

The top 10 best US presidents for black America



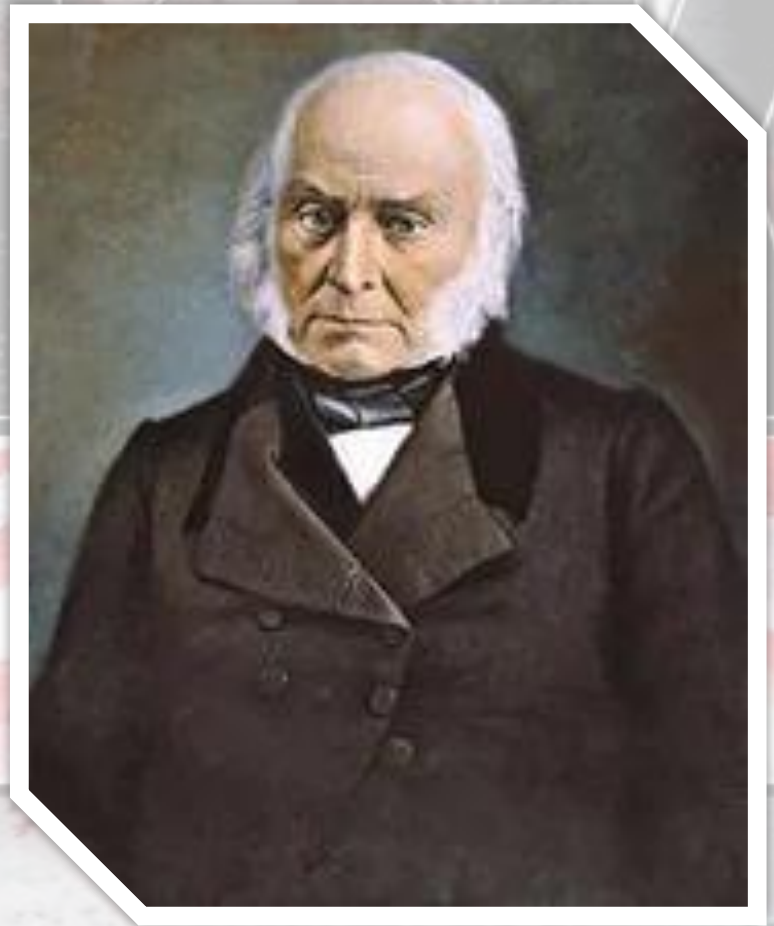
Bill Clinton

Bill Clinton (1993-2001): Though he was dubbed the first black president by writer Toni Morrison in 1998, Clinton had a complicated relationship with black America. Still, Clinton presided over record prosperity, the lowest level of black unemployment ever (7.2 percent), and historic reductions in poverty. But perhaps more than anything, it was Clinton's unprecedented, comfortable approach to black people that earned him points.



John Quincy Adams

John Quincy Adams (1825–1829): The sixth president of the United States (and son of the second,) made much of his impact on Black America after he left office. Having run successfully for Congress, the former president was a strong abolitionist voice, and even represented a group of Africans who had staged a revolt on the slave ship *Amistad* in their successful bid for freedom before the Supreme Court.



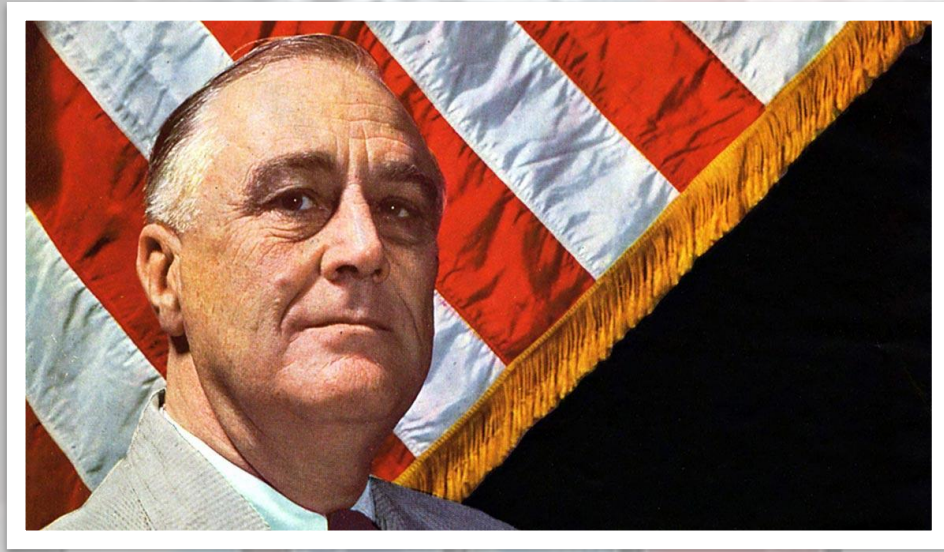
Ulysses S. Grant



Ulysses S. Grant (1869–1877): Elected president as the heroic commander of Northern troops who sealed the surrender of the confederacy, and following the disastrous presidency of Abraham Lincoln's vice president, Andrew Johnson, Grant is considered the strongest advocate for African-Americans of any 19th century president, including fighting for the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave black Americans the right to vote.



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933–1945): FDR was no crusader for African-American civil rights, and tolerated segregationist policies in order to secure passage of the New Deal. But Roosevelt did sign a pair of 1941 executive orders that set the stage for generations of economic opportunity for black Americans by barring discrimination in hiring by federal agencies and contractors.

John F. Kennedy

John F. Kennedy (1961-1963): Though he was elected with 70 percent of the black vote in 1960, JFK was initially cautious on civil rights. Still, he made historic black appointments to his administration and sent federal troops to protect the Freedom Riders, to aid James Meredith in integrating Ole Miss, and to confront Bull Connor in Alabama. It was Kennedy's vision for civil rights legislation that was ultimately signed by Lyndon Johnson.



Harry Truman



Harry Truman (1945–1953): Truman was the first president since Ulysses S. Grant to directly address civil rights. Although known to have expressed racist views, Truman nonetheless created a civil rights commission in 1946 that issued a report, “To Secure These Rights,” that finally examined violence against African-Americans within the U.S. He issued executive orders that ordered the integration of the armed forces, and banned discrimination in the civil service.



Dwight Eisenhower

Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961): The Texas-born war hero signed the 1957 Civil Rights Act, which created the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. Eisenhower sent federal troops to help the Little Rock Nine integrate Central High School, and though he came to civil rights reluctantly, Ike swiftly made the armed forces fully implement the racial integration ordered by Harry Truman 15 years earlier.



Barack Obama



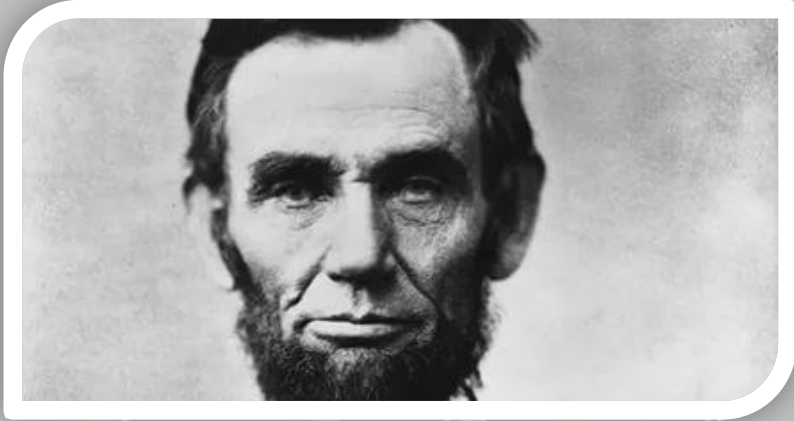
Barack Obama (2009-Present): If it's possible to be transformational simply by "being," President Obama has done so. The nation's first black president made history by winning the presidency in 2008, giving African-Americans a true sense full inclusion in the fabric of the country. He is still building his legacy, but the stimulus, education reform, saving the Detroit auto industry and other programs have benefited black Americans, despite a tough economy.

Lyndon Johnson

Lyndon Johnson (1963–1969): Johnson broke a southern Democratic filibuster to push through the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and his War on Poverty produced such programs as Head Start, which gave millions of children a chance to escape poverty. Not to mention signing Medicaid and Medicare, which lifted millions of blacks out of poverty.



Abraham Lincoln



Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865): Though his personal views of blacks were no different than most other whites of his time, Lincoln's opposition to slavery, and his decision to go to war against the states that seceded from the nation to protect their "peculiar institution," made him the liberator of the country's former slaves.