



## Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America

*Lerone Bennett Jr.*

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"Before the Mayflower" traces black history from its origins in western Africa, through the transatlantic journey that ended in slavery, the Reconstruction period, the Jim Crow era, and the civil rights upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in an exploration of the complex realities of African-American life in the 1990s. Here is the most recent scholarship on the geographic, social, ethnic, economic, and cultural journey of "the other Americans," together with vital portraits of black pioneers and seminal figures in the struggle for freedom, as well as additional material on historical developments in the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton years.

## Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America Details

Date : Published July 1st 1993 by Penguin Books (first published January 1st 1964)

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Author : Lerone Bennett Jr.

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## **From Reader Review Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America for online ebook**

### **R.K. Byers says**

PLEASE read this book.

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### **Keith Wagner says**

This a great introduction, if not then the best introduction, to African American History. If you are wanting to know more about the story of African Americans this book is very readable and accurate. When I taught our school African American History class this was my text. My students liked it so much most of them went out and bought their own copies.

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### **Merrick says**

If you are of African ancestry you have to know your history before you can put your eyes on the future, with success. This is also a very good read for anyone that is not African American but wants to explore the history of Africans in America.

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### **Donna Davis says**

When I was working on my MA with the goal to teach history in the upper grades, I expressed my frustration to my professor. I asked where I could find the actual history of Africa. Everywhere I looked (in conventional sources, such as the university library and trade journals) it said, "See Europe". I didn't WANT to read about the colonizers. But of course, when conquerors succeed in occupying another land militarily and politically, the next thing to be done is to eradicate the culture as it exists, and to pretend there WAS no history before the conqueror arrived (aside, perhaps, from a brief reference to how bad it used to be).

Mr. Bennett gives voice to Black Americans, and to the cultures they brought with them. Through impeccable research, he has uncovered history and culture that was not readily available those many years ago. This book was published and available at almost the same time I finished my degree. I found it later when I had the luxury of being able to read what I wanted, rather than that which was assigned, and have used it to some degree in home schooling my son (though it is too difficult for most high school students). Highly readable and enormously enlightening.

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### **Desiree says**

I don't believe I haven't reviewed this book yet! Read it about 20+ years ago and Loved it!! It's basically a Black version of the history books we're given in school. My daughter's too young to read it now, but in

another 10 years or so, she's definitely reading this gem.

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### **Donna says**

As an African American, I found this book not only very educational but also an interesting read. I expect that anyone interested in black history would enjoy it too.

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### **Shila says**

This is my favorite book of all time. That means that it influenced my actions. Also, I collect editions of it, so if you have one you want to let go, please send it to me. :) Thank you.

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### **Velicia Tillman says**

Excellent resource book to have. It provides a detailed history of Black America before coming over on the Mayflower. There are many that have tried to lift up the defeats and successes of the African American. Great historical book to maintain in your home library.

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### **Tessa says**

Read for one of my history courses while attending San Diego City College. This book is powerful. Spanning centuries of history, a great introduction and original text on African American History. 15 Chapters:

1. The African Past
2. Before the Mayflower
3. The Founding of Black America
4. Behind the Cotton Curtain
5. Blood on the Leaves: Revolts and Conspiracies
6. The Generation of Crises
7. Black, Blue and Gray: The Civil War Nobody Knows
8. Black Power in Dixie
9. The Life and Times of Jim Crow
10. Red, White and Black: Race and Sex
11. From Booker T. Washington to Martin Luther King Jr.
12. The Time of the Whale
13. The African-American Century
14. The Perseverance of the Black Spirit
15. Black America's Gifts to America and the World

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### **Julie says**

This is a solid 3.5 on my scale of ratings, tipping to 4, as the mood changes. This book is a nice, solid primer for those who don't know anything about Black History ... or American History for that matter, for it is impossible to distinguish, and absurd to split hairs.

It is to be noted that this book was first published in 1961, when it truly was a landmark for American culture. It has been revised at least 3 times since; and in this revision Lerone Bennett states he re-wrote many of the sections to update it to encompass present knowledge (as opposed to the earlier editions that were 'revised' simply by making a few editorial changes.)

The book is encyclopaedic: Bennett moves back in time in order to be able to deliver context, travelling as far back as history will allow and then takes it to 2007, when this last edition was printed. As one can imagine, needs must move this narrative by leaps and bounds: so one travels from 7th C BC Timbuktu to 15th century AD, in about 30 pages. A nice sweeping coverage for the uninitiated, but I was hoping for something more; something more scholarly perhaps. The other minor quibble I have with it is that Bennett relies mainly on secondary source material -- all fine and good for a survey for general consumption but leaves a mild disappointment for seeking the unadorned, unfiltered truth.

It's a must-read and a fascinating overview.

To be noted: the book is not quite as daunting as its 700+ pages might suggest. Only 430 or so pages of narrative, with lots of photographs to enhance the storyline; the next three hundred pages can be used as a quick reference chronology which begins in AD 1300 -- little snippets of important events that one can fly through with ease. (I think it might be quite a handy tool for high school teachers, for instance; and for those kids who prefer to get their information in Twitter-sized notes. Better to ingest it this way, than not at all, imho.) There is a nice section entitled Black Firsts -- giving voice to those moments in time when Black Americans were finally able to break through the various social and cultural prisons carved out for them. It's humbling to see life in that way: that one's merits had to be judged on the colour of the skin, and not the colours in their hearts and minds.

In the end, a very quick (and informative) read from a hefty five pound book.

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### **C El says**

This book is a M U S T read for all! yes, it is a lil strong in its content but it all truth to how life was for a race of people whom is still classed as 2nd class! it has a real WOW factor to it but i really feel if read but our young sisters & brother today would clearly feel a lot better about themself than they do now!

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### **Terrance says**

A must read. The chapter on Lincoln puts a lot of things into perspective and casts a new light on "The Great Emancipator"

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**Carole says**

Learned some things I didn't know.

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**Charlie says**

Chronicles the cohabitation of Europeans and Africans in North America and corrects misconceptions and bold face fabrications that have been perpetuated by scholars throughout american history.

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**Cheryl says**

This comment is only to add corrections to the editions shown on GoodReads. My copy is the (Revised Edition) A Pelican book published by Penguin Books (14 020856 9) from 1970, with the Cover Design by Janet Halverson. (435 pages - including reference pages). I selected this one since it came closest in year in publishing date and format.

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