University Medical School. Upon graduation, he opened his own medical office in Chicago, Illinois. Williams quickly gained a reputation for professionalism and was appointed as a surgeon on the staff of the South Side Dispensary and then a clinical instructor in anatomy at Northwestern. In 1889 he was appointed to the Illinois State Board of Health.



On January 23, 1891 Daniel Hale Williams established the Provident Hospital and Training School Association, an interracial hospital meant to serve members of the community as a whole. The school also trained Black nurses and utilized doctors of all races.

Williams is also known as the first American to perform open heart surgery when, in 1893, he opened the chest of a stab wound victim and sutured his pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart). The patient recovered completely and Williams'

procedures became standard for internal surgeries.

# Armed Services

## ELLSWORTH DANSBY

Ellsworth Dansby, of Decatur, Illinois, was always interesting in flying. He read everything about flying, and as a child, he threw himself from a steep hill on a frame made with bedsheets. When he was 12, he flew alone at an airstrip while his parents were gone. Throughout high school, Dansby won trophies for his design and construction of aircraft and power structures.

Dansby wanted to enroll in further training after high school, but his entrance was prohibited to any air schools because he was black. However, in 1941 he was able to enlist under a new U.S. Army Air Corps



program and was the second black person in the nation to be allowed entry to the Air Corps. He began as a technical school instructor and after World War II started, he was promoted to flight status.

During World War II, Dansby became the first African-American master sergeant and one of the "Tuskegee Airmen," the nation's first black military fighter pilots. Later, he was named to the Decatur Board of Education and the Board of Directors of the Decatur/Macon County Opportunities Corporation. Ellsworth Dansby died in 1989.

## More History Makers

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

ERNIE BANKS

ALBERTA HUNTER

LENNY MOORE

LORRAINE HANSBERRY

JOSHUA JOHNSON

MAHALIA JACKSON

BOB LOVE

JOE LOUIS

OTIS B. DUNCAN

JERSEY JOE WALCOTT

WES HAMILTON

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

# Discussion Questions

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The following questions can be used before, during or after your tour of the ALPL exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride: An African-American Journey*.

1. Visit the exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride*. How is the title of the exhibit reflected in the photographs on display? Use examples from the exhibit to support your answer.
2. Choose three individuals featured in the exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride*. Write an essay on the importance of these individuals to African-American history.
3. Identify an African-American prominent in today's society (Jesse White, Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey are a few examples). Write an essay on his/her life, career, achievements and significance.
4. How might the individuals in this exhibit have paved the way for today's influential African-Americans? Name specific individuals or events in your answer.

## Activities

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The following activities can be used before, during or after your tour of the ALPL exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride: An African-American Journey*.

1. Use the Photograph Analysis Sheet in this packet to analyze photographs in the exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride*.
2. Create a class binder on Illinois' African-American History Makers. Have each student choose an individual featured in the exhibit and write a biographical essay about their life. Find pictures or quotes, or create a drawing of or about that person to make the essays colorful and eye catching. Gather your class essays together in a binder for your classroom.
3. Watch clips from movies featuring African-American actors over several decades. How are African-Americans portrayed in films? Has their portrayal changed over time?
4. Create a mural or collage depicting famous African-Americans and their role in Illinois History.
5. Create a "Today in African-American History...." calendar. Research important dates in African-American history and record them on a calendar for your classroom.
6. Create a trivia quiz for your classmates from the African-American Chronology at <http://www.illinoishistory.gov/lib/GenPrideAfAm.htm>.
7. Organize a Black History Month event at your school.



# Analyze a Photograph

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The exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride: An African-American Journey* utilizes photographs from the collections of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. To fully understand the exhibit, it is important to know how to "read" a historic photograph. In this activity, use your powers of observation and interpretation to examine a photograph from the exhibit.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Observation

Study the photograph carefully. Fill in the chart with the appropriate information

People	Objects	Activities

What is the subject of this photograph?

## Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Knowledge

Why is this photograph important to history?

What do you know about this time period or event?

## Questions

What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

What resources would you use to find the answers to them?

## Activities

Write a diary or journal entry or write a newspaper article as a companion to the photograph.

Bring a photograph to class and ask your classmates to analyze it. What does it reveal about you and your family history?

# From Prejudice to Pride:

## An African-American Journey

### Poetry in the Exhibit

#### We Real Cool

by Gwendolyn Brooks

The Pool Players  
Seven at the Golden Shovel

We real cool. We  
Left school. We

Lurk late. We  
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We  
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We  
Die soon.

#### MATERIALS

- 15-20 index cards per group
- Marker or pen
- Paper

#### PROCEDURE

- Divide students into groups of four or five.
- Visit the exhibit *From Prejudice to Pride: An African-American Journey*.
- Identify one student to be the recorder. This student will carry the index cards.
- As the group views the exhibit, ask them to identify words that describe the exhibit or their feelings upon viewing the exhibit. Be sure to choose nouns, adverbs and adjectives. The recorder will write each word on one index card.
- Once the group has come up with approximately twenty words, have the students lay the cards out on the floor and arrange them to create a free-form poem. They do not need to use all the words.
- When the group is satisfied with their poem, ask them to copy it onto paper and read it aloud for the rest of the class.

## Online Resources

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum <http://www.alplm.org>

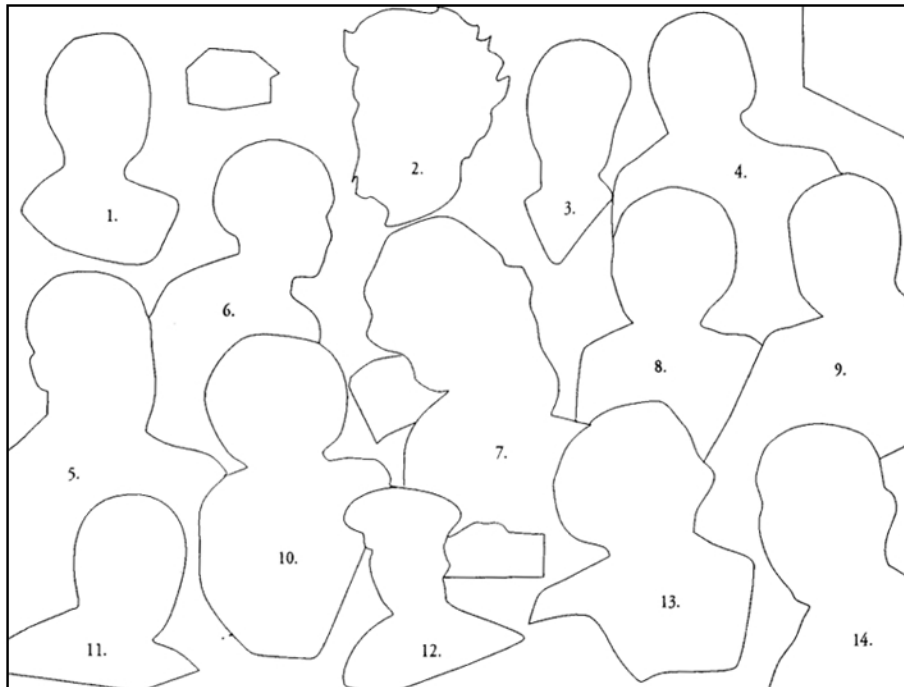
African-American Chronology <http://www.illinoishistory.gov/lib/GenPrideAfAm.htm>

African-Americans in Illinois <http://www.illinoishistory.gov/lib/AfAmHist.htm>



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Artist: John T. Crisp

1. **OSCAR de PRIEST** (1871- 1951 )  
First African-American Congressman from a Northern State
2. **JEAN BAPTISTE POINTE du SABLE** (1745?- 1818) Established first permanent settlement in what is now Chicago
3. **IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT** (1862- 1931) Brought national attention to the issue of lynching and was an activist in establishing the NAACP
4. **WILLIAM FLEURVILLE** (1806?- 1868) Friend and confidante of Abraham Lincoln known as "Billy the Barber"
5. **HAROLD WASHINGTON** (1922- 1987) First African-American mayor of Chicago
6. **MARVA COLLINS** (1936- )  
Innovative educator of the children of Chicago
7. **GWENDOLYN BROOKS** (1917- )  
Pulitzer-Prize-winning Poet Laureate of Illinois
8. **EDITH SAMPSON** (1901- 1979) First African-American woman to be appointed an Illinois judge and the first African-American to be a U.S. delegate to the United Nations
9. **CARTER G. WOODSON** (1875- 1950)  
African- American historian and the father of African- American History Month
10. **KATHERINE DUNHAM** (1909- )  
Redesigned the art of modern dance by introducing elements from African and Caribbean cultures
11. **PERCY JULIAN** (1898- 1975)  
Pioneering chemist whose research still helps glaucoma and arthritis sufferers today
12. **OTIS B. DUNCAN** (1873- 1937)  
Highest-ranking African-American officer to serve in World War I
13. **MARGARET BURROUGHS** (1917- )  
Founder of the DuSable Museum of African-American History
14. **DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS** (1856- 1931) Performed the world's first open-heart surgery