

The Black woman is our soul



The independence, verve, and vitality of the Black woman have been detailed many times by sociologists and anthropologists. Her beauty and physical attributes have been praised in Hollywood and on Madison Avenue. What distinguishes the Black woman, however, is her spirit, which stems from a long tradition of female dominance.

This tradition, which influences every Black female, grew out of the slave social system, which devalued the role of the Black male. Black women, as a result, have been as free, powerful and expressive as any group of women in history.

Black women played a crucial role in the fight for freedom. Harriet Tubman slipped into the South 19 times and led out 300 slaves. Ida B. Wells kept her newspaper free by walking the streets of Memphis, Tennessee, in the 1890s

with two pistols on her hips. The tradition has been carried on by women like Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, Rosa Parks, Daisy Bates and Diane Bevel.

After Emancipation when the whole social fabric of life crumbled and the very economic basis of Black existence was destroyed, it was the Black woman, often alone with her children but always aiding her husband when there was one, who made the survival of Black people possible.

During the 1960s the role of the Black woman in the fight for civil rights continued to show her as a strong and vital social force.

The Black woman, who first reached the shores of the new world in the 17th century continues to be a deep well of Black pride.



Sojourner Truth was in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement—a forceful lecturer.



Frances E. Harper, the first Black woman to publish a novel, was a prominent member of the early women's rights movement.




Ida B. Wells Barnett was the leader of anti-lynching crusades, an educator and journalist.



Mary McLeod Bethune dedicated her life to the education of Black people.

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Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806)
INVENTOR AND ENGINEER. Born a free man, in Ellicott, Maryland, he was the first Black to publish scientific and astronomical materials, and he constructed the first clock made entirely in America in 1753. He published a treatise on bees, computed the cycle of the seventeen-year locust, and published a yearly almanac from 1791 until 1802. A member of the surveying team that laid out the city plan of Washington, D.C., he astounded scientists and intellectuals with his insight and ability as an astronomer, mathematician and essayist.

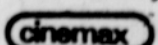
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