

# Women in History: Marian Anderson



**Directions:** Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Marian Anderson was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1897. When she was 6 years old, her aunt thought her voice was very good and encouraged Marian to join the church choir. That was the beginning of her music education.

In 1925, Marian won a singing award from a major orchestra, the New York Philharmonic. She performed in concerts around the United States.

Because Marian was African American, some people did not want her to perform. Marian went to Europe, where the people did not stop her from performing. She became very famous in Europe.

In the 1930s, Marian returned to the United States. She sang around the country, but still some people did not want her to perform. In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution would not allow her to sing at an auditorium they owned. This made many people angry, including President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. They helped arrange for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The concert was a huge success.

Over time, many people that would not let her sing changed their minds and asked her to perform. In 1943, the Daughters of the American Revolution invited her to sing. In 1955, she was the first African American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. Marian sang at the inaugurations of President Dwight Eisenhower and President John Kennedy. In 1963, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Marian died in 1993. She is remembered for her wonderful voice and her work for civil rights.

1. What is the author's purpose in writing this text?

The author's purpose in writing this text was to share information about Marian Anderson's life and legacy in the music that she left behind.

2. How did President Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt impact Marian Anderson's life?

President and Mrs. Roosevelt invited Marian Anderson to sing at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., when others did not want her to perform. They helped her showcase her talent, and later, many people changed their minds and asked her to perform.

3. How did Marian Anderson's experience in the United States change after she sang at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.?

Marian Anderson's experience in the United States changed after she sang at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. She became more well known and she was invited to perform in more places.

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4. List three significant achievements or moments in Marian Anderson's life. Cite the paragraph where you found the evidence in the text. *Student answers will vary, but may include:*

- a. *She won a singing award from a major orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, in 1925.*  
*(Paragraph 2.)*
- b. *Marian Anderson became very famous in Europe. (Paragraph 3.)*
- c. *She sang at the inaugurations of two presidents, President Eisenhower and President Kennedy.*  
*(Paragraph 5)*

5. What is Marian Anderson's legacy?

*Marian Anderson leaves behind a legacy of her wonderful voice and her work for civil rights.*

*Student answers will vary, but may include:*

6. Complete the graphic organizer below with the main idea and details about Marian Anderson's life.

**Main Idea:**

*Marian Anderson was a famous and successful singer during a time of racial segregation.*

**Detail:**

*She performed in concerts around the U.S., but many people didn't want her to perform.*

**Detail:**

*She went to Europe to continue her singing career because of the racial segregation in the U.S.*

**Detail:**

*She became widely popular in the U.S., and won the Presidential Medal of Freedom.*