

Today in Black History –February 1

1810 Charles Lenox Remond is born in Salem, Massachusetts to free parents. He will become one of the most prominent of the African American abolitionist crusaders. Charles Remond will begin his activism in opposition to slavery while in his twenties as an orator speaking at public gatherings and conferences in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New York and Pennsylvania. In 1838 the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, will choose him as one of its agents. As a delegate from the American Anti-Slavery Society, he will go with William Lloyd Garrison to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London In1840. He will have a reputation as an eloquent lecturer and reported to be the first Black public speaker on abolition. He will recruit Black soldiers in Massachusetts for the Union Army during the Civil War, particularly for the famed 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry. He will also be active in recruiting for the U.S. Colored Troops. After the Civil War ends, he will work as a clerk in the Boston Customs House, and as a street lamp inspector. He will later purchase a farm in South Reading (nowWakefield), Massachusetts. He will join the ancestors on December 22, 1873.

1810 - The first insurance company managed by African Americans, the American Insurance Company of Philadelphia, is established.

1833 - Henry McNeal Turner is born in Newberry Courthouse, South Carolina. He will become one of the first Bishops in the African American Episcopal Church. He will also be an army chaplain, political organizer, magazine editor, and college chancellor. He will be inspired by a Methodist revival and swear to become a pastor. In 1858, he will transfer his membership to the African Methodist Church and study the classics, Hebrew and divinity at Trinity College. In 1880, he will become a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the American Civil War, he will be appointed a Chaplain to one of the first Federal regiments of Black troops (Company B of the First United States Colored Troops). He will be the first of only 14 Black Chaplains to be appointed during the Civil War. This appointment will come directly from President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. He will also be appointed by President Andrew Johnson to work with the Freedman's Bureau in Georgia during Reconstruction. Following the Civil War, he will become steadily more disenchanted with the lack of progress in the status of the country's African Americans. During this time, he will move to testate of Georgia. It is here that he will become involved in Radical Republican politics. He will help found the Republican Party of Georgia. After attempts to overcome certain Supreme Court decisions, he will become disgusted and end his attempts to bring equality to the United States. Instead, he will become a proponent of the "back to Africa" and "African American colonization" movements. He will travel to Africa and be impressed by the differences in the attitude of Africans who have never known the degradation of slavery. He will organize four annual conferences in Africa. He will write extensively about the Civil war and about the condition of his parishioners. He will join the ancestors while visiting Windsor, Ontario on May 15, 1915. He will be highly regarded in the Afro-American and the Afro-Canadian community and a large number of churches will be named in his honor.

1865 - John S. Rock becomes the first African American attorney allowed to practice before the United States Supreme Court. Due to his poor health, he never actually argued a case before the court, succumbing to tuberculosis at the age of 41.

1870 - Jonathan Jasper Wright is elected to the South Carolina Supreme Court. He is the first African American to hold major judicial position.

1871 - Jefferson Franklin Long, Republican congressman from Georgia, makes the first speech by an African American on the floor of Congress. His text is to oppose leniency to former Confederates.

1902 - Langston Hughes is born in Joplin, Missouri. He will be known as one of the most prolific American poets of the 20th century and a leading voice of the Harlem Renaissance. In addition to his poetry, Hughes will achieve success as an anthologist and juvenile author, write plays and librettos, found theater groups, and be a

widely read columnist and humorist. Among his honors will be the NAACP's Spingarn Medal in 1960. He will join the ancestors on [May 22, 1967](#).

1938 - Sherman Hemsley is born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He will become an actor and will be known for his roles in the TV shows "All in the Family," "The Jeffersons," and "Amen."

1948 - James Ambrose Johnson, Jr. is born in Buffalo, New York. He will become a singer, songwriter, producer, and musician working under the name "Rick James." He will be best known for his recording of "Super Freak" and produce Teena Marie, the gold-certified Mary Jane Girls, Eddie Murphy, and others. He will join the ancestors on [August 6, 2004](#).

1957 - P.H. Young becomes the first African American pilot, flying on a United States scheduled passenger airline.

1960 - Four African American college students from North Carolina A&T College in Greensboro, North Carolina sit at a "whites-only" Woolworth's lunch counter and refuse to leave when denied service, beginning a sit-in protest.

1963 - Nyasaland (now Malawi) becomes a self-governing nation. 1965 - More than seven hundred demonstrators, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., are arrested in Selma, Alabama.

1965 - Ruby Dee becomes the first African American thespian to play a major role at the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut.

1978 - The first stamp of the United States Postal Service's Black Heritage USA series honors Harriet Tubman, famed abolitionist and "conductor" on the Underground Railroad.

1982 - The nations of Senegal & Gambia form a loose confederation named Senegambia.

1991 - President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa, states that he will repeal all apartheid laws.

1992 - Barry Bonds signs baseball's highest single year contract to date (\$4.7 million).

1997 - BET Holdings and Encore Media Corp. launch BET Movie/Starz, the first 24 hour African American movie channel.

2003 - Lt. Colonel Michael P. Anderson, NASA astronaut, joins the ancestors at the age of 43, when the Space Shuttle Columbia explodes during re-entry.

2003 - Ramon "Mongo" Santa Maria joins the ancestors in Miami, Florida from stroke complications at the age of 85. He had been considered one of the most influential percussionists of his generation.

2012 - Don Cornelius, the founder of the "Soul Train" television show, joins the ancestors, succumbing to an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head, at the age of 75.