

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN DELAWARE TIMELINE 1638-1930

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- 1638- First African (Antoni) arrives in Fort Christina (Wilmington, DE) on the Vogel Grip purchased from the Caribbean.
- 1655- Increasing numbers of Africans were being brought directly from Africa into the renamed colony of Delaware.
- 1672 - Royal African Company granted monopoly in English colonies for importing enslaved.
- 1683 - 84- William Penn supervised the laying out of Philadelphia (meaning '*city of brotherly love*'). Philadelphia was made the seat of government and the capital of the colony of Pennsylvania. During the next few years the population of Philadelphia expanded rapidly. Penn also oversaw the creation of his mansion house and slave-run plantation at Pennbury on the Delaware River. He visited New York, Long Island and the Jerseys. He visited Maryland and New Castle to discuss what proved to be a long running border dispute with Lord Baltimore.
- 1688 - Quakers in Pennsylvania issued a formal protest against slavery in America.
- English colonies; large shipments of Africans begin reaching the Chesapeake.
- 1698- The slave trade was opened to all by the English Parliament.
- 1713- There were an increasing number of enslaved persons being imported into Delaware.
- 1725 - The population of black slaves in the American colonies reaches 75,000.
- 1726- Delaware adopts "black codes" similar to Pennsylvania's black codes.
- 1760- John Dickinson inherited land and enslaved Africans in Kent County, DE after his father's death. The Dickinson Plantation is located near Dover Air Force Base in Dover, DE. Dickinson with his approximately 59 enslaved Africans was considered to be a very wealthy landowner.
- 1774 - On October 20, the Congress adopts the Continental Association in which delegates agree to a boycott of English imports, effect an embargo of exports to Britain, and discontinue the slave trade.
- 1775- July 6 The Continental Congress issues a declaration on the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms detailing the colonists' reasons for fighting the British and states the Americans are "resolved to die free men rather than live as slaves."

length of terms for the president and legislators, the power of Congress to regulate commerce, and a proposed 20 year ban on any Congressional action concerning slavery.

- 1789- Delaware ports were prohibited from use by slave ships or for slave trading activity.
- 1790- Population of Delaware 59,096 (3,899 free Africans and 8,887 enslaved Africans).
Woodburn- The Delaware State Governors mansion was built. This historic mansion's former residents included: "gentlemen farmers, prominent landowners, and abolitionists".
- 1792- An attempt to have slavery abolished in the new Delaware State constitution fails.
- 1793- Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin on a Georgia Plantation which separates the seeds from the cotton. Whitney's cotton gin transforms southern economy.
- 1795- Samuel Eli Cornish born in Sussex County, Delaware.
Star Hill located in the town of Camden, DE was originally settled by free African Americans on a tract of land allotted to them in the late 1700s by the Quakers .
- 1803- A bill in the General Assembly to abolish slavery gradually in Delaware fails by one vote.
- 1808- Congress prohibits external slave trade.
- 1817 - American Colonization Society was formed with plans to colonize free Africans in America to Native Africa.
- 1820- Population of Delaware 72, 749 (Free Africans 12, 958 and 4, 509 enslaved Africans).
- 1821- Delaware state legislature passed a law which denied the education of free Blacks.
- 1824- Harry Boyer, who ran away from his owner in Kent County DE, was captured at his uncles home at Barker's Landing in Kent County, De near the mouth of the St. Jones River in while waiting passage to Philadelphia.
- 1826- Free Africans in Delaware were required to carry identity papers at all times signed by an authorized white person.
- 1829- Patty Cannon, a notorious illegal "slave catcher" dies in a Georgetown,

Delaware jail house.

- 1831- October 3rd- There were reports of men riding through Sussex County, DE reporting that Blacks had assembled on the Nanticoke River (3,000 strong) with the intentions of carrying out an insurrection.
- The National Convention of Colored Men held in Philadelphia, PA this year expressed to the Colonization Society that they did not agree with the "Back to Africa Movement" because "many of our fathers and some of us have fought and bled for the liberty, independence and peace (for America)".
- 1832- Delaware passes laws prohibiting the use of firearms by enslaved Africans, the immigration of free Africans and mulattos, the meetings of Blacks after 10 o' clock at night and , forbidding non-resident Blacks from preaching.
- 1839- Depression deepens as the Bank of the United States fails and Theodore Weld publishes "American Slavery As It Is".
- Free Africans in the state of Delaware could be sold if they were convicted of a crime.
- 1844-1845- Methodist Episcopal and Baptist churches split into northern and southern wings over slavery.
- 1845- Douglass publishes "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass".
- Zion A.M.E Church of The Star Hill free African American community in Camden, DE was built in the surrounding Camden area.
- 1847- The Delaware House of Representatives voted to abolish slavery in the state but were vetoed by the Senate.
- Samuel Burris, a free African and abolitionist working with the Underground Railroad in the mid 1800's was captured in his birthplace of Kent County, DE and was found guilty of helping enslaved Africans escape. He was fined, sent to prison and was sentenced to be sold back into slavery after his term. He was sold on the Dover, DE auction block to another white abolitionist who gave him his freedom back so he could continue his work on the Underground Railroad.
- 1849- The General assembly declares that idle and poor free African Americans will be sold into servitude for up to one year.
- 1850- Fugitive Slave Law enacted- ensuring the retrieval of escaped enslaved persons by state officials . Federal marshals were hired to help recapture enslaved persons under 1,000 fine. If runaway escaped while in a marshals custody, the marshal had to pay the value of the enslaved person to the prospective owner. Those caught aiding escaped persons were subject to a fine and up to six months in jail.

- Harriet Tubman continued her freedom crusade through Delaware despite the hardships and danger she faced. She returned 18 more times back and forth through Delaware during the 1850's and lead more than 750 people to freedom on the underground railroad.
 - Large numbers of free Africans began leaving Delaware for the North.
 - Property ownership by free Africans in Delaware increases.
- 1852- Publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, published on March 20, focused national attention on the cruelties of slavery.
- 1853- The Star Hill A.M.E Church of the free African-American community of Star Hill in Camden, DE had it's first documented church service.
- 1854- African American Methodist meeting house built at the corner of North and Queen streets in Dover, De.
- 1857- Supreme Court rules on the Dred Scott case. On March 6, the Supreme Court decided that an African-American could not be a citizen of the U.S., and thus had no rights of citizenship. The decision sharpened the national debate over slavery.
- Harriet Tubman lead her parents to freedom through Delaware.
- 1860- Civil War era. Population of Delaware 112, 216 (Free Africans 19, 829 and 1,798 enslaved Africans).
- 1861- Although a slaveholding state, Delaware rejects invitation to join Confederacy.
- Several "deaths" were reported among the enslaved Africans in Southern Delaware. Suspicious whites dug up the graves only to find "muskets and ammunition".
- 1862- The United States Congress passed the first Morrill which established Land-Grant institutions to each state to educate citizens in the "useful" fields of agriculture, home economics and the mechanic arts. However African Americans had to be educated in "separate but equal" institutions (if states complied).
- 1862- Delaware legislature rejects President Lincoln's offer to buy its enslaved persons.
- 1863- Emancipation Proclamation issued. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect January 1, legally freeing slaves in areas of the South in rebellion.
- Star Hill A.M.E. Church in Camden, DE was built.

- 1864- On June 15, Congress passed a bill authorizing equal pay, equipment, arms, and health care for African-American Union troops.
- 1865- Congress approves the Thirteenth Amendment. Slavery would be outlawed in the United States by the Thirteenth Amendment, which Congress approved and sent on to the states for ratification on January 31. The Freedmen's Bureau. On March 3, Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau to provide health care, education, and technical assistance to emancipated slaves.
Ratification of Thirteenth Amendment. The Thirteenth Amendment, outlawing slavery, was ratified on December 18.
- 1866- Congress enacts the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Supplementary Freedmen's Bureau Act over Johnson's vetoes. Congress passes Fourteenth Amendment.
- Civil Rights Act. Congress overrode President Johnson's veto on April 9 and passed the Civil Rights Act, conferring citizenship upon black Americans and guaranteeing equal rights with whites.
The Fourteenth Amendment. On June 13, Congress approved the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing due process and equal protection under the law to all citizens. The amendment would also grant citizenship to blacks.
 - The Methodist Church's Freedmen's Aid Society, largely supported by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, were the driving force for the establishment of a African-American educational system in Delaware.
- 1867-Reconstruction begins. Reconstruction Acts were passed by Congress on March 2. These acts called for the enfranchisement of former slaves in the South.
- Howard High School, Delaware's first high school for African-Americans, established.
- 1868-Fourteenth Amendment added to the Constitution.
- 1869-Fifteenth Amendment approved. On February 26, Congress sent the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution to the states for approval. The amendment would guarantee black Americans the right to vote.
- 1870-The 15th Amendment receives final ratification granting African-American men the right to vote. By its text, women are not specifically excluded from the vote. During the next two years, approximately 150 women will attempt to vote in almost a dozen different jurisdictions from Delaware to California, including the Grimke sisters in Boston, Sojourner Truth in Battle Creek, MI, and Matilda Joselyn Gage in New York. Even in South Carolina, a few black women, protected by Reconstruction officials, cast ballots.

Wilmington, Delaware's African American community honors Thomas Garrett for his work as a stationmaster on the Underground Railroad.

1871- African Sabbath School Association was founded by the Quaker Friends mission.

1872- Freedmen's Bureau ended.

1873- Voters Assessment Tax enforced requiring that voters pay poll taxes months in advance of an election. A complicated system of voter registration was born. It was designed primarily to make it more difficult for African-Americans voters to participate in elections.

1875- Civil Rights Act of 1875. Congress approved the Civil Rights Act on March 1, guaranteeing equal rights to black Americans in public accommodations and jury duty. The legislation was invalidated by the Supreme Court in 1883.

The Delaware Legislature establish state-funded schools for black citizens. These schools were funded through a "special school tax that only blacks would pay"

1890- A Second Morrill Act was passed supporting Negro Land-Grant Institutions calling for each state to establish a "Negro Institution".

1891- Delaware State College for Colored Students (now Delaware State University) chartered; opened in 1892.

- The Quakers also established an educational institution for African American children by the late 1800s.

1901-Delaware ratifies the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution and becomes the last state to end slavery.

1897- Harriet Tubman discussed her underground railroad route in Delaware and she told of the names of people she stayed with including: William Brinkley, Nat Brinkley and Abraham Gibbs (all from Camden, DE)..

1909-The NAACP is formed. On February 12 -- the centennial of the birth of Lincoln -- a national appeal led to the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, an organization formed to promote use of the courts to restore the legal rights of black Americans.

1913-Jubilee year. The fiftieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation was celebrated throughout the year.

1915 -The founding of the NAACP chapter in Delaware in 1915 marked the beginning of organized political pressure from the black community to press for equality and greater opportunity for blacks in the state.

1930-One out of every four persons in Dover, De were African American. The population consisted of school teachers, a medical doctor, a dentist and an undertaker. Many of the population were the descendants of early enslaved and free African Delawareans.

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- 1775 - Methodists and Baptists start to make major strides in converting slaves to Christianity. There is a major increase in manumissions at this time.
- 1790s
- 1776- The Philadelphia Yearly meeting directs Delaware Quakers to free their enslaved Africans.
- 1777- John Dickinson "no longer desired to maintain the continuance of slavery and executed a manumission document which freed his enslaved Africans. This agreement was a conditional one requiring them to serve him for a period of 21 years in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, and "reward for service" or eventual emancipation. His decision was reportedly "influenced by Delaware legislation, its state constitution and Quaker requirements".
- 1778- Francis Asbury, known as America's most important Methodist Preacher of Kent County Delaware decided that " his sect must follow the lead of the Society of Friends and support abolitionism".
- 1785- It was said that in "to clear his conscience", John Dickinson unconditionally freed all of his enslaved Africans. The adults among Dickinson's freed enslaved persons were thought to be among the 293 freed Blacks recorded in the Kent county records in 1797.
- 1787- A Delaware State law was introduced by Richard Bassett "prohibiting the sale of enslaved African Americans to the Carolinas, Georgia and the West Indies.
- Free Africans in Delaware were permitted to own land.
- 1788- Quakers in Delaware organized the Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Delaware Society for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery.
- 1788- Abolitionist societies established in Dover and Wilmington, Delaware.
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- 1784- Quaker Friends in the State of Delaware had granted either immediate or gradual slavery manumission to almost all of their enslaved Africans. Note: Gradual manumission at the age of 18 for females and 21 for males.
- 1787- July 16 - At the constitutional convention, Roger Sherman proposes a compromise which allows for representation in the House of Representatives based on each state's population and equal representation for all of the states in the Senate. The numerous black slaves in the South are to counted at only three fifths of their total number. A rough draft of the constitution is then drawn up.
- Aug.6-10- Items in the draft constitution are debated including the