

* Today in Black History - February 14 *

1760 - Richard Allen, is born into slavery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He will purchase his freedom in 1786 and will become a preacher the same year. He will become the first African American ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church (1799), and founder of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in 1816, and first bishop of the AME Church. He will join the ancestors on March 26, 1831.

1818 - The birth of Frederick Douglass in Tuckahoe (Talbot County), Maryland, is attributed to this date. He will state, "I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it... and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant." He will be a great African American leader and one of the giants of nineteenth century America. He was born Frederick Bailey and will change his name to Douglass after he escapes slavery in 1838. He will join the ancestors on February 20, 1895 in Washington, DC.

1867 - Morehouse College is organized in Augusta, Georgia. The school will be moved later to Atlanta.

1867 - New registration law in Tennessee abolishes racial distinctions in voting.

1936 - The National Negro Congress is organized at a Chicago meeting attended by eight hundred seventeen delegates representing more than five hundred organizations. Asa Phillip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is elected president of the new organization.

1946 - Gregory Hines is born in New York City. A child tap-dancing star in the group Hines, Hines, and Dad, Hines will lead a new generation of tap dancers that will benefit from the advice and teaching of such tap legends as Henry Le Tang, "Honi" Coles, Sandman Sims, the Nicholas Brothers, and Sammy Davis, Jr. He will also become a successful actor in movies including "White Knights," "Tap," and "A Rage in Harlem." He will join the ancestors on August 9, 2003.

1951 - Sugar Ray Robinson defeats Jake LaMotta and wins the middleweight boxing title.

1957 - Lionel Hampton's only major musical work, "King David", makes its debut at New York's Town Hall. The four-part symphony jazz suite was conducted by Dmitri Mitropoulos.

1966 - Wilt Chamberlain breaks the NBA career scoring record at 20,884 points after only seven seasons as a pro basketball player.

1978 - Maxima Corporation, a computer systems and management company, is incorporated. Headquartered in Lanham, Maryland, it will become one of the largest African American-owned companies and earn its founder, chairman and CEO, Joshua I. Smith, chairmanship of the U.S. Commission on Minority Business Development.