

Check It Out Column for week of Feb.14-20, 2010

Discover Black History at the Library

By Kathy Stutzman, Public Relations Manager

Millions watched last January's inauguration of the nation's first black President. It was a historic event for the United States. Although the focus was on the newly elected President, Barack Obama, there are plenty of black historic figures in America's history.

In the spirit of Black History Month, I want to encourage everyone to read up on the black history-makers of America. Those who were pioneers for their race, those who forged ahead in their endeavors regardless of obstacles, those who paved the way for freedom for all mankind in America. Here is just a sampling of what the Warsaw Community Public Library holds on its shelves:

Black and white airmen: their true history / John Fleischman. John Leahr and Herb Heilbrun grew up in the same neighborhood and were in the same third grade class together. They were classmates--not friends--because Herb was white and John was black. Old friends at last, Herb and John launched a mission to tell young people why race once made all the difference and why it shouldn't anymore.

Creating Black Americans: African-American history and its meanings, 1619 to the present / Nell Irvin Painter. Integrates art and history in this fascinating book, filled with powerful images of black art from photographs to paintings to quilts that tell the story of black America. Begins with the history and imagery of slavery through the Civil War and emancipation, then traces the cultural influences of the civil rights movement, the black power era, and ends with the hip-hop era.

The match: Althea Gibson and Angela Buxton : how two outsiders--one Black, the other Jewish--forged a friendship and made sports history / Bruce Schoenfeld. Coming from widely divergent backgrounds (Gibson from a poor black family in Harlem, Buxton from a well-to-do Jewish family in London), the two hooked up in the mid-1950s and became tennis partners and lifelong friends. Althea Gibson won Wimbledon and the U.S. championship only to discover that she could not make a decent living as a full-time black female athlete.

The Audacity of Hope by Barack Obama. Covers themes raised in his keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, shares personal views on faith and values and offers his vision of the future. *The New York Times* notes that "portions of the volume read like outtakes from a stump speech, and the bulk of it is devoted to laying out Mr. Obama's policy positions on a host of issues, from education to health care to the war in Iraq".

Reflections in Black: a history of Black photographers, 1840 to the present / Deborah Willis. Willis alternates chronological sections of photographs with essays that discuss the individual photographers and the scope of their work. They range from men and

women who operated photography studios and made dignified portraits of the people in their communities, to photojournalists documenting social change, to contemporary artists making creative statements with digital montage techniques.

A shining thread of hope: the history of Black women in America / Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson. Conveys the plight and pluck of African American women from their arrival at Jamestown, VA, in 1619 to what the authors describe as a new era at the dawn of the year 2000. Celebrating black women's historical strength.

100 African Americans who changed American history / Chrisanne Beckner. Youth. From Dred Scott to Toni Morrison, 100 African Americans Who Changed American History is a sweeping, insightful overview of African Americans who have played vital roles in the shaping of American history. Learn about Harriet Tubman, who fought for the abolition of slavery, and Louis Armstrong, a jazz pioneer. Find out how Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play in the World Series, how Martin Luther King, Jr. led the fight for civil rights, and much more!

African Americans during the Civil War / Deborah H. DeFord. Young adult. While Northern African Americans eventually were permitted to join the battle for the Union, some Southern African Americans revolted against their owners.

African Americans in science, math, and invention / Ray Spangenburg and Kit Moser. Ferguson, a medical researcher and pediatrician, researched the cause and treatment of sickle-cell anemia in children. Jemison, a physician, was the first African American woman in space. Morgan, an inventor, created many useful items, including a gas mask for firemen and an improved traffic signal, and later founded the *Cleveland Call* newspaper. And Quarterman, a chemist, worked on the Manhattan Project.

The forgotten fifth: African Americans in the age of revolution / Gary B. Nash. African-Americans made up a fifth of the population during the Revolutionary era. The first chapter, "The Black Americans' Revolution," illustrates how the War for Independence whetted slaves' thirst for freedom. Nash chronicles slave defection to the British (for whom many more blacks fought than for the Americans) and sketches vivid portraits of individuals who sued for their freedom in the courts.

For more information about black historic figures visit the library or use our online catalog at www.warsawlibrary.org.