

* Today in Black History - February 26 *

1844 - James Edward O'Hara is born in New York City to an Irish merchant and a West Indian woman. He will move to North Carolina after completing his basic education. After studying law at Howard University, he will be admitted to the North Carolina bar and become a practicing attorney in Halifax county and active in state politics. He will later become a two-term United States Congressman from North Carolina, serving in the forty-eighth and forty-ninth congress.

1870 - Wyatt Outlaw, Town Commissioner in Graham, North Carolina, joins the ancestors after being executed (lynched) by the "White Brotherhood," The Ku Klux Klan. He was president of the Alamance County Union League of America (an anti Ku Klux Klan group), helped to establish the Republican party in North Carolina and advocated establishing a school for African Americans. The Klan will hang him from an oak tree near the Alamance County Courthouse. Dozens of Klansmen will be arrested for the murders of Outlaw and other African Americans in Alamance and Caswell Counties. Many of the arrested men will confess, but, despite protests by Governor William W. Holden, a federal judge in Salisbury will order them released.

1926 - Dr. Carter G. Woodson starts Negro History Week. This will be expanded to Black History Month in 1976.

1926 - Theodore "Tiger" (The Georgia Deacon) Flowers becomes the first African American middleweight champion of the world. He will defeat Harry Greb in fifteen rounds to win the title in New York City.

1928 - Antoine "Fats" Domino is born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He will be a pioneering Rhythm & Blues pianist whose hits will include "Ain't That A Shame" and "Blueberry Hill."

1930 - "The Green Pastures" opens on Broadway at the Mansfield Theater with Richard B. Harrison as "De Lawd."

1946 - A race riot in Columbia, Tennessee results in two deaths and ten injured persons.

1964 - Boxer Cassius Clay converts to Islam, adopting the name Muhammad Ali, saying, "I believe in the religion of Islam...believe in Allah and peace..."

1965 - During civil rights demonstrations in Selma, Alabama, that were designed to get the attention of the Johnson administration in Washington, DC, police violence erupts against the marchers. In an effort to protect his mother from a beating, 26 year old Jimmie Lee Jackson strikes a police officer. He will join the ancestors after being shot and killed. Civil rights activists, outraged by his death, will plan a march from the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma to Montgomery.

1966 - Andrew Brimmer becomes the first African American governor of the Federal

Reserve Board when he is appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1984 - Rev. Jesse Jackson acknowledges that he referred to New York City as "Hymietown."

1985 - At the 27th Grammy Awards, Best Album of the Year for "Can't Slow Down," is presented to Lionel Richie. Tina Turner is a big winner with Best Song, Best Record and Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Female for "What's Love Got to Do with It."