

## **Lesson #112 U.S. History African American**

### **African American Church**

#### **Religion in Slavery**

##### **Black Preachers**

1. evangelical – personal call of God rather than churchly education
2. literacy enemy to slavery
3. Nat Turner – placed strong control on Black preachers
4. illegal meetings
5. worship form – call and response in musical and dance forms
6. Exodus experience – Hebrews
7. songs
8. stable and coherent institutions in slavery

##### **Frederick Douglas and Abolitionist**

1. 1781 Elizabeth Freeman won freedom in Massachusetts court
2. 1783 Massachusetts abolished slavery
3. 1887 Northwest Ordinance free territory (3 North & 5 Sothern votes)
4. 1834 Racheal vs. Walker – Rachel won her freedom on Free Soil doctrine
5. 1843 Isabella van Wagener became Sojourner Truth
6. 1846 African American woman founded Missionary Society
7. 1849 Harriet Tubman escaped and then help more than 300 others
8. 1851 “Ain’t I a Woman” speech
9. 1856 Charlotte Forten Grimke 1<sup>st</sup> black woman to teach white students
10. 1857 Dred Scott case

##### **Civil War**

1. Emancipation Proclamation
2. United States Color Troops
3. Civil Rights Amendments 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> , and 15<sup>th</sup>
4. Freedmen’s Bureau

##### **Reconstruction**

1. Booker T. Washington – Atlanta Compromise -things getting better
2. Freemans Bureau
3. Civil Rights Amendments
4. W.E.B. DuBois – thing are getting worst - Jim Crow

##### **Jim Crow impact on society in general**

1. Minister visible figure in community
2. Some called anti-intellectual and emotional based
3. Independent
- 4 Accommodationist
  - a. oppression fear
  - b. violence in black community - husband wife , neighbor against neighbor
  - c. worship release valve of tension
  - d. DuBois critical of black church – things getting worst

## **Civil Rights Movement 1900's**

- 1. Niagara Movement Black and Jewish Leaders**
- 2. Role of church**
- 3. Education**
  - a. churched autonomous**
  - b. urban more resourceful**
  - c. urban black college educated**
  - d. main communication centers**
- 4. 1909 NAACP not an agent of direct change**

## **Marcus Garvey 1920's**

- 1. "Up you Mighty Race"**
- 2. "Black is Beautiful"**

## **Charles Hamilton Houston – Howard Law School**

- 1. Thurgood Marshall**
- 2. Mendez vs. Westminster 1947**
- 3. Brown vs. Board of Education 1954 / 1956**

## **Highlander Folk School – pacifist/non-violent founded in the 1930's (Leftist?)**

- 1. training for civil disobedience**
- 2. Rosa Parks attended**

## **Bus Boycott Alabama**

- 1. Claudette Colvin was arrested for sitting in white section of bus**  
**She was a teenager and pregnant and not consider suitable for a test case**
- 2. Rosa Parks arrested and became test case**
- 3. Bus boycott organized in Montgomery**
- 4. Martin Luther King jr. became leader**
- 5. Black women pushed back into background**

## **Southern Violence**

- 1. 1962 – 1965 there were over 90 churches burned**
- 2. Lynching**

## **Women back in forefront**

- 1. 1968 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm**
- 2. 1992 Senator Carol Moseley-Braun**

**Slavery in the South did allow worship in the Christian faith. By 1780 Black minister were preaching to the African American community. In Savannah, Georgia Andrew Bryan was arrested for preaching to a small group of slave. That small gathering became the became the First African Baptist Church of Savannah in 1790.**

**Up in Philadelphia Richard Allen and Absalom Jones in 1787 organized the Free African Society of Philadelphia that later became the Bethel Church the origin of the African Methodist Episcopal.**

**By 1810 there were some 15 African American church's in the new nation. Missionaries moved through the nation spreading the Second Great Awakening. The Methodist and Baptist churches were very active in spreading the word.**

**Frederick Douglass confronted the Christian community to confront slavery that was against the teaching of the church. Then Harriet Tubman became the "Moses" to many slaves she took north. The one book of the Bible that resonated in the African American community was Exodus.**

Not all African American abolitionist were peaceful in their words. David Walker wrote in *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* that violence was necessary and the divine punishment was coming.

January 1, 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that did nothing at first. Yet, black churches organized missionaries and spread the word and education was paramount. The white churches also sent missionaries and teachers and in time educational institution developed.

During reconstruction Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois saw the world in different terms. Washington who was born a slave saw the world improving and DuBois born free saw the world falling backwards. DuBois wrote *The Soul of Black Folk* and praised the black preacher in his essay *Of the Faith of the Fathers*.

W.E.B. DuBois coined the term 'The Negro Church' while others saw they belong to Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and other denominations. Black Americans were decentralized in their churches.

Left out of much of the civil right history is the role of black women. Nannie Burroughs fought for suffrage and social reforms in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. She took black minister to task in 1920 on NBC "...too much of Heaven and too little practical Christian living...". Woman made the heart of the black church in Chicago 70% of the congregations were women.

In March of 1955 Claudette Colvin got on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama and sat in a white section and was arrested. She was not used as a test case for the reason she was a teenager and pregnant.

Emmett Till in September of 1955 was murder and became a show case study of the segregated South.

Then in December Rosa Parks boarded as city bus and sat in the white section and became the focal point of a test case and the bus boycott. The white section was the last seat not taken by a white person.

The boycott was organized and the spokes person was Dr. Martin Luther King jr. of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. The boycott lasted more than a year and finally won the right to sit any place on a city bus.

The Highlander Folk School was a training area for poor working class at first and then moved to civil rights in the late 1940's. Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King jr. both had ties to the school. The left leaning philosophy placed it in the way of the Red Scare of the 1950's. The school was closed and remains a controversy today.

After the boycott black ministers including Martin Luther King jr., Ralph Abernathy, Andrew Young, James Lawson and Wyatt Walker helped form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference along with civil rights activist. Many churches were reluctant to go against the status quo that tactics of civil disobedience would hurt the movement to equality. Later King would be arrested in Birmingham and answer his critics in "*Letter From Birmingham Jail*". Congressman John Lewis spoke of slave and segregation as their Egypt and civil rights as the Exodus.

August 28, 1963 King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech to a crowd of 200,000 on the Washington Mall. Then on September 15, 1963 a bomb went off at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham killing four little girls. King was being push by civil activist to focus on just civil rights. Stokely Carmichael turn white liberals away with "Black Power" and Malcolm X of the Nation of Islam mocked King's nonviolent approach.

JFK was assassinated in November and LBJ pushed his Great Society through Congress. King denounced the Vietnam War and began to organize the Poor People's Campaign before he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Elijah Muhammad and Nation of Islam was born out of the Marcus Garvey movement. Two lieutenants were Louis X and Malcom X and rumor was that Louis X was behind the attack on Malcom X.

There was no federal law against lynching passed until 2018. Between 1882 and 1968 there were 4,742 lynchings of these 1,297 were identified as white individuals and 3,445 as black individuals. The victims were criminals, religious, nationality, and race concentrated in the Southern United States. Each lynching was reported by the NAACP.

Back of the bus behind the last white person



Jim Crow

