

*Today in Black History -February 11 *

1783 - Jarena Lee, the first woman to preach in an AME church, at Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia, is born in Cape May, New Jersey. She will chronicle her life's work in her book, "Religious Experiences and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee: A Preachin' Woman" (1849). Jarena Lee will be one of first African American women to speak out publicly against slavery. She will join the ancestors in 1849.

1790 - The Society of Friends (Quakers) presents a petition to Congress calling for the abolition of slavery.

1958 - Mohawk Airlines schedules Ruth Carol Taylor on her initial flight from Ithaca, New York to New York City. She becomes the first African American flight attendant for a United States-based air carrier.

1961 - Robert Weaver becomes the highest-ranking African American in the federal government as he is sworn in as administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

1966 - Willie Mays signs with the San Francisco Giants for \$ 130,000 a year. At the time, this is one of the highest salaries in professional baseball.

1977 - Clifford Alexander, Jr. is confirmed as the first African American Secretary of the Army. He will hold the position until the end of President Jimmy Carter's term.

1977 - Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam is named head of state in Ethiopia. He will rule Ethiopia and be backed by the Soviet government until he loses the civil war in 1991 to the forces supporting Meles Zenawi.

1989 - Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris becomes the first woman consecrated as a bishop in the Episcopal Church, in a ceremony held in Boston.

1990 - Nelson Mandela is released from prison after being held for nearly 27 years without trial by the South African government. The founder and unofficial leader of the African National Congress, Mandela became, during his imprisonment, a symbol for the struggle of Black South Africans to overcome apartheid.

1990 - James "Buster" Douglas defeats Mike Tyson in a stunning upset in Tokyo to win the heavyweight boxing championship. Almost two years later to the day, Tyson will be convicted of rape and two related charges filed by a Miss Black America contestant in Indianapolis, Indiana.

2012 - Whitney Houston, the woman with the pitch-perfect voice who once reigned as the queen of pop at the Grammys, joins the ancestors at the age of 48.