Freedom Train

Spans 200 Years Of History

Black Americans' contributions to the nation's history, exploration, technology, literature, art and sports are represented in The American Freedom Train display of Americana spanning 200 years.

The 25-car, steam-powered train—the first national Bicentennial project to get underway is winging its way across the United States.

Visitors who board the train's unique moving walkway through its 10 exhibit cars see President Lincoln's historic preliminary Emancipation Proclamation as well as innovative multi-media displays reflecting the contributions of Crispus Attucks to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Attucks, then 47, was the leader of a group of patriots who were fired on by British soldiers in the infamous Boston Massacre of 1770 and became the first casualty of the Revolutionary War. A photograph of Attucks is displayed in Car 1 of the train amid other patriot leaders and a display of the original British Brown Bess, Hessian and Charleville muskets, flintlock Kentucky rifle and Minuteman powder horn.

The conflicts of the '60s, nearly 200 years later, are recalled on the Freedom Train by Dr. King, foremost advocate of nonviolence and racial brotherhood. His black robe, a red prayer shawl trimmed in gold, and the bible used by this Nobel Peace Prize recipient are included in a multi-media presentation, along with a life-size replica of his pulpit in Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta.

Four movie projectors simultaneously flash scenes from the peace marches he led on Cicero, Selma, Montgomery, Detroit, New York and Washington, D.C. before he was cut down by an assassin's bullet in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Black Americans' contributions to nation's progress on display

Other black notables featured in the train's 10 exhibition cars include 18th century poet Phyllis Wheatley. Kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery, she was later freed and became the first black woman, and second American woman, to have her works published.

Social reformer Marcus Garvey, who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and Frederick Douglass, author, editor, lecturer and U.S. minister and consul general to Haiti, are also featured.

Matthew A. Henson was the

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Art, Sports Displays Ride The Rails

first American to raise the U.S. flag at the North Pole in 1909.

This great moment in American history is reflected in The American Freedom Train display which includes the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded Admiral Peary for leading this famous expedition.

Edmonia Lewis' 19th century marble sculpture of an "Old Indian Arrowmaker and His Daughter," the late W. H. Johnson's tempera, "Sowing III," and Jacob Lawrence's new screenprint, "The Builders" are prominent in the Train's mini-art gallery.

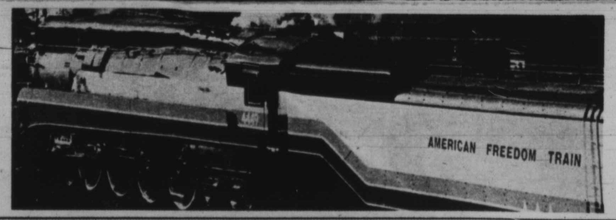
Black athletes highlighted in films, video tapes and athletic artifacts aboard the train read like a virtual "Who's Who" in American sports.

Baseball superstars include Hank Aaron, Lou Brock, Willie Mays, Jackie Robinson and Maury Wills, while football stars include record-setters Jim Brown and Gayle Sayers. Track stars aboard the train include Olympic champions Jesse Owens, Wilma Rudolph and Wyomia Tyus.

Also on display are action replays, uniforms and giant sneakers of all-time basketball greats Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wilt Chamberlain, K. C. Jones, Bob Lanier, Meadowlark Lemon and Bill Russell.

There's a knockout every four seconds as the Freedom Train's screens replay the championship fights of Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Joe Louis, Archie Moore, Sugar Ray Robinson, Jersey Joe Walcott and Ike Williams.

The American Freedom Train Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt, and non-political project financed completely without government or state funds. Check the schedule for your area.



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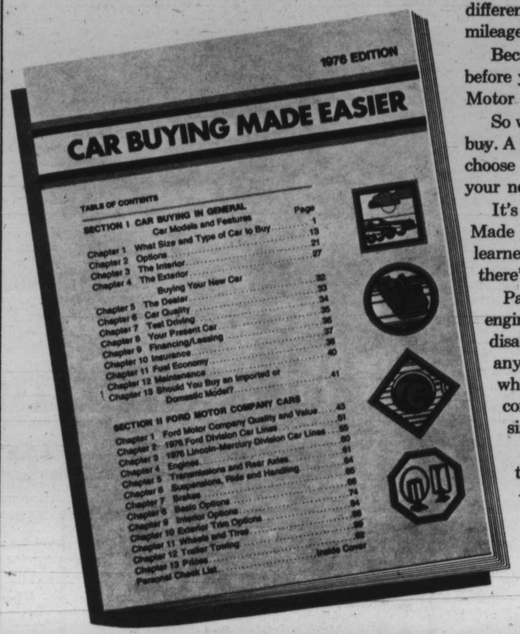

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