

# United States History

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# Walking Tall

## How did Ruby Bridges make history 50 years ago?

“Don’t be afraid.” That’s what Ruby Bridges’s mother told her on Nov. 4, 1960. Little Ruby listened carefully to the advice. Soon, four United States federal court **marshals**, or officers, arrived at the Bridges family home in New Orleans, Louisiana to drive the first grader to William Frantz Public School. A screaming mob was waiting. People stood near the building shouting.



AP Images

*Ruby Bridges enters her school in 1960.*

Ruby held her head high. With the marshals surrounding her, the 6-year-old walked into the school and into history books. That morning, Ruby became one of the first African Americans to attend an all-white elementary school in the South.

## Dividing Lines

For a long time, parts of the United States were **segregated**, or separated by race. Under law, black children could not attend the same public schools as white children. People of different races also had to use separate public restrooms and drinking fountains.

U.S. leaders worked hard to end segregation. They wanted all Americans to have **civil rights**. Civil

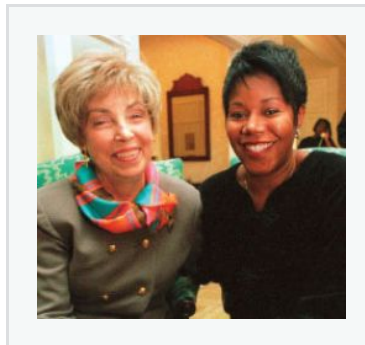
rights are the rights to be treated equally. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The case was *Brown v. Board of Education*.

By the year 1960, however, many Southern cities, including New Orleans, were still not following the court's ruling. That prompted a federal court to take action in New Orleans. It ordered the city to desegregate its public schools. Ruby Bridges was one of the first students to lead the way.

## School Days

Ruby made it inside William Frantz Public School that first day. However, there was so much uproar that she didn't make it to class. From the principal's office, Ruby watched as angry parents pulled their children out of school.

On her second day, Ruby met her teacher, Barbara Henry. By then, so many kids had been removed from the school that Ruby was Henry's only student. The pair worked one-on-one for the whole year. "Mrs. Henry was one of the nicest teachers I ever had," Bridges told *WR News*. "She made school fun for me."



AP Images

*Bridges was reunited with teacher Barbara Henry (left) in 1998.*

Outside the building, people continued to protest. Others, though, believed everyone should have civil rights.

By the end of the year, crowds began to **dwindle**, or decrease. When Ruby returned to school for second grade, there were no more protesters. Many of the other students had returned.

## Building Bridges

By the late 1960s, most schools in the United States were no longer segregated, thanks to the efforts of civil rights workers. Other laws were passed that improved life for African Americans. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example, helped protect African Americans' right to seek jobs.

Bridges never had to attend a segregated school. She graduated from high school and continued her studies in business school.

Today, Bridges speaks to kids about the importance of treating one another equally. She has never forgotten her experience at William Frantz Public School, and she shares details about her first day there in her speeches.

"I wasn't really afraid," Bridges told *WR News*. "I didn't really know what was going on at the time, and I loved school."

## The Little Rock Nine



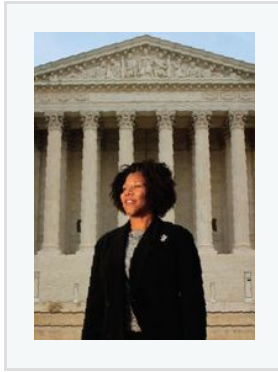
The Commercial Appeal/Landov

*The Caption*

Before Ruby Bridges, there was the Little Rock Nine. They were nine African American students in Little Rock, Arkansas. On Sept. 4, 1957, the students attempted to begin classes at the all-white Central High School. But the governor of Arkansas and the angry mobs surrounding the school prevented them from entering.

Finally, President Dwight D. Eisenhower took action. He sent U.S. troops to protect the students, and they finally began classes. High school was far from easy for the group, but some of them went on to graduate. In 1999, Congress awarded the Little Rock Nine the Congressional Gold Medal for their bravery.

# How Ruby Made History



Jay Glendenin/Aurora Photos

How does it feel to make history? *WR News* student reporter Kaelin Ray recently asked Ruby Bridges.

**Kaelin Ray:** How does it feel to know that you are a part of U.S. history?

**Ruby Bridges:** I'm [very] proud of that fact. My mother was really happy about [my] being able to attend that school. My father was more concerned about my safety.

**KR:** What was your first day at William Frantz Public School like?

**RB:** My first day I spent sitting in the principal's office, so it was very confusing.

**KR:** What was it like to meet your teacher, Mrs. Henry, again many years later?

**RB:** I was really, really excited about meeting her again because she [was] a very important part of my life that had been missing for a long time.

# The Struggle for Equality



*Representative Barbara Jordan*

For hundreds of years, most African Americans were enslaved. In 1865, the U.S. Civil War ended, and slavery in the United States also officially ended that year. But African Americans have been struggling to be treated fairly and equally ever since. Many have helped change laws to make the United States a better country for all its people. Here are stories about how some heroic African Americans worked for equality for everyone.

## Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 when she refused to give her bus seat to a white passenger. At the time, a city law required black people to give their seats to white people on crowded buses. Parks's action and arrest was a major event in the civil rights movement, which led to greater equality for black people in the U.S.

## Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri. He went to college and became a writer in the 1920s. Hughes published 50 books. He wrote poetry, plays, novels, songs, and children's stories. Many of his books are about the struggle for equality. One of his fictional characters says, "I've been insulted, eliminated, locked in, locked out, and left holding the bag. But I am still here."

## Thurgood Marshall

Thurgood Marshall became the first African American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Named after his grandfather, who had been enslaved, Marshall always tried to help poor people and other African Americans. Before becoming a justice of the Supreme Court in 1967, Marshall helped end segregation in schools.

## Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson was born in Cairo, Georgia. After graduating from college, Robinson joined the Army and became a lieutenant. In 1947, he became the first African American to play for a major league baseball team. Robinson's spectacular skills won him many fans, and he became one of the greatest players of his time. Throughout his life, Robinson tried to help other people. He once wrote, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

## Barbara Jordan

Barbara Jordan was born in Houston, Texas, in 1936. She was the first African-American woman elected to the Texas state legislature. In 1972, she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Jordan always believed that if people worked hard, they could overcome any barriers and become successful.

# Diving Into History



recovery of H.L. Hunley

In August 2000, divers raised the Confederate submarine *H.L. Hunley* from its watery grave, 136 years after the ship mysteriously sank in the Charleston, S.C., harbor.

Divers hoisted the barnacle-covered ship from 30 feet of water. Scientists sent the submarine to a laboratory to be preserved and studied. Scientists believe that inside the sub lie the bodies of the ship's crew.

The *Hunley* was the first submarine ever to sink an enemy vessel. During the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865), the Union (northern states) used its powerful navy to block ships from entering or leaving Confederate (southern) ports. The *Hunley*'s secret job was to break that blockade.

On February 17, 1864, nine crew members crawled inside the 40-foot *Hunley*. Using a hand-crank to turn the propeller, the crew quietly guided the sub out of Charleston harbor. Then the *Hunley* rammed an explosive charge into the Union sloop *Housatonic*, destroying it.

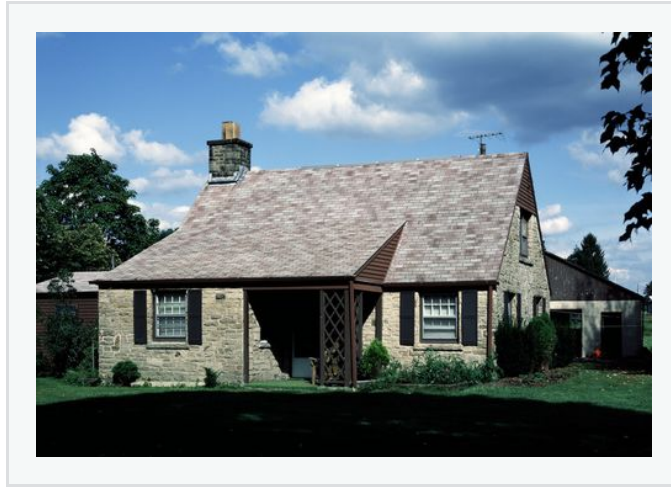
Moments after the *Hunley*'s victory, however, the submarine sank, killing all its crew.

Why did the sub sink? No one knows for sure. Scientists continue their investigation to come up with answers.



# Eyewitness to History: The Promise of Arthurdale

By Rita Crowley



*Structure at Arthurdale, West Virginia, a planned community housing destitute families during the Great Depression*

Rita Crowley – St. Ann's School Wilmington, DE

**The Great Depression, an economic upheaval that lasted throughout the 1930s, left many people out of work. To help revive the economy in one West Virginia mining area, the U.S. government helped build a community called Arthurdale. Rita interviewed her grandmother, one of Arthurdale's first residents.**

In the early 1930s, my grandmother, Rita DeGolyer, lived in a small, poor mining town called Scott's Run, W.Va. Her father worked in the coal mines.

The miners were paid little. The mines would unexpectedly collapse. Because of the high death toll, the town earned the nickname "Bloody Run."

The living conditions in Scott's Run were awful. The nearby river, used by hundreds of families for cooking, bathing, cleaning, and dumping waste, was a stream of yellow, green, and red slime. The houses had no running water. Roofs leaked. People used slop jars instead of toilets.

In 1933, the lives of my grandmother and her family changed forever. That's when President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, decided to build a community called Arthurdale to help the poor of Scott's Run. The government purchased land from a local landowner named Richard Arthur. People who wanted to live in the community could borrow money from the government and

slowly pay it back. In June 1934, the first 50 houses were built.

The DeGolyers moved into a white house with a blue roof and five acres. The new house had four bedrooms, an indoor bathroom, and running water.

My grandmother and her family met Eleanor Roosevelt when she visited to check Arthurdale's progress. She toured homes and spent time talking to the people.

Occasionally, the president came with her, though he usually stayed in the car. At the time, my grandmother did not know the president was crippled with polio. Sometimes he would sit in a chair so the children could chat with him. In Arthurdale, the adults had good jobs, and the children could attend school.

My grandmother's sister was the first child born in Arthurdale. She was named Eleanor, after the first lady.

# Remembering a Forgotten U.S. President

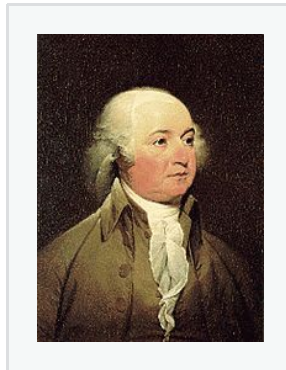
George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were the first and third U.S. presidents. Monuments in Washington, D.C., honor both men. But do you know who the second president was?

If not, you're not alone. Many people don't know who the second president was. No monument has been built in the capital of the United States to honor him. And he is not pictured on a coin or a bill, as Washington and Jefferson are.

The second president was just as important, however. He was a patriot who helped the 13 British colonies win their independence from Great Britain in the American Revolutionary War.

His name is John Adams. Throughout his life, Adams was fearful that people would forget him. In 1760, Adams wrote that he would be "totally forgotten within 70 years."

## A Congressional Honor



[whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov)

*John Adams*

Efforts have been made to prove Adams wrong, however. A monument may be built in Washington, D.C., to honor him. In 2001, Congress passed a bill to build a monument that would honor John Adams and his son, John Quincy Adams. John Quincy Adams was the sixth U.S. president. The bill passed by Congress calls John Adams a leader of the American Revolution. However, there still aren't any specific plans in place because a location for the monument has yet to be agreed upon.

U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer, who supports the monument, said that the Adamses were a "historic, dazzling, brilliant family." After his presidency, some people called John Adams "the founder of

the American republic."

Historian David McCullough, who wrote a book about John Adams, says that a monument should be built to honor Adams. "There is no other American... with the exception of George Washington, who did more toward winning the Revolution and establishing [the United States'] form of government than John Adams," McCullough said.

## A Historic Controversy

Not everyone has agreed that a monument should be built to honor John Adams and his family.

Many critics said that the National Mall, where a monument to Adams might be placed, is overcrowded with memorials and statues. Many national monuments are located on the Mall, a 2-mile-long strip of land that stretches from the U.S. Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial. Those critics argue that a new monument would spoil the Mall's beautiful views. In 2003, further construction along the Mall was banned.

Other critics believe a monument to John Adams should not be built. For instance, historian Richard Rosenfeld, says Adams does not deserve a memorial. He says Adams imprisoned some people simply because they disagreed with him.

Supporters of a monument to honor Adams, however, have little doubt that a monument should be built and placed on the Mall. Historian Edward Smith said, "There is no question Adams deserves a memorial and one on the Mall. There is always space there for someone like Adams."

## What Did John Adams Do?

- Signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776
- Helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1783, ending the American Revolutionary War
- Served as a U.S. ambassador to Great Britain
- Became the first vice president of the United States, serving under George Washington
- Became president in 1797

# Day of Infamy

By Carissa Lee



*photo from a Japanese plane shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack began*

**Carissa Lee**  
**Central Elementary School**  
**Jerome, Idaho**

*World War II, which had been raging in Europe since 1939, hit home for many Americans when the Japanese launched a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.*

Richard Hansing joined the U.S. Navy in 1939, when he was 19 years old. Richard always knew he would enlist in the Navy. His grandfather, who had fought in the Civil War, had joined when he was 16.

Richard served with the Pacific Fleet based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He served on the battleship USS *Nevada*. Richard's job was to "jump the burners," which meant that he had to heat the oil before it could be used in the ship's engine.

Richard was stationed on the *Nevada* when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. When the bombs started falling just before 8 a.m., Richard was below decks on the *Nevada*.

A group of Japanese planes had orders to bomb the *Nevada*, which was docked at the northern end of Battleship Row, east of Ford Island. The *Nevada* was docked near the USS *Arizona*, which was heavily

damaged in the attack.

Japanese bombers tried to hit the *Nevada* but had a hard time seeing the ship because of all the smoke coming from the sinking *Arizona*. The Japanese launched 21 bombs, eight of which hit the *Nevada*. The remaining 13 went into the water. A torpedo also hit the *Nevada*, opening a large hole in the ship's *port*, or left, side. The *Nevada*'s crew fought many fires. Although the ship was badly damaged, it managed to steam down the channel toward the open sea. The slow-moving *Nevada* was an attractive target for the Japanese planes.

The planes dropped bombs on the moving battleship, hoping to sink it in the channel to block the entrance to Pearl Harbor. The commander of the *Nevada* beached the ship at Hospital Point, keeping the channel clear.

Although he was never injured in the war, Richard said Pearl Harbor was the worst day of the conflict. Of the *Nevada*'s crew of about 1,500 men, 50 were killed. Richard's friend Glen Shape was killed.

On Nov. 30, 1942, at 11:25 p.m., two enemy torpedoes hit Richard's new ship, the USS *North Hampton*. The crew abandoned the sinking ship on December 1 at 3 a.m. The water was smooth and warm. There were no sharks in the area. He was in the water for about one and a half hours. Eleven hundred men were picked up and taken back to Pearl Harbor. Once there, Richard came home on the USS *Bernet*.