Andrew Carnegie
1835 - 1919

Andrew Carnegie's rags-to-riches story is one of perseverance, initiative, and resourcefulness. Carnegie was born in 1835 to a working-class Scottish family. He came to the United States with his family when he was thirteen years old. He began working right away: as a messenger, a bobbin boy, and steam machine operator. In 1853 he took a job as telegraph operator at a railroad company. He was charming and intelligent. He took an active interest in his work and quickly advanced at the company.

Carnegie also took the initiative to learn about investing. He wisely invested his money in equipment and technologies that he believed were good for to the railroad industry. In 1889, he founded the Carnegie Steel Company. This company combined with others to create U.S. Steel. U.S. Steel helped meet the country's great demand for steel—used in railroads, skyscrapers, and other examples of great technological achievements. He literally helped build America.


John Quincy Adams
1767 - 1848

Some believe John Quincy Adams's most heroic contribution to his country came after he was President. Adams was born in Massachusetts in 1767. He was the son of President John Adams. After serving in various offices, including the Presidency, John Quincy Adams was elected to Congress in 1830.

In 1835, the House of Representatives voted to table (postpone without hearing) any petitions about slavery. Adams, then in his mid-seventies, was still vigilant. He led a small group of Representatives in the fight against the Gag Rule. Adams said that whatever one's position on slavery, the Gag Rule was a violation of the First Amendment's protection of freedom of petition. “[T]he stake in the question is your right to petition, your freedom of thought and of action, and the freedom in Congress of your Representative,” he declared. The Gag Rule had to be renewed each session, and Adams courageously fought against it each time. Over those nine years, Adams was accused of treason and even received death threats. But he never backed down.

The Gag Rule was repealed in 1844, due in part to John Quincy Adams's courageous fight for the First Amendment right to freedom of petition.
Henry Clay
1777 - 1852

Henry Clay’s perseverance and moderation earned him his reputation as the “Great Compromiser.” Clay was raised with his eight siblings in Hanover County, Virginia. With little formal schooling, he was trained as a lawyer. He saw opportunities on the expanding frontier, and moved west to Kentucky in 1797. He found great success, and was known as an eloquent and courteous speaker.

The new frontier brought great challenges as well as opportunities. Clay represented Kentucky in both the House and Senate. As a lawmaker, he put the integrity of the Union first. He made a deal in the Senate to lower tariffs slowly when South Carolina threatened to secede (leave the nation) in response to the Tariff Act. As Speaker of the House, he helped lead the young nation through struggles over slavery. Clay was able to calm the bitterness on both sides to secure passage of the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850. He helped pass laws he hoped would allow the nation to survive.

He died in 1852, a year after leaving Congress. Henry Clay’s commitment to his country as a whole was made clear on his headstone: “I know no North—no South—no East—no West.”

Cesar Chavez
1927 - 1965

Cesar Chavez struggled throughout his life for better working conditions for union farm workers. He was born in Yuma, Arizona. His parents lost their farm in the Great Depression, and the family moved from place to place, working the fields. He attended thirty-seven different schools. These early experiences left their mark and gave his life purpose. His father had been injured in a car accident, so after eighth grade, young Chavez became a farm worker to help support his family.

In 1962, Chavez founded and organized the National Farm Workers Association, later called the United Farm Workers. This union was the first of its kind, and fought for contracts, safe conditions, higher wages, and job security for union members. He led a nationwide boycott of grapes that increased support for the United Farm Workers. In a movement called *La Cosa*, he brought together churches, unions, and consumers. His motto was “*Si, se puede.*” (“Yes, it can be done.”)

A humble and deeply religious man, Chavez’s hunger strikes, boycotts, and marches got America’s attention, and improved the lives of thousands. Though his critics point out that unionized farm labor resulted in great numbers of willing migrant workers being turned away from jobs, Cesar Chavez’s perseverance brought the experiences of migrant workers to national attention.
FREDERICK DOUGLASS

ROBERTO CLEMENTE
Frederick Douglass  
1818 - 1895

Frederick Douglass wrote and spoke about the injustices of slavery and helped open the eyes of a nation. He was born a slave in Maryland, in 1817 or 1818. Although it was against the law to teach enslaved people to read, Douglass learned to read and also taught other slaves to do so. He knew that reading and learning would help people see that slavery was a great injustice. After two failed attempts, Douglass escaped from slavery in 1838.

Douglass settled in Massachusetts where he went to abolitionist meetings. He began giving speeches on his experiences, and soon he began traveled in America and Europe giving lectures. He also published his thoughts in a weekly newspaper. His most important work was his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas, an American Slave*. It was very popular and, like his speeches, opened many peoples' eyes to the horrors of slavery. Douglass advised two Presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, about the treatment of African Americans. He spoke and wrote in favor of a constitutional amendment securing voting rights and other liberties for former slaves.

Frederick Douglass persevered in his work for equal rights for former slaves, and also for women, until he died.

Roberto Clemente  
1934–1972

Roberto Clemente was an impressive outfielder and hitter for the Brooklyn Dodgers and Pittsburgh Pirates Major League baseball teams from the 1950s through 1972. Clemente was Puerto Rican, and he dealt with discrimination from the some members of the press and baseball fans. He showed great courage and perseverance and was voted Most Valuable Player in 1971.

Clemente was a humanitarian and philanthropist concerned with protecting the rights of other people, especially those of Hispanic descent. One of Clemente's dreams was to open a sports center for disadvantaged Puerto Rican youth athletes. In 1972, while Clemente managing a team in the Amateur World Series in Nicaragua, a devastating earthquake struck the country. Clemente became the chairman of the relief committee and helped to raise money and collect supplies for the victims. He helped load a plane with supplies and boarded the flight. The plane exploded soon after take-off, and Clemente was killed.

To honor Clemente and his dream, his wife and son started The Roberto Clemente Sports City in California. After his death, Clemente was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame and received the Congressional Medal of Honor.
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Thomas Edison
1847 - 1931

Thomas Edison saw every obstacle as an opportunity. “Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration,” he said. He had little schooling and was deaf from a young age, but he pursued his interests with resourcefulness and passion. He loved science and mechanics. He was driven to invent.

By 1868, Edison had improved the telegraph and the typewriter. He made an electric vote recorder and a stock ticker. Two years later, he had enough money to open his first “invention factory.” He was only twenty-three. He and the talented team of engineers and scientists he hired would change the world.

Within five years, they had perfected the telephone and created the phonograph. Next, they became famous for the incandescent light bulb. Later they worked on the motion picture camera, talking movies, a car battery, and an x-ray machine. In his lifetime, Edison registered 1,093 patents.

“The three essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itive-ness; third, common sense,” Edison said. With a booming business and boundless enthusiasm, Thomas Edison helped bring America into the modern age.

Gloria Estefan
b. 1957

Gloria Estefan was born in Havana, Cuba. Her parents fled Communist Cuba and headed to Miami, Florida when she was a child. Throughout her life she showed great courage and perseverance in her career and personal life. Estefan gained success with the music group, the Miami Sound Machine, in the 1980s. The band recorded their first few albums in Spanish, but also released hit music in English. Estefan was the lead singer for the band, and she also became involved in writing songs and producing.

In 1990, Estefan, her husband, and son were in a terrible bus accident. Estefan’s spinal injuries were severe, and many people wondered if she would be able to recover. Estefan persevered through the injuries and within the next year, she was performing again. Since the accident, she released many successful solo albums in Spanish and English and toured all over North America.
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

FANNIE LOU HAMER
Fannie Lou Hamer
1917 - 1977

Fannie Lou Hamer courageously fought for her right to vote. Hamer was born in Mississippi in 1917. In 1962 she attended a voter registration meeting. It was there that she first learned the Fifteenth Amendment protected African Americans’ ability to vote. She left that meeting determined to register to vote.

Hamer decided she wanted to help other African Americans participate in American democracy. She took the initiative to organize registration drives. On these drives, she became famous for singing hymns. In one 1963 drive, she was thrown in jail. Montgomery County guards beat her and fellow civil rights workers. She lost her job and even received death threats, but she persevered.

In 1964, Hamer spoke out at the Democratic National Convention about people being illegally prevented from voting. A year later in 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. This law removed many barriers to voting, and many see it as a fulfillment of the Fifteenth Amendment’s promise. Fannie Lou Hamer’s courage and perseverance had never wavered.

Benjamin Franklin
1706 - 1790

Benjamin Franklin dedicated his life to improving the lives of his fellow citizens. He did this by creating goods, services, and a form of government. “The most acceptable service of God is doing good to Man,” he said. He lived by this principle—as a citizen, author, inventor, scientist, and statesman.

Franklin’s life was filled with firsts. He put his ideas in action to create the first fire department, the first public library, and the first public hospital in Philadelphia. He shared homespun humor and advice in his popular Poor Richard’s Almanack. He also improved peoples’ lives with his inventions. He made the first lightning rod, bifocal glasses, and iron furnace stove.

Yet Franklin made his greatest contributions to America’s first governments. He had a strong sense of responsibility and never refused a public office. To build the new republic, he served faithfully at the Second Continental Congress. He helped draft the Declaration of Independence. He helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War. He joined the Constitutional Convention, where he stood up for a stronger union and worked hard to protect citizens from tyranny. Benjamin Franklin was optimistic about America’s future; and gave much of his life to help her grow.
Martin Luther King, Jr.
1929 - 1968

Martin Luther King, Jr. persevered for civil rights throughout his life. King was born in Georgia in 1929. He fought for desegregation and equal rights for African Americans by speaking out and leading marches. He always preached non-violence as a means for change.

The most important march of King’s career was the March on Washington in 1963. A quarter of a million people packed the National Mall. King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In his speech, King referred to the “architects of our republic” and their commitment to freedom. He electrified the crowd with his speech, saying, “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

In the years that followed, King led civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama. He always urged moderation in non-violence protest. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was assassinated in 1968. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s funeral was attended by 300,000 people, and his courageous life continues to inspire people today.

Thomas Jefferson
1743 - 1826

Thomas Jefferson spent his life fighting for the integrity of each person’s beliefs, and the integrity of his country. Born in Virginia in 1743, he was a respected lawyer and writer. When he was 33 years old, Jefferson wrote and signed his name to the Declaration of Independence. The King considered this treason, but Jefferson and the other signers had the courage and integrity to stand by their beliefs.

Jefferson fought for the new nation’s promise to protect rights. He authored the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in 1786. This statute, which is still part of Virginia law, brought an end to the state church. Jefferson was serving in France while the Constitution was being drafted in 1787. But he stayed involved. He wrote letters to Convention delegates. He urged that a bill of rights be added to the Constitution. Years after the Bill of Rights was adopted, he fought against a 1798 law that made it a crime to criticize the federal government. Two years later, he was elected president.

After two terms as president, he retired to his home, Monticello. In 1819, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia, one of his proudest achievements.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JAMES ARMISTEAD LAFAYETTE
James Armistead Lafayette
1748 - 1830

Armistead was born into slavery in 1748 in Virginia. He wanted to fight for independence from England, and his master gave him permission to serve in the Continental Army in 1781. He courageously became a spy for the Marquis de Lafayette. Posing as a runaway slave, Armistead was allowed into the British camps. He listened closely as British officers, including Benedict Arnold and General Cornwallis, detailed their strategies. He then sent crucial information about their plans to the Lafayette and General George Washington. He would also pass the British inaccurate information about American movements. It was dangerous work. If he had been discovered, he would surely have been hanged.

Because he was a spy and not a soldier, Armistead was not eligible for freedom under a 1783 Virginia act freeing slaves who served in the Continental Army. He and his owner petitioned the Virginia legislature for his freedom; his petition included a recommendation from Lafayette. When the legislature granted his freedom, Armistead changed his surname to Lafayette. As a free man, he became a farmer, raised a large family, and received a monthly pension from the army for his services.

Abraham Lincoln
1809 - 1865

Abraham Lincoln rose from obscurity to celebrity, from boyhood on the Kentucky frontier to President of the United States. Despite election defeats, he persevered in his pursuit of public office. In 1858, he became famous in debates over the western expansion of slavery. The nation could not survive half slave, half free, he said.

Elected on the eve of Civil War, Lincoln courageously led the nation through four bloody, tumultuous years. At Gettysburg in 1863, he inspired all Americans to recover the integrity of their country and its ideals. The United States was “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” For his second inaugural speech, Lincoln stood on the East Portico of the Capitol, March 4, 1865. The end of the Civil War was in sight. Thousands had gathered to hear him. They expected a victory speech.

Lincoln surprised them. He called for forgiveness and unity. He knew the challenges the nation would face. Abraham Lincoln’s words echo through the ages: “With malice toward none; with charity for all … let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds…” and arrive at a “just and lasting peace.”
JAMES MADISON

THURGOOD MARSHALL
Thurgood Marshall
1908 - 1993

Thurgood Marshall may be best known as the first African American Supreme Court Justice, but his courage and determination were clear long before his appointment to the Court. He was born in 1908, the grandson of a slave. He graduated from college with honors. In 1930, he was turned down at the University of Maryland because he was black. He completed law school at the historically black Howard University.

Marshall decided to use his talents to end segregation in public life. His first legal victory came against the University of Maryland’s admission policy—the very school which did not let him in because of his race. He became chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Marshall and the NAACP began a legal campaign against segregation in public schools. This struggle ended when Marshall argued Brown v. Board of Education (1954) before the Supreme Court. This decision declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

Marshall was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1967, becoming the first African American Associate Justice. Thurgood Marshall spent almost a quarter century on the Court, supporting the Constitution’s protections for individual and civil rights.

James Madison
1751 - 1836

James Madison’s ideas formed the backbone for the United States’ plan for self-government. Madison, a wealthy Virginia planter, grew up small, thin, and sickly. Physically, he could not compete with many Founders. Intellectually, he was a giant.

Madison had the initiative and resourcefulness to nurture a nation in ways no one else could. In 1787, he was a leader at the Constitutional Convention. He took notes, spoke often, and helped people come to compromises. He was ever vigilant about the abuse of government power, and worked to prevent it. He was wise enough to be worried about factions. He suggested a system of checks and balances. He also worked to balance the power of the states and the federal government. Both are key parts of American government.

When the Constitution was sent to the states, Madison wrote newspaper articles to defend it. When it became clear that the Constitution would not pass without it, he drafted the Bill of Rights. Madison believed the new government was “the work of many heads and many hands.” History, however, has made James Madison famous as the “Father of the Constitution.”
William Penn
1644 - 1718

William Penn’s fight for religious liberty spanned four decades and two continents. At twenty-four years of age, Penn was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1668 for life. But he did not repent. “I owe my conscience to no mortal man,” he declared. A devout Quaker, he had been persecuted for his beliefs. Fortunately, Penn was well-connected. Within eight months he was released. He continued to write and give speeches. He continued to support religious toleration. He continued to protest efforts to force Englishmen to follow one faith.

As he grew older, Penn became interested in America. In 1681, the King gave him the largest remaining piece of land between New York and Maryland as payment of a debt to his father. Penn named the colony for his father, calling it “Pennsylvania” or Penn’s Woods. He advertised for colonists, and they came in droves.

Penn called it his “Holy Experiment.” As governor, he believed that good government could not force a faith or require conformity. Respect for individual beliefs and self-government, William Penn argued, would bring peace and prosperity to Pennsylvania—and they did.

Rosa Parks
1913 - 2005

Parks has been called “The Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.” She was born in Tuskegee, Alabama and was raised on a farm. She grew up in the shadow of Jim Crow laws, which rigidly segregated society. On December 1, 1955, as Parks was riding the bus home, she was asked to give up her seat and move further back in the bus. Parks refused, and was arrested.

Parks’ courage led to a boycott of city buses championed by the relatively unknown Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., along with many others. During the boycott, members of the black community (many of whom could not afford cars) made sacrifices for their rights. Some cab drivers, in solidarity with the boycotters, began charging blacks only 10 cents per ride to assist with the hardships that came with the bus boycott. When the city government announced they would prosecute these cab drivers, leaders began a “private taxi plan” offering coordinated transportation. They risked not only arrest, but police brutality and mob violence.

The boycott was powerful—Montgomery county bus passengers were 75% African American—and it lasted more than a year: 381 days. In November of 1956 the District Court ruled that segregation on buses was unconstitutional and boycott officially ended.
BENJAMIN RUSH

JACKIE ROBINSON
Benjamin Rush
1745 - 1813

The fourth of seven children born to Quaker parents, Benjamin Rush was the most famous physician of his time.

Known and respected by many of the Founding generation, Benjamin Rush treated illnesses such as yellow fever and smallpox, putting himself at great risk to do so. During the yellow fever epidemic of the 1790s he often saw more than one hundred patients a day and published an account of his findings in 1793. He did not limit his ingenuity to medicine. He also played a major role in revolutionary politics, attending the Continental Congress of 1776 and signing the Declaration of Independence. He and James Wilson led their home state of Pennsylvania to become the second state to ratify the new Constitution.

Decidedly revolutionary in his thinking, he worked to cure social ills such as slavery, alcoholism, and tobacco addiction. He was passionate about education. He knew that schools promoted virtue, and virtue was key in a free society like the American republic. He was a pioneer in the study of mental illness and a champion of humanitarian reforms. He often said that, when it came to bringing about much-needed change, “Prudence is a rascally virtue.” His reputation was for innovation and candor, if sometimes to the point of tactlessness.

Jackie Robinson
1919 - 1972

Jackie Robinson was born in Georgia in 1919. Abandoned by his father and raised with his four siblings by their mother, Robinson’s early life experiences were of segregation: in restaurants, movie theaters, and at school. His mother taught him self-respect, courage, and perseverance. His athletic talents blossomed in high school. He excelled at many sports. As a player in the Negro American League, Robinson’s batting average approached .400.

Robinson signed on with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, ending 80 years of segregation in professional baseball. Robinson knew it would be a tough road. Some players threatened to strike. When he was at bat, fast balls would narrowly miss his head. The crowd taunted him with racial epithets. His family received hate mail. But Robinson did not back down. And as time went on, his fellow ball players could not deny his talents and contributions to the team.

Robinson was a trailblazer in American sports. In 1997, on the anniversary of his first game, Major League baseball retired Jackie Robinson’s number—42—as a testament to his courage and perseverance.
ELIZABETH Cady Stanton

HARRIETT BEECHER STOWE
Harriet Beecher Stowe 1811 - 1896

Harriet Beecher Stowe used the power of her pen to open the eyes of a nation to the injustices of slavery. She was born in Connecticut in 1811. She lived in a Protestant, abolitionist tradition: her father a minister, her brother a theologian, her husband a clergyman.

When Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, Stowe knew she had to act. At the time, women had few ways to engage in politics. She could not run for office, or even vote, but she was undeterred. Ever resourceful, she found a political voice in her writings. She began to do research by interviewing former slaves and others who had personal experience with slavery. Her first novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, told of the abuse suffered by enslaved people and families in emotional, human terms.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 10,000 copies in its first week, and was a bestseller in its time. She reached peoples' hearts and minds in a way that politicians had not been able to do. Historians believe the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sped up the outbreak of the Civil War, as more and more people believed the nation had a duty to end slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe's writing truly changed a nation's view of justice.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815 - 1902

Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for the ideals of the Declaration of Independence—that all people are created equal. Stanton was born in New York State in 1815. She received a formal education, unlike most women of her time. She did well in school, impressing her teachers and classmates with her intelligence. But as a woman, she could not attend the college of her choice.

Stanton was disturbed by women's lower legal status. She helped organize the first women's rights convention in the US in Seneca Falls, New York. At that convention, the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions was read. This document, based on the Declaration of Independence and written by Stanton, declared the legal equality of men and women, and listed the legal rights women should have, including the right of suffrage (voting). Her work helped launch the women's movement which eventually won women the right to vote.

Stanton knew she was fighting for something bigger than herself. She did not live to see the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Susan B. Anthony wrote when Elizabeth Cady Stanton died, "Mrs. Stanton was always a courageous woman, a leader of thought and new movements."
Mary Tsukamoto (left)  
1915 - 1998

Mary Tsukamoto devoted her life to ensuring civil rights for all Americans. She was born in San Francisco to parents who had come to California from Japan. She attended a segregated school, and helped her family grow modest crops despite laws banning Japanese people from owning the land they farmed.

In 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. President Roosevelt was concerned that people of Japanese descent might aid the Japanese. Roosevelt signed an Executive Order creating detention camps. 120,000 people of Japanese descent—most of them American citizens—were rounded up and forced to live in the camps. They lost their possessions, their livelihoods, and their dignity.

Tsukamoto worked to make sure the story of Japanese Internment would not be forgotten by history. She recorded her experience in a book: *We the People: A Story of Internment in America*. She also worked with the California History Museum and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. to develop exhibits about Japanese Internment. Despite her experience, she remained committed to self-government. In 1990, Mary Tsukamoto wrote: “Only in a democracy can we correct mistakes. I am proud to be an American.”

Mary Beth Tinker  
b. 1952

Mary Beth Tinker fought for the right of students to respectfully express their personal views in public school. Tinker was a thirteen year old middle school student from Des Moines, Iowa in 1965. She opposed the war in Vietnam. She, her older brother John, and other students decided to wear black armbands to school to protest the war and mourn the dead. When they got to school, they were told they would be suspended from school until they returned without the armbands.

Tinker believed the punishment she faced was unjust. She believed had a right to express her views in a respectful and non-disruptive way. She courageously wore the armband even though she knew she would be suspended. She refused to give up her fight. She and her brother took their case to the Supreme Court.

In *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) Tinker won her case. The Court said that the armbands were “akin to pure speech.” Schools must have the ability to keep order, but unless students truly disrupt school, they do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” Mary Beth Tinker’s fight for justice became a landmark victory for public school students’ rights.
GEORGE WASHINGTON

HARRIETT TUBMAN
George Washington  
1732 - 1799

George Washington wanted his presidency to be an example of moderation, just as he had lived his life. On September 19, 1796, Washington gave his Farewell Address. Although the Constitution did not limit the President’s term, Washington knew the system of checks and balances was designed to prevent abuse of power. The letter of the law did not forbid a third term, but he believed its spirit did.

The decision to step down kept with Washington’s character. Throughout his life, he worked to follow a set of strongly held values including moderation and responsibility. He was a hot tempered person, but he moderated his actions. He always answered the call of duty—as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, and as president of the Constitutional Convention. And he always stepped down when the job was done. In fact, Washington warned against leaders with a “love of power” and the ability to abuse it. There was no greater danger to liberty, no greater peril for a free people.

The people wanted him to stay, but he knew he could not. He was aware that as the first president, everything he did would be setting an example for all the future presidents of the United States. By resigning, he was a model of moderation. To George Washington, the preservation of the American republic was more important than personal gain.

Harriet Tubman  
1820 - 1913

Harriet Tubman, an enslaved field hand who could not read, escaped to freedom in 1849. Thirty years of poverty and abuse had left her small body battered and scarred. But her spirit was unstoppable. “There was one of two things I had a right to—liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other,” she later said.

Not content with securing her own freedom, Tubman then turned to helping others escape. Although she faced death or re-enslavement if caught, Tubman became a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad in the 1850s. At first, she returned south to rescue her family. Over time, she saved hundreds of slaves. She was clever and gifted at avoiding capture, so successful that she was nicknamed “Moses.” Nineteen times, she made the dangerous 650-mile journey from Maryland to Canada. She was never caught, and “never lost a passenger.”

During the Civil War, she became a scout, spy, nurse, and cook. She recruited freedmen to the Union cause, and helped lead raids that freed hundreds more slaves. With unequalled courage, Tubman pursued liberty for every American, and in doing so became a legend.
IDA B. WELLS

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS
Ida B. Wells
1862 - 1931

Ida B. Wells worked to bring national attention to ending the injustice of lynching. Wells was born in Mississippi in 1862, the oldest of eight children. Her parents died when she was 14, and she raised her younger siblings herself. She put herself through college and became a teacher in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1892, Wells lost three close friends to a lynch mob. These gruesome killings made headlines, but no one was arrested or charged. As a journalist and a newspaper owner and editor, Wells courageously wrote about the racism that motivated such murders. The press attacked her as a “black scoundrel.” A mob ransacked her office and threatened her life, but she continued to speak the truth about lynching.

Wells later moved to Chicago where she published *The Red Record*, the first documented statistical report on lynching. She became a respected public speaker, and traveled widely. She co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Ida B. Well’s courage and perseverance helped end an on-going injustice, and brought about important change in the United States.
ANDREW CARNEGIE

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
John Quincy Adams
1767 - 1848

John Quincy Adams was a man of perseverance and vigilance. His father, John Adams, was the 2nd President of the United States. He was the 6th President of the United States. After he was President, he became a member of Congress.

In 1835, the House of Representatives voted against listening to any petitions about slavery called a “Gag Rule.” Adams said that the Gag Rule was against the First Amendment right to petition the government.

Finally, in 1844 the Gag Rule was repealed with help from Adams. John Quincy Adams was heroic because he fought for the First Amendment right to freedom of petition.

Andrew Carnegie
1835 - 1919

Andrew Carnegie’s life story shows perseverance, initiative, and resourcefulness. In 1853, he began to work for a railroad company. Carnegie showed initiative by learning about investing money. He invested in technology that helped the railroad company grow.

In 1889, Carnegie started the Carnegie Steel Company. This company and other companies combined to make U.S. Steel. Carnegie and U.S. Steel produced the steel that the country needed for railroads and buildings. Carnegie helped to build America.

Later in his life, Carnegie continued to improve people’s lives through charity work.
CESAR CHAVEZ

HENRY CLAY
Cesar Chavez
1927 - 1933

Cesar Chavez’s life was based on perseverance and initiative. He struggled for better working conditions for union farm workers. His family lost their farm during the Great Depression so they moved from place to place working in other peoples’ fields. When his father was injured in a car accident, Chavez started working to help his family.

In 1962, Chavez started the National Farm Workers Association. Later the name changed to United Farm Workers. The National Farm Workers Association fought for better work conditions and better pay for union workers. Cesar Chavez’s perseverance for unions for farm workers got the attention of many Americans.

Henry Clay
1777 - 1852

Henry Clay was a man of perseverance and moderation. These values helped him earn the nickname of the “Great Compromiser.” He did not have a lot of formal education, but he studied law.

Clay was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. He felt the unity of the country was very important. He made a deal to lower tariffs when South Carolina wanted to secede (leave the nation). He also helped the young nation through struggles with slavery. He helped pass the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850. He hoped these laws would help the nation survive and remain united.
FREDERICK DOUGLASS

ROBERTO CLEMENTE
Frederick Douglass
1818 - 1895

Fredrick Douglass was a man of integrity, perseverance, and resourcefulness. He was born a slave in Maryland. As an enslaved young man, Douglass learned how to read and he taught other slaves, too. It was illegal to teach slaves how to read. But Douglass knew that learning and reading would help show people how bad slavery was. Douglass was able to escape to freedom in 1838.

Douglass moved to Massachusetts and began to work with abolitionists (people who wanted to stop slavery). He traveled around America and Europe speaking against slavery. He also wrote an autobiography called Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave to show even more people about the misery of slavery.

Roberto Clemente
1934–1972

Roberto Clemente played Major League baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1950s and the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 1960s and early 1970s. He showed great courage and perseverance through discrimination by members of the press and baseball fans because he was from Puerto Rico. He was voted Most Valuable Player in 1971.

Clemente was concerned about people and especially wanted to help protect the rights of minorities. Clemente was killed in a plane crash in 1972 while he was on his way to Nicaragua to deliver supplies to earthquake victims. After his death, Clemente was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame and was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor.
Gloria Estefan  
b. 1957

Gloria Estefan was born in Havana, Cuba. Throughout her life she showed great courage and perseverance. Estefan gained success with the music group, the Miami Sound Machine, in the 1980s. Estefan was the lead singer for the band, and she also became involved in writing songs and producing.

In 1990, Estefan, her husband, and son were in a terrible bus accident. Estefan’s spinal injuries were severe, and many people wondered if she would be able to recover. Estefan persevered and within the next year, she was performing again. After the accident, she released many successful solo albums in Spanish and English and toured North America.

Thomas Edison  
1847 - 1931

Thomas Edison lived a life of resourcefulness and initiative. He believed that every challenge was an opportunity. He had little schooling and was deaf from a young age, but he was driven to invent.

By 1868, Edison had improved the typewriter and telegraph. Two years later, he opened his own “invention factory.” Within five years, he and his team of engineers perfected the telephone and created the phonograph. Next, they became famous for the incandescent light bulb, and later they worked on the motion picture camera, talking movies, a car battery, and an x-ray machine. Not everything they worked on was a success, but Edison persevered. Thomas Edison helped bring America into a modern age.
Benjamin Franklin was a man of initiative and resourcefulness. He wanted to improve the lives of citizens in America. He did this by creating goods, services, and a form of government. He created the first fire department, the first public library, and the first public hospital in Philadelphia. He invented the first lightning rod, bifocal glasses, and iron surface stove.

Franklin was also very famous for helping America's first governments. He was a part of the Second Continental Congress, and he helped write the Declaration of Independence. He also helped end the Revolutionary War and was a part of the Constitutional Convention. Franklin lived vigilantly to protect Americans from tyranny in all its forms.

Fannie Lou Hamer fought courageously for her right to vote. In 1962, she learned that the 15th Amendment protected African Americans' right to vote. She decided to register to vote. Hamer wanted to help other African Americans participate in the government so she helped people register to vote. In 1963, she was put in an Alabama jail and beaten. She lost her job and received death threats, but she persevered.

Hamer's words helped convince President Lyndon Johnson to sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This law defended the 15th Amendment's promise of voting rights for African Americans and other minorities. Fannie Lou Hamer showed great courage and perseverance in fighting for voting rights.
THOMAS JEFFERSON

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
1929 - 1968

Martin Luther King, Jr. persevered for civil rights during his life. He made speeches, led marches, and supported non-violence. He played an important role in the Montgomery bus boycott, ending segregation on city buses.

King’s most important speech was at a March on Washington D.C. in 1963. More than 250,000 people came to Washington to hear King make his famous “I Have a Dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial.

King continued to work for civil rights. He supported public education in Virginia. He supported public education in Virginia. He supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In 1968, he was assassinated, and over 300,000 people came to his funeral. His courageous life helps encourage people today.

Thomas Jefferson  
1743 - 1826

Thomas Jefferson fought for the integrity of people’s beliefs and the integrity of his country. When he was 33 years old, he wrote the Declaration of Independence. He knew he could get in trouble (even be put to death for treason) for writing the Declaration, but he had the courage to defend his ideas.

Jefferson fought to protect rights. He wrote a law that ended the state church in Virginia. Even when he was in France, Jefferson stayed involved with the Constitutional Convention by writing letters to delegates and urging a bill of rights. He also fought against the idea of a national bank.

Jefferson supported public education in Virginia. He knew citizens in a republic needed to be educated for a free society to survive.

Thomas Jefferson became our 3rd President and served for two terms. After he retired, he started the University of Virginia.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JAMES ARMISTEAD LAFAYETTE
Abraham Lincoln
1809 - 1865

Abraham Lincoln personified perseverance. He lost many elections, but he never gave up. He became famous in 1858 during his debates with Stephen Douglas about westward expansion and slavery. He said that the country could not survive if it was half-slave and half-free. Lincoln became President just before the start of the Civil War, and he courageously led the country through the bloody war. He believed in the promise of the Declaration of Independence: No one was born with a right to rule over others. In 1864, Lincoln was elected President for a second term.

In March 1865, when the Civil War was almost over, Lincoln gave his second inaugural speech. Many people thought he would speak about winning the war in the speech, but Lincoln surprised them. He asked the people to forgive each other and come together again to achieve a "just and lasting peace."

James Armistead Lafayette
1748 - 1930

James Armistead lived a life of courage and duty. He was born into slavery in 1748 in Virginia. He wanted to fight for independence from England. He courageously became a spy for the Marquis de Lafayette in the Continental Army. He pretended to be a runaway slave and was allowed into the British camps. He listened to what the British officers said about their plans, and then he would tell Lafayette and General Washington.

Because he was a spy and not a soldier, Armistead did not gain freedom after the war like many other slaves who served. With a recommendation from Lafayette, Armistead and his owner asked the Virginia legislature for Armistead's freedom. When he became free, Armistead changed his last name to Lafayette. He became a farmer, raised a family, and received a pension from the army for his services.
Thurgood Marshall  
1908 - 1993

Thurgood Marshall is famous because he was the first African American Supreme Court Justice, but he was courageous and determined many years before he was on the Court. He graduated from college with honors, but the University of Maryland would not accept him into law school because he was black. He studied law at the historically black Howard University.

Marshall worked to end segregation in public life. The first case he won was against the University of Maryland (the same school that wouldn’t let him in because he was black). He became the chief lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Segregation in public schools ended after Marshall argued Brown v. The Board of Education (1954) in front of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court said that segregation of public schools was unconstitutional.

Marshall became a part of the Supreme Court in 1967. He was the first African American Supreme Court Justice.

James Madison  
1751 - 1836

Madison had initiative and resourcefulness to help the new nation in ways no one else could. His ideas helped form the United States’ plan for self-government. In 1787, he was a leader of the Constitutional Convention. He took notes, spoke often, and helped people compromise. He always tried to prevent the abuse of government power. He suggested a system of checks and balances, and he also worked to balance the power of the state and federal governments. He also fought for individual rights, because he wanted to prevent majorities from abusing the rights of minorities.

Madison worked hard to support the Constitution by writing newspaper articles. To make sure that the Constitution would be passed, he helped write the Bill of Rights.
WILLIAM PENN

ROSA PARKS
William Penn
1644 - 1718

Rosa Parks
1913 - 2005

William Penn fought courageously for religious liberty in two different countries. "Penn was a Quaker, and his religion was illegal in England. When he did not change his religion, he was sentenced to life in jail. William Penn knew many important people, and he was released from jail after a short time. He did not like the idea of forcing people to follow a specific religion so he spoke for religious liberty.

In 1681, The King of England gave Penn a large piece of land in America between New York and Maryland because the King owed money to Penn's father. William Penn named the colony "Pennsylvania" (or Penn's Woods) for his father.

As governor, he believed that the government could not force a person to follow a certain religion. Penn believed that it was important to respect people's beliefs and self-government.

Rosa Parks's courage led many to call her the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." She was born in Alabama and grew up under Jim Crow laws which said that blacks and whites had to be separated (segregation).

On December 1, 1955, Parks was asked to give up her bus seat and move to the back of the bus. She refused and was arrested. Parks' courage led to a boycott of all city buses in Montgomery, Alabama. With her were Martin Luther King, Jr. and many others.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted for 381 days until the District Court ruled that segregation on city buses was unconstitutional.
Benjamin Rush  
1745 - 1813

Benjamin Rush was the most famous doctor of his time. He treated illnesses like yellow fever and smallpox, and put himself at great risk to do so.

Rush also played a major role in politics by attending the Continental Congress of 1776 and signing the Declaration of Independence. He also helped lead his home state of Pennsylvania to become the second state to sign the new Constitution.

Rush worked to end slavery, alcoholism, and tobacco addiction. He was passionate about education because he knew schools promoted virtue. He believed that virtue was key to a free society like the American republic. Rush also lead the way for the study of medical illnesses, supported reforms for citizens, and advocated for the education of women.

Jackie Robinson  
1919 - 1972

Jackie Robinson lived a life of courage and perseverance. His early life was full of segregation in restaurants, movie theaters, and at school. In high school, his talents in sports began to grow.

Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team in 1947. This ended 80 years of segregation in professional baseball. Some of the players were angry and threatened to strike. When he was at bat, fast balls would just miss his head. His family received hate mail. Robinson did not back down, and, as time went on, his fellow players couldn’t deny his talent.

In 1997, on the anniversary of his first game, Major League Baseball retired Jackie Robison’s number – 42 – to show everyone his courage and perseverance.
ELIZABETH Cady Stanton

HARRIETT BEECHER STOWE
**Harriet Beecher Stowe**  
1811 - 1896

Harriet Beecher Stowe was resourceful: she used her writing to show the nation the evil of slavery. She was born in Connecticut in 1811, into a religious, abolitionist family.

In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which forced people in free states to return escaped slaves to their masters. Stowe knew she had to do something. Since she could not vote or participate in the government, she began to write about slavery. She talked to former slaves and other people who had experience with slavery. In her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she told of the abuse suffered by slaves.

Historians believe that her book helped more people believe that slavery should end and led to the Civil War. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s writings helped to change the nation’s view of justice.

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton**  
1815 - 1902

Elizabeth Cady Stanton persevered for the idea that all people are created equal. She was born in New York in 1815. Unlike most women at her time, Elizabeth was formally educated. She was very successful in school. But as a woman, she could not go to the college she wanted.

Stanton did not like the legal status of women so she organized a women’s convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Stanton wrote the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions based on the Declaration of Independence. This document said that men and women were equal, and, therefore, they should have equal rights, including the right to vote. Stanton did not live to see women gain the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment. Many people thought that Stanton was a courageous woman and a leader.
MARY BETH TINKER

MARY TSUKAMOTO
Mary Tsukamoto (left)  
1915 - 1998

Mary Tsukamoto turned her own sacrifice into work for civil rights for all Americans. She went to a segregated school and helped her family grow crops even though there was a law that said that Japanese people could not own the land they farmed.

In 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered World War II. President Roosevelt was worried that Japanese people in America would try to help Japan in the war. The military ordered the creation of detention camps. One hundred and twenty-thousand Japanese people were forced to live in the camps even though many of them were American citizens. These people lost almost everything including their belongings, homes, jobs, and dignity.

Tsukamoto did not want people to forget about the Japanese Internment. She wrote a book about her experience called *We the People: A Story of Internment in America.*

Mary Beth Tinker  
b. 1952

Mary Beth Tinker fought for the rights of students. She wanted them to be able to express their opinions in public schools. When Tinker was 13 years-old, she and her old brother John wore black armbands to school to protest the Vietnam War. They were told they would be suspended if they didn't take the armbands off. Tinker felt that the punishment was unjust. She believed that she had the right to express her ideas in a peaceful and respectful way. She wore the armband even though she knew that she would get in trouble. She and her brother took their case to the Supreme Court.

In *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) Tinker won her case. The Court said that the armbands were the same as “speech,” and that students had the First Amendment right to freedom of speech as long as they did not disrupt school. Mary Beth Tinker’s fight affirmed the rights of young people in public school.
GEORGE WASHINGTON

HARRIETT TUBMAN
Harriet Tubman
1820 - 1913

Harriet Tubman was a slave who courageously escaped to freedom in 1849. She was also wanted to help other slaves become free. She did so even though she could have become a slave again if she were caught.

Starting in the 1850s, she worked with a secret group called the Underground Railroad. At first, Tubman helped her family escape. Over time, she saved hundreds of slaves. People nicknamed her “Moses” because of her work to free oppressed people. She traveled the 650 miles from Maryland to Canada 19 times. She was never caught and she never lost one person.

During the Civil War, Tubman was a scout, spy, nurse, and cook. She helped free hundreds of slaves during the war. With courage, she fought for liberty for every American.

George Washington
1732 - 1799

George Washington wanted his time as a President to be an example of moderation. Even though the Constitution didn't say how long a President could serve, Washington only served for 2 terms. He understood that the system of checks and balances was intended to stop one branch from having too much power. He wanted to protect that system.

Washington worked hard to follow his own values of moderation and responsibility. He had a hot temper, but he controlled his actions. He had served the country as the Commander of the Continental Army and the President of the Constitutional Convention, but in every role, he left when the job was done. Washington knew that abuse of power was very dangerous to liberty.

By retiring, Washington demonstrated moderation. Washington thought that preserving the American republic was more important than his personal gain.
THE WRIGHT BROTHERS

IDA B. WELLS
Ida B. Wells 1862 - 1931

Ida B. Wells worked with courage to show the nation that lynching was evil. Her parents died when she was 14, and she took care of her family. She put herself through college and became a teacher in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1892, three of Wells’ friends were killed by a lynch mob. The killings made headlines, but no one was arrested or charged. Wells, as a journalist, owned and edited a newspaper. She wrote courageously about the racism that caused the murders. Other newspapers called her a “black scoundrel.” A mob destroyed her office and threatened to kill her, but she did not stop speaking about lynching.

Wells later moved to Chicago and published a report on lynching called The Red Record. She became a respected speaker around the country. She helped to start the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Ida B. Wells’ courage and perseverance helped to stop lynching and change the way the people of the United States thought about racism.

Wright Brothers
Orville Wright 1871 - 1948
Wilbur Wright 1867 - 1912

Wilbur and Orville Wright’s resourcefulness and perseverance changed the nation and the world. Other people dreamed of flying machines, but no one could build one that could be controlled. The Wright Brothers tried different materials and imagined new ideas, but they failed many times. They almost gave up.

Finally, on December 17, 1903 they succeeded. Their engine-powered airplane flew 120 feet and was in the air for 12 seconds. Their “flying machine” changed the world forever. Traveling became faster and easier, and ideas spread around the world. The perseverance of Wilbur and Orville Wright helped the world come into the modern age.

Ida B. Wells
1862 - 1931

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