

Relearning history: Reflections on Black history by a homeschooling mother

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Due to the pandemic, I decided to begin homeschooling my three children last year, and soon our small learning pod grew to include my friend's three kids. After teaching math and science at a private school for three years, I found myself teaching history for the first time. Thanks to an in-depth curriculum provided by [Core Knowledge](#), the same one used in the private school where I had worked, I was learning for the first time about the contributions of African Americans that were not as well known and never included in my childhood history books.

For example, we recently studied about the construction of Washington, DC. I was learning right along with my students that it was slaves and freed black men who built the White House. I learned about Benjamin Banneker, the surveyor of the then new capital. Not only was he honored for his contributions in that historical moment, but he was also a self-taught astronomer, scientist and writer. Mr. Banneker was born a freeman and hoped to see an end to slavery. He corresponded with Thomas Jefferson over this issue that "all men were created equal".

Next came the war of 1812, where we learned about Charles Ball, a slave, who declared himself free and fought on the American side, even though Great Britain promised freedom to any slaves that fought on the British side. Charles Ball ended up being enslaved again years after the war.

We have the greatest of the greats: Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, Frederick Douglass and many more. In every moment of American history, African Americans have excelled, invested, and served. These stories must be taught throughout the whole school year. Benjamin Banneker and Charles Bell are examples that black history is part of every event in American history.

Homeschooling has given me a chance to relearn history. However, how does knowing some facts about great men and women of color who served our country compensate for 400 years of injustice and brutal treatment that still bear scars and lingering institutional bias? There are still remnants of racism in people's hearts, in society, and in our culture. There are many ways to contribute to cultural change to heal and end inequality. One way is that we must not forget to teach history and teach it inclusive of all who built our nation.

Core Knowledge student readers and teacher guides (with worksheets and links to online videos and resources to go with each lesson) are available free online at www.coreknowledge.org. The original Core Knowledge History and Geography textbooks can also be purchased (used) online for \$10 to \$20.

Information for this article was taken from the 4th grade Core Knowledge History and Geography textbook. Copyright 2002 by Pearson Education Inc.

And from the following websites provided in the teacher guides:

www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CKHG-Online-Resources-Early-Pr esidents-Social-Reformers.pdf

www.pbs.org/video/the-war-of-1812-blacks-in-the-war/

www.nps.gov/articles/american-liberty-and-slavery-in-the-chesapeake.htm