Timeline of Events Around the Lifetime of Octavius Catto (1839 – 1871)

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| 1837 | Institute for Colored Youth founded |
| 1839 | Octavius born to William T. Catto and Sarah Isabella Cain in Charleston, South Carolina |
| 1841 | Supreme Court of the U.S. states that in the case of the slave ship Amistad the Africans who wrested control of ship had been bound into slavery illegally |
| 1842 | Lombard Street Riot began when angry mob of whites attacked parade celebrating Jamaican Emancipation Day. African Americans were beaten and their homes looted. The rioting lasted for 3 days. A local church and abolition meeting place were destroyed by fire. |
| 1845 | New York Herald first newspaper to mention the game of baseball  Alexander Cartwright and New York Knickerbockers baseball team systemizes the "rules of baseball" for first time, including nine men per side.  Irish potato famine began with widespread failures of the potato crop |
| 1847 | The American Medical Association founded in Philadelphia |
| 1848 | Catto and his family move to Philadelphia which only offered segregated public schools. He enrolls in Vaux Primary School and then attends the Lombard Street Grammar School.  Gold discovered in California by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in town of Colona  The Declaration of Sentiments calling for equal rights for women and men signed by 100 men and women in Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Seneca Falls, New York at 1st Women's Rights Convention led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton |
| 1850 | Fugitive Slave Law limiting legal rights of escaped slaves passed  Debate on future of slavery in the territories escalates when Henry Clay introduces the Compromise of 1850 to the U.S. Congress |
| 1852 | Uncle Tom's Cabin published helping to inspire the anti-slavery movement in the 1850's |
| 1854 | Catto enrolls in the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY) which offered classical subjects including Latin, Greek, geometry and trigonometry  The Republican Party is founded by anti-slavery expansion activists |
| 1857 | United States Supreme Court rules in Dred Scott decision, 6-3, that a slave did not become free when transported into a free state, that slavery could not be banned by the U.S. Congress in a territory, and blacks were not eligible to be awarded citizenship |
| 1859 | After successfully graduating from ICY which was renamed for Benjamin Banneker, Catto hired as a teacher of English and mathematics and elected secretary of the Banneker Institute |
| 1860 | Abraham Lincoln elected president |
| 1861 | Civil War between the Confederate and the Union states begins |
| 1862 | President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation which frees nearly 4 million slaves |
| 1863 | The United States War Department issued General Order Number 143 on May 22, 1863, establishing a "Bureau of Colored Troops" to facilitate the recruitment of African-American soldiers to fight for the Union Army  Catto helps raise a company of black soldiers to defend Pennsylvania against Confederate invaders |
| 1864 | Catto elected Corresponding Secretary of the Pennsylvania Equal Rights League. |
| 1865 | Catto helps [desegregate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desegregation) Philadelphia’s [trolley car](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_car) system resulting in a law to end segregated trolleys in Philadelphia |
| 1865 | Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Grant ending the Civil War |
| 1865 | Thirteenth Amendment to US Constitution ends slavery nationwide |
| 1866 | The Civil Rights Act of 1866 passed by Congress, first federal law protecting the rights of African Americans. Vetoed by President Andrew Johnson, but veto overridden by Congress |
| 1867 | Catto helps establish [Negro league baseball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_league_baseball) in Philadelphia and the [Pythian Base Ball Club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythian_Base_Ball_Club) of Philadelphia |
| 1868 | Fourteenth Amendment ratified, granting citizenship to any person born or naturalized in the United States |
| 1869 | Catto helps support Pennsylvania’s ratification of the 15th Amendment which prohibited discrimination against male citizens in registration and voting based on race, color or prior condition  Wyoming becomes the first state to give women the right to vote in its state constitution |
| 1870 | Fifteenth Amendment ratified granting voting rights to males of all races  First election in Philadelphia in which black men regained the right to vote. Under the Federal Enforcement Act, federal troops protected their right to vote. |
| 1871 | Catto one of four black men murdered in election day riots, violent attempts to suppress the black vote and keep Democrats in power in Philadelphia. (As a result of his injuries, the fourth victim died a number of days after the election.) Numerous others were beaten and shot. No federal troops were deployed in Philadelphia to protect the vote. |