

# Black Volunteer Roll Call

Throughout the history of the United States, millions of black Americans have demonstrated the "spirit of America" by volunteering countless hours to organizations and causes in which they believed. Their activities have ranged from

volunteering as an anti-slavery speaker to setting forth to become the first American to reach the North Pole.

This black volunteer roll call provides an introduction listing of just some of the nation's past volunteers whose

contributions -- like the thousands of people who volunteer today -- have made a difference. Each has demonstrated the spirit of voluntarism and service that has been this nation great.



Rev. Richard Allen

**Prince Estabrook** (c. 1755-1775): Joined the volunteer colonial militia and was among the first to give his life in defense of the colonies. He fought and died in the first military engagement of the American Revolution.

**Richard Allen & Absalom Jones** (c. early 1800s): Each founded an independent black church, helping establish the tradition of the progressive civic-minded, volunteer-oriented minister. Allen founded the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and Jones organized the St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal Church.



Mary McLeod Bethune

**Salem Poor** (c. late 1700s): Volunteered for service in the colonial militia during the American Revolution. For his meritorious conduct at the Battle of Bunker Hill, 14 officers signed a petition to the state legislature declaring that Poor "behaved like an experienced officer as well as an excellent soldier." He also served at Valley Forge and White Plains.

**William Flora** (c. late 1700s): Joined the volunteer militia of Virginia. In the Battle of Great Bridge in December 1775, he was the last sentinel to leave his post as the enemy approached. He returned fire eight times while withdrawing.

**Jesse Peter** (c. late 1700s): Volunteered to take over a church in Silver Bluff, S.C. in 1783. He became the head of the first black Baptist church in the United States.

**Joseph Willis** (c. late 1700s): Volunteered as an explorer of the Mississippi Territory. He became the first minister to deliver a Protestant sermon west of the Mississippi.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.** (1929-1968): Dedicated his life to the civil rights movement, preaching non-violence as a means of obtaining equal rights for all people, regardless of race.

**Elijah B. Tunnel** (c. 1800s): Left his position as a Baltimore clergyman to enlist as a cabin cook on a torpedo boat during the Civil War. He was killed after moving from the galley to the deck to become more involved in the fighting.

**Matthew Henson** (1886-1955): Volunteered to join Admiral Robert Peary in his 1909 journey to the North Pole. He was the first to reach the Pole.



Matt Henson



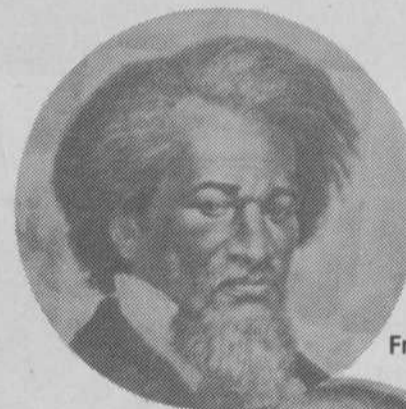
Harriet Tubman

**Joachim Pease** (c. 1800s): Enlisted in the Navy during the Civil War and was eventually awarded the Navy Medal of Honor for his service on board the warship Kearsarge when she engaged the Confederate raider Alabama off the coast of France.

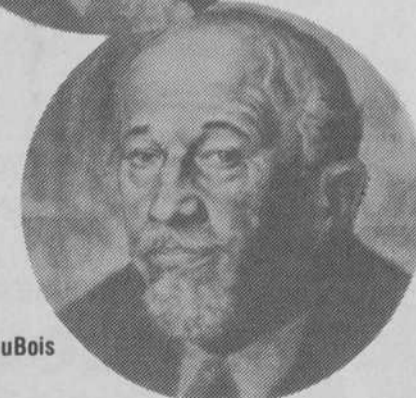
**Booker T. Washington** (c. 1856-1915): Became one of the most prominent spokesmen of the early civil rights movement. He also founded Tuskegee Institute.

**Harriet Tubman** (c. 1820-1913): Dedicated part of her life to helping fugitive slaves escape from the South on the Underground Railroad. She also volunteered as a spy, scout and nurse during the Civil War.

**Mary McLeod Bethune** (1875-1955): Became a leading proponent of education for both blacks and women. She helped organize Bethune-Cookman College, became an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the problems of minority groups and founded the National Council of Negro Women.



Frederick Douglass



Dr. W.E.B. duBois

**Frederick Douglass** (1817-1895): Spent much of his life fighting for the abolition of slavery. After escaping from slavery himself, he crisscrossed the nation often donating his skills as an orator and writer at public meetings and speaking forums to advance the abolitionist movement.

**W.E.B. DuBois** (c. 1868-1963): Volunteered his energies to help found the Niagara Movement in the 1890s to bring black grievances to the forefront. He was the only black among the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.