



African Americans in Winslow: Scenes From Our History



A Brief History of the NAACP



Left:
NAACP
Birthday
Ball, New
York City,
1943; Louise
E. Jefferson.
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24947



NAACP 20th Annual Session, June 26, 1929, Cleveland, Ohio. LC-DIG-ppmsca-05523



Right:
Marguerite
Belafonte and
boy holding
NAACP
Freedom Fund
balloons, 1950s.
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Founded in 1909 and currently boasting more than half a million members, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, better known as the NAACP, is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots-based civil rights organization. Their mission is to "ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination."

The NAACP was formed by a group of black and white activists to address the ongoing discrimination and violence against African Americans. These activists proposed to create a "new abolition movement" in order to secure the rights guaranteed in the 13th Amendment (1865), the 14th Amendment (1868), and 15th Amendment (1870), which promised an end to slavery; citizenship and equal protection of the law; and universal adult male suffrage, respectively.

The NAACP established its national office in New York City in 1910, and W. E. B. Du Bois soon established *The Crisis*, the organization's official publication. The NAACP pursued their mission with strategies that included legal action, lobbying, peaceful protest, and publicity. They provided these supports for causes such as anti-lynching legislation in the 1920s; integration of the federal government and armed forces (1948); *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which outlawed segregation in public schools; the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964; the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

NAACP membership continued to grow, particularly in the South. It was former NAACP Branch Secretary Rosa Parks who sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the modern civil rights movement. It was NAACP Youth Council chapters that staged lunch counter sit-ins to protest segregation. The NAACP helped organizing the 1963 March on Washington and the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the NAACP supported school desegregation and affirmative action programs. But the organization faced financial and philosophical challenges in the 1970s and civil rights challenges from the Reagan administration in the 1980s. So in the 1990s, the NAACP sought new ways to define its mission, pursuing economic empowerment, youth programs, and voter registration. Today the NAACP is devising new strategies to expand membership and build coalitions, so it can continue to work towards racial equity in education, employment, housing, health care, the criminal justice system, civic engagement, and voting rights.

A Brief History of Black History Month

National African American History Month celebrates the contributions that African Americans have made to American history. In 1915, historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the organization now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. The ASALH initiated the first Negro History Week in February 1926, which soon became an established part of African American life. In 1976, the ASALH expanded the observance to Black/African American History Month. President Ford officially recognized the observance that same year, and each American president has issued a National African American History Month proclamation ever since. The ASALH continues to promote the study of African American history throughout the year, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture opened in September 2016.



The Smithsonian's National
Museum of African American
History and Culture

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