

Quotes From Black Historical Figures

"....A band of successful robbers who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery."
--Frederick Douglass

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

—March on Washington, August 28, 1963
--Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

"The time has come when our people must assume the rank of a first-rate power in the battle against caste and Slavery; it is emphatically our battle; no one else can fight it for us, and with God's help we must fight it ourselves."

--Dr. James M. Smith

"We are going to start a movement. And we're not going to Washington just for one day No, we are going in a wait-in and stay-in movement Come young and old, come sick and well, come to Washington And we're going to build a shanty town in Washington And we're going to let the whole world know what it means to be poverty-stricken. We're going to let the whole world know how America is treating its poor citizens."

—Albany, Georgia, February 21, 1968
--Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

"I have held all my life, and shall hold to the day of my death, that the fundamental and everlasting objection to slavery, is not that it sinks a Negro to the condition of a brute, but that it sinks a man to that condition. Let us not forget that justice to the Negro is safety to the nation."

--Frederick Douglass

"The time must come when the Declaration of Independence will be felt in the heart, as well as uttered from the mouth, and when the rights of all shall be properly acknowledged and appreciated. God hastens that time. This is our home, and this is our country. Beneath its soil lie the bones of our fathers; for it, some of them fought, bled, and died. Here we were born and here we will die."

--1931 Declaration by Convention of Negroes

"....Mass social pressure in the form of marches and picketing will not only touch and arrest the attention of the powerful public officials but also the 'little man' in the street. And, before this problem of Jim Crow can be successfully attacked, all of America must be shocked and awakened."

--Asa Phillip Randolph

"I would rather be in jail ten years than desert my people now. I have begun the struggle, and I can't turn back. I have reached the point of no return."

—Montgomery, February 1956
--Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

"I can't turn around without hearing about some 'civil rights advance!' White people seem to think the black man ought to be shouting 'hallelujah!' Four hundred years the white man has had his foot-long knife in the black man's back--and now the white man starts to wiggle the knife out, maybe six inches! The black man's supposed to be grateful? Why, if the white man jerked the knife out, it's still going to leave a scar!"

--Malcolm X

"I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountain top . . . And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land . . . Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

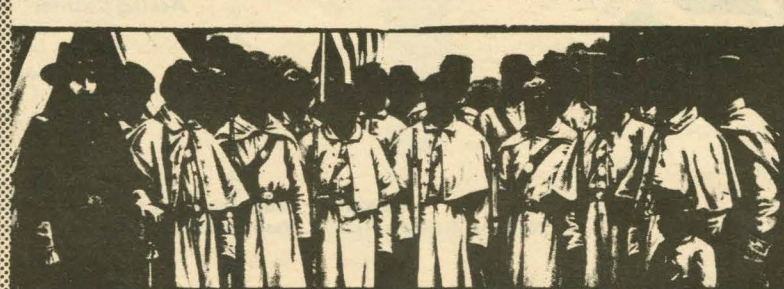
—Memphis, April 3, 1968
--Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

"The Black race, like the white, is proud of its own society and will yield nothing in the desire to keep it pure and ward off a monstrous subjugation of its original and natural type, by which creation is to be judged as a race responsible for its own, and held accountable in the final analysis for the presentation, before the judgment seat of God. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin; and we shall not."

--Marcus Garvey

"Manly self-respect is worth more than land and houses, and a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing."

--William Edward Burghardt DuBois



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