Black History Month

As the son of former slaves, Carter G. Woodson knew firsthand that there was plenty to be told about the black experience in America. The problem was, no one was telling it, at least in school. Woodson, a teacher, was so troubled by the fact that there was no information on black history that he took it upon himself to start the American Negro Academy to study the history of blacks and, in 1926, established Negro History Week to celebrate their proud heritage.

That weeklong observance grew into Black History Month in February. Today, Black History Month not only provides Americans an opportunity to learn about the African-American culture and its contributions, but also about how all people, regardless of race, religion or nationality, have a rightful place in the story of our country.

In pre- and post-Civil War America, African-Americans suffered the bonds of slavery and faced the discouragement of postwar poverty and legal discrimination in the educational system. Yet a quick look back through our country’s history shows that despite these obstacles, African-Americans are well represented on America’s list of important inventors.

As the saying goes, “Necessity is the mother of invention,” and as these Americans looked around their world and saw things that needed changing, they rose above their circumstances, showing the best of human intellect and determination.

You might not recognize the names you see on the following pages, but you’ll be surprised at how familiar their inventions are in your everyday life! And, while their individual stories are important in American history, as a group, the people behind the names demonstrate that human imagination and our drive to better ourselves are powerful tools that can overcome great odds.
What does it mean?

In the world of money, some words sound strange. Check out the definitions below and choose whether they’re true or false:

1. **Account** — A character you see in October.
2. **Interest** — Something you get when you have a savings account and something you pay when you have a loan. This can also be called dividends.
3. **Loan** — Sitting by yourself counting money.
4. **Withdrawal** — Talking about money with an accent.
5. **Transaction** — An action you take on your account to move money from one place to another.
6. **Checking account** — A standard account used for regular transactions and instant access to money.
7. **Term deposit** — Sometimes called a certificate of deposit, this savings account option has more limits than a regular savings account but also pays more interest.
8. **Investing** — Blowing warm air in your vest.

**ANSWERS:**

1. False.
2. True.
3. False.
4. False.
5. True.
6. True.
7. True.
8. False.

**ACTIVITY**

Find and read articles in the Deseret News that are profiles of people. Then, choose one of the inventors profiled in this section and read more about him or her, looking for details that a newspaper profile includes. Using the information in this section and other resources, write a newspaper-style profile for this inventor.

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**NORBERT RILLIEUX (1806-1894)**

Born in New Orleans, Norbert Rillieux was the son of a wealthy, white plantation master and a slave mother. When Norbert was born, his father could declare him free or a slave. Most plantation owners would have declared him a slave, but Norbert’s father declared him free, which gave Norbert access to education and other “white” privileges.

As a young man, Rillieux was sent to L’Ecole Central in Paris, France, to be educated as an engineer. After graduating, he returned to Louisiana and became one of the most famous engineers in the state.

Despite his professional success, Rillieux eventually returned to France because of increasing restrictions on blacks in Louisiana.

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**JAN ERNST MATZELIGER (1806-1894)**

Jan Ernst Matzeliger was born in Dutch Guiana to a Dutch father and Surinamese mother. At the age of 10, he went to work in his father’s machine shop. Later, though barely able to speak English, Matzeliger earned his way to the United States by working as a sailor.

Once on U.S. soil he worked in Philadelphia for a while before moving to Lynn, Mass., where, at 18, he went to work in a shoe factory.

**HOW HE CHANGED YOUR LIFE**

In the 1830s, sugar was an expensive luxury. The process used to extract the sugar from sugar cane or sugar beets was slow and costly. But more important to Rillieux was that the process was dangerous and required the back-breaking labor of slaves. Even after that process, sugar at the time was a brown and sticky mass, rather than the fine white crystals we use today. Rillieux developed a process that was safer, more efficient, less costly and produced higher quality granulated sugar.

This not only made sugar affordable to the masses but drastically changed the food-manufacturing industry and our eating habits.

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**HOW HE CHANGED YOUR LIFE**

Just six years after landing in the United States, Matzeliger revolutionized the American shoe industry by inventing a machine that opened the doors for the mass production of shoes. Before Matzeliger’s invention, only part of a shoe was made by machine. The last step — shaping the leather over the form of a human foot and stitching it to the sole of the shoe — is called lasting, and lasting was still being done by hand.

So, no matter how fast the rest of a shoe could be manufactured, this final step — the hand work — slowed the production of shoes to only 40 to 50 shoes per worker per day. Because they were handmade, shoes were expensive.

Many inventors had tried, and failed, to create a machine to perform this final step. It was believed throughout the shoe industry that it simply couldn’t be done. Matzeliger was determined and worked for years to create a machine that could complete the shoemaking process. In 1882, he applied for a patent, sending a diagram of his lasting machine to the Washington patent office.

The drawings were so complicated that patent officers couldn’t understand them; they actually visited Matzeliger to see the model. His patent was awarded in 1883. Because of Matzeliger’s invention, Lynn, Mass., became the shoe capital of the world.
Sarah Breedlove McWilliams Walker was born in Louisiana in 1867, the daughter of former slaves. Orphaned at the age of 6, she and her sister survived by working in the cotton fields. At 14 she married C.J. Walker and had a daughter. Her husband died a few years later, though, and she found herself a widow at 20. To support herself and her daughter, she worked as a laundry woman. During the 1890s, she began to lose her hair and started to experiment with home remedies. She eventually developed a line of hair products and cosmetics that made Madame Walker America’s first self-made female millionaire — of any color.

“I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations. ... I have built my own factory on my own ground.” — Madame C.J. Walker

**HOW SHE CHANGED YOUR LIFE**

Walker’s most famous invention was a way to straighten hair chemically. Before her product, black women who wanted straight hair had to press their hair with a flat iron. Her hair softener and straightening comb made straightening hair easy and affordable. Walker’s line of hair products and cosmetics opened the door for a beauty and cosmetics industry that catered to black women. Perhaps more importantly, her company gave thousands of black women an opportunity for meaningful employment.

**MADAME C.J. Walker**

**(1867–1919)**

**FREDERICK McKinley Jones**

**(1892–1961)**

Frederick McKinley Jones grew up an orphan in Cincinnati. He attended school only through sixth grade, but through curiosity and constant experimentation, he became a self-taught master of electronic devices. Jones made a career for himself working as an automobile mechanic as well as designing movie sound equipment at the time when silent movies were turning into “talkies.” Over his career, Jones patented 61 inventions.

**HOW HE CHANGED YOUR LIFE**

After a conversation with a truck driver who had lost a shipment of chickens because the trip had taken too long, Jones invented a practical refrigeration system for trucks and railroad cars. This invention revolutionized the eating habits of the country.

The following is a list of African-American inventors and their creations. As you go through the list, pay attention to the things you might be using or experience the benefits of every day. Keep in mind, though, that more than one patent can (and usually is) awarded for the same type of machine. For example, the horseshoe listed below might have its own patent because of a variation in shape or how it is attached to a horse’s hoof.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVENTOR</th>
<th>INVENTION</th>
<th>PATENT DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.P. Ashbourne</td>
<td>Biscuit cutter</td>
<td>Nov. 30, 1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.C. Bailey</td>
<td>Folding bed</td>
<td>July 18, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.J. Beard</td>
<td>Rotary engine</td>
<td>July 5, 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.J. Beard</td>
<td>Car coupler</td>
<td>Nov. 23, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.E. Becket</td>
<td>Letter box</td>
<td>Oct. 4, 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Bell</td>
<td>Locomotive smoke stack</td>
<td>May 23, 1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.E. Benjamin</td>
<td>Gong and signal chairs for hotels</td>
<td>July 17, 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.W. Binga</td>
<td>Street sprinkling apparatus</td>
<td>July 22, 1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.B. Blackburn</td>
<td>Railway signal</td>
<td>Jan. 10, 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Blair</td>
<td>Corn planter</td>
<td>Oct. 14, 1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Blair</td>
<td>Cotton planter</td>
<td>Aug. 31, 1836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.B. Brooks</td>
<td>Street sweepers</td>
<td>March 17, 1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.E. Brown</td>
<td>Horseshoe</td>
<td>Aug. 23, 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.A. Burr</td>
<td>Lawn mower</td>
<td>May 9, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.W. Butts</td>
<td>Luggage carrier</td>
<td>Oct. 10, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.C. Carter</td>
<td>Umbrella stand</td>
<td>Aug. 4, 1885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.S. Church</td>
<td>Carpet beating machine</td>
<td>July 29, 1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Cook</td>
<td>Automatic fishing device</td>
<td>May 10, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.W. Cornwall</td>
<td>Draft regulator</td>
<td>Feb. 7, 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.L. Cralle</td>
<td>Ice-cream mold</td>
<td>Feb. 2, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.R. Davis Jr.</td>
<td>Library table</td>
<td>Sept. 24, 1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.J. Dorticus</td>
<td>Machine for embossing photos</td>
<td>Apr. 16, 1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Elkins</td>
<td>Refrigerating apparatus</td>
<td>Nov. 4, 1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Flemings Jr.</td>
<td>Guitar (variation)</td>
<td>March 3, 1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.F. Grant</td>
<td>Golf tee</td>
<td>Dec. 12, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Gregory</td>
<td>Motor</td>
<td>April 26, 1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Headen</td>
<td>Foot power hammer</td>
<td>Oct. 5, 1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.F. Jackson</td>
<td>Gas burner</td>
<td>April 4, 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.L. Love</td>
<td>Pencil sharpener</td>
<td>1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.J. Marshall</td>
<td>Fire extinguisher (variation)</td>
<td>May 26, 1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah McCoy</td>
<td>Lubricator for steam engines</td>
<td>July 2, 1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.F. Pickering</td>
<td>Airship</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.B. Purvis</td>
<td>Fountain pen</td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Spears</td>
<td>Portable shield for infantry</td>
<td>Dec. 27, 1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufus Stokes</td>
<td>Air-purification device</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.H. Sutton</td>
<td>Cotton cultivator</td>
<td>April 7, 1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granville T. Woods</td>
<td>Electromechanical brake</td>
<td>Aug. 16, 1887</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patent rules passed in 1793 and 1836 allowed slaves to legally patent their inventions. Despite these rules, however, an invention was often stolen by a slave’s owner, who would patent it in his name.
Dr. Patricia Bath, an ophthalmologist, was born in Harlem in New York City. Her father, Rupert Bath, came to the United States from Trinidad and became the first black motorman for the New York City subways. Her mother, Gladys, was descended from African slaves and Cherokee Indians. She was determined Patricia and her brother would have the best education possible. When Patricia was in middle school, her mother went to work cleaning people’s homes. “She scrubbed floors so I could go to medical school,” Bath said.

After graduating from the Howard University School of Medicine, Bath became the first African-American woman surgeon at the UCLA Medical Center and the first woman on the faculty of the UCLA Jules Stein Eye Institute. She is also the first African-American woman doctor to receive a patent for a medical invention. Bath has focused her career and research on the prevention, care, and treatment of blindness.

Dr. Patricia Bath (1942—)

HOW SHE CHANGED YOUR LIFE

In 1988, Bath patented the Cataract Laserphaco Probe. This device uses the power of a laser to quickly and painlessly vaporize cataracts from patients’ eyes. With this invention, Bath was able to give sight back to several people who had been blind for more than 30 years.

SHIRLEY A. Jackson

Shirley A. Jackson was born in Washington, D.C. Her early interest in math and science was encouraged by her father, who would help her with class projects. After high school, Jackson enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As one of only a few black students at MIT, Jackson was treated differently by her classmates, and some faculty even tried to discourage her interest in physics. But Jackson persevered and became the first African-American woman to receive a PhD in particle physics. While at MIT, Jackson co-founded the Black Student Union to encourage more African-Americans to attend the prestigious school. She has received numerous awards and honors throughout her career, including being named chair of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission by President Bill Clinton in 1995.

SHIRLEY A. Jackson (1942—)

HOW SHE CHANGED YOUR LIFE

After college, Jackson worked at Bell Laboratories, the research division of AT&T. There she made advances in the field of telecommunications that led to the development of the touch-tone telephone and fiber optic cables. Her work also made Call Waiting and Caller ID possible.

ACTIVITY

Look through the ads in the newspaper and choose a product that you are particularly thankful for (a computer, favorite soft drink, etc.). Now, conduct research to find out how that product was invented. Was there one inventor or many who built on previous inventions?

This section holds only a few of the many African-American inventors in our country’s history. In small groups, learn about three more African-American inventors, then present your findings to the class.

Mark your calendars

March 2 is the 21st anniversary of National Read Across America Day. It is also Dr. Seuss’s 114th Birthday. Across the country, thousands of schools, libraries and community centers will celebrate reading. Here are some fun facts about Dr. Seuss to help you prepare for the fun day:

1. He often came up with story ideas by doodling.
2. His friend bet that he couldn’t write a book with just 50 different words, and so, Green Eggs and Ham was born.
3. He kept a closet full of wacky hats. Whenever he was stumped in his writing, he’d put on a suitable hat to help the words flow.
4. It took him over a year to write Cat in the Hat — and it only uses 236 different words!
5. His full name was Theodor Seuss Geisel, but his friends called him Ted.
6. He published 44 picture books.
ONE OF OUR most popular holidays is Valentine’s Day. Over hundreds of years Feb. 14 has become a day to celebrate love and friendship. You already know the symbols of valentines that we use: red hearts, cupids, doves and flowers.

In February, when spring is coming, many kinds of birds get together in pairs. When doves and pigeons choose a mate they stay with each other year after year. People in the Middle Ages thought they were romantic, and so Valentine’s Day features these birds. Pigeons have also been used to carry messages over long distances. The first air-mail valentines must have been sent by carrier pigeon! Ever since the first handmade valentines, artists have often drawn pictures of doves carrying a valentine message.

On the following page you will find a dove that you can cut out to make a different kind of valentine. Making your own card to tell other people how much we care for them is a fun way to celebrate Valentine’s Day. Another idea is to thank someone who means a lot to you. Perhaps they have helped you out or done something really nice for you. Maybe you can think of someone who needs a smile or a note of friendship. You might also want to do something nice for a friend or relative and make that your special way of saying happy Valentine’s Day!

Tu eres mi amigo
You’re my friend
Amor
Love
Te quiero
I love you
Mi novio/novia
My boyfriend/girlfriend
Eres especial
You are special
Un abrazo para ti
A hug for you
Mi mejor amigo/a
My best friend
Me gustas
I like you
Me haces feliz
You make me happy

¡Feliz Día De San Valentín!
Happy St. Valentine’s Day!

Tu eres mi amigo
You’re my friend
Amor
Love
Te quiero
I love you
Mi novio/novia
My boyfriend/girlfriend
Eres especial
You are special
Un abrazo para ti
A hug for you
Mi mejor amigo/a
My best friend
Me gustas
I like you
Me haces feliz
You make me happy

¡Feliz Día De San Valentín!
Happy St. Valentine’s Day!
Valentine’s Day financial facts

What are the top 5 most popular Valentine’s Day gifts in the country? Draw a heart next to the 5 you think belong on the list, then look below to see if you’re right.

- Hamburgers
- Greeting cards
- Conversation hearts
- Perfume
- Flowers
- Lip gloss
- Chocolate/candy
- Clothes
- Toothbrush
- Jewelry
- Pizza
- Dinner
- Stuffed animals
- Socks

If you guessed hamburgers, well, that’s not quite right. The top 5, in no particular order, are: chocolate/candy, greeting cards, dinner, flowers and jewelry. Gift givers last year spent a combined total of about $1.8 billion on chocolate/candy. That’s a lot of sweets! And $2 billion more was spent on flowers! Many of the gifts listed above cost money, but you don’t have to spend anything to have a special day. Make a card for loved ones, help around the house or make treats at home to have fun and show people you care.

If you want to spend money, the best idea is to plan ahead. Don’t just buy something because you think you should. Think about who you are giving to and what they will appreciate. Doing something nice may be the best gift of all.

Postduiven

Postduiven is Dutch for “messenger dove.” Knowledge is power, and at one time the surest and swiftest way to deliver this knowledge was with carrier pigeons.

Make your own carrier pigeon. Trace the pattern on a piece of stiff white paper, cut out, cut slits along dotted lines. Assemble as pictured. (Pattern may be enlarged on a copy machine.)
This message tells you how to have a healthy heart. Change each letter to the one that comes just before it in the alphabet.

ABCDEFGHJKLMNPQRSTUVWXYZ
ZPVDBOIBWF,B
IFBMUZIFBSTRUJVUT
BTFBTZBTPOF,
UXPUSSF!FBU
IFBMUZTUVGG,NPWF
BSPVOEFOPVHI,MJWF
PCBDDDPSGSFF!
Heart word game

Sean and Yolanda were playing a game in which they spell words using letter squares. All the words they spelled were about the circulatory system. Fill in their game board by using the clues and words on this page.

CLUES:
1. What the heart does to send blood rushing out
2. A gas that our bodies need
3. The name for the system that includes our heart and blood vessels
4. What the heart works like
5. What you can listen to with a stethoscope
6. The part of the body that takes in oxygen
7. The liquid that carries oxygen throughout our bodies
8. What our heart is made of
9. The tubes that carry blood

WORDS:
- blood
- circulatory
- contracts
- heart
- vessels
- muscle
- oxygen
- pump
- lungs

Break the heart code: You can have a healthy heart if you eat as easy as one, two, three. Eat healthy stuff more round.

SPONSORED BY

If you would like to receive FREE copies of Connect 1•2•3 for your classroom, order on the Web at deseretnews.com/nie.
Stop hugging that library. No wait, my mistake, I forgot that it’s Library Lovers Month. So why love your local library?

Libraries are a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life; they offer security and peace and quiet.

It’s important to understand that not everything is available on the internet (yet).

Love your library for what it is, a community meeting place or treasure trove of ideas. Why not push against the declining attendance of libraries and go and learn something new that will expand your knowledge of who you are, of where you live or what you do? This is a time for everyone to recognize the value of libraries and to work to ensure that the nation’s libraries will continue to serve.

The big play
Everyone dreams of making the big play, whether it’s scoring the winning basket, playing the piano perfectly at a concert or giving the lead performance in the school play. We all want to succeed and should each develop our talents, skills and abilities. But those don’t happen all at once. It takes time and practice. Anyone who is successful at something is an example of doing small things that lead to bigger success. Professional basketball stars practice dribbling, passing and shooting every day. Famous movie stars must memorize lines and stay in character. Millionaires stay millionaires by saving, investing and spending wisely. It’s daily practice over and over that leads to success. Very rarely do people just happen into the big play. And if they do, they must keep the little things going to stay successful. This year, whether it’s saving money regularly, keeping up with batting practice or staying flexible for the dance recital, stay consistent on the little things to get ready for the big play.

“I AM PROUD TO DO WHAT I CAN TO SUPPORT OUR LIBRARIES AND THEIR LIBRARIANS. WITHOUT THEM, AND WITHOUT THIS BASIC AMERICAN RIGHT TO READ A BOOK — ANY BOOK — REGARDLESS OF ONE’S SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, WE WILL SURELY BE LESS FREE AS A PEOPLE.”
— MICHAEL MOORE, Author/filmmaker

ACROSS
4. The _____ draws or illustrates the pictures in a story.
7. The _____ page tells who the author wrote a book for.
8. The _____ writes the words of a story.

DOWN
1. The _____ number is located on the spine of a book and tells the reader where it belongs in the library.
2. The _____ of the book protects the pages and keeps them from getting dirty or bent.
3. A story with real facts in it about sharks is a _____ story.
5. The _____ of a book holds the pages together.
6. The _____ is the company who makes or puts the book together so it can be bought and sold.
9. The _____ page gives important information about a book such as the title or name of the book, and the names of the author, the illustrator and the publisher.

What can you do for your library to celebrate Library Lovers Month? Write a plan about your idea. Look through the Deseret News to see what kinds of events are listed for this
TIN MAN HEART COOKIES

INGREDIENTS:
1 cup vegetable shortening
1 cup white sugar
¼ cup milk
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ cup butter
3 cups confectioner’s sugar
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract, or more to taste
2 tablespoons milk, or as needed

DIRECTIONS:
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Beat vegetable shortening, white sugar, ¼ cup milk, eggs and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract together in a bowl. Whisk flour, salt and baking soda in a separate bowl. Slowly beat flour mixture into shortening mixture to make a smooth dough.
3. Roll dough out ¼-inch thick on a floured work surface and cut into shapes. Arrange cookies on baking sheets.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until cookies are firm, about 10 minutes. Let cool.
5. Beat butter, confectioner’s sugar, 1½ teaspoon vanilla extract and 2 tablespoons milk in a bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until frosting is spreadable and slightly fluffy. Frost cooled cookies. Decorate with sprinkles, candy or sugar to add some fun variety.

SOURCE: allrecipes.com

MELTED WITCH PUNCH RECIPE

INGREDIENTS
1 2-liter bottle Lemon-Lime Soda
1 packet lime Kool Aid (unsweetened)
1 large bottle Perrier or soda water
1 container lime sherbet

DIRECTIONS:
In a large punch bowl empty the Kool-Aid packet into the punch bowl and then add the Perrier and Lemon-Lime soda. Next add the sherbet scoop by scoop. Add enough scoops to cover the top of the bowl with froth. Stir gently to make more froth if needed. If there are many guests, you can refresh the punch by adding more soda and sherbet as needed. It is very forgiving, so don’t worry about getting the ratios perfect. Enjoy!

http://www.squidoo.com/melted-witch-punch-recipe

BOOK PARTY!

Have you ever chosen a favorite book for your party theme? As a class, pick a book and then brainstorm what you can do for decorations, games and food. Here’s a few ideas to get you started using “The Wizard of Oz.”

“WIZARD OF OZ BINGO”

On a blank Bingo sheet write in words having to do with the “Wizard of Oz.” Play like regular Bingo.

CHARACTER CHALLENGE

The Cowardly Lion, the Scarecrow and the Tin Man each sought something from the Wizard: courage, a brain and a heart. Brainstorm ideas for activities that represent each of those traits. For example: You could fall back into the arms of a classmate to show courage.
"Dactyl Hill Squad," by Daniel Older. It’s 1863 and dinosaurs roam the streets of New York as the Civil War rages. Magdalys Roca and her friends are on a field trip when the Draft Riots break out, and a number of their fellow orphans are kidnapped. Can Magdalys and the squad rescue the rest of their friends before it’s too late?

"One Crazy Summer" by Rita Williams Garcia. Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters. She’s had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. But when the sisters arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with their mother, Cecile is nothing like they imagined.

"The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA" by Brenda Woods. The moving story of the friendship between a young white boy and a Black WWII veteran who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South.

"The Journey of Little Charlie" by Christopher Paul Curtis. Twelve-year-old Charlie is down on his luck: His sharecropper father just died and Cap’n Buck has come to collect a debt. Charlie strikes a deal with Cap’n Buck. Torn between his guilty conscience and his survival instinct, Charlie needs to figure out his next move — and soon.

"Ghost Boys" by Jewell Parker Rhodes. A heartbreaking and powerful story about a black boy killed by a police officer, drawing connections through history.