spotlight biography

Katharine Johnson was born in West Virginia. She was born in 1918. She loved counting. She counted everything. Her neighborhood schools wouldn't let her in. It was because she was black and female. That didn't stop her. She finished college at age 18. She went to graduate school. She was one of three black students. She was the only woman. She got hired by NASA. She was a "human computer." She did hard math problems. Her math sent people to the moon and back. She figured out flight paths. She figured out how to get space shuttles to go around Earth. She wasn't treated fairly. She wasn't allowed to put her name on reports. She did anyway. She wasn't allowed to go to meetings. She did anyway. She took giant steps for women and blacks.

Apollo 13 was to be the third mission to the moon. Its goal was to bring back moon pieces. There were three **astronauts**. Astronauts are people who fly into space. They do everything. They're the **crew**. The crew is made of people who work in the shuttle. The commander was James A. Lovell Jr. The other pilots were John L. Swigert Jr. and Fred W. Haise Jr.

Lovell was the world's most traveled astronaut. He had a lot of space experience. He had 572 hours of space flight. He had already done three missions.

Astronauts get a lot of training.