

Celebrating Black History Month: A Resource Guide

February 2021

commonfund

Table of Contents

IF YOU WANT TO:

Listen and learn	1
Understand and connect	2
Watch and enjoy	2
Read and explore	5
Investigate and absorb	5
Connect and contextualize	6

Author

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office
Black History Month Subcommittee

diversity@commonfund.org

About Commonfund

Commonfund was founded in 1971 as an independent asset management firm with a grant from the Ford Foundation. Together with or through its affiliates, Commonfund today manages customized investment programs for endowments, foundations and public pension funds. Among the pioneers in applying the endowment model of investing to institutional portfolios, we provide extensive investment flexibility using independent investment sub-advisers for discretionary and non-discretionary outsourcing engagements. Investment programs incorporate active and passive strategies in equities and fixed income, hedge funds, real assets and private capital. All securities are distributed through Commonfund Securities, Inc., a member of FINRA. For additional information about Commonfund, please visit www.commonfund.org.

Celebrating Black History Month: A Resource Guide

About Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian [Carter G. Woodson](#) and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

To continue learning more, click [here](#).

About This Resource Guide

Commonfund, in conjunction with our Black History Month subcommittee has created a resource guide to help all of us celebrate the contributions of African Americans in all aspects of American Life. African Americans, and those a part of the African Diaspora, have and continue to be such an integral part of America (and Global) community, from music, art, politics, science, academia, finance, law, sports and entertainment, the list goes on and on. With that said, this resource guide is not an exhaustive list by any stretch of the imagination, the hope is that you will take advantage of at least a few of these resources to begin your exploration of this very important part of American history; your history, our history.

If you want to listen and learn:

Podcasts

- [Humanity Archive](#)

Founded by Jermaine Fowler, Humanity Archive is an educational website and storytelling podcast that shares untold or underexposed stories from history. Many of the figures showcased represent hidden histories of African Americans in the U.S.

- [Historically Black](#)

Historically Black uses personal objects to map Black history. Each episode explores the story behind a listener-submitted artifact, and in the process creates a sort of “people’s museum” that honors the lived experiences of various Black Americans.

- [School Colors](#)

School Colors is a documentary podcast that follows generations of parents and educators fighting for educational equity in Central Brooklyn. As the hosts tackle topics like gentrification and charter schools, School Colors reveals how race, class, and power heavily impact the quality of education Black students are able to receive.

- [Blackbelt Voices](#)

Hosted by Adena J. White, Kara Wilkins, and Katrina Dupins, Blackbelt Voices explores the vastness of Black Southern culture through first-person narratives and interviews with prominent scholars.

- [Black History Buff](#)

Black History Buff shines a light on the inspiring stories of Black historical figures from all over the world. With each episode clocking in at around 10-20 minutes, Black History Buff is an elegant and efficient way for listeners to expand their knowledge of Black culture across the globe.

- [Witness Black History](#)

Launched by BBC as an extension of its Witness History podcast series, Witness Black History features interviews with people who were actually present for, or have close ties to key moments in Black and civil rights history.

- [Black History Year](#)

Produced by PushBlack, a nonprofit Black media company, Black History Year introduces its listeners to thinkers and activists who have been erased or otherwise marginalized from mainstream conversations about history.

- [Noire Histoïr](#)

Created by Natasha McEachron, Noire Histoïr is a multimedia exploration of history and inspirational stories from across the Black diaspora.

If you want to understand and connect:

History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

- [Thurgood Marshall College Fund: The History of HBCUS](#)
- [HBCU First: A History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education: Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Higher Education Desegregation](#)
- [The Best Schools Magazine: History of Historically Black Colleges](#)
- [Aspen Institute: A Guide to America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)

If you want to watch and enjoy:

Documentaries allow us to re-live historic moments and provide insight into our culture and society. Movies, unlike documentaries, allow for more creative interpretation and allow filmmakers to bring different elements to life through storytelling.

Documentaries

- *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*

This Emmy Award-winning series premiered in 2013 and looks at more than just Black history, it explores Black identity and what it means to be an African American in the U.S. today. this series spans five hundred years and two continents as Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. takes viewers on a journey of the Black experience throughout the United States.

- *Freedom Riders*

Based on Raymond Arsenault's book *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, this two-hour documentary tells the story of the summer of 1961 when more than 400 Black and white Americans risked their lives traveling together in the segregated South to protest segregation.

- *Slavery by Another Name*

Did Slavery really end with the Civil War? The documentary *Slavery by Another Name* explores how in the years following the Emancipation Proclamation, systematic approaches were taken to re-enslave newly freed Blacks in the United States.

- *Eyes on the Prize*

This award-winning series covers all of the major events of the Civil Rights Movement from 1954-1985, including the Montgomery bus boycott in 1954, the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the birth of the Black Power Movement, and the courageous acts of the crusaders that contributed along the way.

- *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*

The Black Power Mixtape tells the story of the Black Power Movement through the eyes of Swedish journalists. Drawn to America in the late 1960s by stories of revolution and urban unrest, the journalists recorded interviews with activists like Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis and Eldridge Cleaver.

- *Soundtrack for a Revolution*

Taking a fresh approach to the story of the American Civil Rights Movement, *Soundtrack for a Revolution* features the powerful music from the movement. Focusing on the freedom songs sung by protesters on picket lines, in mass meetings, in paddy wagons and in jail cells, this film celebrates the vitality of the music and the

infectious energy that it provided. Freedom songs evolved from slave chants, the labor movement, and from the Black church, and were a vital tool as protestors stood up against adversity.

- *Dark Girls*

Dark Girls is an emotional exposé on what it means to be dark skinned in America. Filmmakers D. Channsin Berry and Bill Duke capture moving interviews with women who open up about their experiences being dark, Black women in America.

- *The Black List: Volume One*

The Black List: Volume One features interviews from a variety of voices in contemporary Black America using a technique where the interviewer is never seen or heard on camera. The result is a living portrait of stories from leading voices across a variety of disciplines including arts, sports, politics, business and government.

- *Breaking the Huddle: The Integration of College Football*

The HBO documentary *Breaking the Huddle* explores civil rights through the lens of football. Looking at the impact of the Civil Rights Movement and football programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the story culminates with the historic September 1970 game when the all-white University of Alabama Crimson Tide faced off against the fully integrated University of Southern California Trojans. Alabama's crushing defeat under legendary head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant by USC's star African American running back, Sam "Bam" Cunningham, is considered the game that changed college football in the South.

- *More than a Month*

In this 2012 documentary, African American filmmaker Shukree Hassan Tilghman sets off on a journey across America asking the question “Should Black History Month be ended?” Tilghman searches to learn more about race and power in contemporary America by interviewing experts at revered organizations around the country in addition to everyday people he meets along the way during his journey.

Movies

- *Hidden Figures* (2016)

The story of African American women who served as human computers and made other vital contributions to NASA during the '50s and '60s that helped launched the unmanned space flight program. Available on Amazon and other streaming platforms.

- *Malcolm X* (1992)

Directed by Spike Lee and starring Denzel Washington, this movie is a 1992 American biographical film about the African American activist Malcom X.

- *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967)

Starring Sidney Poitier, Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn, this movie centers around the character Joanna Drayton, a 23-year-old white woman, who brings home her fiancé, who happens to be black, to meet her upper-class family. Despite being liberal, Drayton’s parents have a hard time adjusting to the relationship.

- *42* (2013)

Starring Chadwick Boseman, *42* is the inspiring biopic about the two years in which Jackie Robinson broke the sport’s color barrier in Major League Baseball.

- *Marshall* (2017)

Marshall is a 2017 American biographical legal drama film directed by Reginald Hudlin and written by Michael and Jacob Koskoff. It stars Chadwick Boseman as Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice, and focuses on one of the first cases of his career, the State of Connecticut v. Joseph Spell.

- *Selma* (2014)

A critically acclaimed historical drama, *Selma* chronicles the Selma to Montgomery marches led by Civil Rights activists such as Martin Luther King, Jr. The marches, held over a period of 18 days, aimed to secure equal voting rights and were met with violent resistance from local law enforcement and posse men.

- *Remember the Titans* (2000)

Starring Denzel Washington, this film is based on the true story of a new African-American high school football coach in a newly integrated school in Alexandria, Va. in 1971. The Titans are struggling to get along and play as a team, divided by racial tensions, when a major player is critically injured in a car accident.

- *Loving* (2016)

This is the story of Richard and Mildred Loving whose interracial marriage would end with an historic 1967 Supreme Court decision. Because of their interracial marriage, the couple are arrested, roughed up, insulted, and booted from their home.

- *One Night in Miami* (2020)

On one incredible night in 1964, four icons of sports, music, and activism gathered to celebrate one of the biggest upsets in boxing history. When underdog Cassius Clay, soon to be called Muhammad Ali, (Eli Goree), defeats heavy weight champion Sonny Liston at the

Miami Convention Hall, Clay memorialized the event with three of his friends: Malcolm X (Kingsley Ben-Adir), Sam Cooke (Leslie Odom Jr.) and Jim Brown (Aldis Hodge).

- *Between the World and Me* (2020)

The HBO adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates' award-winning 2015 book aims to honor its source material while expanding its tone with an all-star cast. The movie, like the book, is structured as an open letter to Coates' adolescent son Samori about what to expect as a Black person living in the U.S., and the words still ring true in 2020 in the face of institutional racism and police brutality.

- *The Hate U Give* (2018)

Based on the best-selling novel, *The Hate U Give* tells the story of Starr Carter, who lives in two worlds: the poor, black neighborhood where she resides and the mostly white prep school she attends. This uneasy balance is shattered when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood friend by a policeman. Facing pressures from all sides, Starr must find her voice and stand up for what's right.

- In addition to the movies and documentaries listed here, please view any of the "Representation Matters" and "Black Lives Matter" Collection on Netflix and other streaming platforms for various works from African American producers, directors, actors, and animated artists.

If you want to read and explore:

We have compiled a list of articles, websites, and resources about Black History Month:

Articles:

- [Carter G. Woodson: Meet the Man who created Black History Month, CNN](#)

- [Black History Month: What is it and why does it matter?, BBC](#)
- [America is Losing the Real Meaning of Black History Month, Time](#)

Educational Websites:

- [National Geographic Resource Library: Black History Month](#)
- [BlackPast: Resource Guides and other websites](#)

Cultural & Historic Virtual Resources:

- [Schomburg Center For Research in Black Culture](#)
- [National Museum of African American Music](#)
- [National Museum of African American History & Culture \(Smithsonian\)](#)
- [Studio Museum Harlem](#)
- [African American History Month: National Resources \(Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Gallery of Art, etc.\)](#)

If you want to investigate and absorb:

Books and other materials to read

- [The Souls of Black Folk](#), by W.E.B. Du Bois (1903)
- [White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812](#), by Winthrop Jordan (1968)
- [The Myth of the Negro Past](#), by Melville Herskovits (1941)
- [When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America](#), by Paula Giddings (1948)

- [Before the Mayflower](#), by Lerone Bennett (1962)
- [Blues People](#), by Amiri Baraka (1963)
- [Harlem Renaissance](#), by Nathan Huggins (1971)
- [Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63](#), by Taylor Branch (1988)
- [Paul Robeson: A Biography](#), by Martin Duberman (1988)
- [Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family From Slavery to the Present](#), by Jacqueline Jones (1985)
- [Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems About Slavery, 1660-1810](#), edited by James G. Basker
- [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#), by Michelle Alexander (2010)
- [The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States](#), by Walter Johnson (2020)
- [The Half Has Never Been Told: Slaver and the Making of American Capitalism](#), by Edward E. Baptist (2014)
- [The Slave Ship: A Human History](#), by Marcus Rediker (2007)
- [The Autobiography of Malcolm X](#), by Alex Haley and Malcolm X (1965)
- [First Martyr of Liberty: Crispus Attucks in American Memory](#), by Mitch Kachun (2017)
- [Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present](#), by Harriet A. Washington (2008)
- [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#), by Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)

If you want to talk to connect and contextualize:

National Legacy and other Black-led Nonprofit Organizations

- [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\)](#)

Founded in 1909 in response to the ongoing violence against Black people around the country, the NAACP is the largest and most pre-eminent civil rights organization in the nation.

- [National Urban League \(NUL\)](#)

The National Urban League (NUL) is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment, equality, and social justice. Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, the Urban League collaborates at the national and local levels with community leaders, policymakers, and corporate partners to elevate the standards of living for African Americans and other historically underserved groups.

- [NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund \(NAACP LDF\)](#)

The NAACP LDF is America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans. LDF also defends the gains and protections won over the past 80 years of civil rights struggle and works to improve the quality and diversity of judicial and executive appointments.

- [Equal Justice Initiative \(EJI\)](#)

Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer and bestselling author of *Just Mercy*, EJI is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons. Many of those wrongfully convicted are disproportionately African American.

- [United Negro College Fund \(UNCF\)](#)

UNCF is an American philanthropic organization that funds scholarships for black students and general scholarship funds for 37 private historically black colleges and universities. UNCF was incorporated on April 25, 1944 by Frederick D. Patterson (then president of what is now Tuskegee University), Mary McLeod Bethune, and others.

- [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#)

Established in 1987, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) is the nation's largest organization exclusively representing the Black College Community. TMCf member-schools include the publicly supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs). Publicly supported HBCUs enroll over 80% of all students attending HBCUs. Through scholarships, capacity building and research initiatives, innovative programs, and strategic partnerships, TMCf is a vital resource in the K-12 and higher education space. The organization is also a source for top employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs.

For additional resources, please visit the [Commonfund](#) website to download our [Diversity and Inclusion: Ways to Make a Change](#) resource guide.