

* [Today in Black History - February 22](#) *

1841 - Grafton Tyler Brown is born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A lithographer and painter, he will be considered to be one of the first African-American artists in California. His paintings will be collected by the Oakland (California) Museum of Art, Washington State Museum, and private individuals.

1865 - Tennessee adopts a new constitution abolishing slavery. This will allow Tennessee to become the first former confederate state to be re-admitted to the Union.

1888 - Horace Pippin is born in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His right arm crippled in World War I (where he will earn a Purple Heart), Pippin will paint holding the wrist of his practically useless right arm in his left fist. The self-taught artist will win wide acclaim for the primitive style and strong emotional content of his work. He will join the ancestors on [July 6, 1946](#).

1898 - The African American postmaster of Lake City, South Carolina joins the ancestors after being lynched. His wife and three daughters are shot and maimed for life.

1906 - African American evangelist William J. Seymour first arrives in Los Angeles and begins holding revival meetings. The "Azusa Street Revival" later broke out under Seymour's leadership, in the Apostolic Faith Mission located at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. It will be one of the pioneering events in the history of 20th century American Pentecostalism.

1921 - Jean-Bedel Bokassa I is born in Bobangul, Oubangul-Chari, French Equatorial Africa (present-day Central African Republic). He will become a career soldier who will seize power from President David Dacko in a 1965 coup. In 1972 he will proclaim himself president-for-life, ruling the country with brutal repression, using its revenues for personal enrichment, and crowning himself emperor in 1976. He will be deposed in [September 1979](#) and was imprisoned for murder in 1986 after seven years in exile. He will be pardoned in 1993 and will join the ancestors in 1996 at the age of 75.

1938 - Ishmael Reed is born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He will become a poet (nominated for the National Book Award for "Conjure"), novelist ("Yellow Back," "Radio Broke Down," "Mumbo Jumbo," "Flight to Canada"), and anthologist of the well-received "19 Necromancers from Now" and "The Yardbird Reader, Volume I."

1940 - Chester 'Chet' Walker is born in Benton Harbor, Michigan. He will begin his NBA All-Star career with the Philadelphia '76ers in 1963, averaging 17.3 points per game. The highlight of his career will be capturing the NBA title in 1967 on a team that included Wilt Chamberlain. The '76ers will defeat the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Division finals, preventing them from going to their ninth straight NBA final.

1950 - Julius Erving is born in Roosevelt (town of Hempstead), New York. He will become a star basketball player, first for the ABA's Virginia Squires and later for the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers. Known as "Dr. J.," he will become the third pro player to score more than 30,000 career points (after Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar). He will be enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1993.

1962 - Wilt Chamberlain sets a NBA record with 34 free throw attempts.

1979 - St. Lucia gains its independence from Great Britain.

1989 - "Don't Worry, Be Happy", by Bobby McFerrin, wins the Grammy for Song of the Year.