

let's learn about...

famous Black American Women

Name:

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Bessie Coleman



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Bessie was full of adventure! She was the first African American and Native American woman pilot. She was born in Texas on January 26th, 1892. She dreamed of becoming a pilot but had to learn French and move to France in order to do so. Because she was African American and a woman, she was not allowed in American flight schools. She made her dreams come true and was known for tricks in the sky. She used her voice to speak out against segregation.

Marian Anderson



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Marian was born on February 27th, 1897 in Philadelphia. She began singing in her church choir at the age of 6. Her aunt took her to events where she would earn money to perform. When she was 10, she joined the People's Chorus of Philadelphia where she was often a soloist. Her family did not have the money for high school or singing lessons. The chorus she was a part of worked with her pastor and other black community leaders to raise money for singing lessons and high school. After graduation, she applied to the Philadelphia Music Academy but was not admitted because she was black. Her talent gave her many opportunities to perform but she still faced discrimination. In 1936 she was the first black artist to perform at the White House. In 1955 she was the first black artist to perform on the stage at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Amelia Boynton Robinson



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Amelia was born in Georgia on August 18th, 1911. Her family believed reading was important. She was able to attend two years at Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth and then earned a degree from Tuskegee Institute in 1927. Her job for the U.S. Department of Agriculture was to educate rural populations on food production, nutrition and healthcare. In 1934 she registered to vote. In order to do so, she had to pay fees and pass a literacy test - something that was not required of white people. She worked to register other African Americans to vote. She also fought against segregation.

Katherine Johnson



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Katherine Johnson was born in West Virginia on August 26th, 1918. She was very good at math and graduated from high school when she was 14 years old. She attended West Virginia State, a historically black college, and graduated with degrees in math and French when she was 18 years old. Her first jobs were in teaching and then she was hired by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in June of 1953. She worked as a human computer and helped make calculations that were important to the space program. Katherine was assertive in her work and fought to overcome the segregation and discrimination that existed.

Edna Lewis



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Edna Lewis was born in Virginia in 1916. She lived in a small community of emancipated slaves named Freetown. She began cooking at a young age. Without modern tools to use in her cooking, she learned to be very resourceful. For example, she would measure baking powder on coins to make sure she used the right amount. She became a chef and opened a French restaurant with a friend in Manhattan. This was a big accomplishment as most chefs were male and very few were African American. She was known for her Southern inspired dishes and using fresh ingredients.

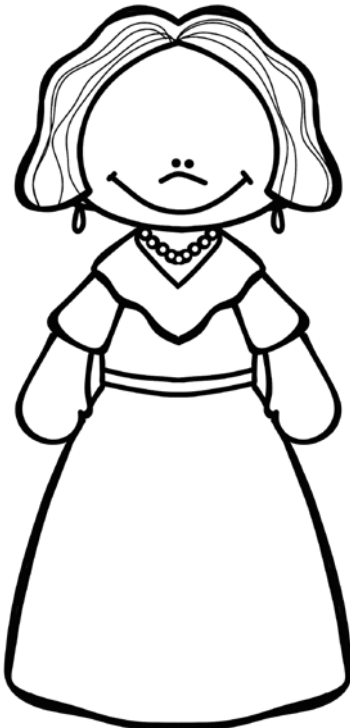
Dorothy Height



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Dorothy Height was born in Virginia on August 28th, 1912. Her school growing up was racially integrated. Despite this, she experienced racism at a young age. One moment that shaped her is when she was not allowed to swim in the pool at the YWCA despite being president of a club there. Her race also prevented her from studying at Bernard College after being accepted. They only allowed two black students a year. After being denied, she attended and graduated from New York University. She began her career as a social worker in New York City and then continued to find other opportunities to push for integration. She became an important part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Sarah Breedlove Walker



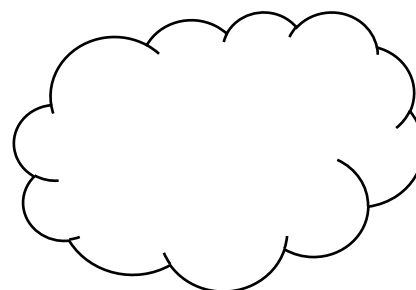
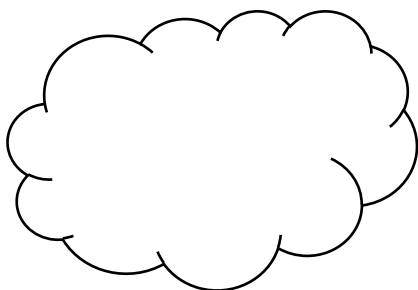
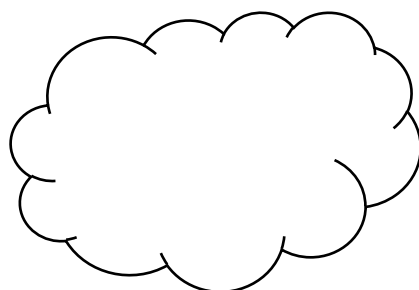
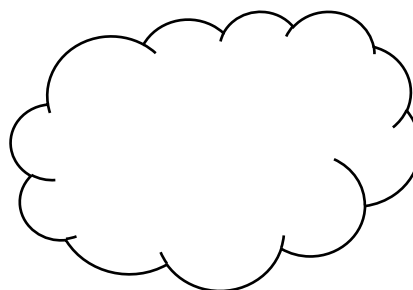
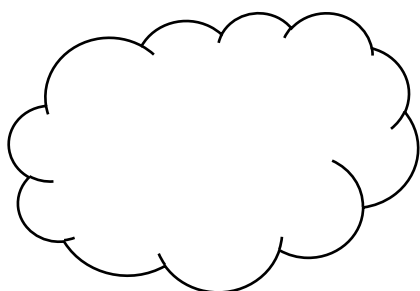
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Sarah Breedlove was born in Louisiana on December 23rd, 1867. She was the first child in her family born into freedom after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. At age seven, she was orphaned and ended up working as a servant at the age of 10. She only received three months of formal education during Sunday school. As a young mom of a daughter, she worked hard and attended night school when she was able. She struggled with hair loss which encouraged her to create her own healthy products for her hair. She renamed herself Madam C.J. Walker and began to sell her products. She also employed hundreds of black women around the country. She was the first self-made black female millionaire in America. She provided a good life for her and her daughter but also worked to help black men and women escape poverty through her work.

Name: _____

Word Clouds

Find five important words. Write a word in the middle of each cloud. Surround the cloud with words and pictures that help you understand the meaning and how it was used.



Name:

Think about it!

What is an obstacle Bessie Coleman had to overcome in order to learn to fly?

Money is often an obstacle to overcome when fighting for education. How did others come together to help Marian Anderson overcome this obstacle?

How do you feel about Amelia Boynton Robinson and what we learned about her being able to vote?

We learned that Katherine Johnson was assertive in her work. Why do you think this is a rare quality for black women working in her position at the time?

What does it mean when it says that Edna Lewis was resourceful?

How do you feel about Dorothy Height not being able to attend Bernard College even though she was admitted to the school?

How did Madam C.J. Walker use the wealth she earned to help others?