

# BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY



As an organization, Fresno WILPF is committed to ongoing unlearning and re-education for those of us who hold privilege in today's constructed society. We believe that limiting the education of Black American History is an insult and disservice not only to the Black community, but to each and every one of us in this dazzlingly diverse nation.

That said, we will take this opportunity to spotlight two of Fresno's most revolutionary individuals. They are both active members of our organization involved in planning most if not all of our events; we encourage you to come out any time of the year and introduce yourselves to them!

Aline Reed's unwavering commitment to social justice was forged in childhood. Born in Fresno in 1958, Reed grew up in a family deeply committed to Black liberation movements. Her parents' involvement with the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and the Nation of Islam shaped her political consciousness from an early age; by age 10 she held firm political views. She graduated from Edison High School in 1976 and went on to earn a BA in English with a minor in Political Science from California State University, Fresno in 1981. She then attended UC Hastings College of the Law from 1981 to 1983. Throughout her life, Reed has dedicated herself to community organizing and social justice work. She founded the Social Justice Book Club and served as President of the Fresno Freedom School from 2016 to 2024. Her activism includes work with the Black Political Council, the Malcolm X/Revolutionary MLK Organizing Committee, the Hinton Community Center Board, and the West Fresno Democratic Club, where she has served as both President and Vice President. Reed's lifelong fight for political empowerment and community leadership in not only Black communities but also for the American people as a whole reflect the values instilled in her during childhood.



Reverend Dr. Floyd D. Harris Jr. is a community and political Civil Rights activist whose leadership has shaped social justice work across California. He founded the California chapter of the National Action Network and serves as a key leader in the Poor People's Campaign. Recognizing the need for youth investment and mentorship, Rev. Harris Jr. established the Fresno Freedom School in West Fresno in 2011. The school operates under the motto "We educate, motivate, energize, organize, and mobilize to take our youth to a higher level." Through his efforts, thirteen youth impacted by the Fresno Freedom School have attended historically Black colleges and universities, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in agriculture. Rev. Harris Jr. has received numerous awards and recognitions for his participation in local and national social justice actions. He remains committed to fighting for human rights and standing with communities facing injustice, whether through protests, rallies, or organizing meetings. With his powerful presence and unwavering commitment to radical, people-first principles, Rev. Harris Jr. stands firmly in the tradition of the great civil rights leaders who have fought for true freedom and justice throughout American history.



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What do you really know about Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day has roots in both ancient Roman tradition and later Christian observance, though its modern association with romance developed much later.

In ancient Rome, mid-February was marked by Lupercalia, a pre-Christian festival held on February 15. The celebration was connected to fertility, purification, and renewal, and honored Faunus, a Roman god associated with nature and agriculture, as well as the mythic founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. During the festival, priests known as Luperci sacrificed animals (most commonly goats) and used strips of the hides in rituals believed to promote fertility and agricultural abundance. Some later accounts describe temporary pairings between men and women during Lupercalia, though the historical reliability of these descriptions remains uncertain.

Valentine's Day is named for Saint Valentine, but there is no single, well-documented historical figure behind the name. Early Christian records suggest that more than one martyr named Valentine was executed in or near Rome during the third century. Over time, their stories blended into legend. One tradition describes a Christian priest who was imprisoned and executed during the reign of Claudius II, possibly for ministering to fellow Christians. Later medieval legends expanded this story, portraying Valentine as a secret officiant of marriages and/or the author of a farewell letter signed "From your Valentine," though these details are not supported by contemporary evidence.

In the late fifth century, Pope Gelasius I abolished Lupercalia and established February 14 as the feast day for Saint Valentine. While the proximity of these dates has led to speculation that the Christian feast was intended to replace the pagan festival, no surviving sources explicitly confirm this connection.

The association between Valentine's Day and romantic love emerged centuries later. In the 14th century, writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer linked the day with courtly love, helping establish its romantic meaning. By the 18th century, Valentine's Day had become a popular occasion for exchanging love notes and small gifts, eventually evolving into the commercial celebration recognized today.

In the modern world, Valentine's Day is an industry in and of itself and even has a spin-off category that's been growing consistently: Galentine's Day. Americans are projected to spend close to \$30 billion celebrating the shared holiday. Jewelry, dining, flowers, and candy sure do add up!

We at Fresno WILPF would like to propose a challenge: find creative ways to celebrate Valentine's (or Galentine's) Day, without inserting your hard-earned cash into the machine that is capitalism. Go on a hike or drive to see some wildflowers, make your loved ones some kind of art or bake them some cupcakes, build a fort in your living room and have a charcuterie-board dinner in it, you get the picture! You can also make a donation in their honor to one of the many worthy causes out there. If you must spend money spend it locally!

Much love,  
Fresno WILPF



FREE  
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Women in Black protest:  
Wed, Feb 4 @ 11:30am-1pm  
2500 Tulare St  
For more info contact Sue:  
skern@netptc.net  
559-349-3777

Stir It Up on KFCF:  
Wed, Feb 26 @ 3pm  
Tune in to 88.1 FM as Jean  
Hays highlights people and  
events important to our  
WILPF community.

WILPF Monthly Meeting:  
Thurs, Feb 12 @ 6:30pm  
Fresno Center for  
Nonviolence  
1584 N Van Ness Ave  
For Zoom link email  
lenivreeves@gmail.com  
Open to all! Please join us.

"Valley Voices for Peace"  
Check out our podcast!  
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YouTube thanks to a grant  
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### Donation requests from WILPF:

- empty containers (i.e. yogurt containers, tupperwares, spaghetti sauce jars)
- clean warm clothing for mxn, womxn, children
- warm outerwear (i.e. gloves, scarves, hats)
- personal hygiene for mxn & womxn (i.e. 3-in-1 body wash, menstrual products, deodorant, razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes)



Find us on social media! @FresnoWILPF  
Email our president: [FresnoWILPF@pm.me](mailto:FresnoWILPF@pm.me)

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Every Friday at 5pm  
 Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
 1584 N Van Ness Ave, Fresno  
 (559) 485 - 8558