
James Brown created a hit song to uplift the voices of African Americans and to stand up for the rights of African Americans. “Say it loud! I’m black and proud!” was considered as a protest song for not only for Civil Rights Movement but the official chant for the socialist organization, The Black Panther Party. This was the time when equal right was in high demand but completely ignored in the United States. Brown addresses the prejudice towards African Americans in America and the need for black empowerment. The opening lines catch the listener’s ears with “some people say we’ve got a lot of malice/some say it’s a lot of nerve.” The meaning behind the phrase is to show how people who not black are reacting when the topic of justice and equality comes to the table. In the second verse, Brown expressed the frustration of not receiving the respect and recognition as any hardworking citizen in America. “But all the work I did was for the other man” refers to how hard work and success would be the credit of the white man due to the inequality in the Jim Crowe era. Overall, James Brown’s “Say it loud! I’m black and I’m proud” has become a pioneer for song for future artists to voice their opinion on current events.


The musical biography song “Alright” is written and performed by Grammy Award artist
Kendrick Lamar. The content and message of the song are to empower the African American youths in the current state of society. It has been labeled as a politically charged song for the inequality toward African Americans in the United States. The chorus chants “we gon’ be alright” several times to ensure people that every negative situation will not last long. There has been a recent outburst of police brutality in the past years and it has involved predominately African Americans. The message has been deeply used by the Black Lives Matter protesters and the fight against police brutality. In the opening line, Lamar quotes Alice Walker’s “The Color Purple” by shouting, “Alls my life I has to fight.” Lamar voiced his opinion, not as though he was a slave or dealt with segregation, but as though he still had to face discrimination and judgment in the 21st century. “Alright” tackles the mindset of African Americans in multiple occasions like “we been hurt, been down before/when our pride was low,” as a representation of how his ancestors have dealt with discrimination and had pushed forward to freedom. “Alright” is a masterpiece of overcoming any situation, especially to the black youth and to remind people to keep hope alive.


Maya Angelou was an extraordinary African American writer during the late 1970s. Angelou was born on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri, but lived in Stamps, Kansas with her brother during her childhood. Having to face harsh discrimination as a young, black girl in Kansas during the Great Depression, Angelou had a grasp understanding of the vicious creature called racism. Angelou went five years of not speaking due to the dramatic after-effects of being raped by her mother’s boyfriend. She felt that her voice had power when revealed the attacker who had later murdered by her uncles. In her adult years, she published her award-winning novel, “I
Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.” In 1973, the awards winning poem, “Still I rise” was Angelou's waking call for the uplift of African American people and their culture. Maya Angelou represents strength and no matter the hardship, the individual will come out strong and will rise. She describes her upbringing as hard, but still delivered her message to "power to endure.” Maya Angelou has accomplished countless achievements as a writer and poet. She has empowered and encouraged for not only African-Americans but for women in the world.


Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King was the front man of the Civil Rights movement and has organized multiple nonviolent protests, including the infamous march in Washington, D.C. Dr. King was greatly inspired by the teaching of Mohandas K. Gandhi and the power of love. Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus Christ above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force in a large scale. He has used this method to create a nonviolent approach for freedom and equal rights. Dr. King deliver his groundbreaking speech, I Have a Dream. Despite the racial conflict against the black community, he gave his speech with a clear vision in mind. He preached, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," to a crowd full of believers, protesters, men, women, and children of different culture ethnicities gathering on the Washington Mall on August 28, 1968. Dr. King and the assistance of freedom’s advocates shared the same vision; they can accomplish anything and everything together because, with their faith, they will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.
Barack Obama was the 44th president of the United States of America. In history, he was one of the youngest and first African-American elected to the office. Born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii, Obama grew up most of his life in Hawaii, New York City, and Chicago. Obama attended Occidental College for two years, transfer to Columbia University, and graduated to attend Harvard Law School. Originally, Obama's career goal was to pursue into law but switched to politics. By 2004, he was elected to the U.S. Senate representing Illinois. A few years later, Obama made history in America by becoming the first African-American president. Obama election has given hope to Americans in the efforts to shift discrimination. He also published an autobiography entitled “Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance”, in 1995. Barack Obama has passed many laws from health care, women rights, education, and marriage equality. Without his sacrifices and diligence, many things would not be possible today. For this reason, Barack Obama's success story is recognized as America’s dream for young African Americans and possibly opened the door for black individuals in politics to help make a difference in this country.

Booker Taliaferro Washington was a major key component during lifespan as an educator, philosopher, politician, and speaker. Booker T. Washington was born as a slave in 1856, in Franklin County, Virginia under the guidance of his mother. Very eager and determined at a young age to get his education, Washington attended night schools and graduated with honors in
1875. On July 4, 1881, Washington opened the historic Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute or known now as Tuskegee University. This helped other young, promising African Americans to further their education and careers. Coincidentally, Tuskegee University became the leading school in the country with Washington's leadership. Washington became a historic black figure after he became the first African-American to be invited to White House by President Theodore Roosevelt and President William Howard Taft. Booker T. Washington paved more than a way but laid down a foundation of what hard work and dedication can create. Growing up as a slave was not factor toward his education, but a stepping stone toward his achievements.