

Written by Kathy

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**CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM-CLEVELAND, Ohio**-It's Black history month, so let's talk a little bit about Black history. Do we really know the true history of the plight of African-Americans and their African ancestors?

We know without reservation that former president Barack Obama is the first Black president of the United States of America and Michelle Obama is the first Black first lady. And we know that Vice president Kamala Harris is the first Black vice president in the U.S., Loyd Austin is the nation's first Black secretary of defense and Ketanji Brown Jackson is the first Black female U.S. Supreme Court justice.

Closer to home, we recognize and remember some of the true greats that have touched the lives of Clevelanders. They include the late Carl B. Stokes, the first Black mayor of a major American city, whom Cleveland voters elected in 1967. Stokes later held the post under former president Bill Clinton of U.S. Ambassador to Seychelles and was a Cleveland Municipal Court judge. His older brother, the late Louis Stokes, was the first Black congressman from Ohio and led the 11th congressional district until his retirement in 1998.

The late Stephanie Tubbs Jones, of Cleveland, was the first Black Cuyahoga County prosecutor. She followed Stokes to congress and was the first Black woman in congress from Ohio.

But how much do we really know about Black history, particularly since eurocentric-curricula

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dominate teaching in elementary and secondary schools across the country, and in our institutions of higher learning?

History reveals that Black people were enslaved initially by Black people in Africa and then sold to be brought to America for further slavery to work our fields and to perform other subservient measures. But remember that it was White men that brought our ancestors to America in chains.

The aftermath of those chains still plagues the Black community in various ways, including through high unemployment, disproportionate incarcerations of Black men and women, and underfunded public school districts that serve majority Black and poor children, among other systemic problems.

Blacks have long contributed to the greatness of America.

The very first Black killed in a major American war was a Black man named Crispus Attucks, who died in the Revolutionary War. Hundreds of Black soldiers were among the casualties at Bunker Hill.

Blacks were at one time, if not even now in some situations, counted as 3/5 of a person. And while the slavery of Blacks is not mentioned in the constitution, it is implicated under the fourth Amendment, which demands equal protection under the law for members of a protected class like Black people, and women.

President Abraham Lincoln's executive order of the Emancipation Proclamation did not start the American Civil War, but it help to end it. President Lincoln was a Republican, as was Civil Rights activist and historian Frederick Douglas.

Jim Crow laws kept Blacks traditionally enslaved and the Ku Klux Klan was started in part because racist Whites wanted to keep former slaves in line and were angry that slavery had ended in the official sense.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's served to stop the Jim Crow laws. King gave his life to better America, and the official holiday named in his honor is well deserved.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed by Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson, with some saying he did so solely under threat of an override veto. Still, Johnson pushed the federal act through Congress, along with Dr. King, and a host of others.

What will children in our schools be taught this month about Black history? Will it be that Michael Jackson was a great man? How do we define greatness? Do we forgive major flaws? Yes we can. Pop singer Michael Jackson knew his craft, and was truly a great musician and songwriter of all time.

Legendary singer Nat King Cole, boxing legend Muhammad Ali, poet Maya Angelou, Malcolm X , pop icon Michael Jackson, the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are also among Black notables,

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as are the following:

- Native Clevelander Garrett A. Morgan invented the traffic light and gas mask
- George Crum was inventor of the potato chip
- Frederick McKinley Jones invented the refrigeration unit for trucks
- Dr. Patricia Bath invented laser eye surgery for cataract removal
- Thomas L. Jennings invented dry-cleaning products
- Hiram Revels (R-MS) was the first Black in Congress as a U.S. senator

[Clevelandurbannews.com](http://Clevelandurbannews.com) and [Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com](http://Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com) , Ohio's most read Black digital newspaper and Black blog with some 5 million views on Google Plus alone. Tel: (216) 659-0473 and Email: editor@clevelandurbannews.com. Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief, and who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview, [CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM, OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS](#)