

Who Am I?

The IRT has produced plays that have shined the spotlight on many of these notable Americans:

1. I gave the "Atlanta Compromise" Speech. I was a leader of the Black Reform Movement during the Post-Civil War era. I ate dinner with Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. Who am I?

2. I won the Nobel Peace Prize. I was a public figure to whom people looked for a peaceful way to combat segregation. I gave the "I Have a Dream" speech. Who am I?

3. I worked my way up from a job in the train station baggage room to being a Pullman car porter, a job I held until 1964. I was the leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Alabama. I organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956 with the help of Martin Luther King Jr. and others. Who am I?

4. I participated in the Pottawatomie Massacre in the Kansas Territory. I led the raid at Harpers Ferry, Maryland, in hopes that escaped slaves would join my rebellion. I helped to heighten sectional animosities that led to the American Civil War. Who am I?

5. I was the 16th President of the United States of America. I signed the Emancipation Proclamation. I was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. Who am I?

6. I became very sick and could not walk properly until I was 11 years old. I was the first black woman to win a gold medal in a sprint event at the Olympics; in fact I won three in 1960. My autobiography was made into a movie starring Shirley Jo Finney. Who am I?

"I freed a thousand slaves.
I could have freed a thousand more
if only they knew they were slaves."
—Harriet Tubman

7. I was a Quaker. I worked with my wife to hide more than 2,000 slaves on the Underground Railroad. My house is located in Newport, Indiana. Who am I?

8. I argued the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954. I was appointed onto the Supreme Court in 1967. I was replaced by Clarence Thomas in 1991. Who am I?

9. I was born Isabella Baumfree, but I changed my name. I was a former slave. I was one of the few black women of my era to participate in the women's rights movement. Who am I?

10. I was the first African-American to play in the Major Leagues. I was a Brooklyn Dodger. I was the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. Who am I?

A. Philip Randolph

Abraham Lincoln

August Wilson

Booker T. Washington

Carter G. Woodson

E. D. Nixon

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Ida B. Wells

Jackie Robinson

John Brown

John F. Kennedy

Julia Carson

Langston Hughes

Levi Coffin

Lyndon B. Johnson

Martin Luther King Jr.

Paul Robeson

Sojourner Truth

Thurgood Marshall

Wilma Rudolph

11. I was a poet, playwright, and author during the Harlem Renaissance. One of my most famous poems is "A Dream Deferred." Who am I?

12. I wrote a cycle of ten plays on the African American experience, one for each decade of the 20th century. I won two Pulitzer Prizes. Who am I?

13. I was named to Walter Camp's all-white All-American Football team. I became an internationally known star with my acting and singing careers. I was blackballed by the McCarthy Commission for speaking out against a war with Soviet Union. Who am I?

"This is the greatest country under the sun,
but we must not let our love of country,
our patriotic loyalty, cause us to abate one whit
in our protest against wrong and injustice."
—Madam C. J. Walker

14. I founded the magazine *The Messenger*. I founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids, the first railway union open to black membership. I proposed the first March on Washington in response to discrimination in war industries employment and segregation of the armed forces in 1941. Who am I?

15. I was the 32nd President of the United States. I had polio. I was elected to four terms as President. Who am I?



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16. I was the youngest President of the United States. I asked Congress to pass a Civil Rights bill to allow blacks to have more rights. I was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Who am I?

17. I worked with Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I nominated Thurgood Marshall for a seat on the Supreme Court. I replaced John F. Kennedy as the President of the United States. Who am I?

18. I am known as the "Father of Negro History." I founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life & History. I established Negro History Week, which later evolved into Black History Month. Who am I?

19. I was a journalist. I co-founded the NAACP. I purchased *The Conservator* from my husband and became its editor. Who am I?

20. I held the Office of the 7th Congressional District of Indiana. I was the second African-American woman from Indiana elected to Congress. I replaced Andrew Jacob Jr. as representative. Who am I?

"I knew I could have been lynched, manhandled, or beaten when the police came.

I chose not to move.

When I made that decision, I knew that I had the strength of my ancestors with me."

—Rosa Parks

Harriet Tubman

The Moses of Her People

c.1820 - 1913

Harriet Ross Tubman was probably born in the year 1820 in Bucktown, a village of a few hundred people in Dorchester County, Maryland. Like her parents, she was born the property of a slave master. Although Harriet never had a day of schooling, she displayed adult wisdom at an early age; but her rebellious ways often brought her difficulties.

Soon after Harriet entered her teens, she was hired out as a field hand. One evening, a slave named Barrett left his work and went to the village store. The overseer followed him, and so did Harriet. When the slave was found, the overseer declared that he should be whipped and called upon Harriet to help tie him down. She refused, and as Barrett ran away, she placed herself in the doorway to block pursuit. The overseer grabbed a two-pound weight from the store counter and threw it at the fugitive, but it fell short and struck Harriet a stunning blow on the head. It was some time before she recovered, and she suffered from sleeping seizures and dizzy spells the rest of her life.

In 1844 or 1845, Harriet married John Tubman, a free Negro. Several years later, she devised a plan to escape to the North. Her husband refused to join her, and two brothers who started out with her lost heart and returned. Harriet went on alone and made her way to freedom in Pennsylvania. When Tubman returned for her husband several months later, she found that he had taken another wife.

Over the next decade, Tubman worked at numerous jobs (thrilled with the freedom to quit if conditions were poor) in order to save money. With this money, she made trips to the South, rescuing family, friends, and neighbors from slavery.



- 1619 Twenty Africans, three of them women, are put ashore off a Dutch frigate at Jamestown, Virginia.
- 1661 Virginia is the first colony to give statutory recognition to slavery.
- 1662 Virginia law establishes that children born in the colony will be held bond or free according to the condition of their mother.
- 1712 Slave men and women in New York City initiate a revolt that results in the deaths of nine white men and the stiffening of restrictions on slaves.
- 1746 Lucy Terry writes "Bars of Flight," the first known poem by an African American in the United States; the poem is not published until 1895.
- 1753 Phillis Wheatley publishes *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral*, the first book published by a black person in North America and the second by a woman in North America.
- 1777 Vermont abolishes slavery.
- 1781 Los Angeles, California, is founded by 44 settlers, of whom at least 26 are black women, men, and children.
- 1787 The United States Constitution, with three clauses protecting slavery, is approved at the Philadelphia Convention.
- 1793 The first fugitive slave law is enacted by Congress, making it a criminal offense to harbor or prevent the arrest of a fugitive slave.
- 1800 U.S. black population totals 1,002,037; 108,435 are free, and 893,602 are slaves.
- 1821 **Estimated birth of Harriet Ross Tubman.**
- 1827 The first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, is published in New York; its main financial supporter is the Female Literary Society of New York.
- 1831 Legendary revolt of Nat Turner.
- 1832 The Female Literary Association of Philadelphia and the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of Boston are founded.
- 1836 A group of black women rush into a Boston courtroom to rescue two fugitive slaves about to be returned to their masters.
- 1851 The Fugitive Slave Act is passed.
- 1861 The Civil War begins.
- 1863 **Harriet Tubman leads Union troops in a raid along the Combahee River in South Carolina.**
- 1864 Maryland abolishes slavery.

Madam C. J. Walker

Econor

Madam C. J. Walker was born Sarah Breedlove in Delta, Louisiana, on December 23, 1867. Since the family had no money for gifts, her parents called her their Christmas baby. They had high hopes for this child: she was born free. In 1874, however, Sarah's parents died. Sarah's brother moved to the West, while Sarah and her sister moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi. The two girls took in laundry to make a living.

In 1882, Sarah married Moses McWilliams and had a daughter, Lelia. Two years after her daughter's birth, Moses died, and Sarah decided to move to St. Louis, Missouri. She started a good laundry business there, but wanted something more for herself and her daughter. After hearing Margaret Murray Washington—Mrs. Booker T. Washington—speak

about the rewards of hard work, Sarah made up her mind to take new measures to improve her own life both physically and mentally.

Sarah decided to market a hair grower which she used on her own thin, dry hair. While her daughter was in college, she moved to Denver and got a job in a drugstore. At night she worked on her hair care products. Soon, she began selling them door to door. Because of the scarcity of hair products for black women, Sarah's items sold very well. They became so popular, in fact, that she soon was able to hire other women to sell them door to door.

In 1906, Sarah married Charles Joseph Walker. From that time on, following a custom used by many businesswomen of the era, she added

"Madam" to her name, becoming Madam C. J. Walker. Charles helped her with the advertising of her products; and when Lelia graduated from college, she joined her mother's business. In 1908, they opened the Lelia Beauty College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Graduates of the school were called "hair culturists." At that time, most black women made between two to ten dollars a week, but Madam Walker's hair culturists made twenty dollars a week or more.



Walker

1867 - 1919

Pioneer

In 1910, Madam Walker built her headquarters and factory in Indianapolis, Indiana. She was forty-four years old when she incorporated her company. As the company grew, Madam Walker carefully guarded the secret formulas for her products. By 1918, Madam Walker was the first female self-made millionaire in America.

Once when going to the movies, Madam Walker was charged more for a ticket because of her color. She sued the theatre and began plans to build her own theatre that would not segregate its seating. Madam Walker did not live to see the completion of the building in 1927, but her daughter would oversee the project to its completion.

In 1913, Lelia moved to Harlem. She tried to convince her mother to move the business there, as it was fast becoming the center of black life. In 1916, Madam Walker agreed and left Indianapolis. The Walker Factory, however, remained there. Madam Walker's health quickly deteriorated, but she still kept a frantic pace: traveling around the country, giving speeches that encouraged African Americans to start businesses in their own neighborhoods, and opening new shops.

On May 25, 1919, Madam Walker died. Her daughter used their wealth to support struggling black authors, actors, artists, and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance. Madam C. J. Walker remains an inspiration to many.

She was born a sharecropper's daughter, but died a wealthy woman; born in a one-room cabin on a cotton plantation, she died in a mansion overlooking the Hudson River in New York. She used to the fullest the opportunities of freedom.

Madam Walker driving her electric car.

abolishes slavery.
Sarah Breedlove (Madam C. J. Walker) born in Delta, Louisiana.

The fourteenth Amendment is ratified, extending citizenship rights to African Americans.
Howard University Medical School opens its doors to women both black and white.
The Civil Rights Bill of 1875 provides for equal access to public accommodations without regard to race.

Over the next 45 years at least 26 black women will be lynched in the United States.
7,000 African Americans migrate to Oklahoma Territory to homestead.
In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court allows racial segregation under the doctrine of "separate but equal."

The NAACP is founded.

Madam Walker opens headquarters in Indianapolis.

Rosa McCauley (Parks) born in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Harriet Tubman dies at her home in Auburn, New York.

Silent March in New York-the first organized protest against lynching.

Madam C. J. Walker dies, the first female self-made millionaire in American history.

The Constitution's Nineteenth Amendment is ratified, finally allowing women the right to vote.

Madam Walker Theatre completed in Indianapolis by daughter Lelia.

Rosa Parks joins Montgomery NAACP.

Jackie Robinson first black player in major league baseball.

Supreme Court rules against segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat, inspiring Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I have a dream" speech at Lincoln Memorial.

Congress passes the Civil Rights Act. Thurgood Marshall first African American Supreme Court Justice.

Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated.

Rosa Parks dies in Detroit, Michigan.
Black Presidential candidate Barack Obama wins Iowa caucuses.

Rosa Parks

1913 - 2005

Mother of the Civil Rights Movement

Rosa Parks was born Rosa McCauley on February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama, 45 miles east of Montgomery. Her father sought better employment in the North, but her mother insisted on staying near her family. Although he occasionally sent money, Rosa did not see her father from the age of five until after her marriage.

Rosa and her brother, Sylvester, were raised by their mother and maternal grandparents in Pine Level, Alabama. Grandma Rose often told stories of life during the Civil War, but her grandfather "instilled in me that you don't put up with bad treatment from anybody. It was passed down almost in our genes."

There was no public high school for Blacks in Montgomery, so Rosa attended the laboratory school of Alabama State College for Negroes. To help pay her tuition, Rosa cleaned houses and did sewing for Whites in Montgomery. She received her high school diploma in 1933 at the age of 20, but could only find work as a seamstress.

In spring 1931, Rosa had met Raymond Parks, a barber, and they were married in December 1932. Although Ray was active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he initially felt that it might be too dangerous for his wife to join the organization.

In 1943, Mrs. Parks decided to attend the annual meeting for the election of officers of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP and was the only female among the dozen or so individuals present. She found herself elected to the office of secretary; she later said she was too timid to say no. Mrs. Parks stayed in that volunteer position for the next 12 years. One of her most important jobs was helping the chapter's president, E. D. Nixon, document every case of racial discrimination and violence against Blacks that occurred in Alabama.

In August 1955, Mrs. Parks attended a workshop on desegregation at the Highlander Folk School. She was deeply inspired by the experience of Blacks and Whites working together for a common cause at Highlander.



Just a few months later in December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man and was arrested for violating segregation laws. Seeing in Rosa an unimpeachable rallying point, Montgomery's black community leaders organized a bus boycott that lasted more than a year, until the United States Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional.

In 1957, Rosa, her husband, and her mother moved to Detroit, where Rosa's brother Sylvester lived. Mrs. Parks found work as a seamstress and continued to travel to speaking engagements. Although women were not allowed much of a role in the 1963 March on Washington (where Martin

Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech), Mrs. Parks was introduced at a "Tribute to Women" held in conjunction with the march.

Mrs. Parks worked in the Detroit office of African American Congressman John Conyers from 1965 until he retired in 1988. In 1975, Cleveland Avenue in Montgomery, where Mrs. Parks had been arrested in 1955, was renamed Rosa Parks Boulevard. Despite preferring a quiet life at home, she was much in demand as a speaker, and over the years she spent much time traveling across the nation.

Raymond Parks died in 1977, and Rosa's mother in 1979. In 1987 Mrs. Parks founded the Rosa & Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development, a community center for youth. Her name returned to the headlines in 1994 when she was attacked and robbed in her own home, fortunately without serious harm. Rosa Parks died in 2005.

Rosa Parks riding at the front of the bus the day the Montgomery Bus boycott ended.



On-Line or at the Library

WATCH:

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman (1974) • *Roots* (1977) • *A Woman Called Moses* (1978)
Eyes on the Prize (1987) • *The Long Walk Home* (1990)
The Rosa Parks Story (2002) • *Freedom's Song* (2006) • *The Great Debaters* (2007)

CLICK ON:

<http://www.freedomcenter.org>

Visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

<http://www.naacp.org>

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a civil rights organization for ethnic minorities in the United States.

<http://www.voicesofcivilrights.org>

AARP, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the Library of Congress have collected and preserved thousands of personal stories and oral histories of the Civil Rights Movement, forming the world's largest archive of personal accounts of civil rights history.

<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/home.htm>

The history of Jim Crow: Explore the African American experience of segregation from the 1870s to the 1950s.

<http://search.eb.com/blackhistory>

Encyclopedia Britannica's Guide to Black History.

<http://www2.lhric.org/POCANTICO/tubman/tubman.html>

A website about Harriet Tubman created by a second grade class.

<http://www.madamcjwalker.com/>

Madam C. J. Walker: entrepreneur, philanthropist, social activist.

<http://www.rosaparks.org>

The Rosa & Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development encourages youth to reach their highest potential through the Rosa Parks philosophy of "Quiet Strength."

READ:

Recommended for Elementary Schools:

White Wash by Ntozker Shange • *Freedom on the Menu* by Carole Boston Weatherford
Remember by Toni Morrison • *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges
Follow the Drinking Gourd by Bernadine Connolly

Recommended for Middle Schools:

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt • *Sounder* by William H. Armstrong
The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis • *Day of Tears* by Julius Lester
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor • *The Middle Passage* by Tom Feelings
Middle Passage by Charles Richard Johnson • *To Be a Slave* by Julius Lester

QUESTIONS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

What causes are you willing to fight for? Why? How?

The Power of One focuses on individuals who made a difference. Who is the "one" in your community?

What does freedom mean to you?

What unites us as a nation, a state, a community? What do we allow to separate us?

"If one group is not free, then no one is free." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

WRITING PROJECTS

Write an essay on how the actions of these three women have had an impact on your life.

Write a narrative or dramatic scene telling the story of an important event in the life of a notable African American.

Visit irtlive.com and write a review of the play. What moments made an impression on you? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actor's performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel?

Before you see the play, list three things you know about African American history. After the you see the play, add three more things you learned.

ACTIVITIES

For much of history, women have not had the same educational opportunities as men. Research women's earliest opportunities for education in your community, your state, across the nation, and around the world. What has been the impact of education on women in the last century? Where in the world are women still struggling for access to education? What challenges confront girls today in America's public schools?

Research organizations that exist today to advocate for our rights. How effective are they? Think of age, gender, race, ability, and beyond.

All three of these women lived through war; two took active roles. Research the changing roles of women in American wars, from the Revolution to Iraq, from the home front to the front lines.

Make a soundtrack of music through time. Start with the birth year of the oldest person in your family and continue through today. What does music tell us about the times in which we live?

This being an election year, research African American women in politics—for example, Shirley Chisholm, Carol Moseley-Braun, or Julia Carson. There are many more.

Visit *The Power of Children: Making a Difference*, a new permanent exhibit at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis showing the impact that children have had in shaping history. How do the exhibition's stories of Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White relate to the stories from the IRT's play?

GOING TO THE THEATRE

You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. The theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to make the performance enjoyable for everyone:

- Leave CD players, mp3 players, cameras, cell phones, beepers, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.
- Food and drink must stay in the lobby.
- Dimming house lights signal the audience to get quiet and settled in their seats: the play is about to begin.
- Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.
- Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show or during intermission (a 10-minute break half-way through the play).
- Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.
- Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue, and look at the set, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.
- Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.
- Remain at your seat during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.



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Contributors: Ethan Kingen & Katie Norton

UPCOMING STUDENT MATINEES

Doubt • January 23, 31; February 5, 6

The Piano Lesson • February 27, 28; March 4, 5, 11, 12

Oxford Financial Group presents
Looking Over the President's Shoulder
April 8, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 29, 30; May 1

Iron Kisses • April 22, 23

The Fantasticks • June 4, 10, 18

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