

FREE

# BLACK HISTORY

*Heroes, Soldiers & Spies*SOME OF THE CHARACTERS  
FROM THE SHOW

## Spotlight

### Hero

**George Washington Carver**

Born into slavery, George Washington Carver went on to work tirelessly to create new uses for easily grown crops--like peanuts! He always gave his uses away for free to help the common man.

### Soldier

**Colonel Charles Young**

This military man became the highest ranking Black military officer before being forced to resign. He worked with the Buffalo Soldiers and even became the nations first black superintendent of a national park.

### Spy

**Mary Elizabeth Bowser**

Born into slavery in Richmond, VA; Bowser had a photographic memory--she ended up eventually working in the house of Jefferson Davis and repeating things word-for-word to the Union.

### Soldier

**Buffalo Soldiers**

Active from 1866 to 1951; the Buffalo soldiers were formed in Leavenworth, Kansas. They are rumored to have received the name buffalo soldiers from the Native American people of the region--who compared their hair to that of buffalo. These all-black regiments overcame incredible prejudice and odds in heroic military endeavors.

**Frederick Douglass**

THIS ABOLITIONIST APPEARS IN THE SHOW!

BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY

Show Objective: We want to celebrate some of the forgotten heroes and soldiers of Black History in this inspiring production.

### ABOUT THE SHOW

In this production audiences will have the opportunity to experience, celebrate and learn about some



amazing people from throughout Black History. We'll take the audience westward to see the work of the Buffalo Soldiers and Col. Charles Young, They'll join the Tuskegee Airmen as they take flight to help win a battle in World War II. This play also highlights the work of spies such as Mary Elizabeth Bower who worked with the Union during the Civil War. We hope your audience finds this high



energy production, packed with interaction, inspiring and exciting!

*This show will offer the opportunity for several students to join our actors on-stage as they experience history first hand! Don't worry--teacher 'volunteers' are almost never used.*

Did you know that this is a true touring theatre company!? The Professional actors that you'll see are traveling the country in a mini van with three full-45-minute productions. They'll drive about 1,000 miles a week performing everywhere from the National Theatre in Washington DC to cafeterigymnasiums across the South. We offer more than 60+ Shows from anti-bullying to Black History,

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES!

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1

### MAKE INVISIBLE INK

*Paper, white crayon, watercolors.*

Our production celebrates a number of heroes and spies. For this activity you're going to make invisible ink! There are many recipes for invisible ink--our favorite uses lemon juice to write and a flame of some kind to reveal the message--so this is a safer recipe: On paper, have your students write a message with white crayon. Then have them paint over the paper with watercolors and ta-dah the message reappears!



## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 2

### Find a Hero from History

*Older Grades; Library or computer time*

History is filled with incredible stories of Black History Heroes, Soldiers & Spies. Research your own favorite black American that wasn't talked about in the show or uncover some new material of one who was. Prepare a report and present your finding to the class! One idea is to recreate a living museum. In a big space or hallway, have your students come dressed as



Tuskegee Airmen: African American fighter pilots who fought in World War II. Officially they formed the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group.

these people from our past. As other students walk by the statue comes to life and shares their story with the viewer.



## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 3

### I Wanna Be GWC!

*paper, pencil or crayons*

George Washington Carver found hundreds of uses for the peanut. Think of an object in the classroom and come up with at least 25 different uses for it--it can be things that the object was never intended for, get creative!



### DID YOU KNOW?

Eleanor Roosevelt flew with one of the very first black pilots to demonstrate that they black soldiers could be equally qualified and competent pilots!

## Learn Geography: Map Reading Skills!

Using a big map of the United States let's explore where some of the stories we talked about today happened.

Can you remember places that were mentioned in the show? Here's some places to get you started:

**George Washington Carver was born in Diamond, Missouri.**

**Col. Charles Young was born in Mays Lick, Kentucky and worked as a Park Ranger in Sequoia National Park in California.**

**Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland**

**The Tuskegee airmen were educated in Tuskegee, Alabama**

**Frederick Douglass published his first abolition paper in Rochester, New York**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### General Show Questions

Why is it important to learn about Black History and these significant Americans?

How would life be different if these people had never done the things they did?

Who is your favorite hero, soldier or spy you learned about?



### Mary Elizabeth Bowser:

Why do you think she was so successful as a spy?

Would you have had the courage to do what she did?

What makes her story so unique?

What was life like during the Civil War for people like Ms. Bowser?



### Colonel Charles Young

Why do you think Col. Young is so important?

Col. Young overcame significant racism in his life--how do you think you would handle living in a world facing the obstacles, he did?

What was so significant about the Buffalo Soldiers?



### Tuskegee Airmen

Why do you think it was so important for people like Ms. Roosevelt to fly with a black pilot?

What's the significance of these Airmen? Why are they so important?

How did these pilots change America and the world in which we live?

Are the Tuskegee Airman still important today? If so, why?



“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”

Dr. Martin Luther King

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”

Frederick Douglass



BLACK HISTORY HEROES,  
SOLDIERS & SPIES

# Can we help?

Here are some helpful things for your school, from our research

## Racism

**A big part of our show are the stories of these Americans overcoming great racism and obstacles. Here are some tips to help address these issues in your own school.**

- 1) Stay Calm when you witness a racist remark or action
- 2) Address the behavior. It's your responsibility.
- 3) Once you have raised the attention of the student who has demonstrated the racism--address how their words affect the bullied student.
- 4) Teach acceptance and respect for all students.

## Bullying

### Anonymous Reporting Box

A lot of schools have found it helpful to have a bullying box available. It's here that students can report bullying incidents they experience or witness. Follow-up is vital to this. Patterns, people and locations may begin to help teachers identify the students or locations in the school that may need the extra attention.

### Be there to help!

When a student has the courage to report or tell you about a bullying incident it's important that you take action. It's equally important that your school have the tools in place to ensure you know what to do in such an instance. Just know you may be the only adult in this young person's life they are willing to reach out to for help.



# MORE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

**STORY OF THEIR LIFE** (Best for grades 5-8; Materials Needed: Pencil & Paper) Divide your class into groups of 3-4. Assign or let each group pick a different famous hero, soldier or spy to make their presentation about. Have the group then write a play or dramatization of their life story. Make sure it includes a few key moments that made this person famous. Then have the groups assign roles for each person to play. Depending on the story, there may be multiple roles given to a few people in the group. Have each group present to the class. After each group performs, have a discussion about what everyone learned about the person.



**WRITE YOUR OWN LIFE AS A HERO, SOLDIER OR SPY** (Best for grades 3rd-8th; Materials Needed: Pencil & Paper) Have each person in the class write their own fictional story as a hero, soldier or spy. What happens to you? Why are you a hero, soldier or spy? What sort of risks to you face? Were you caught as a spy? Were you injured as a soldier? What makes you a hero? Does the story have an ending? What happens to you? Maybe explore each person sharing their story with the classroom when they're all done.



**THE ENEMY & THE PROTECTOR** (Best for grades 3rd-8th; Materials Needed: None) In an open space large enough for everyone to walk around, have the class stand up and begin walking at random around the room. Have each student silently pick someone in the room to be their enemy. No one else is supposed to know who they pick. Then have each person in the class also silently pick a protector. Again, no one in the room should know who each person picks. At this time, you let them know that (without running) they have to keep their chosen protector between them and their enemy at all times. Watch as the hilarity ensues. If the game is played correctly, eventually the class will find themselves walking in a straight line at the end.



**UNCONVENTIONAL PRESENTATION** (Best for grades 4th-8th; Materials Needed: Pencil & Paper) Divide the classroom into groups of 3-4. Assign each group a famous hero, soldier or spy from the play. You can also assign the same person to every single group. Then instruct each group to come up with a way to honor that person's life story or accomplishments. This can be either through a play, song, rap, poem, dance or any other medium the group chooses. It just has to be presented in performance art in one way or another. Give the groups about half an hour to come up with their presentation and then let each group present one at a

time to the entire class. After each group goes, open a discussion about the presentation.



**SPY ON A CLASSMATE** (Best for grades 5th-8th; Materials Needed: Pencil & Paper) Write everyone's name in the class down on a piece of paper and put it into a hat. Walk around the room and have the class anonymously draw a name out of the hat. Have them secretly observe that person for a week and find things out about them. At the end of the week have each student give a report on things they observed about the person they picked and things that they have in common with them.

Did you know?

## Harriet Tubman



Harriet Tubman did a lot of great work, including rescuing some 300 people out of slavery and helping them to escape northward. But you may not know that when she was younger she was hit in the head with a 2-pound weight for refusing to help her master tie up a slave that tried to escape. This injury caused her to have unexpected and passing black-outs for the rest of her life. In the late 1890's she underwent brain surgery in Boston—can you imagine? It healed her and she never suffered from black-outs again.

# BEFORE, DURING, & AFTER THE PLAY

## FUN FACTS ABOUT THEATRE!

After a play is over and everyone goes home, there is always a light left on backstage. It's called a ghost light!

The oldest play that is still around was written by an Ancient Greek man named Aeschylus. It's almost 2500 years old!

The longest performance on stage ever was over 23 hours long! It happened in New Jersey in 2010.

William Shakespeare is a famous playwright. He wrote 37 plays and is still quoted by many people. There are 157 million google pages that mention him—the most of any famous person ever!

In theatre, it's considered bad luck to tell an actor, "Good luck" before a performance. Instead, you're supposed to say, "Break a leg!"

In Ancient Greece, audiences stamped their feet rather than clapping their hands to applaud.

World theatre day is an annual celebration on March 27th. How will you choose to celebrate?

## BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY...

Attending the theatre is very different from watching TV or going to the movies. For one thing, the actors are real people who are performing right then and there. They can see and hear everything that happens in the audience. Because of this, YOU are an important part of the play and it's also important to do your job as an audience member well. Here are some tips before you see the play.

1. Please be quiet and respectful so everyone else around you can hear what's happening and so the actors can do their job.
2. If something is funny, it's okay to laugh!
3. The actors may ask you to participate. Don't be afraid to respond, ask a question or volunteer!
4. Keep your hands to yourself and your eyes up front.
5. If you like the play, be sure to clap at the end.
6. Have fun! Enjoy yourself!



## AFTER SEEING THE PLAY...

Write your own review of the play! A review is a way of telling your thoughts about a play, movie, book or music. Consider the following things when you are writing your review.

*What was your favorite part? Who was your favorite character? Can you summarize the play in your own words? If you had written this play, would you have done anything different? Would you recommend this play to a friend or family member? Name one new thing you learned from watching this play!*

## YOU CAN DO THIS TOO!



**Where to start:** All of our actors started out playing an telling stories when they were young - then they decided to study acting in school. Here are some ways you can start doing theatre right away!

**In School!** Does your school have plays or musical performances? This is a great place to start.

**In Your Community!** Many towns have community theatres or local acting groups. See if you can try out!

**Start Something!** If your school doesn't have a drama club or a theatre class, talk to your favorite teacher about how you might be able to start one.

**At Home!** Get together with friends, cousins, brothers and sisters and make your own play. You can make up plays based on your favorite books and stories. Invite your family and friends to see your performance.

**Try New Things and Do You Best!** There are lots of jobs in the theatre besides acting. There are people who paint the sets, make costumes, write plays, and more! Get the most of your art, music and English classes. You can use all of these things to be a live theatre pro!

# EVERYTHING ABOUT THE THEATRE!

## Theatre Vocabulary!

**Actor:** The people onstage performing the play.



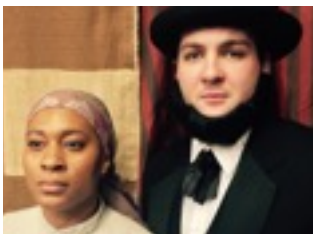
**Backdrop:** The background for the play.

**Props:** Anything that an actor holds while onstage - a cane, book, or even a rubber chicken!

**Downstage:** The area closest to the audience. A long time ago stages were built at angles.

**Upstage:** The area away from the audience, like the back wall of the stage.

**Director:** The person who told the actors where to go while they were onstage and helped them create the characters they played.



## Facts about us!

1. Did you know we're owned by an Emmy winning actor?
2. Our actors average 1,000 miles a week traveling the country to entertain young audiences.
3. Our programs have been seen in almost every corner of the country an even around the world.
4. We watch over 1200 actors audience before we cast our season.
5. We offer dozens of different shows a season from Black History to anti-bullying and literary classics.
6. We toured Moscow, Russia with performances of our Aesop's Fables, Once Upon a Time..., & Happily Ever After.
7. We're based in Asheville, North Carolina.

We were founded in 2003, Bright Star Touring Theatre tours the nation offering high quality, affordable programs to every imaginable venue. We've had countless engagements at the National Theatre in Washington D.C., toured Moscow, and are so grateful to be in your community today!

**Costumes:** The wigs, clothing and glasses that the actors wore to help polish their characters.

**Auditions:** How an actor gets a role is by auditioning. They may have to interview, pretend to be a character from the play or read something from the play.

**Set Designer:** The person who decided what should be on the background and who painted it.



## The Process of a Play:

1. Actors audition
2. Directors cast the show (that means they choose the actors they want)
3. The directors and actors rehearse the play (that means they practice it)
4. A team of people works on building the set, costumes, and props.
5. They play opens (that means it is performed for the first time!)

Were there other terms that came for the experience of seeing the live play that you'd like to learn more about? What did you like about being involved in a live performance?

Bright Star Touring Theatre  
Bright Star Touring Theatre performs across the country from Boston to Burbank and many schools, museums, theatre and community events in between. Each season our shows run the gamut from Black History to anti-bullying, from literary classics to biographical shows. Our shows are available throughout the year for any event in any part of the world.

Black History: Heroes,  
Soldiers, & Spies

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To learn more about this show, this company & our whole season:

[www.brightstartheatre.com](http://www.brightstartheatre.com)

We want every show to be special and remarkable for our audience. Please feel free to connect with us at anytime to tell us about your experience:

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