

FAMOUS AMERICANS

Who are some famous Americans we should know?

Here is a list of some Americans who have worked to build our country.

William Bradford, b. 1590, England - In 1620, he led the Pilgrims to Plymouth Colony for religious freedom. As governor, he made peace with the Wampanoag Indians who lived where the Pilgrims settled in Massachusetts.

Benjamin Franklin, b. 1706, Boston, MA - writer who published *Poor Richard's Almanac* in which he gave advice, such as "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." He invented the lightning rod, bifocals, the battery, the odometer, and the Franklin stove. He started the first public library in America. He helped Thomas Jefferson write the *Declaration of Independence*.



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George Washington, b. 1732, Virginia - military leader, statesman, and surveyor, soldier, and a general in the American Revolution. In 1789, he became the first president of the newly formed United States.



Benjamin Banneker, b. 1731, Maryland - son of free slaves, he taught himself math and astronomy. He helped survey the land for Washington, DC. He is known as America's first black scientist.

Noah Webster - was a teacher who wanted American children to learn from books written by Americans, not from England. So he wrote the first American spelling book, grammar book, and reader in 1773. Later he wrote the first American dictionary.

Thomas Jefferson, b. 1743, Virginia - a surveyor and a lawyer, he wrote most of the *Declaration of Independence*. He designed many buildings including Monticello, his home. He had many slaves but he thought slavery was cruel. In 1801, Jefferson became the third president of the United States.



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Harriet Tubman, b. 1820, Maryland - She escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad, a secret way of helping slaves run away from the South. She became a "conductor" to help other slaves to freedom.

Menlo Park, NJ. He was known as the **Wizard of Menlo Park**. In 1879 he invented electric light bulbs to replace gas lamps. Later, his electric generators made electric lights available to the public. He also invented an improved telephone, an improved typewriter, and a record player. Edison was quoted as saying "Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration."

Amelia Earhart, b. 1897, Kansas - In 1928 she was the first woman to fly as a passenger on a plane across the Atlantic. In 1932 she was the first woman to fly an airplane by herself across the Atlantic.



Cesar Chavez, b. 1927, Arizona - a migrant worker, he taught other migrants how to read and write. He formed a union to help farm workers get fair pay and better working conditions.

Henry Ford, b. 1863, Michigan - In 1896 he mounted a gasoline engine in a four-wheel carriage and drove the first horseless carriage. He started the Ford Motor Company. By 1908 the cheaper **Model T** was introduced.



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George Eastman, b. 1854, New York - In 1888 he invented the first **Kodak** camera. The simple, reliable camera made photography available to everyone. He became wealthy and donated millions of dollars to schools.

Robert Frost, b. 1874, California - He was a teacher who won four Pulitzer Prizes for his poetry. He read his poem "The Gift Outright" at the 1960 inauguration of President John F. Kennedy.

Helen Keller, b. 1880, Alabama - became blind and deaf at age 2. Taught to read by Anne Sullivan, she went on to college which was unusual for a deaf person and a woman at that time. Wrote *The Story of My Life* and gave many speeches about helping people with disabilities.



Thurgood Marshall, b. 1908, Maryland - African American lawyer who brought many cases of segregation before the **Supreme Court**. Later became the first black Supreme Court judge.

Rosa Parks, b. 1913 - lived in Montgomery, Alabama where segregation was the law. In 1955, she refused to give her seat on the bus to a white man so she was arrested. Then all the black people began a bus strike. They refused to pay and the bus company lost so much money, the law was changed.

Eleanor Roosevelt, b. 1882, New York - became First Lady in 1905; she campaigned for human rights and social justice where she was



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Martin Luther King, Jr. b. 1929, Atlanta, GA - He was a minister who believed in peaceful methods to change unfair laws. He helped start the Civil Rights Movement. In 1963 he gave a famous speech saying "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." He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Neil Armstrong, b. 1930 - In 1969, he was the first astronaut to walk on the moon.