

1802

- 1802 George Bonga Born**
George Bonga was born in 1802 near Duluth to the black fur trader, Pierre, and an Ojibwe woman. He is the first-known person of African ancestry to be born in the Minnesota Territory.
- 1830's Slaves Living at Fort Snelling**
Officers at Fort Snelling bring their slaves with them.
- 1836 Harriet and Dred Scott at Fort Snelling**
For two years, the slaves Harriet Robinson and Dred Scott will live and work at Fort Snelling. When they are taken back south, they sue for their freedom, arguing that by having been in a free territory, they should be considered free. Years later, the U.S. Supreme Court hears the case and determines that all people of African Ancestry can never become citizens.
- 1849 Minnesota Becomes a Territory**
The territorial census lists 40 free people of African descent in Minnesota at the time. Most live in St. Paul as barbers and cooks.
- 1850s Free Blacks and Escaped Slaves Arrive**
Following the Mississippi north, free blacks and escaped slaves make Minnesota their home.
- 1854 Legislators Propose a Black Law**
Minnesota's territorial legislature considers a law requiring all persons of Negro blood to give a bond of \$300 to \$500 as a guarantee of good behavior. The bill is defeated 10 - 6 in the House.
- 1857 Dred Scott Decision**
The U.S. Supreme Court decides that Dred and Harriet Scott are considered property and therefore do not have the right to sue for their freedom.*
- 1858 Minnesota Becomes a State**
Though Republicans argue to give black men the right to vote in the new state constitution, there is too much resistance, and the new constitution allows only white men to vote.
- 1860 Eliza Winston Case**
The slave Eliza Winston is taken to Minnesota by her owners, the Christmases. While staying in St. Anthony, she is befriended by Emily Goodridge Grey and other abolitionists. She flees her owners and is later pronounced free by a judge.
- 1860 259 Blacks Living in Minnesota.**
- 1861 Civil War Begins**
With the first shots fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the Civil War begins. Minnesota is the first state to offer troops to the Union, and 104 Black men serve in Minnesota's regiments.
- 1863 First Black Church in Minnesota Begins**
African Americans in St. Anthony and Minneapolis form the first black church, St. James African Methodist Episcopal. They buy a church building in 1869.
- 1863 Robert Hickman's Group Arrives**
On April 12, 1863, 76 black men, women, and children arrive on a raft towed by the steamboat Northerner. Many are escaped slaves, and they are led by the slave preacher Robert Hickman. Another group of 218 blacks arrived ten days later.
- 1865 Thirteenth Amendment Passes**
On December 6, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment passed. The Thirteenth Amendment prohibits slavery.
- 1866 Pilgrim Baptist Church Formally Organized**
Having worshipped together since 1863, Robert Hickman and the group of ex-slaves he led formally organize Pilgrim Baptist Church. They construct the building in 1871, and Hickman becomes the official pastor in 1877.
- 1868 Minnesota Constitution Amended**
The Legislature amends the Constitution on March 6, 1868, giving African American men get the right to vote in state elections.
- 1869 School Segregation Forbidden**
The State Legislature forbids the practice of segregated public schools.
- 1870 Fifteenth Amendment Passes**
The U.S. Constitution is amended to give black men the right to vote in federal elections.
- 1870 Black Population in Minnesota Reaches 759**
- 1885 Western Appeal Newspaper Begins**
This influential black newspaper is started in June of 1885, and two years later John Quincy Adams becomes its editor. The Appeal and Adams became effective tools for enlisting professional blacks to move to Minnesota.