

Black communities

MILESTONES :

In USA :

- 1619: First Africans in America
- 1808: slave trade became illegal
- 1865: slavery was outlawed
- 1916-1970: Great Immigration from the south to the north and west
- 1964: Civil Rights Act allowed African-American advancement in the south
- 1965: Hart-Cellar Immigration Act reopened legal immigration from Africa
- 1986: Diversity Visa Lottery favoured African and Afro-Caribbean immigration
- 1993: Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize in Literature

In Great Britain :

- 1601: Bill to expel Africans residing in England
- 1806: England had one-half of the world market share in slaves
- 1807: slavery was abolished
- 1962: legislation restricted the entry of citizens of former colonies such as Africa

The first Africans, arrived in the **New World**, settled in the English colony of Jamestown in **1619**, as servants. But slavery was soon instituted in what was to become the American South. As the economy plantation expanded, growers of tobacco, rice and cotton demanded more **slaves** to cultivate their crops. Thus a **global trade** was developed around the buying and selling of humans so that some 15 to 20 million Africans had been kidnapped. They were chained in the holds of slave ships during the journey to the Americas during which some one million Africans perished. It became **illegal in 1808** and **slavery was outlawed in 1865** by constitutional amendment.

Africans invented their own culture as new forms of artistic expression : music, literature and arts. It is this legacy which produced Nobel Prize winner in Literature in 1993, **Toni Morrison**. Institutions founded in the late 19th century allowed black Americans access to education but also permitted a development of a collective identity.



There were new changes in the mid 20th century as the **Civil Rights Act** of 1964 that allowed African-American advancement in the South. Between 1916 and 1970, the **Great Migration** of African-Americans transformed the US as more than 7 million people moved from the south to cities in the north and west. Racial tensions and even race riots subsequently became a factor in many American cities. In the latter decades of the 20th century, a stable black middle class appeared as we can see with the example of Barack Obama.

The **Hart-Cellar Immigration Act** of 1965 reopened legal immigration from Africa. Moreover, the **Diversity Visa Lottery** in 1986 opened doors to citizens of countries underrepresented as for Africans and Afro-Caribbean. The US currently welcomes over a million immigrants from Africa per year.

However, life expectancy for blacks is shorter than for whites due to a poorer access to health care and they are more important blacks who live under the official poverty line. Added to this they are much more touched by unemployment partly because they lack certificates. Finally blacks are over-represented in the US prison population (39%).

The first Africans arrived **in England** earlier than in America but the black community developed less. Moreover, racism and xenophobia led Elizabeth I to pass (unsuccessful) legislation in 1601 expelling Africans residing in the country. Africans arrived in ever greater numbers with Britain's expanding role in the **international slave trade**. The British economy was by then based on kidnapped Africans: it had one-half of the world market share in slaves in 1806. In 1807, Britain abolished slavery. In 1962 legislation restricted the entry of citizens of former colonies, including Africans. Nowadays, Great Britain is trying to increase immigration from Africa because this population tends to be more highly educated than whites are.

