

***Today in Black History -February 5 ***

1866 - The distribution of public land and confiscated land to freedmen and loyal refugees in forty acre lots is offered in an amendment to the Freedmen's Bureau bill by Congressman Thaddeus Stevens. The measure is defeated in the House by a vote of 126 to 37. An African American delegation, led by Frederick Douglass calls on President Johnson and urges ballots for former slaves. The meeting ends in disagreement and controversy after Johnson reiterates his opposition to African American suffrage.

1934 - Henry (Hank) Aaron is born in Mobile, Alabama. After starting his major league baseball career with the Milwaukee Braves in 1954, he will distinguish himself as a home-run specialist. Aaron will be considered by some, the best baseball player in history. Over his 23-year Major League Baseball career, he will compile more batting records than any other player in baseball history. He will hold the record for runs batted in with 2297, and will be a Gold Glove Winner in 1958, 1959, and 1960. His most famous accomplishment will come on [April 8, 1974](#), when at the age of 40, he will hit a 385-foot home run against the Los Angeles Dodgers, surpassing Babe Ruth's record of 714 career home runs. He will end his career with 755 home runs. In 1982, he will be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. After his retirement, he will return to the Atlanta Braves as a vice-president for player development, and will be promoted to senior vice-president in 1989.

1941 - Barrett Strong is born in West Point, Mississippi. He will become a Rhythm and Blues singer best known for his recording of "Money (That's What I Want)." He will also be a prolific songwriter, responsible for hits such as "Just My Imagination," "Papa Was A Rolling Stone," and "Ball of Confusion." He will receive a Grammy Award for Best Rhythm & Blues Song for co-writing "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone". He will be inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2004.

1956 - L.R. Lautier becomes the first African American to be admitted to the National Press Club.

1958 - Clifton W. Wharton, Sr. becomes the first African American to head an American diplomatic mission in Europe when he is confirmed as minister to Romania.

1962 - A suit seeking to bar Englewood, New Jersey, from maintaining "racial segregated" elementary schools, is filed in United States District Court.

1968 - Students in Orangeburg, South Carolina try to end the discriminatory practices of a local bowling alley. Their confrontation with police and the National Guard, and the subsequent death of three students, creates widespread outrage among students on campuses across the South.

1969 - Cinque Gallery is incorporated by African American artists Romare Bearden, Ernest Crichlow, and Norman Lewis. Located in the So Ho district of New York City, the nonprofit gallery's mission is to assist in the growth and development of minority artists and to end the cycle of exclusion of their work from the mainstream artistic community. 1972 - Robert Lewis Douglas, founder, owner and coach of the New York Renaissance is the first African American inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. The New York Renaissance was an African American team that won 88 consecutive games in 1933.

1977 - Sugar Ray Leonard defeats Luis Vega in 6 rounds in his first professional fight.

1989 - Kareem Abdul-Jabar becomes the first NBA player to score 38,000 points.

1994 - Avowed white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith is convicted of Medgar Evers' murder, more than thirty years after Evers was shot in the back from ambush. After deliberating for seven hours, a jury of eight African Americans and four whites convicted 73-year-old De La Beckwith of Medgar Evers's murder,

sentencing him to life in prison. He died there seven years later. As a Mississippi State Supreme Court justice wrote about the retrial: "Miscreants brought before the bar of justice in this state must, sooner or later, face the cold realization that justice, slow and plodding though she may be, is certain in the state of Mississippi."