



African American Physicians and Organized Medicine, 1846-1968

Historical Periods

Antebellum (before 1861)
 Civil War (1861-1865)
 Reconstruction (1865-1877)
 Gilded Age (1877-1890)
 Progressive Era (1890-1914)
 World War I (1914-1918)
 Progressive Era cont. (1918-1929)
 Great Depression (1929-1939)
 World War II (1939-1945)
 Cold War (1945-1955)
 Civil Rights Movement (1955-1968)

Medico-Historical Events

1846-1847	A “National Medical Association” is proposed at a national meeting on medical education chaired by Nathan Smith Davis in New York City. The organization, renamed the “American Medical Association,” is officially founded in 1847 at a national convention in Philadelphia, where its constitution, by-laws and code of ethics are approved.
1847	Rush Medical School of Chicago, IL awards an MD to David Jones Peck; first African American to receive a medical degree from a US medical school.
1848	First annual meeting of the American Medical Association.
1849	John Van Surly DeGrasse graduates medical school at Bowdoin College (Maine); first African American medical officer in the US Army during the Civil War.
1850	Daniel Laing, Jr., Martin Delany, Isaac H. Snowden are the first known African Americans admitted to Harvard Medical School. However, prominent American anatomist Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. expels this trio in March 1851, bowing to pressure by some of its white students. Two groups of white medical students sign petitions protesting the exclusion; Horatio R. Storer is one of the petitioners.
1854	Massachusetts Medical Society admits John Van Surly DeGrasse as a member on August 24; first African American to be admitted into a US medical society.
1862	Freedmen’s Hospital (Washington, DC), one of several federally-funded Freedmen’s Hospitals established by the Freedmen’s Bureau in the South, is erected to provide medical care to slaves, especially those freed after the Civil War, and displaced whites; it was the only federally-funded health care facility for African Americans in the US. It exists today as Howard University Hospital, one of only 3 remaining historically black hospitals.
1864	Rebecca Lee, the first African American woman to graduate from an America medical school,

	graduates from the New England Female Medical College in Boston.
1865	Alexander T. Augusta is placed in charge of a Freedmen's Hospital in Savannah, GA; first African American to direct a US hospital.
1865	John Sweat Rock, a physician, dentist, and lawyer, is the first African American admitted to practice law before the bar of the US Supreme Court; also second black member of the Massachusetts Medical Society (mid-1850s).
1868	Howard University Medical School is founded; first medical school open to all races and genders.
1869-1870	Three black physicians—Alexander Thomas Augusta, Charles Burleigh Purvis, and Alpheus W. Tucker—are denied admission to the Medical Society of the District of Columbia.
1870	Black and white physicians form the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia.
1869-1870	US Senate finds Medical Society of the District of Columbia guilty of race discrimination. Sen. Charles Sumner leads failed attempt to abrogate the congressional charter of the MSDC and confer a new charter upon the National Medical Society.
1870	National Medical Society members excluded from the annual AMA meeting. Officially, “the consideration of race and color had nothing whatsoever to do with the decision”; however, observers believed race played a major role. AMA Committee on Ethics finds the charge regarding the Medical Society of the District of Columbia's granting licenses to irregulars is “not of a nature to require the action of the [AMA],” and recommends inclusion of the MSDC's all-white delegation. The Committee urges recognition of the all-white MMS delegation, although the charge that they accept irregulars as members is “fully proved” and “plainly in violation of the Code of Ethics.” Horatio R. Storer and a colleague raise the issue of racial exclusion.
1870	Lincoln University Medical Department is established in Oxford, PA.
1872	Henry Fitzbutler is the first African American graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School.
1872	AMA reaffirms refusal to admit Freedmen's Hospital, Howard University, and National Medical Society members.
1873	Davis proposes that delegations be restricted to state and local medical societies and that state societies, not the national convention, should determine which local societies are officially recognized by the AMA.
1873	Susan Smith McKinney graduates from New York Medical College and Hospital for Women in 1870; first black woman to be certified as a physician.
1873	Straight University Medical Department is established in New Orleans, LA.
1874	Davis' 1873 proposal is adopted.
1874	Lincoln University Medical Department closes.
1874	Straight University Medical Department closes.
1876	The AMA's Illinois delegation includes Sarah Hackett Stevenson, the AMA's first woman member, and the AMA President implies in a speech that no African Americans have yet been accepted as members of the AMA.
1876	Meharry Medical College is founded.
1881	Charles B. Purvis is asked to assist with the care of President James A. Garfield, who had been shot by an assassin earlier.

1881	Charles B. Purvis is appointed surgeon-in-chief of Freedmen’s Hospital; first African American civilian in the US to head a civilian hospital.
1882	Leonard Medical School of Shaw University is established in Raleigh, NC.
1883	<i>The Journal of the American Medical Association</i> publishes its first issue. AMA Past President Nathan Smith Davis is founding editor.
1884	The Medico-Chirurgical Society of the District of Columbia is founded by a biracial group of physicians.
1886	The Lone Star State Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association of Texas is founded.
1887	The Old North State Medical Society of North Carolina is founded.
1888	All members of AMA constituent state societies are deemed “de facto permanent [AMA] members.” The AMA may have gained its first African American members beginning this year.
1888	Henry Fitzbutler establishes, and is the first dean of, the Louisville National Medical College in Louisville, KY.
1889	Flint Medical College of New Orleans University is established in New Orleans, LA.
1889	Hannibal Medical College is established in Memphis, TN.
1891	Provident Hospital and Training School for Nurses (Chicago, IL) is founded by Daniel Hale Williams.
1892	Miles Vandahurst Lynk, a future NMA founder, publishes the first issue of <i>The Medical and Surgical Observer</i> , the first African American medical journal.
1893	Daniel Hale Williams performs first successful open heart surgery.
1895	The North Jersey National Medical Association of New Jersey is founded.
1895	The National Medical Association is established in Atlanta, GA.
1895	Knoxville College Medical Department in established in Knoxville, TN.
1896	Hannibal Medical College closes.
1896	Austin Maurice Curtis, a protégé of Daniel Hale Williams, is appointed to the surgical staff of Cook County Hospital, the first such appointment to a non-segregated hospital.
1899	Chattanooga National Medical College is established in Chattanooga, TN.
1899	State University Medical Department is established in Louisville, KY.
1900	Second black medical journal, the <i>Hospital Herald</i> , first published in Charleston, SC.
1900	Knoxville Medical College is established in Knoxville, TN.
1900	University of West Tennessee College of Medicine and Surgery is established in Jackson, TN.
1900	Knoxville College Medical Department closes.
1900	Medico-Chirurgical and Theological College of Christ’s Institution is established in Baltimore, MD.
1903	State University Medical Department merges with Louisville National Medical College.
1904	Chattanooga National Medical College closes.
1904-1905	Neurologist and psychiatrist Solomon Carter Fuller helps to characterize Alzheimer’s disease when he studies at the University of Munich under Alöis Alzheimer.
1906	AMA publishes first volume of the <i>American Medical Directory</i> , which lists all physicians in the US. African American physicians have the abbreviation ‘col.’ after their names to indicate that they are “colored.”
1907	University of West Tennessee College of Medicine and Surgery moves to Memphis, TN.

1908?	Medico-Chirurgical and Theological College of Christ's Institution closes.
1908-1909	AMA asks the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to sponsor an on-site assessment of all US and Canadian medical schools. AMA Council on Medical Education secretary Nathan P. Colwell and Abraham Flexner survey US and Canadian medical schools together.
1909	<i>The Journal of the National Medical Association</i> publishes its first issue. NMA Past President Charles V. Roman is the first editor.
1910	Carnegie Foundation publishes <i>Medical Education in the United States and Canada</i> (the "Flexner Report").
1910	Knoxville Medical College closes.
1911	Flint Medical College of New Orleans University closes.
1912	Louisville National Medical College closes.
1913	Daniel Hale Williams becomes a charter member of the American College of Surgeons; the first African American to do so.
1918	Leonard Medical School of Shaw University closes.
1923	University of West Tennessee College of Medicine and Surgery closes.
1923	Howard University Medical School and Meharry Medical College are the only historically black medical schools in the US.
1923	National Hospital Association is founded to ensure standards in black hospitals.
1928	Scholastic Aptitude Test for Medical Students (later named the Medical College Admission Test) is developed.
1932	US Public Health Service Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male (Tuskegee Syphilis Study) begins in Alabama. Study continues for 40 years.
1934	AMA calls an emergency meeting of the House of Delegates. AMA adopts a position against compulsory health insurance.
1934	Louis T. Wright becomes second African American physician admitted into American College of Surgeons; Wright is the only black member of the ACS at this time.
1936	<i>JAMA</i> publishes the first academic journal article on the US Public Health Service Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male.
1938	Official NMA representatives—Clarence H. Payne, Roscoe C. Giles, Carl Roberts—are recognized by the AMA House of Delegates and Board of Trustees for the first time to discuss issues of race discrimination in medicine.
1939	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes that the AMA declare "that membership in the various component county societies of the [AMA] should not be denied to any person solely on the basis of race, color or creed." The AMA House of Delegates rejects the proposal because progress is reportedly being made and that membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1939	The AMA House of Delegates adopts a policy discouraging racial discrimination in constituent society membership, but notes that it cannot control the membership policies of its constituent societies.
1939	AMA discontinues its policy of listing African American physicians as "colored" in its <i>American Medical Directory</i> .
1939	NMA endorses the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill, which is meant to establish a national health

	insurance program under the Social Security Act.
1940-1943	NMA meets with US Army and Navy to petition for the introduction of African American physicians into the US armed forces. 300 African American physicians are initially called to serve in 1941.
1941	Charles R. Drew is named director of the first American Red Cross Blood Bank and assistant director of blood procurement for the National Research Council.
1942	Maj. Gen. James C. Magee, Surgeon General of the US Army, racially segregates blood donated to the American Red Cross. These actions are denounced by several groups including the NMA, AMA and NAACP.
1942	New York County Medical Society denounces <i>JAMA</i> for printing “ads specifying religious or racial qualifications for medical posts” in its “Physicians Wanted” columns; similar ads are hereafter barred from being printed in the Society’s weekly journal.
1944	NMA argues that insofar as medical societies, “particularly in the South,” continue to “exercise a bar to the membership of Negro physicians,” the AMA should allow “members in good standing of the [NMA] to become members of the constituent societies of the [AMA].” The AMA House of Delegates rejects the proposal because membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1945	AMA testifies before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor in support of the Hill-Burton hospital construction bill.
1945	White physicians in Cincinnati, OH protest the Southern Medical Association’s racial bars. In a letter, the physicians note that: “We would like to point out that in this community Negro physicians enjoy full parity with white physicians. Since your meeting is called a victory meeting, we feel that all groups of the American people who have made victory [in WWII] possible should be allowed to participate. To show racial discrimination is in our opinion contrary to the principles of democracy for which this war was fought and won.”
1945	NMA, NAACP, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, National Negro Publishers’ Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority’s National Non-Partisan Council, and Maj. Gen. Paul R. Hawley, Surgeon General of the Veterans Administration, protest the erection of segregated VA facilities.
1945	George D. Thorne, a prominent black surgeon in New York, is rejected by the American College of Surgeons because “fellowship in the college is not to be conferred on members of the Negro race at the present time.”
1945	Louis T. Wright and other black and white physicians protest the racially exclusive policies of the American College of Surgeons and other specialty boards, forcing some of them to desegregate.
1945	26 of the 78 accredited medical schools are closed to African American students entirely. All 26 are in Southern or border states.
1947	27 of the 127 Veterans Administration hospitals maintain segregated wards; 19 of these 27 refuse to admit African American patients except for emergency treatment.
1948	Baltimore County Medical Society votes unanimously to admit African Americans into membership.
1948	University of Arkansas desegregates after a series of lawsuits filed by the NAACP.
1948	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes that: “No component society of the [AMA]

	shall exclude any qualified physician from its membership by reason of race, creed or color.” The AMA House of Delegates rejects the proposal because membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1949	A black physician is admitted into the county and state medical associations in Oklahoma.
1949	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes that the AMA “appoint a committee to study the matter of membership in the [AMA], where such membership is banned for other than professional or ethical reasons.” The AMA House of Delegates replies that the “manner of admission to membership is entirely a county society function, and unless the [AMA] Constitution and By-Laws were amended, the appointment of such a committee would serve no useful purpose.”
1949	Medical Society of the State of New York elects Peter Marshall Murray to the AMA House of Delegates; first African American to be elected to the House.
1949	Missouri State Medical Association deletes the word “white” from its membership policies. The St. Louis Medical Society admits its first black member.
1949	The NMA petitions the Association of American Medical Colleges to publicly oppose race discrimination in medical schools and unequal opportunities in premedical education; AAMC responds that it lacks the jurisdiction to do so.
1950	After discussions with the New York State Commission Against Discrimination, the AMA eliminates designations of race, creed, and color from its “Situations Wanted” ads published in <i>JAMA</i> .
1950	Delaware Medical Society votes to desegregate.
1950	Florida State Medical Association votes to desegregate.
1950	The House of Delegates passes a resolution proposed by the AMA’s Virginia delegation urging component societies to study race discrimination in membership in “light of prevailing conditions ... taking such steps as they may elect to eliminate such restrictive provisions.” The AMA emphasizes that membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1950	Peter Marshall Murray of New York becomes the first African-American to serve in the AMA House of Delegates; Murray serves for 12 years.
1951	National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses merges with the American Nurses Association.
1951	Medical Society of Arlington County, VA, votes to desegregate.
1951	Medical Society of the District of Columbia desegregates.
1951	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes that the AMA “organize and make available to interested constituent state associations and component county societies, for their guidance and assistance, all pertinent information and experiences bearing on possible restriction to membership based on race or religion.” The AMA House of Delegates rejects the idea because “progress” is reportedly being made and membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1952	Bibb County Medical Society of Georgia grants full membership to black physicians.
1952	Old North State Medical Society appeals for admission to the AMA as a constituent association. Although endorsed by the AMA’s North Carolina delegation, the AMA House of Delegates votes to deny the request.
1953	Pulaski County Medical Society of Arkansas votes to desegregate.

1953	Alabama Medical Association unanimously votes to bar race discrimination in its affiliate county bodies.
1954	Medical Society of the State of North Carolina votes to remove racially restrictive membership policies.
1954	Virginia Medical Society votes to remove racially restrictive membership policies.
1955	Veterans Administration orders all of its facilities to desegregate.
1956	The Clarkdale and Six Counties Medical Society of Mississippi admit their first African American physician into membership.
1956	Medical Society of the State of North Carolina begins to admit African Americans as “scientific members.”
1956	Fulton County Medical Society votes down a proposal to admit African Americans as full members.
1956	Louisiana is the only Southern state without at least one black physician member of a local medical society.
1957	William Montague Cobb organizes the first Imhotep National Conference on Hospital Integration. Sponsors include the NMA, the Medico-Chirurgical Society of the District of Columbia, and the NAACP.
1960	12 of the 26 medical schools in the South are closed to African American students.
1961	Eight African American NMA members—F. Earle McClendon, Louis F. Reese, John T. Gill Jr., Albert M. Davis, George C. Lawrence, James P. Ellison, Roosevelt P. Jackson, and Clinton P. Warner—are registered as delegates to the annual meeting of the Atlanta Graduate Assembly, held under the auspices of the Fulton County Medical Society. Although invited to attend the business functions, an Assembly spokesman notes that the Biltmore hotel dining room is whites-only. After attempting to be seated in the dining room, the NMA members are arrested.
1961	The AMA Board of Trustees requests that the House of Delegates take “official note of the progress that has been made toward eliminating race restrictions on constituent society membership and commends those societies which have moved forward in this area of human relations by taking positive actions to remove limitations on membership based on race or color.”
1963	Medical Committee for Human Rights is founded; MCHR provides medical care to civil rights workers, community activists and volunteers, and develops rural and mobile health centers.
1963	AMA opposes pending Medicare legislation, while the NMA supports it.
1963	The AMA-affiliated Rhode Island Medical Society proposes excluding discriminatory societies from the AMA, but the idea is rejected for reasons that had remained unchanged for decades: “progress” is already being made and membership matters are controlled by constituent societies.
1963	Medical Committee for Human Rights, NMA, NAACP send an “Appeal to the AMA” to “speak out” against segregation, the Hill-Burton Act’s “separate-but-equal” clause, and “the racial exclusion policies of State and County medical societies.”
1963	20 Black and white physicians from the Medical Committee for Human Rights and other prominent white and black organizations picket the AMA annual meeting. The AMA Board of Trustees chairman Hopkins responds that the picketing serves only “to obscure the

	achievements in medical science being reported at the meeting.”
1964	In <i>Simkins v Moses H Cone Memorial Hospital</i> the US Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals finds it unconstitutional to practice race discrimination in federally-funded hospitals.
1964	AMA urges Congress to amend the Hill-Burton hospital construction act such that “participation of a private hospital in the Hill-Burton program does not in any way change the private character of the hospital in any respect other than outlawing” race discrimination. The NMA believes that the AMA’s proposed amendment is unnecessary and that it would perpetuate racism and weaken “the impact of the [1964 Simkins v] Moses Cone decision.”
1964	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes “That the [AMA] go on record as being opposed unalterably to any discrimination in the field of medicine because of race, creed, color, or national origin, whether in patient care, physician opportunity, or professional organization.”
1964	AMA’s California delegation proposes the AMA Board of Trustees formulate “mechanisms and procedures which will assist in the removal of any barriers to the acceptance of physicians on staffs and by component medical societies because of race, color, creed, or national origin” and that the Board instruct “all appropriate divisions, councils, and committees of the Association” to initiate a study on in order to determine the scope and extent of discriminatory practices which affect physicians.”
1964	The State Medical Society of Wisconsin proposes that the AMA Board of Trustees “deny the rights and privileges of membership in the [AMA] to members of any constituent association or component society thereof which denies membership to any qualified physician because of race, religion, or place of national origin.”
1964	Resolution passes stating that the AMA is “unalterably opposed to the denial of membership in county medical societies” based on race, but without enforcement provisions.
1964	23 sit-in demonstrators are arrested at the Heart of Atlanta Hotel, which refused to drop its color bar. Demonstrators include C. Miles Smith, a dentist and president of the NAACP’s Atlanta chapter, and Clinton Warner, a surgeon and NAACP vice-president.
1964	AMA-NMA Liaison Committee formed.
1964	After nearly a decade of litigation, Hubert A. Eaton gains staff privileges at James Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, NC.
1965	Medical Committee for Human Rights holds its first national convention.
1965	In order to ensure compliance to Title VI, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare propose requiring physicians receiving federal funds to sign statements of compliance, formally forswearing racially discriminatory practices. There is “bitter” opposition to such a statement within the AMA’s House of Delegates. This “oath of compliance” is regarded by the AMA as excessive, demeaning, and even discriminatory against physicians.
1965	Medical Committee for Human Rights member Paul Lowinger records his experiences caring for those injured by violent segregationists on the Selma to Montgomery march. <i>JAMA</i> reportedly accepts his letter for publication on April 29, but three weeks later informs him it will not be published due to its “controversial” nature.
1965	Medical Society of the State of New York proposes that the AMA admit African American “physicians who have thus been denied county medical society membership and thereby are unable to join certain hospital staffs or specialty organizations requiring [AMA] membership.” The AMA House of Delegates does not adopt this resolution, but reaffirms its position of 1964.

1965	Approximately 200 black and white demonstrators including the Medical Committee for Human Rights and NMA picket the AMA annual meeting, urging the AMA to “Integrate All County and State Medical Societies!” and “End Discrimination in Medicine Now!”
1965	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes discrimination in hospitals receiving Federal funds illegal.
1965	Passing of Medicare and Medicaid legislation essentially mandates hospital integration.
1965	NMA leaders resume Liaison Committee activities with AMA leaders.
1966	Due to objections from the AMA, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare notes that signing an “oath of compliance” to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is not necessary for physicians.
1966	AMA’s Connecticut, California, New Hampshire, and New York delegations proposes excluding discriminatory societies from the AMA.
1966	The AMA’s New York and New Jersey delegations propose that “No applicant for membership [in a state or local society] shall be barred because of his race, color or creed,” and “If admission to membership is denied by the constituent association, he shall have the right of appeal to the [AMA] Judicial Council.”
1966	The AMA House of Delegates declares that its “[Judicial] Council shall have jurisdiction to receive appeals filed by applicants who allege that they, because of color, creed, race, religion, or ethnic origin, have been unfairly denied membership in a component and/or constituent association, to determine the facts in the case, and to report the finding to the House of Delegates.”
1966	The AMA’s Pennsylvania delegation proposes the AMA “ascertain whether or not there is any evidence of discrimination in county or state medical societies.” The AMA House of Delegates replies that the resolution “would impose an impractical burden upon the staff to require an investigation to determine whether discrimination exists, in the absence of specific complaints.” Instead, the AMA reaffirms the 1964 policy.
1966	Approximately 400 white and black demonstrators including the Medical Committee for Human Rights, NMA and NAACP picket the AMA annual meeting.
1968	Massachusetts Medical Society proposes that the AMA amend its <i>Constitution and Bylaws</i> , to give the Judicial Council the authority to expel constituent societies for race discrimination in membership policies. The AMA House of Delegates adopts the resolution.
1968	Reaffirmation of cooperation between AMA and NMA and restatement/strengthening of AMA policy to “continue to use all of its influence to end discriminatory racial exclusion policies or practices by any medical society.” Additionally, first mention by AMA of seeking ways to increase the presence of African Americans in medicine.
1968	Members of the Medical Committee for Human Rights and the Poor People’s Campaign picket the AMA annual meeting to protest insufficient AMA action on race discrimination and health services for the poor.
1968	Association of American Medical Colleges recommends that “medical schools must admit increased numbers of students from geographical areas, economic backgrounds and ethnic groups that are now inadequately represented.”
1968	Over three-fifths (61.77%) of the African Americans enrolled in US medical schools for the class of 1969 are being trained at either Howard University Medical School or Meharry

	Medical College.
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Sociopolitical Events

1846	Mexican-American War erupts after the US annexed Texas from Mexico in 1845.
1848	Mexican-American War ends; Mexico cedes to US and signs the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signing over territories of Alta California and Santa Fé de Nuevo México (California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming).
1849	Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery; she later returns to the South to lead over 300 black slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad.
1850	Compromise of 1850 admits California into the Union without slavery, strengthens Fugitive Slave Laws by mandating government support for the capture of freed slaves, and ends slave trade in Washington, DC. Compromise is protested by many in the North.
1851	Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and women's rights advocate, delivers her "Ain't I a Woman" speech at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, OH.
1852	Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes her anti-slavery novel <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Life Among the Lowly</i> , which draws negative public attention to, and intensifies sectional tensions over, slavery.
1854	Kansas-Nebraska Act passes; establishes the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and allows settlers to decide for themselves whether slavery is permitted.
1854	Republican Party is founded by anti-slavery expansion activists and progressives in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.
1857	In <i>Dred Scott v Sandford</i> the US Supreme Court rules that slaves do not become free when taken into a free state, that Congress cannot bar slavery from a territory, and that blacks cannot become citizens. Decision is thought to have helped precipitate the American Civil War.
1859	Charles Darwin publishes <i>The Origin of Species</i> .
1859	Harriet Wilson publishes <i>Our Nig; Or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black</i> , the first novel by an African American woman.
1859	The last ship to bring slaves to the United States, the <i>Clothilde</i> , arrives in Mobile Bay, AL.
1860	Over 4 million slaves in the US.
1860	By this year, African Americans are allowed to vote on equal terms with whites in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
1860	Republican Party nominee Abraham Lincoln is elected president. In response to the election, and to safeguard its interests in slavery, South Carolina secedes from Union to form the Confederate States of America.
1861	Civil War officially begins after Confederate army attacks Fort Sumter in Charleston, SC.
1862	Congress abolishes slavery in the District of Columbia.
1863	President Abraham Lincoln issues an executive order (the "Emancipation Proclamation") on January 1, abolishing slavery in all states within the Confederate States of America not under Union control. The Proclamation does not affect Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, Tennessee, and parts of Louisiana and Virginia. Ideology of war shifts from merely preserving the Union to also ending slavery.
1863	President Abraham Lincoln works with Frederick Douglass to plan the relocation of liberated slaves from the South.
1863	New York City Draft Riots; thousands of ethnic Irish protest Civil War draft. Protests escalate into a violent riot against African Americans, resulting in the death and injury of hundreds of

	African Americans. Civil unrest is squelched after President Abraham Lincoln sends in federal troops.
1863	President Abraham Lincoln admits black troops into the Union Army as part of the Emancipation Proclamation. Their military heroics show whites that blacks are willing to die for the Union. 54th Massachusetts Regiment is the first African American regiment. Alexander Thomas Augusta, Charles Burleigh Purvis, Alpheus W. Tucker, and John Van Surly DeGrasse are among the eight black physicians serving in the Union Army Medical Corps.
1864	Congress passes a bill authorizing equal pay, equipment, arms, and health care for African American Union troops.
1865	Confederate Army concedes defeat to Union; end of Civil War. Over 180,000 African American men served in the Union Army and Navy. Collapse of the slave health subsystem.
1865	13th Amendment to the Constitution (abolishing slavery in the US) is ratified.
1865	President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in Washington, DC.
1865	Congress passes Freedmen's Bureau legislation, first large-scale government aid program.
1865	The Reconstruction Era begins.
1865	Expansion of Black Codes, primarily in the rural South, limits civil rights and civil liberties of African Americans.
1866	Ku Klux Klan formed in secrecy in Pulaski, TN. KKK comprises primarily Confederate army veterans and develops into a paramilitary group to enforce white supremacy.
1866	Radical Republicans in Congress assume control of Reconstruction policy. Congress overrides veto of President Andrew Johnson to pass Civil Rights Act of 1866, which declares "all persons born in the United States not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed," citizens of the United States.
1866	A delegation of African Americans, led by Frederick Douglass, meets with President Andrew Johnson to advocate for black suffrage.
1866	Several black Republicans protest outside the New Orleans Constitutional Convention in response to the enactment of Black Codes and their lack of suffrage. The protest escalates into a violent riot against African Americans involving citizens, police, convention members, and Union and Confederate Army veterans, which diminishes support for President Andrew Johnson's conciliatory Reconstruction programs.
1867	Series of measures aimed at suffrage and other redresses for former slaves passed over President Andrew Johnson's vetoes.
1868	14th Amendment to the Constitution (intended to secure citizenship, equal protection under the law and due process for former slaves) is ratified.
1868	Congress impeaches President Andrew Johnson; Johnson avoids indictment by one vote.
1868	Racially-motivated gunfight erupts in Pulaski, TN between black and white citizens, leaving two black men killed.
1869	A federal grand jury declares the Ku Klux Klan a terrorist organization and orders it to disband.
1869	President Ulysses S. Grant appoints Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett as minister to Haiti; the first black American diplomat and the first black American presidential appointment.
1869	Most Freedmen's Bureau programs are eliminated.
1870	Hiram Rhodes Revels, R-Mississippi, becomes first African American elected to the US Senate.
1870	15th Amendment to the Constitution (intended to grant voting rights to former slave men) is

	ratified.
1870	Final secessionist Southern states are readmitted to the Union.
1872	Congress eliminates the Freedmen's Bureau.
1872	After Republican Gov. Henry Clay Warmoth is impeached and convicted, Lt. Gov. P.B.S. Pinchback becomes the first African American governor of a US State (Louisiana).
1875	Congress passes Civil Rights Act, granting equal rights in public accommodations and jury duty.
1875	Blanche Kelso Bruce, R-Mississippi, elected to US Senate; first African American to serve a full term.
1877	With the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877, President Rutherford B. Hayes withdraws Union troops from the South, and the "Black problem" is handed to Southerners as a matter of states' rights. Reconstruction formally ends.
1880	Henry O. Flipper is the first African American cadet to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point.
1880	In <i>Strauder v West Virginia</i> the US Supreme Court rules that African Americans cannot be excluded from serving on juries.
1883	US Supreme Court invalidates 1875 Civil Rights Act, ruling that the federal government cannot bar discrimination by corporations or individuals.
1890	Mississippi institutes a "poll tax" as a prerequisite for voting, which most African Americans cannot afford. Similar laws establishing taxes and literacy tests as prerequisites for voting are later passed in other states.
1895	Booker T. Washington delivers a speech to a predominantly white audience at the Cotton States and International Convention in Atlanta, where he urges African Americans to pursue economic advancement rather than social and political equality. The speech is criticized by W.E.B. DuBois, who calls it "The Atlanta Compromise."
1896	<i>Plessy v Ferguson</i> US Supreme Court decision finds "Jim Crow" racial segregation constitutional and validates "separate but equal" doctrine.
1898	Louisiana enacts the first state-wide grandfather clause—allowing citizens to vote if a relative was able to vote before the Civil War—that provides an exemption for some white illiterates to vote.
1903	W.E.B. DuBois publishes his influential critique <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , where he argues that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line."
1903	Robert S. Abbott begins publishing <i>The Chicago Defender</i> , Chicago's first African American newspaper.
1906	Race riot in Brownsville, a suburb of Atlanta; 21 dead, city under martial law.
1909	National Congress on the Negro convenes, leading to founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People by several white and black activists including W.E.B. DuBois.
1910	National Urban League is founded.
1914	World War I begins.
1915	D.W. Griffith's silent film <i>The Birth of a Nation</i> , which glorifies white supremacy and the Ku Klux Klan, becomes Hollywood's first "blockbuster."
1915	Resurgence of Ku Klux Klan.
1917	Race riots in Houston, Philadelphia, Chester (PA), and East St. Louis.
1917	Organized by the NAACP, thousands of African Americans march down New York City's Fifth Avenue to protest racial violence and discrimination.

1918	World War I ends. African Americans constituted one-seventh of the US armed forces during the war.
1919	“Red Summer”: race riots in Chicago, Omaha, Washington (DC), Charlestown (SC), Knoxville (TN), among others.
1920	4,534 hospitals in US; 202 are black hospitals.
1920	Black Hospital movement begins.
1921	Race riot in Tulsa, OK leaves many hundreds dead and 10,000 homeless.
1923	National Hospital Association is founded to ensure standards in black hospitals.
1925	Ku Klux Klan marches on Washington, DC.
1929	US stock market crashes, triggering global economic depression.
1932	Committee on the Costs of Medical Care publishes its report on health care. Study reveals that health care is costly and largely inaccessible to the poor.
1932	Radiologist Rudolph Fisher writes <i>The Conjure-Man Dies</i> , the first mystery novel by an African American
1935	Social Security Act is passed.
1936	Congress of Industrial Organizations is founded.
1939	World War II begins.
	AMA is indicted by US Justice Department for violating antitrust law, i.e., unlawfully interfering with a health plan in Washington, DC.
1940	Richard Wright publishes <i>Native Son</i> , which becomes a bestseller.
1940	Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr., becomes the first African American General in the US Army.
1941	President Roosevelt issue executive order, prohibiting race discrimination in defense industries.
1941	Congress mandates the establishment of an African American unit in the US Army Air Corps. Commonly known as the “Tuskegee Airmen,” these pilots serve heroically during World War II in the 332nd Fighter Group.
1942	African Americans are admitted to US Marine Corps, general Navy service.
1942	Congress of Racial Equality is founded by black and white activists; CORE employs nonviolent civil disobedience to combat segregation.
1943	War contractors barred from racial discrimination.
	Race riots in Harlem, Detroit.
1944	In <i>Smith v Allwright</i> the US Supreme Court rules that the whites-only Democratic Party primary in Texas was unconstitutional.
1945	Close of the Black Hospital movement
1945	World War II ends. Almost 1.2 million African Americans fought in the war.
1945	Cold War begins.
1946	Hill-Burton Hospital Survey and Construction Act is ratified.
1947	Jackie Robinson becomes the first African American to play major league baseball.
1948	President Harry S. Truman issues executive order outlawing segregation in US military.
1948	In <i>Shelley v Kraemer</i> the US Supreme Court rules that the government could not enforce racial restrictive covenants, and asserts that they were in conflict with the nation’s public policy.
1952	Racial and ethnic barriers to naturalization removed by Immigration and Naturalization Act.
1954	In <i>Brown v Board of Education of Topeka</i> , the US Supreme Court declares school segregation unconstitutional.

1955	Rosa Parks refuses to move to the back of a Montgomery, AL, bus, as required by city ordinance; bus boycott follows in 1956.
1955	Federal Interstate Commerce Commission bans segregation on interstate trains and buses.
1955	Civil Rights Movement begins.
1956	In <i>Browder v Gayle</i> , the US Supreme Court rules that bus segregation in Alabama is unconstitutional.
1956	Coalition of Southern congressmen calls for massive resistance to Supreme Court desegregation rulings.
1957	Martin Luther King Jr. helps found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; SCLC initially focuses on education, voter registration and other civil rights struggles.
1957	Arkansas Gov. Orval Rubus uses National Guard to block nine black students from attending a Little Rock High School; following a court order, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends in federal troops to ensure compliance.
1957	Civil Rights Act of 1957 is signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower; Act is meant to ensure voting rights for African Americans, but is largely ineffective.
1960	Four black college students begin sit-ins at lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina, restaurant where black patrons are not served.
1960	Nearly half of African Americans now live in the Northern states.
1960	Congress approves a watered-down voting rights act after a filibuster by Southern senators.
1960	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is founded; SNCC coordinate sit-ins and freedom rides.
1960	Civil Rights Act of 1960 is passed after a protracted filibuster; Act allows for federal inspection of voter registration polls and penalties for voter obstruction.
1961	CORE begins to organize Freedom Rides from Washington, DC, into Southern states.
1962	President Kennedy sends federal troops to the University of Mississippi to quell riots so that James Meredith, the school's first black student, can attend.
1962	The US Supreme Court rules that segregation is unconstitutional in all transportation facilities.
1962	The Department of Defense orders full integration of military reserve units, the National Guard excluded.
1962	Martin Luther King Jr. writes his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."
1963	Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands at the March on Washington.
1963	Church bombing in Birmingham, AL, leaves four young black girls dead.
1964	Congress passes Civil Rights Act of 1964, declaring race discrimination illegal in schools, public places, housing, government and employment. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare is charged with the task of assuring that "the provider of health services 'is complying and will continue to comply with Title VI'" of the Act.
1964	Hill-Burton hospital construction act is extended for five years. Act does not contain the "separate but equal" provision; however, there is no language barring race discrimination.
1964	Three civil rights workers disappear in Mississippi after being stopped for speeding; found buried six weeks later.
1964	Riots in Harlem, Philadelphia.
1964	24th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes the poll tax for Federal elections.

1964	Martin Luther King Jr. is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
1965	March from Selma to Montgomery, AL, to demand protection for voting rights; two civil rights workers slain earlier in the year in Selma.
1965	Malcolm X assassinated.
1965	Riot in Watts, Los Angeles.
1965	New Voting Rights Act signed.
1966	Edward William Brooke III, R-Massachusetts, becomes first black US senator elected in 85 years.
1966	Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale found Black Panther Party in Oakland, CA, a black power group formed to promote civil rights and self-defense.
1967	Riots in Detroit, MI, and Newark, NJ.
1967	Thurgood Marshall becomes first African American to be appointed to the Supreme Court.
1967	Carl Stokes (Cleveland, OH) and Richard G. Hatcher (Gary, IN) elected first black mayors of major US cities.
1968	Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee; James Earl Ray later convicted and sentenced to 99 years in prison.
1968	Riots in Washington, DC.