

8 ways to celebrate Black History Month in Philadelphia

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ANDREW ECCLES

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the Kimmel Center Feb. 3 and 4.
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February ushers in Black History Month, and African American organizations throughout Philadelphia are hosting happenings and celebrations of black culture and heritage. From film to dance to museum exhibits, there are many ways to celebrate the vibrant history of black America.

[National Constitution Center](#)

Take self-guided tours that look at African American milestones, or check out the Breaking Barriers exhibit, where icons such as Thurgood Marshall, Bessie Coleman, and Jackie Robinson come to life. Don't miss out on the center's rare printing of the Emancipation Proclamation and test your wits at the Giant Board Game that is all about African American history for the month of February.

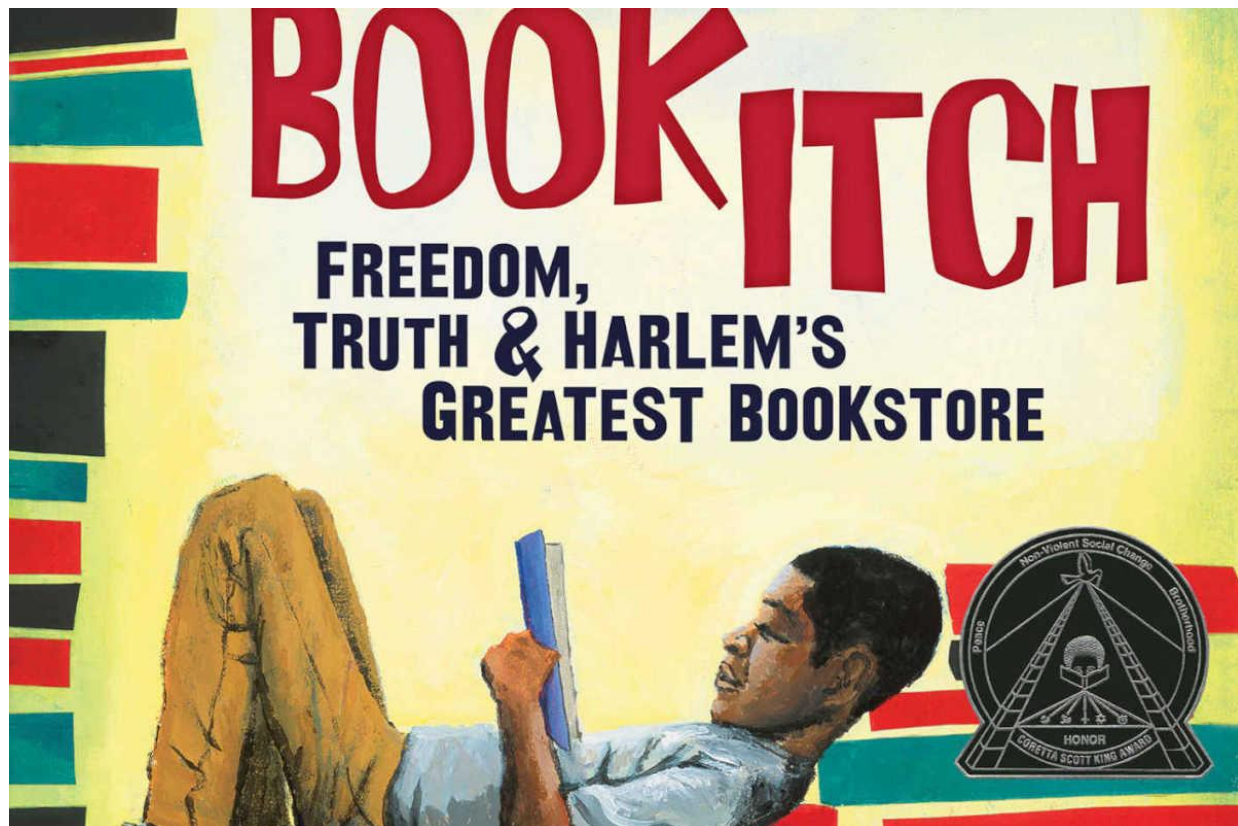
Through Feb. 28, National Constitution Center, 525 Arch St., free with museum admission, 215-409-6600, constitutioncenter.org/

Films at AAMP: "Black Girl" & "Merkato"

Ousmane Sembène's stirring 1966 feature film *Black Girl* chronicles the life of a young Senegalese woman who moves to France to work for a wealthy white couple and finds that life in their small apartment becomes a figurative and literal prison. Philadelphia-based filmmaker Sosena Solomon's documentary *Merkato* is a spirited tribute to the living testimonies of four merchants as they journey through the largest open-air market in Africa. The African American Museum in Philadelphia screens the two films along with a discussion featuring Solomon and photographer Shawn Theodore about *Black Girl*, *Merkato* and the films' intersection with AAMP Winter 2017 exhibitions, "Shawn Theodore: Church of Broken Pieces" and "Dawoud Bey: Harlem, USA."

6 p.m. Friday, African American Museum in Philadelphia, 701 Arch St., 215-574-0380, www.aampmuseum.org.

[The African American Children's Book Project](#)



CAROLRHODA PICTURE BOOKS

'The Book Itch' by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson.

Each year, the spotlight shines on African American children’s authors and illustrators at the annual African American Children’s Book Fair in Philadelphia. Founded by literary publicist and advocate Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati, it is known as “one of the oldest and largest single-day events for children’s books in the country.” Thousands of parents, children, teachers, librarians and literature fans will gather to hear panelists and participate in promotional giveaways, games, or simply spend a comfortable afternoon of book perusing.

1 p.m. Feb. 4, Community College of Philadelphia, 1700 Spring Garden St., 215-878-2665, theafricanamericanchildrensbookproject.org

The Kimmel Center



Two talented dance troupes known for their celebration of traditional African American dance will take center stage throughout the month of February. The events start when the [Alvin Ailey](#)

[American Dance Theater](#) will fill the [Merriam Theater](#) for a show of African-inspired modern dance. Just a few days later, on Wednesday, Feb. 8, [PHILADANCO](#) will present [Mix, Jazz and Dance](#), a free event intended for school groups.

Alvin Ailey, Fri. & Sat., [The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts](#), 300 S. Broad St., \$26-\$130, 215-670-2300, [kimmelcenter.org](#).

PHILADANCO, 11 a.m., Feb. 8, [The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts](#), free.

Hip-Hop Jazz Musicology

Trace the history of African American music from its beginnings all the way to what you hear on the radio. Musician Ali Richardson leads the way through this teen-geared event.

3:30 p.m. Feb. 15, [Riletta L. Cream Ferry Avenue Branch](#), 852 Ferry Ave. Camden, N.J., 856-342-9789, [www.camdencountylibrary.org](#)

African Dance Workshop

Sponsored by North Fifth Street Revitalization Project, this free dance class will instruct attendees how to find their groove in an interactive and educational session.

6:30 p.m. Feb. 15, [Greater Olney Library](#), 5501 N. 5th St., 215-685-2846.

African Roots and the Blues

The Annenberg Center for the Arts at the University of Pennsylvania will continue its [African Roots, American Voices](#) series all month long. *[I Go On Singing: Paul Robeson's Life in Song](#)* features the titular athlete, singer, actor and civil rights champion in a multimedia performance on Feb. 18. Led by baritone Anthony Brown, a pianist and a narrator, *I Go On Singing* celebrates Robeson's life and impact with archival video and musical selections ranging from Broadway to spirituals, including favorites such as "Wade in the Water" and "Ol' Man River." Former New Orleans street performer [Corey Harris](#) will take the stage Feb. 26 for an evening of music and conversation.

Feb. 18 & 26, [The Annenberg Center for the Arts](#), 3680 Walnut St., \$30-\$35, 215-898-3900, [annenbergcenter.org](#).

Black History Untold: Joy

In conjunction with WHY Y, we celebrate Black History Month by expanding on the [Black History Untold: Joy](#) project. Expect live entertainment and a panel led by project creator Sofiya Ballin, along with Lehigh University professor (and host of WHY Y's The Remix podcast) Dr. James Peterson.

5:30 p.m. Feb. 28, WHYY Studios, The Dorrance H. Hamilton Public Media Commons, 150 N. 6th St., \$30; \$10 (students), www.philly.com/blackjoyevent