



Turning points: site of the Boston Massacre (above); Rosa Parks remembered (right)



The story of black America is a story as old as America itself

This February is not just the first full month of the first African-American presidency of the U.S.; February each year in America is **Black History Month**. As a saying popular in the black community goes, “you can’t know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been.”

The story of black America is a story as old as America itself; it is the nation’s 230-year-long attempt to **reconcile** its practices with its principles. The country’s **founding** document, the 1776 Declaration of Independence, said it was “self-evident” that “all men are created equal.” Yet in 1787, delegates at the **Constitutional Convention** decided that, for the purpose of determining each state’s population and number of representatives in Congress, blacks would be counted as 3/5 of a person. Black people, of course, would not actually be represented; they could neither vote nor own property. Mostly, they were someone else’s property.

Ironically, the first man to die for this country was a black man, Crispus Attucks. On the evening of March 5, 1770,

colonists were publicly **taunting** British soldiers on a Boston street. The crowd grew to an enormous size. Feeling threatened, the soldiers fired shots, hitting Attucks and four other men. A **memorial** on **Boston Common** includes a sculpture showing Attucks falling to the ground; his **grave** is marked in the **Granary Burying Ground**.

Attucks may have been an escaped slave, a reminder that the slave economy had started all the way back in 1619, only 12 years after the first permanent settlement was begun at Jamestown, Virginia (see *Spotlight* 4/07). A new wing of the museum at the rebuilt **Jamestown Settlement**, added in 2006, tells the story of the first Angolans sold to the English settlers to help them farm tobacco.

In any Southern state today, former plantations are among the main tourist attractions. What you see are the brick-and-stone **manor homes** of the plantation owners. Little remains of the **shacks** and **cabins** in which the slaves themselves lived.

Monticello, the plantation home of America’s third president, Thomas Jefferson, near Charlottesville, Virginia, is well worth a visit. As the main author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson gave a voice to early American idealism; yet for most of his life, he owned about 200 slaves. With one of these, Sally Hemings, he is believed to have fathered one or several children — a claim at least **partially** supported by **descendants’** DNA. Visitors today can take a 45-minute walking tour through that part of the plantation where the slaves lived and worked; and one can hear stories from the lives of these **oppressed** individuals.

Nearby Baltimore, Maryland, was a frequent port of call for slave ships. A **replica** of the **Amistad** tours the East Coast of America each year, stopping in several cities, including Baltimore. A **permanent exhibition** at the **National Great Blacks in Wax Museum** in that city **recreates** a portion of a slave ship to show the horrors of the Middle Passage — the **leg** of the triangular route that slave ships took be-

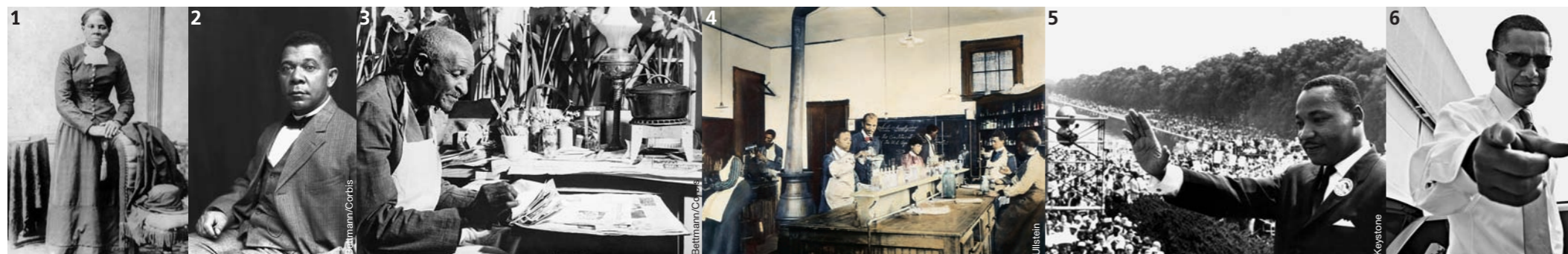
tween Britain, West Africa and the United States. Baltimore is also where the slave Frederick Douglass was taught to read and write. In 1838, Douglass escaped to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he gave speeches about life under slavery. The **Nathan and Polly Johnson House** in New Bedford, where Douglass attended **abolitionist** meetings, is a national historic **landmark**. Douglass later moved to Washington, DC, where he became an adviser to President Lincoln. You can visit Douglass’s two homes there.

Nathan and Polly Johnson were part of the Underground Railroad, a network of abolitionists — many of them Quakers — who hid escaped slaves in their homes and helped them to establish themselves in the North. The best-known of these was Harriet Tubman, who, after reaching freedom in Philadelphia in 1849, went back to Maryland to rescue her family, then again to rescue other slaves as well. Tubman’s courage and her **elaborate** methods of **evading** slavecatchers are documented in the **Harriet Tubman Museum** in Cambridge, Maryland.

The **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center** in Cincinnati, Ohio, which opened in 2004, offers a more general **approach** to the path taken by an estimated 100,000 slaves. You can listen to recordings of actors in the roles of slaves describing the risks that escape brought. Even if they got to Cincinnati, on the border between slave and free states, they were often followed as far as the Canadian border.

The slaves further south who could not escape turned to the only source of hope they had: religion. Some churches were stations on the Underground Railroad (see box, page 41). Old Testament metaphors of the Israelites living in **captivity**, then in the **wilderness**, gave inspiration to African-Americans who saw parallels to themselves. In songs ▶

abolitionist [ˌæbəlɪˈʃnɪst]	Gegner der Sklaverei etw. abschaffen)
abolish sth.	
approach [əˈprəʊtʃ]	Ansatz; hier: Betrachtungsweise
burying ground [ˈberɪŋ ˌgraʊnd] US	Friedhof
cabin [ˈkæbɪn]	Hütte
captivity [kæpˈtɪvətɪ]	Gefangenschaft
constitutional convention	verfassungsgebende
[kɔːnstəˌtuːʃənəl kənˈvenʃən]	Versammlung
descendant [dɪˈsendənt]	Nachkomme
elaborate [ɪˈlæbərət]	ausgeklügelt
evade sb. [iˈveɪd]	jmdm. entgehen/ ausweichen
founding [ˈfaʊndɪŋ]	Gründung
granary [ˈgrænəri]	Getreidespeicher
grave [ɡreɪv]	Grab
landmark [ˈlændmɑːrk]	Wahrzeichen; hier: Denkmal
leg [leg]	Strecke, Abschnitt
manor home [ˈmænər ˌhəʊm] US	Herrenhaus
memorial [məˈmɔːriəl]	Denkmal
oppressed [əˈprest]	unterdrückt
partially [ˈpɑːrʃiəli]	teilweise
permanent exhibition	ständige Ausstellung, Dauerausstellung
[ˌpɜːmənənt ˌeksɪˈbɪʃən]	
reconcile sth. with sth.	etw. mit einer Sache in Einklang bringen
[ˈriːkənˌsaɪl wɪθ]	
recreate sth. [ˌriːkriːeɪt]	etw. nachempfinden
replica [ˈreplɪkə]	Nachbau
self-evident [ˌself ˈeɪvɪdənt]	offensichtlich
shack [ʃæk]	Bude, Hütte
taunt sb. [tɔːnt]	jmdn. verhöhnen
wilderness [ˈwɪldrənəs]	Wildnis; hier: Wüste



History makers: Harriet Tubman (1), Booker T. Washington (2), George Washington Carver (3), Tuskegee Institute (4), Martin Luther King (5) and Barack Obama (6)