

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

FROM 19TH CENTURY

ARTISTS
ENTERTAINERS
POETS



INTRODUCTION

- Black history is American history and should represent blacks' contributions in every American history milestone.
- In 1978, the Postal Service initiated the Black Heritage stamp series, to recognize the achievements of individual African Americans. More than 140 blacks have been honored in this stamp series.
- YAAHA uses these stamps and other illustrations for the **Profiles in Leadership** series to honor African Americans' contributions to American history.



THE JAMES FORTEN FAMILY HISTORY

- **James Forten** (1766 – 1842) used his wealth and social standing for the abolition movement.
- He and his wife, **Charlotte**, had nine children that were equally committed to the abolition movement.
- **Margaretta Forten** (1806-1875), was a teacher for 30 years, and part of the women's suffrage movement.
- **Harriet Forten Purvis** (1810-1875) married into a prominent black abolitionist family and the sisters were part of six abolitionists' organizations. All three sisters were members of the Female Literary Association.
- **Sarah Forten Purvis** (1814-1893) married another Purvis brother, she was a conductor in the Underground Railroad, and a very successful poet. She wrote the poem, *The Slave Girl's Address to Her Mother*.
- The Quaker poet, John Greenfield Whittier, after a visit with the Forten sisters, wrote a poem, *To the Daughters of James Forten*, for deep appreciation for their civil rights work.



EDMONIA LEWIS

1844 -1907

Edmonia was the first professional African American sculptor.

Her father was black, and mother was a member of the Chippewa Indian tribe. She was orphaned at five and raised by the Chippewa tribe until the age of twelve.

Edmonia met portrait sculptor Edward Brackett and had limited sculptural studies but began producing medallion portraits of famous abolitionists and was able to finance a trip to Italy. She spent most of her artistic life in Rome, Italy.

Most of her art has been lost, but *Hager in the Wilderness* is the masterpiece of her surviving works.

By the time she was twenty-five, fame and fortune found her as Edmonia's sculptures were sought by the wealthy in Europe.



HAGER IN THE WILDERNESS

One of the greatest masterpieces of sculptor Edmonia Lewis.

It is in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Size is 55 5/8 x 15 1/4 x 17 1/8

Edmonia Lewis's work reflected her dual heritage.





HENRY OSSAWA TANNER 1859-1937

Henry's mother was born into slavery; she escaped with the help of the Underground Railroad.

Tanner was the first African American painter to gain international acclaim.

Henry was taught painting by Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Henry moved to Paris in 1891 to paint.





THE BANJO LESSON 1893

This is Henry Ossawa Tanner's most famous painting.

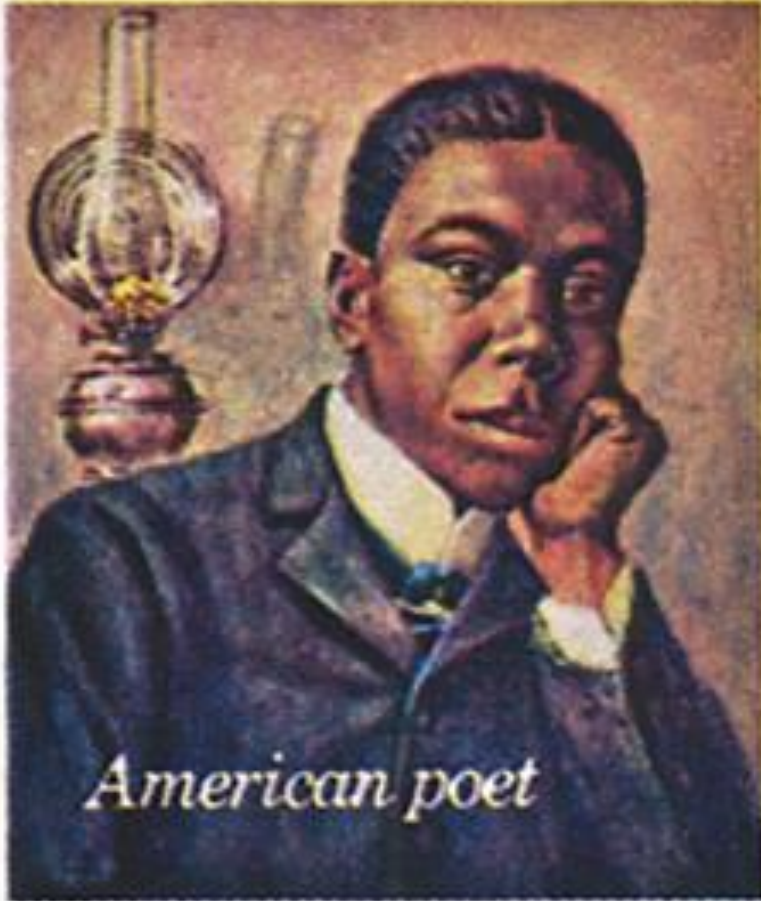
Tanner created this sensitive interpretation of human interaction from photographs and illustrations in order to paint it in 1893.

This tender moment of an elderly man teaching the boy to play a banjo, and the concentration of the task at hand is beautiful.

The double light source makes this a strong composition.



Paul Laurence Dunbar



10 cents U.S. postage

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR 1872 - 1906

Paul was a prolific poet, writer, novelist and playwright.

He was born in Dayton, Ohio to parents who were freed slaves from Kentucky.

Paul started writing poems at a very young age.

His literary work is an impressive representation of black life in the turn-of-the-century America.





AMELIA LOUISE TILGHMAN 1856 - 1931

Amelia was a pianist, teacher, activist, and a great vocal talent.

Tilghman studied at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

She taught music for fourteen years.

She founded the first African American Journal devoted to music, *The Musical Messenger* 1886 – 1891.

The New York press referred to her as “The Queen of Song.”





FLORA BATSON

1864 - 1906

Flora was born in Washington, D.C. in 1864.

Her father fought in the Civil War and later died of his injuries.

At nine, she was a member of the famous Bethel Church Choir which attracted hundreds to hear her sing.

At thirteen, she became a professional and began touring.

She had an amazing range from soprano to baritone.



FLORA BATSON

PRESS TESTIMONIALS

- “The peerless mezzo-soprano”
New York Sun
- “The unrivaled favorite of the masses.” *New York Age*
- “She carried the house by storm, and five times was recalled to the foot-lights.” *New York Herald*
- “A voice of great range, and of remarkable depth and purity.”
Louisville Courier Journal
- “Though of pleasing presence, she is unaffected, almost child-like in her bearing; this, with her wonderful singing, captivated the heart of the listener, regardless of the color line.” *The Californian*

MISS FLORA BATSON
THE COLORED JENNY LIND.
AT SPURGEON'S OPERA HOUSE, SANTA ANA,
THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 21st, 1889,



The largest music halls in the country have time and again failed to hold the multitudes that have flocked to hear the colored Jenny Lind. Competent critics and the leading papers from the Atlantic to the Pacific unite in crowning her the greatest singer from the 8,000,000 colored people in America, and worthy to rank among the great singers of the world.

She sings from memory over 200 selections in almost every class of music.

A highly cultivated mezzo soprano of exquisite sweetness, power and compass. Her vocal register has a wonderful sweep from lowest contralto notes to soprano heights without changing the quality of her tones.—*Los Angeles Evening Express.*

A better pleased audience never filed out of the theatre than

After Miss Batson's opening "Song of the Whippoorwill," it seldom been given a human being. And the more we let it follow. The capacity of her voice was well tested last night in "Farewell Marguerite" in a manner that brought a perfect storm.

so captivated the vast audience with her peculiarly sweet and alpha, and last evening Miss Florence Williams, of the *New* her as the most successful colored Prima Donna. When the



MORE ENTERTAINERS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

- Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield (1809-1876) was known as the “Black Swan” and the most famous black singer of her time.
- Ella F. Sheppard (1851-1914) was a member of the famous Fisk Jubilee singers.
- Henrietta Vinton Davis (1860-1941) was the premier actor of all black actors on the 19th century dramatic stage.



SCOTT JOPLIN

1868 - 1917

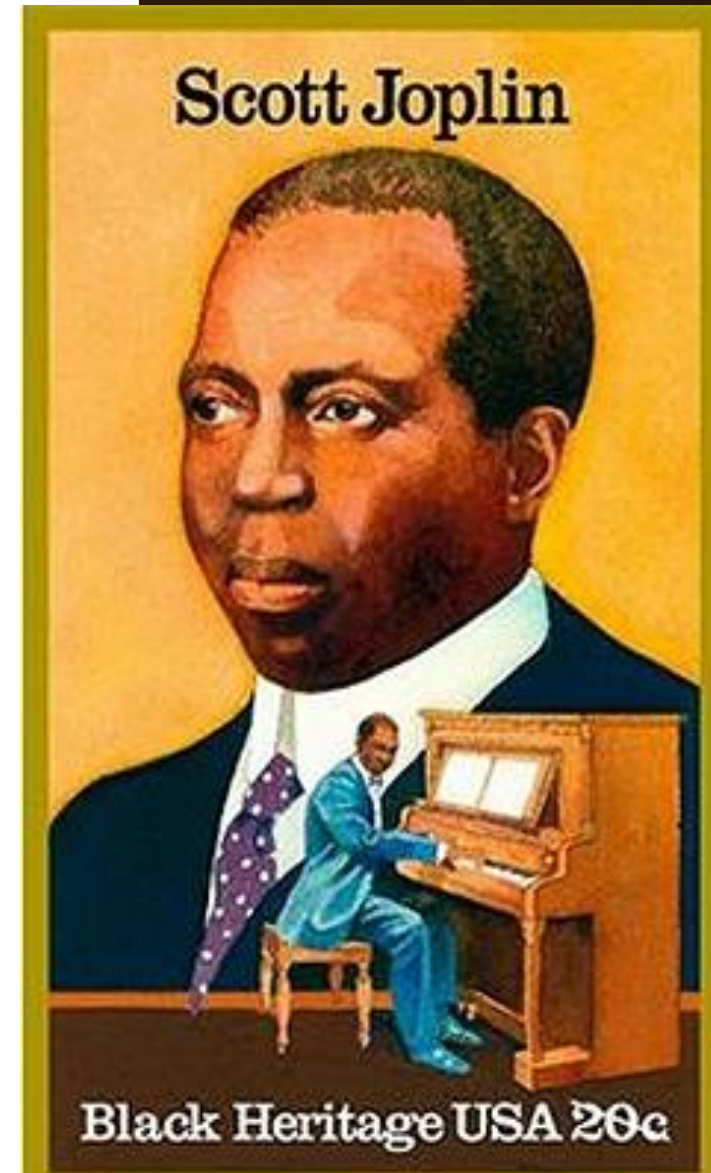
Joplin was the son of a slave and laborer.

He took up the piano as a child and was a classically trained composer.

Scott was known as the “King of Ragtime” and the “King of Ragtime Writers.”

The Maple Leaf Rag was his best-selling song and provided a steady income for the rest of his life.

Joplin’s *The Entertainer* was used in the musical score in the 1973 movie *The Sting*. It won an Academy Award.



SUMMARY

- Black artists, entertainers, and poets struggled against many odds to pursue their talents in the early 19th century up until the end of World War I in 1918.
- These leaders used their pens as swords, their artistic talents to move us, and their virtuoso voices to make invaluable changes in history.
- It is with great pleasure that YAAHA is proud to share these **Profiles in Leadership** to illustrate the profound importance and significance of these pioneer leaders in American history.

