

Ford's Theatre Student Matinee

PROGRAM



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Charles Hamilton Houston

Charles Houston grew up in a middle-class family in Washington, D.C. His father, William Le Pre Houston, was an attorney, and his mother, Mary Hamilton Houston, a seamstress.

During World War I, Houston was an artillery officer. He witnessed and endured the racial prejudice inflicted on Black soldiers and determined to affect change through the law. In 1919 he entered Harvard Law School, graduating with a Doctor of Laws degree in 1923. Houston was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar. When the American Bar Association

refused to admit African-American attorneys, he helped found the National Bar Association, an all-Black organization, in 1925.

Later, as dean of the Howard University Law School, Houston's goal was to train civil rights focused lawyers. Houston left Howard to serve as the first general counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He fought Jim Crow laws that prevented Black people from serving on juries and accessing housing.

His greatest fight was to end school segregation. In 1938 he won a Supreme Court case that ruled in favor of admitting Black students to a White school if no 'separate but equal' school existed for Black students. Houston wanted to make it too expensive for facilities to remain separate.

The Supreme Court ruled that Black students could be admitted to a white school if there was only one school.

He died in 1950. In 1958 the Main building of Howard University Law School was named after him. To learn more about Charles Houston, please visit <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/charles-hamilton-houston>



Mary Church Terrell

Mary Church Terrell was born on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee. Her parents were both formerly enslaved people who became small-business owners.

Terrell attended Oberlin College in Ohio. In 1884 she became one of the first Black women to earn a college degree and master's degree. In 1891 she married Robert Heberton Terrell, Washington, D.C.'s first Black municipal judge.

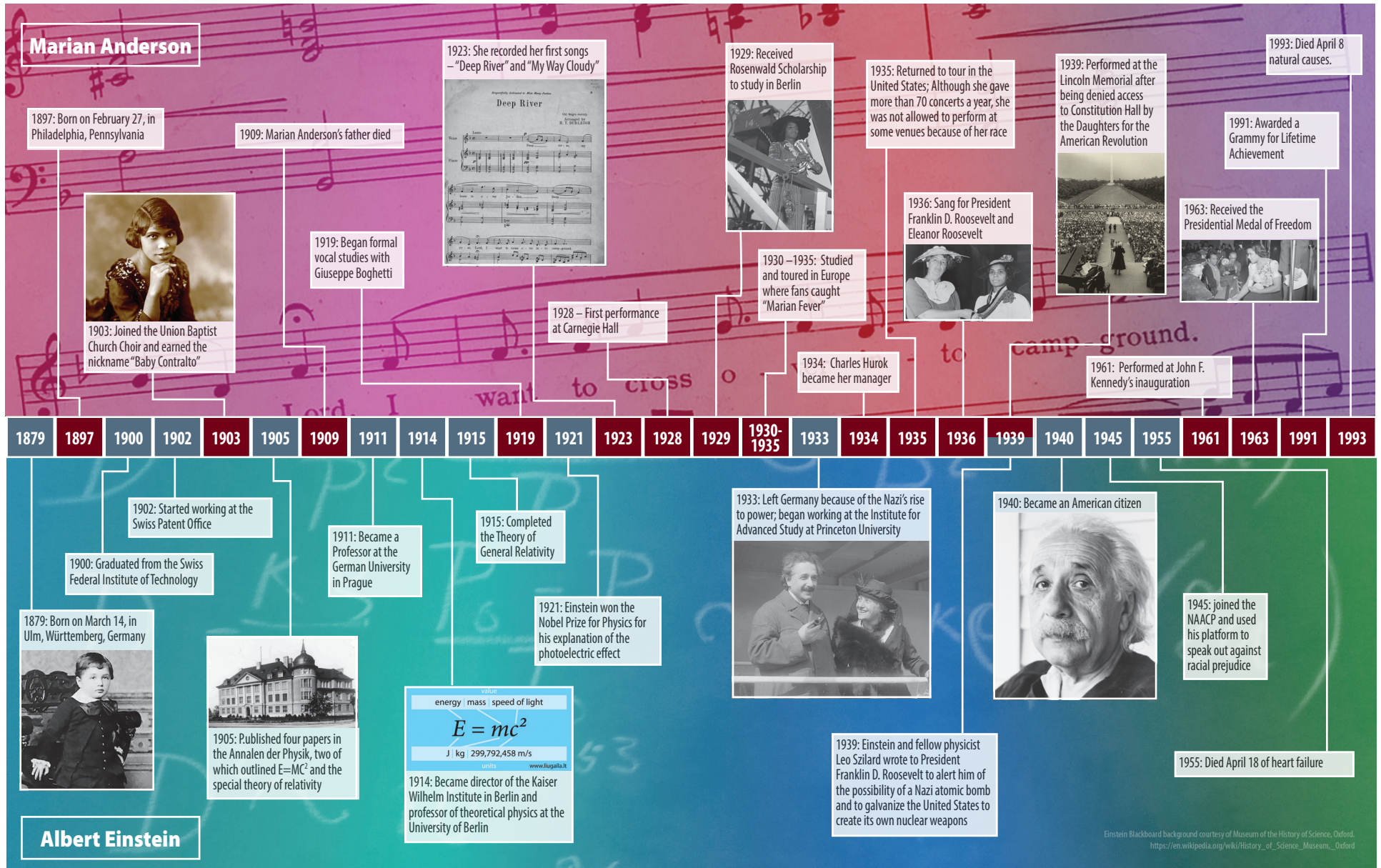
Terrell became involved in the women's rights movement. She frequently spoke out against the reluctance to include

African American women in the movement. In 1896 she co-founded the National Association of Colored Women and became the organization's first president. Terrell also became a charter member of the NAACP. Later, she became the first African-American woman ever appointed to a school board and then served on a committee that investigated alleged police mistreatment of African Americans.

In 1949 she became the first African American admitted to the Washington chapter of the American Association of University Women. Terrell died on July 24, 1954 in Annapolis, Maryland. To learn more about Mary Church Terrell, visit <https://www.biography.com/activist/mary-church-terrell>

WITH WHICH CHARACTER IN THE PLAY
DO YOU MOST IDENTIFY?

MARIAN ANDERSON AND ALBERT EINSTEIN TIMELINE



Einstein Blackboard background courtesy of Museum of the History of Science, Oxford. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Science_Museum,_Oxford

RETELLING HISTORY: FACT VS. FICTION

My Lord, What a Night is based on true events, but often when true life is portrayed onstage some fact becomes fiction. Can you tell the difference?

Test yourself by determining if the below statements are fact or dramatic fiction. Answer key is on back of program.

- 1 Marian Anderson stayed with Albert Einstein in Princeton.**
True False
- 2 Albert Einstein saw parallels between Nazi treatment of Jewish people and racism in the United States and spoke out against it.**
True False
- 3 Mary Church Terrell encouraged Marian Anderson to use her platform to protest.**
True False
- 4 It was Marian Anderson's idea to do the concert at the Lincoln Memorial.**
True False
- 5 Albert Einstein denounced racism in the United States and spoke out against it.**
True False

FRIENDSHIP

Coming from different worlds and backgrounds, Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson fostered a unique friendship. In *My Lord, What a Night*, you see how that friendship provided solace and encouraged them both to use their platforms to improve the world.

Who is an unusual friend in your life?

How did you meet?

What impact do you have on each other?

RETELLING HISTORY: FACT VS. FICTION ANSWER KEY

Marian Anderson stayed with Albert Einstein in Princeton. - TRUE

In 1937, Marian Anderson stayed with Albert Einstein after being denied lodging at a New Jersey hotel. His daughter and housekeeper were at the house; there was no scandal surrounding the stay. Marian Anderson stayed with Albert Einstein many times after that as their friendship continued.

Albert Einstein saw parallels between the Nazi treatment of Jewish people and racism in the United States and spoke out against it. - TRUE

Albert Einstein left Germany while the Nazi party gained power. The Nazis attempted to silence him and discredit his work. In an interview with his friend and biographer Peter Bucky, Einstein stated, "Being a Jew myself, perhaps I can understand and empathize with how Black people feel as victims of discrimination." In addition to speaking out many times about the treatment of Black people in the United States, Albert Einstein joined the NAACP, co-chaired a committee to end lynching and regularly spoke on behalf of civil rights leaders."

Mary Church Terrell encouraged Marian Anderson to use her platform to protest. - FALSE

While there is little evidence of Mary Church Terrell's direct influence on Marian Anderson, the use of the character is an acknowledgment of the real Mary Church Terrell's civil rights work in Washington, D. C. The character is an amalgam of all of the people who encouraged and orchestrated Marian Anderson's career and protest.

It was Marian Anderson's idea to do the concert at the Lincoln Memorial. - FALSE

Marian Anderson tended to be less confrontational, preferring to allow her talent to open doors for her. Her manager, civil rights activists (such as Charles Houston and Walter White) and Eleanor Roosevelt advocated for and coordinated the concert.

Albert Einstein denounced racism in the United States and spoke out against it. - TRUE

Albert Einstein joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), gave speeches that spoke out against racism, and wrote essays against the treatment of Black people in the United States.



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