



Cleveland Metro Remote School K8

# February's Here!

Parent Ambassador Message

## India Jones Parent Ambassador

Happy Black History Month! This month's newsletter will include the usual information for families and caregivers but I also wanted to include a few Black History facts.

Also, CMRS K8 faculty and staff are planning a Black History Month event for us on February 21st, 2023 from 4-5:30 pm. Hope to see you there!

Black History Facts

## Important Black Figures in Cleveland

When I'm not being a parent ambassador for our school community, my other job is museum education. You can usually find me at The Cleveland History Center managing Youth Entrepreneurship Education programs. While writing these programs I have done much research about important people in Cleveland history. Of course some of those people are African Americans and I would like to share some of the things I've learned with you.

**Cleveland's African American Community in the 19th Century.** The African American community in Cleveland is as old as the city itself. The first Black permanent settler to the region was a man named George Peake. He arrived in Cleveland in 1809. Throughout the 19th century, the Black population would grow. Many Black people came from southern slave states as either Freedmen or fugitive slaves. They began settling on the Eastside of Cleveland. Many of them were skilled tradespeople that were involved in the improvement of the social and political positions of Black people across the country. Many of them like

John Malvin used their voices to speak out against slavery and were staunch abolitionists. Some men like John Brown the Barber risked their entire livelihoods to help fugitive slaves escape to Canada. John Brown would allow fugitive slaves to hide out in his barbershop to wait and catch a ferry across Lake Erie. Cleveland's geographical position to Canada made it a very strategic location on The Underground Railroad with many Cleveland residents both Black and White helping enslaved people's escape or helping them settle in Cleveland.

**Notable Cleveland Inventors and Entrepreneurs.** In the 19th century, George Peake invented a new kind of hand mill that would innovate the way that farmers and gristmill workers would grind grain. His new invention made the process of grinding grain into flour less difficult while producing a higher quality product. Prior to his hand mill, people worked twice as hard just to get an inferior meal. His hand mill had people in Cleveland eating better food. Other notable entrepreneurs during the 19th century like Madison Tilley and Alfred Greenbrier accumulated substantial wealth through their efforts in excavation and cattle. By the 20th century, more African Americans from the South began to migrate up North for job opportunities. One of those people was Garrett A. Morgan. One of the most important inventors in American history and a quite capable entrepreneur. Morgan came to Ohio from Kentucky in the late 1800's. He likely moved from Cincinnati to Cleveland in 1895. He worked for a sewing machine company owned by Thomas White. Morgan was a tinkerer and worked as a repairman. He eventually opened his own repair shop in 1907 and in 1909 he opened a tailoring shop. He was very resourceful and always had an entrepreneurial spirit. It is said that while working and repairing the machines, he discovered a lubricant for the machines that could also straighten hair. That is when he started his hair refining company in 1913. Morgan lived in very different times when it was important for Black Americans to find ways to "tame" and straighten their hair. He is known for patenting the hair relaxer and straightening comb. Morgan is also known for his safety devices like the traffic signal and the first version of the gas mask, the safety hood. Morgan used his breathing device to rescue workers in an underground tunnel explosion. There were toxic gasses in that explosion that made escape impossible. Morgan and his brother rescued and retrieved people in the early morning hours. After this, Morgan would go across the country demonstrating his breathing device. Fire departments across the country placed orders for his device to protect their firefighters from smoke in fumes.

The First Great Migration also brought Alonzo Wright to Cleveland. He was this city's first Black millionaire. When Wright was a young man he went to school at night and worked several jobs throughout the day. While working, he met an executive from Sohio Standard Oil and was offered an opportunity to be the first Black man to lease one of the gas stations. His station was on 93rd and Cedar. He fulfilled the needs of many people with his service stations. He provided a gas station in a neighborhood that didn't have one. He hired many young men in the neighborhood to work there like Olympic gold medalist Jesse Owens. His service stations were popular because he provided more than just gas. Wright's Service Stations offered free windshield cleanings, tire and radiator checks. When he was finished with the gas business, he moved on to real estate and even purchased the Carnegie Hotel. This is where he amassed most of his wealth.

The 1920's brought a woman named Amanda Wicker to Cleveland. Before moving to Cleveland she attended Tuskegee Normal school and went to Washington DC to be an apprentice at the Clarke Training School where she learned the craft of dressmaking. She brought these skills with her to Cleveland and opened the Clarke School of Dressmaking and Design in the Fairfax neighborhood. Students learned fashion design, tailoring and clothing manufacturing. Students learned the art of fashion and gained the skills to work in any garment district operating the machinery that made clothing. Wicker was a civic leader and champion of vocational education for young Black students in the city. She was recognized and acknowledged for all of her work in the community and business. She worked hard to improve the Fairfax neighborhood and believed in opportunities for students even in her retirement years. She continued to present young people with scholarships through the Amanda Wicker Scholarship Fund.

I hope you enjoyed these lesser known Cleveland Black History facts.

## Important Dates This Month

Feb 8th, 2023: K-8 Parent Teacher Conference Night. (Teachers will send links for sign ups.)

Feb 17th, 2023: Staff Professional Development Day. **NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS.**

Feb 20th, 2023: Presidents' Day. **ALL FACILITIES CLOSED. NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS.**

Feb 21st, 2023: Black History Month Event. 4-5:30 pm at John Adams High School. Enjoy crafts, an African drumming performance, presentations from students and food!

## Community Resources

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a government program that helps low income families get access to affordable internet. ALL CMSD families are eligible. The benefit provides a monthly \$30 discount to your internet bill. You must apply at this website <https://affordableconnectivity.gov/> or print out the application. Contact your preferred service provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill. Make sure that you fill out the application and contact the service provider to get the discount.

Free tutoring through the district is still available! Schedule using this link.

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/CMSDTutoringProgram@ClevelandMetroSchools.org/bookings/> Use your child's district email address, personal email addresses will not work.

If you are ever looking for events and activities for your children, the Cleveland Public Library has many offerings for the entire family. Here is a link to the public calendar. You can find something that you may want to register for.

<https://cpl.libcal.com/calendar/events/?cid=8758&t=g&d=0000-00-00&cal=8758&inc=0>

As always, keep motivating your students to stay present in live classes and continue to work independently in their learning apps in Clever. Remember that students should have their cameras turned on and using a district approved device.

Thank you for reading this month.

[CMRS K8 Website](#)

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