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“Why is it important to learn about the history of African Americans and their contributions to South Carolina?”

We are blessed to live in a state where racism has significantly decreased, and it is easy to take progress in racial equality for granted. However, even in the near past, African Americans were treated very differently in South Carolina, victims of a racism that had persisted for centuries. Yet, they never gave up on the dream of equality, and it is because of their striving that such progress has been made. Therefore, it is important that we learn about the history of African Americans because without them we would not be where we are as a state today.

Morgan Freeman says, “Black History is American History,” and this is also the case with our state. Black history is South Carolina’s history because African Americans have contributed greatly to our state, even in times when our state did not respect them. A great example of this is Robert Smalls, a former slave during the Civil War. His courage and intelligence helped the union army take over our state and eventually win the war. After the war, Smalls and many other African Americans continued to fight for racial equality in the government even when the racist “Redeemers” took control of the state. For example, George Murray was elected to the United States House of Representatives even though the democrats did all they could to suppress the black vote. The heroic actions of these African Americans were a key step in the equality movement, and they would inspire countless others to keep on fighting. It is important to learn about them so that we can be grateful for the significant improvement in equality in our state.

Not only have African Americans enhanced our military and government, but they have also greatly improved education for all races in our state. This is clearly shown in the actions of Septima Clark, who made several advances in equality in the Charleston School Systems, and helped over half a million African Americans become literate, enabling them to vote. African Americans have also heavily influenced South Carolina and American culture. Their spirituals are still sung all over the state. Musicians from South Carolina such as Dizzy Gillespie and James Brown helped create new styles of music like jazz and soul which are still widely listened to today. African Americans also added soul food to our cuisine, which is very popular in South Carolina today. They have contributed significantly to South Carolina in many ways, and without them, our state’s culture would not be the same today.

African Americans have played a vital role in the history of our state, and it is important to learn about their history because without them, life as we know it would be very different. Learning their history should inspire society to be grateful for their contribution to our state’s culture, and their perseverance should motivate us to continue to strive for complete racial equality.