

How will you celebrate your birthday?

Celebrating 400 years of African American contributions to this country

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Every year of our life we get a chance to celebrate a wonderful milestone, our birthday! Birthdays are special days to reflect on our past experiences and accomplishments while looking toward the future. Looking back over the years, we realize there were challenging moments and circumstances that we had to face, but, we grew, we became better because of those obstacles. We became a bit older and a bit wiser.



Birthdays are impactful and special, something we instinctively want to share with others, with our family, and with friends. Everyone gathers together to share stories, memorable stories, stories that shaped who we are, stories of our past that enlighten, invigorate, and even empower. Our birthdays provide an opportunity for us to bond, one to another. Our birthdays come and go, yet with every moment that passes, we never forget our history or our journey.

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Ted Ellis

In 1619, the White Lion ship flying the Dutch flag carried on board 20 or so odd enslaved Africans to the English colonies at Point Comfort, VA., currently known as Fort

Monroe National Monument. First known as “The Gibraltar of the Chesapeake” and later as the “Freedom Fortress,” Fort Monroe has a storied history in the defense of our country and its struggle for freedom. It was a stronghold for the Union Army and a place of freedom for enslaved Africans.

Our landing at Point Comfort marked a long chapter of enslavement of Africans throughout this nation, and it was not until 1865 that the enslaved became free men and women. Each year beginning in 1619 Africans fought for their survival, and most of all fought for their humanity. Our survival through periods of Emancipation, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and post-Civil Rights continue to prove our resilience in the fight for humanity, justice, and equality. Each year we reflect upon our progress, the lessons learned and triumphs earned.

Our birthdays are special! We celebrate what we have accomplished over a period of 400 years. The inventions that advance our livelihood, the medicines that cure our diseases, and the methodologies that improve our agriculture. We are a people of deep faith with unshakable trust in God, and as freed Africans, we constructed churches, schools, colleges, universities, roads, and cities. We were and continue to be the architects of our communities and we celebrate that. From the bellows of slave ships to working in the fields of cotton, rice, sugar and tobacco, and then becoming literate, advancing ourselves as inventors, teachers, preachers,

politicians, nurses, doctors, scientists, scholars, entrepreneurs, culinary chefs, composers of music, the arts to our excellence in athletics. We celebrate all our accomplishments.

The year 2019 reflects 400 years since those 20 or so odd enslaved Africans arrived in Point Comfort, Virginia in 1619. It is a year to commemorate and pay homage to our African ancestors for enduring and ensuring an existence for us today. Although there are continued struggles and challenges we will recognize all of our accomplishments and celebrate those achievements on our birthday.

The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service has appointed the 400 Years of African History Commission and charged it with planning, developing and carrying out programs and activities throughout our 50 United States. It is my honor to serve on the Commission and help guide those activities over the next year.

2019 is a very special year, and I will celebrate my personal birthday by honoring my African ancestors. I will commemorate the significance of their sacrifice, and in so doing, I will live a life of hope, purpose, and promise focused on forging a better future for all of us. I will recognize those who have helped me in my personal journey and lastly, I will continue to pursue my passion and share that passion with others.

Most importantly I am asking everyone next year...How will you celebrate your birthday?
1619-2019

Respectfully submitted by,

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