



Nurses Who Paved the Way

A Historical Timeline of African American Healing & Courage



1860's

Susie King Taylor

1. First Black Army nurse to serve in the Civil War — while still enslaved.
2. She taught soldiers to read and cared for the wounded with strength and skill.

“My strength creates space for others to learn and heal.”



1890's

Mary Eliza Mahoney

1. First licensed Black nurse in the United States.
2. Advocated for equality, professionalism, and ethical standards in nursing.

“I lead with integrity and open doors for others.”



1920's

Adah B. Thoms

1. Co-founded the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses.
2. Fought for equal treatment of Black nurses in wartime service and education.

“My voice matters. My leadership inspires change.”



1950's

Estelle Osborne

1. First Black nurse to earn a master's degree in nursing.
2. Worked to integrate nursing schools and mentor future leaders.

“I rise, so others can rise with me.”



1980's

May Wykle

1. Became one of the first Black deans of a U.S. nursing school.
2. Focused on geriatric nursing and improving care for aging populations.

“Wisdom, care, and leadership live in me.”



2020's

COVID Frontliners

1. Black nurses led with strength during the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Cared for patients and families while risking their own health and safety.

“Even in crisis, I am calm, capable, and compassionate.”

✨ *These women were more than caregivers — they were pioneers, leaders, and quiet revolutionaries. Their legacy continues in every nurse today.*

Reflections on Healing & History

A Journal Page to Accompany the "Nurses Who Paved the Way" Timeline

Instructions:

Take a few quiet moments to reflect on what you've learned about the legacy of African American nurses. Use the prompts below to write your thoughts, draw connections, or explore your own story.

1: Legacy

Which nurse or era inspired you the most? Why?

2: Lessons in Healing

What does "healing" mean to you?

"I gave my services willingly for four years without receiving a dollar." – Susie King Taylor

3: Color Their Story

If you could create your own coloring page about a nurse's life, what scene would you include?

4: Connection to Today

How do the stories from the timeline relate to healthcare workers today?

5: My Story Matters Too

Is there someone in your family or community who reminds you of these nurses? Share their story.



Want to bring their stories to life?

Explore our full coloring book: “Healing Hands: A Tribute to African American Nurses Through the Decades



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A decorative border surrounds the page, featuring various butterflies at the top and flowers with leaves along the sides and bottom.

“My story matters. My healing matters.”

This reflection page is a companion to the "Nurses Who Paved the Way" timeline and the "Healing Hands" African American Nurse Coloring Book.

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