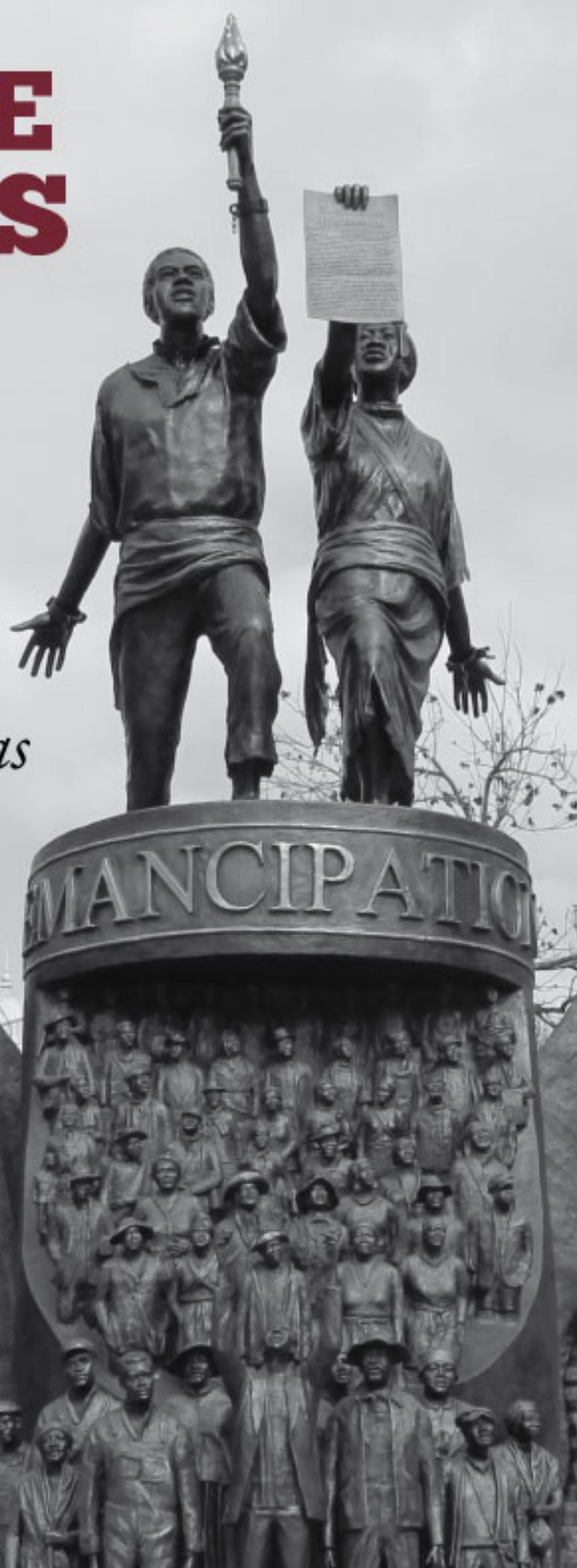


# STRUGGLE & SUCCESS

Selections from the  
*Handbook of  
African American Texas*



Cover Image: The Texas African American History Memorial Monument located at the Texas State Capitol, Austin, Texas.

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Texas State Historical Association  
3001 Lake Austin Blvd.  
Suite 3.116  
Austin, TX 78703  
[www.tshaonline.org](http://www.tshaonline.org)

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Dear Texas History Community,

Texas has a special place in history and in the minds of people throughout the world. Texas symbols such as the Alamo, oil wells, and even the shape of the state, as well as the men and women who worked on farms and ranches and who built cities convey a sense of independence, self-reliance, hard work, and courage. At the same time, Texas has long been a meeting place of many peoples and cultures, sharing much with the rest of the world. Texas history speaks a universal language.

African Americans have been part of the landscape of Texas for as long as Europeans and their descendants. Spanning a period of more than five centuries, African-American presence began in 1528 with the arrival of Estevanico, an enslaved African who accompanied the first Spanish exploration of the land in the southwestern part of the United States that eventually became Texas. While African Americans have been subjected to slavery, segregation, and discrimination during this long history, they have made significant contributions to the growth and development of Texas. They have influenced Texas policies and social standards. Living and working with other ethnic groups, they have helped create a unique Texas culture. Historians have not always acknowledged the role that African Americans have played in the Lone Star State. Although numerous studies of Texas's past appeared in the twentieth century, until 1970 there remained too many empty pages in the history of the state concerning the black population. This situation has changed since the 1970s, but the need to capture more of the African-American experience still exists.

Cognizant of the role that African Americans have played in shaping Texas's past, the original *Handbook of Texas* (1952) and the *Handbook of Texas Supplement* (1976) contained some entries on noted African Americans and institutions. *The New Handbook of Texas* (1996) included many more entries on African-American personalities, institutions, organizations, events, and places. Yet, these entries, while valuable, did not represent a comprehensive coverage of African Americans in the Lone Star State. So in 2011, a spin-off handbook was proposed, and on June 19, 2013, ([Juneteenth](#)) the online encyclopedia, the *Handbook of African American Texas*, came to fruition.

The development of an encyclopedia, whether digital or print, is an inherently collaborative process. The TSHA is deeply grateful to the contributors, University of North Texas graduate students, *Handbook* staff, and Digital Projects team whose dedication led to the launch of the *Handbook of African American Texas*. We owe an inestimable debt to Chief Historian Randolph “Mike” Campbell and Project Director Merline Pitre for their efforts and unwavering commitment to this project. Special thanks go to Stephen Cook, chairman of the Handbook Advisory Committee, for sponsoring a workshop at the African American Library at the Gregory School in Houston, where a group of professors, Texas Southern University graduate students, and members of the community worked to get this project off the ground. Likewise Debra Blacklock-Sloan should be acknowledged for her assistance in the early stages of this project.

This online feature has more than 850 entries on African Americans in Texas, many of which appeared in the earlier versions of the *Handbook*, and approximately 300 new articles about all aspects of African-American life and history in Texas. This *Handbook* is initiated to capture, to create greater awareness, and to increase research on the roles and contributions that Afro-Texans (individuals, groups, and organizations) have made to their neighborhoods, cities, state, and often the nation and beyond. The *Handbook of African American Texas* will continue to be enhanced as more entries and images are added.

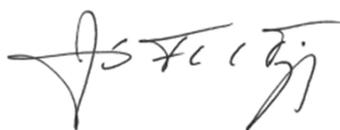
For more than a century, the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) has played a leadership role in historical research and education and has helped to identify, collect, preserve, and tell the stories of Texas and the Southwest. TSHA works in collaboration with numerous colleges and universities, especially its host the University of Texas at Austin, to carry on and expand its work. In the coming years these organizations, with their partners and members, will continue to create a collaborative whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This collaboration will provide passion, talent, and long-term support for the dissemination of scholarly research, educational programs for the K-12 community, and opportunities for public discourse about the complex issues and personalities of our heritage. This collaboration, at its best, will demonstrate that it is possible to find both simple truths and nuanced meanings in the study of the past.

TSHA's core programs include the *Texas Almanac*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, *Handbook of Texas*, TSHA Press, and education programs that reach out to students and teachers at all levels throughout the state. The central challenge before TSHA is to seize the unprecedented opportunities of the digital age in order to reshape how history will be accessed, understood, preserved, disseminated, and taught in the twenty-first century. In recent years, we have capitalized on these momentous opportunities to expand the scope and depth of our work in ways never before possible.

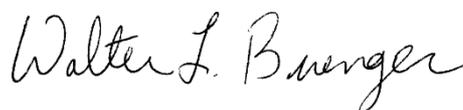
In the midst of this rapid change, TSHA will continue to provide a future for our heritage and to ensure that our history and the complex, always evolving, cultures found in the Southwest continue to serve as resources for the people of Texas and beyond. We encourage you to join us today as a member of TSHA, and in doing so, you will be part of a unique group of people dedicated to an inclusive Texas heritage and will help us continue to develop innovative programs that bring history to life.

Since 1897, TSHA has sought to spread the rich and varied history of Texas and the Southwest across not just the country but the world. As we celebrate progress across more than 120 years, we look forward to bringing our region's past into your life through ever-shifting digital presences, the expansion of publications, and the growth of our immersive educational programs. With your membership, donations, and support, all these things are possible.

With appreciation for the past and hope for the future,



Jesús F. de la Teja  
CEO  
Texas State Historical Association



Walter L. Buenger  
Chief Historian  
Texas State Historical Association

**YES – I SUPPORT TEXAS HISTORY!**

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*Southwestern*  
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XXVIII. ["Reluctance versus Reality: The Desegregation of North Texas State College, 1954-1956"](#)

by Ronald E. Marcello

XXIX. ["Texas and the Master Civil Rights Narrative: A Case Study of Black Females in Houston"](#)

by Merline Pitre

# I. African Americans

By W. Marvin Dulaney

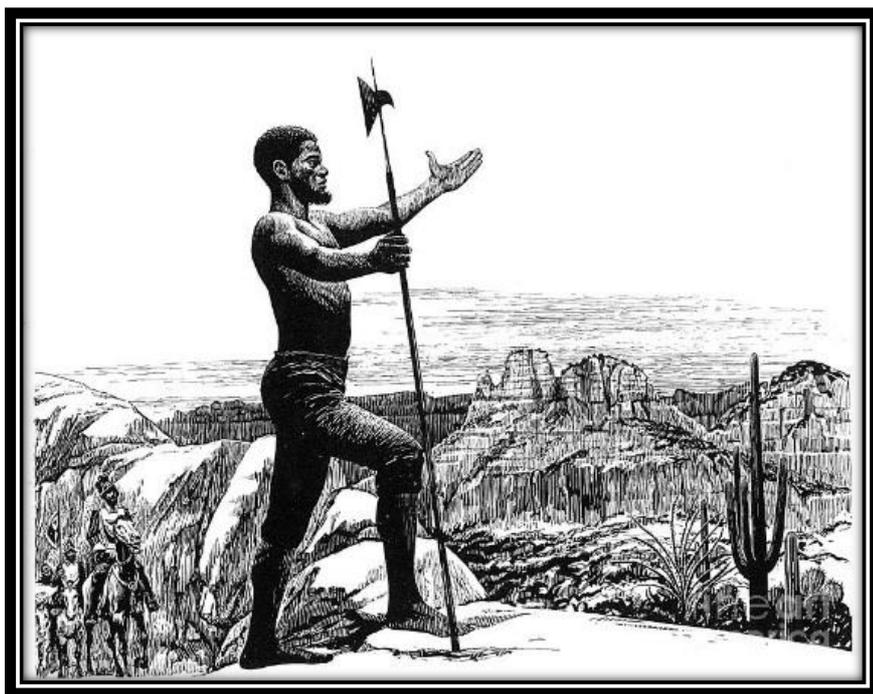
People of African descent are some of the oldest residents of Texas. Beginning with the arrival of [Estevanico](#) in 1528, African Texans have had a long heritage in the state and have worked alongside Americans of Mexican, European, and indigenous descent to make the state what it is today. The African-American experience and history in Texas has also been paradoxical. On the one hand, people of African descent have worked with others to build the state's unique cultural heritage, making extraordinary contributions to its music, literature, and artistic traditions. But on the other hand, African Americans have been subjected to [slavery](#), racial prejudice, [segregation](#), and exclusion from the mainstream of the state's institutions. Despite these obstacles and restrictions, their contributions to the state's development and growth have been truly remarkable.



Model, The Texas African American History Memorial Monument located at the Agricultural Museum of the Texas State Capitol.

From the beginning of European settlement in Texas, people of African descent were present. In 1528 Estevanico, a Moor, accompanied Spanish explorer [Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca](#) across the territory known today as Texas. Estevanico was an important member of Cabeza de Vaca's expedition because he could interpret the languages of many of the Native Americans that it encountered. Along with other members of the expedition he was captured by Indians and enslaved for five years. After escaping, Estevanico and the surviving members of the expedition made their way to Mexico. In 1539 he accompanied a second expedition into the Southwest, seeking *Cibolo* or the “Seven Cities of Gold.” This time he was killed by the Zuñi Indians and the expedition failed. Other pioneer Africans accompanied the Spanish into the Southwest, and some settled in the region known today as Texas. By 1792 [Spanish Texas](#) numbered thirty-four blacks and 414 mulattoes. Some of them were free men and women.

Unlike Estevanico and some of the Africans who inhabited Texas prior to settlement by Anglo-Americans, most African Americans entered the area as slaves. The first Anglo-Americans who settled in Texas came from the southern United States and were accustomed to using enslaved Africans as an important source of labor.



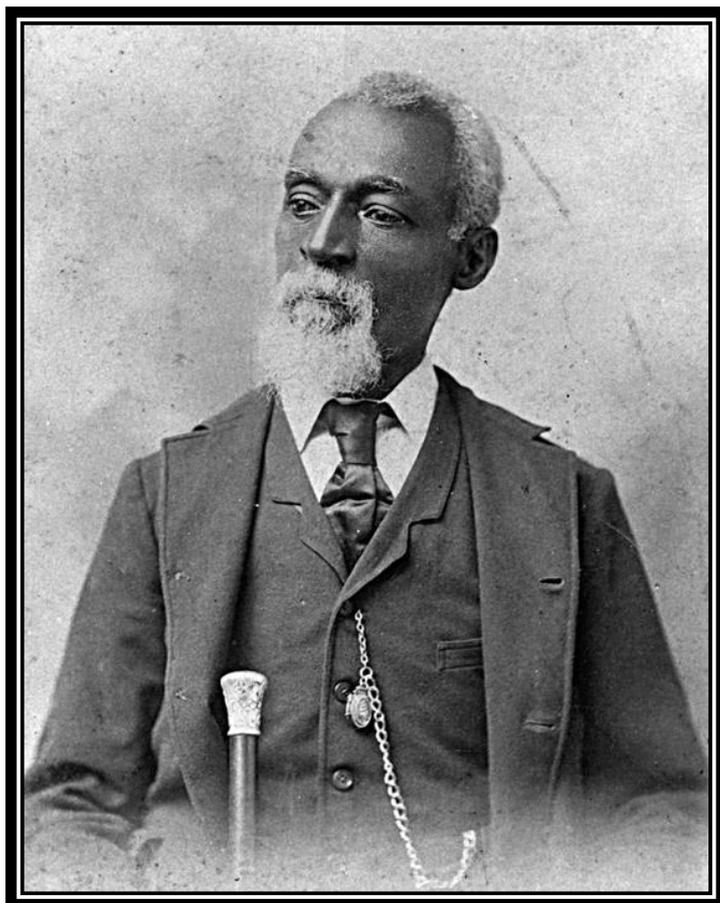
Estevanico

During the first fifteen years of Anglo-American settlement in Texas, from 1821 to the [Texas Revolution](#) of 1836, slavery grew very slowly. On the eve of the Revolution about 5,000 African Americans were enslaved in Texas (13 percent of the population). With independence from Mexico,

however, Anglo-Americans made slavery an integral part of the Republic's and later the state's economic development, and the enslavement of African Americans grew rapidly. By 1840, 13,000 African Americans were enslaved in Texas. By 1850, 48,000 were enslaved, and by 1860, 169,000—30 percent of the Texas population. In this "empire for slavery," according to historian Randolph Campbell, the experience of enslaved African Americans was similar to that in other parts of the American South.

The records gathered by Campbell as well as the testimony of African Americans enslaved in Texas attest to the fact that enslaved African Americans in Texas had as harsh and as easy a lot as those who were enslaved in other parts of the South. Two cases illustrate this fact. In 1861 a Canadian newspaper published the story of Lavinia Bell, a black woman who had been kidnapped at an early age and sold into slavery in Texas. She escaped from bondage and told of being forced to work naked in the cotton fields near Galveston.

She also told about how after her first escape attempt, she was physically mutilated and beaten severely by her owner. Other African Americans who were enslaved in Texas told similar stories of violence and cruelty by their owners. Hundreds sought to escape, especially to Mexico. But there were also cases such as that of [Joshua Houston](#), who was owned by Texas patriot [Sam Houston](#). Joshua, owned initially by Houston's second wife, became an important member of Houston's family. He was treated well, taught to read and write, and prepared well



Joshua Houston

for his eventual emancipation by the Houston family. After the [Civil War](#) Joshua became a politician in Huntsville, and, as if to underscore his loyalty to his former owners, on one occasion he offered to lend money to Sam Houston's widow when she faced financial difficulties.

While the treatment of African Americans enslaved in Texas may have varied on the basis of the disposition of individual slave owners, it was clear that white Texans in general accepted and defended slavery. Moreover, slavery in Texas had all of the characteristics that had made it successful in other parts of the South. For instance, slaveholders dominated the state's economic and political life. The government of the [Republic of Texas](#) and, after 1845, the state legislature passed a series of slave codes to regulate the behavior of African Americans who were enslaved and to restrict the rights of those who were free. The census counted about 400 free African Americans in 1860, although there may have been close to 1,000. Texas laws blocked the migration of free African Americans into the state. White Texans also restricted the civil liberties of white opponents of slavery in order to suppress dissent about the institution. When rumors of a slave insurrection circulated in the state in 1860, Texans virtually suspended civil liberties and due process. Suspected abolitionists were expelled from the state, and one was even hanged. A vigilante group in Dallas lynched three enslaved African Americans—Sam, Cato, and Patrick—who were suspected of starting a fire that burnt most of the downtown area. Other slaves in the county were whipped.

The Texas vote for [secession](#) in February 1861 hastened the end of slavery and set in motion the eventual liberation of the state's African-American population. Despite the objections of Sam Houston to joining a nation (the Confederate States of America) based on the enslavement of African Americans, white Texans voted three to one for secession. For African Americans in Texas, the Civil War brought freedom but it did not come until [Juneteenth](#), June 19, 1865.

where the approach of the Union Army encouraged thousands of enslaved African Americans to free themselves and run away, Texas African Americans remained enslaved until the end of the Civil War. Few were able to run away and enlist in the Union Army, as African- American men did in other parts of the South. Nor were they recruited to serve as soldiers in the all-white regiments that Texas sent to support the war effort of the Confederacy.



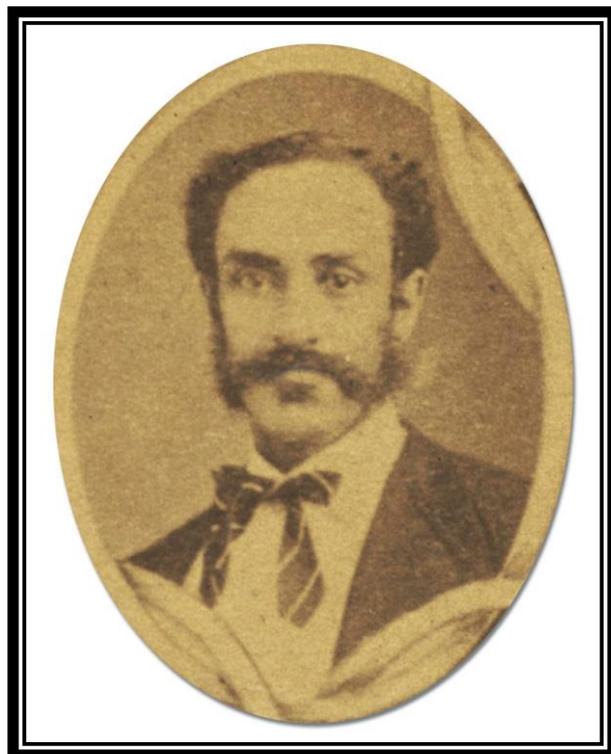
Juneteenth Statue, Galveston, Texas.

Moreover, even after Union Army General Gordon Granger read General Order No. 3 in Galveston on “Juneteenth,” announcing the end of slavery in Texas, many African Americans still had to fight for their freedom from slavery for months because their “so-called owners” refused to accept their emancipation.

The [Reconstruction](#) era presented African-American Texans another challenge. Many had to rebuild their lives, locate lost family members, and begin to live their lives as self-sufficient, free men and women. The establishment of the [Freedmen's Bureau](#) in the state aided this transition from slavery to freedom. But given the continuing racial animosity that separated blacks and whites after the war, this was not an easy task. The state legislature and several Texas cities passed [Black Codes](#) to restrict the rights of African Americans, to prevent them from having free access to public facilities, and to force them back to the rural areas as agricultural laborers. The use of the political and legal system to regulate African-American behavior and life was accompanied by a literal reign of terror in the state. According to the records of the Freedmen’s Bureau,

from 1865 to 1868 white Texans committed over 1,500 acts of violence against African Americans; whites murdered over 370 African Americans. These acts of violence by whites represented their attempts to reestablish white supremacy and to force African Americans back into their "place." In 1867 the United States Congress eliminated the Black Codes and sought to provide a modicum of personal safety for African Americans in Texas by imposing military rule and by enforcing strong federal measures such as the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and proposing the Fourteenth Amendment. These Congressional actions to protect African-American rights ushered in the second phase of Reconstruction in the state. In this period African Americans made a substantial contribution to the transition of Texas from a slave-labor state to one based on free labor. Ten African-American delegates at the [Constitutional Convention of 1868–69](#) helped to write a new state constitution that protected civil rights, established the state's first public education system, and extended the franchise to all men.

Between 1868 and 1900, forty-one African Americans served in the state legislature, and they helped to move the state toward democracy. African-American Reconstruction leaders such as [George T. Ruby](#) and [Norris Wright Cuney](#) became important members of the [Republican party](#) and, along with other African Americans, dominated state Republican politics through the end of the nineteenth century. During the course of the Reconstruction period, many African Americans moved from the state's rural



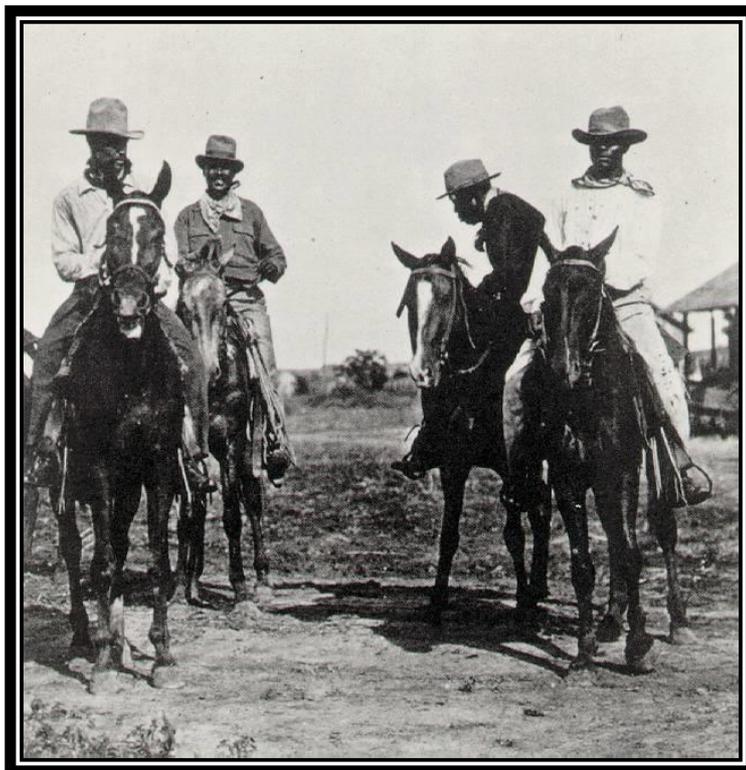
George T. Ruby

areas to cities such as Dallas, Austin, Houston, and San Antonio. On the outskirts of these cities they established "freedmantowns," which became the distinct African-American communities that still exist today. African-

American labor also contributed substantially to the economic development of these cities and helped the state to begin the transition from its near-total dependence on agriculture to industrialization. In 1879 a few thousand African-American Texans moved to Kansas seeking greater opportunities. Other African-American Texans participated in the postwar cattle boom (see [BLACK COWBOYS](#)), while the presence on the frontier of African-American soldiers, called [Buffalo Soldiers](#) by their Indian foes, exemplified the desire of many African Americans to act on their citizenship responsibilities by joining the military.

As in other parts of the South, Reconstruction lasted only a short time in Texas. White Democrats regained control of the state in 1873 and proceeded to reverse many of the democratic reforms instituted by black and white Republicans. Between 1874 and 1900 the gains that African Americans had made in the political arena were virtually lost. In the 1890s, for example, more than 100,000 African Americans voted in Texas elections.

But after the imposition of a poll tax in 1902 and the beginning of [white primaries](#) in 1903, fewer than 5,000 African Americans voted in 1906. In addition, racial segregation was established in all facets of public and private life in Texas for African Americans. In Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, public transportation and accommodations, schools, and, eventually, neighborhoods were segregated by law. African Americans in Houston and San Antonio challenged segregation on public transportation by forming their own bus and jitney companies. Dallas African Americans won a case in 1916 that overturned a residential segregation ordinance. But nothing succeeded in stemming the



**Buffalo Soldiers**

tide of segregation and violence that restricted the rights of African-American Texans by the early twentieth century. One form of violence used to enforce racial exclusion was lynching, and the victims of [lynching](#), which did not end until the 1940s, were predominantly African American. Brutal and vicious acts of violence against African Americans, such as the "burning at the stake" of Jesse Washington in Waco in 1916 (called the "Waco Horror" by the NAACP), happened too frequently for African Americans to live without some fear for their lives. Race [riots](#), such as those in Houston in 1917 and Beaumont in 1943, destroyed African-American neighborhoods. These race riots and lynching combined with political disfranchisement and legal segregation to make African Americans less than second class citizens. As a result, several thousand African-American Texans moved out of the state to the North and West in the early twentieth century. Although the percentage of blacks in Texas fell to 20 percent of the population by 1900 and declined further in the twentieth century, their numbers grew to more than 600,000 in 1900 and 900,000 in 1940.

Despite their second-class status, African Americans built viable and progressive communities throughout the state. Almost immediately after Civil War, they established churches, schools, and other social organizations to serve their own needs. They established newspapers (the [Dallas Express](#), [Houston Informer](#), and [San Antonio Register](#)), grocery stores, funeral homes, and other business establishments that served a predominant African-American clientele. In the late nineteenth century African-American farmers formed a cooperative to encourage African-American land ownership and to raise crop prices. From 1900 to 1940 a majority of African-American Texans remained in farming, with about 20 percent owning their land while most rented farms as tenants. The [Great Depression](#) of the 1930s hastened the trend toward urbanization. In the same period African Americans in Dallas organized a cotton-processing mill, but it failed in less than five years. These self-help and economic development efforts by

African-American Texans indicate that they did not allow the oppression of white racism to deter them from striving to build successful communities. After the Civil War, African Americans also developed their first educational institutions. [Black colleges](#) such as Bishop, Paul Quinn, and Wiley were

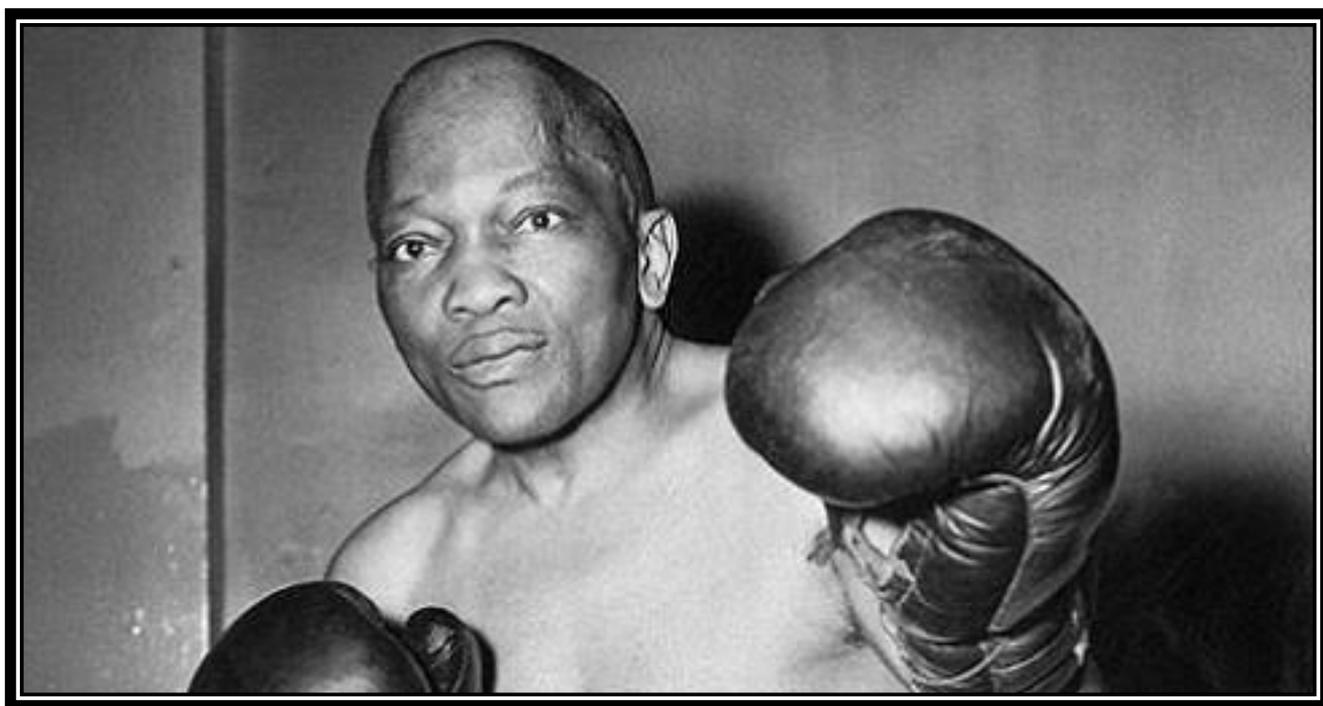


Paul Quinn College, circa 1900.

founded by several religious denominations, primarily Baptist and Methodist organizations. [African-American churches](#) such as Boll Street African Methodist Episcopal in Dallas also started the first schools in that city for black children. The city of Houston provided schools for its African-American citizens beginning in 1871. By 1888 the city government in Dallas followed suit.

African Americans also contributed to the state's social and cultural heritage in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Musicians such as [Blind Lemon Jefferson](#), [Huddie \(Leadbelly\) Ledbetter](#), [Eddie Durham](#), [Scott Joplin](#), and many others became innovators in [blues](#), [jazz](#), and ragtime. Singers such as [Julius L. C. Bledsoe](#) and Osceola Mays sang songs from the African-American folk tradition as well as their own contemporary compositions. Such writers as [Maude Cuney-Hare](#), [J. Mason Brewer](#), and [Sutton Griggs](#)

wrote biographies and novels and recorded the folklore of African-American Texans. Artist [John Biggers](#) of Houston became one of the nation's most important mural painters and an internationally recognized artist. In sports, such African-American Texans as Charlie Taylor, Ernie Banks, [Jack Johnson](#), and George Foreman earned national fame in football, baseball, and boxing, respectively. After the integration of the state's universities, African-American athletes such as Earl Campbell of the University of Texas at Austin, Elvin Hayes of the University of Houston, and Jerry LeVias of Southern Methodist University had outstanding college athletic careers.



Jack Johnson

One of the most significant achievements of African Americans in the state was their participation in the [Texas Centennial](#) of 1936. This event was important because African Americans highlighted the contributions they had made to the state's and the nation's development. Through the efforts of [A. Maceo Smith](#) of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce and [Samuel W. Houston](#) of Huntsville, the [Hall of Negro Life](#) was built at [Fair Park](#) in Dallas to bring to the state the works of Harlem Renaissance painter Aaron Douglas and Atlanta University artist Hale Woodruff, as well as to exhibit the paintings of Texas artists James Thibodeaux of Dallas, Samuel A. Countee of Houston, and Frank Sheinall of Galveston. More importantly, the Negro Day

event held in Dallas on October 19, 1936, as the African-American celebration of the Texas Centennial proved to be an important opportunity for African-American Texans to meet and plan strategy to end the segregation and discrimination that they faced. Three organizations emerged from the Negro Day celebration of 1936: the Texas State Conference of Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Texas State Negro Chamber of Commerce, and the Texas Negro Peace Officers Association (now the [Texas Peace Officers Association](#)). All three organizations had as their objective to improve the lot of African Americans in Texas.

The Texas Centennial was indeed a watershed event for African Americans. After it they launched a campaign to win the citizenship rights that the state's segregation laws and racist tradition denied them. Texas African Americans won two of the nation's most significant civil-rights cases. Through the selfless efforts and leadership of El Paso



**Texas Negro Peace Officers Association**

physician Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and Houston activist [R. R. Grovey](#), African Americans challenged the state's white primary system three times from 1927 to 1935. Eventually, they won a Supreme Court decision in *Smith v. Allwright* (1944), which declared the white primary unconstitutional. This landmark case won by African-American Texans opened primaries for blacks throughout the South. In 1950, African-American Texans also won one of the major legal cases that eliminated segregation in the South's graduate and professional schools. The [Sweatt v. Painter](#) case, filed by Thurgood Marshall, legal counsel of the NAACP, and local NAACP attorney William J. Durham of Dallas, forced the University of Texas Law School to admit black students.

Although the *Sweatt* case was one of several cases that the NAACP filed to gain entry for African-American students into graduate and professional schools, it also became one of the cases that laid the groundwork for the NAACP's challenge to segregation in public schools in the famous *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* case.

Despite the notion among some historians that Texas did not need a [civil-rights movement](#) to end its legacy of racial discrimination, African Americans had to use both the courts and direct action in the 1950s and 1960s to win access to public services and accommodations throughout the state. Using a variety of methods,



**Heman Marion Sweatt**

including negotiation and political activism, African-American citizens won the right to sit on juries, equal pay for equal work for African-American teachers, the elimination of residential segregation in the state's major cities, jobs on the police forces of Dallas and Fort Worth, open seating on public transportation throughout the state, and access to jobs in the public and private sectors. They also used sit-ins in Houston and Marshall to end segregation in public accommodations. By the mid-1960s, only one area of citizenship rights continued to elude African-American Texans—serving in elective office. To overcome their exclusion from elective office, as well as to fight the white primary, poll taxes, and their legal disfranchisement, African-American Texans formed organizations such as the Third Ward Civic Club and the Harris County Negro Democratic Club in Houston in the 1920s and 1930s, the [Progressive Voters League](#) in Dallas in 1936, and Charles Bellinger's Negro Citizens Executive Committee in San Antonio in 1926 to mobilize the African-American electorate and to influence white politicians to address their communities' needs.

In the 1950s and 1960s, African-American Texans challenged this paternalistic arrangement and overcame their exclusion from elective office. In 1958 Houstonian [Hattie Mae White](#) became the first African American to win an elective office in the state since Reconstruction by winning a seat on the school board. But many citizens thought that she was white and voted for her in error. She served nine turbulent years on the Houston school



Hattie Mae White

board, fighting constantly to force other members of the board to implement court-ordered desegregation of the school system. After Mrs. White's election, African-American Texans did not win another elective office until 1966, when several African-American candidates throughout the state won political races. Among the pioneers were [Joseph Lockridge](#) of Dallas and Curtis Graves of Houston, who won seats in the state House of Representatives, and [Barbara Jordan](#)

of Houston, who won a seat in the Texas Senate. In 1967 [Emmett Conrad](#) became the first African American elected to a local office in Dallas (school board) and in 1971 [Judson Robinson, Jr.](#) became Houston's first African-American city councilman since Reconstruction. A year later, Houstonians elected Barbara Jordan to the United States House of Representatives. Thus, she was the first African American in Texas history to represent the state in Congress.

Barbara Jordan's election symbolized the progress that blacks had made in the state after over 100 years of racial segregation and exclusion. Despite the lingering effects of the old racist and segregationist legacy,

African Americans continued to achieve in both the private and public spheres in the state. They won elective office on the city, county, and statewide levels. In 1992, for example, Morris Overstreet of Amarillo became the first African American to win a statewide office when he was elected a judge on the [Texas Court of Criminal Appeals](#). In 1995 Ron Kirk became the first African-American mayor in Dallas and in 1998 Lee P. Brown became the first African American to serve as mayor in Houston. In 1985 John Wiley



Ron Kirk

Price became Dallas County's first African-American county commissioner and El Franco Lee became the first African American to win a seat on the Harris County Commissioner's Court. In 2007 Attorney Craig Watkins became the state's first African-American district attorney when he won the office in Dallas County. Four African-American Texans—Mickey Leland (Houston, 1979–1989), Craig Washington (Houston, 1989–1995), Shelia Jackson Lee (Houston, 1995–present), and Eddie Bernice Johnson

(Dallas, 1993–present) have represented the state in the U. S. House of Representatives since 1979. Employment opportunities have also increased significantly for African-American Texans, especially in the larger urban areas such as Dallas and Houston. Since 1983, for instance, Dallas and Houston have ranked consistently in *Black Enterprise* magazine's "ten best cities for blacks" because of the social, political, and economic opportunities available for African Americans. In addition, African Americans have continued to participate in the state's social and cultural life and to add their creative talents to the state's as well as the nation's artistic development. Two of

many examples are the works added to American literature by Houston playwright and author Ntozake Shange and short story writer J. California Cooper of East Texas. Shange's work "for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf" played on Broadway and toured the country for several years. Her novels *Sassafras, Cypress, and Indigo* (1982) and *Betsey Brown* (1985) were national best-sellers. Cooper's short stories in *A Piece of Mine* (1984) and *Family* (1991) also earned her national acclaim. In addition, musical icons such as Beyonce Knowles of Houston and Erykah Badu of Dallas have won Grammy and other national awards for their music in the jazz, rhythm and blues, and pop genres.

These achievements were the result of African-American Texans' ongoing struggle for equal opportunity and human dignity. African Americans have lived in the area known as Texas as long as any other ethnic group except Native Americans.



**Beyonce Knowles**

Their blood, sweat, and hard

labor to make Texas what it has become in the twenty-first century. In 2011 over 3,000,000 African-Americans lived in Texas, but they formed only 12 percent of the state's population. Two-thirds of African-American Texans lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston metropolitan areas. Nearly one million African Americans were spread across the state from Texarkana to El Paso and Amarillo to Corpus Christi. They made up significant parts of the populations in Beaumont, Port Arthur, Austin, and San Antonio. Their contributions to the history and culture of these smaller cities were just as significant as in those in the major metropolitan areas of the state. Overall, no matter where they lived in the state, African-American citizens had to

work and struggle to overcome and reverse the negative aspects of the previous 450 years. In 2013 they have made major progress toward overcoming the historic paradox that made them some of the state's most productive and creative citizens, but also some of its most oppressed.

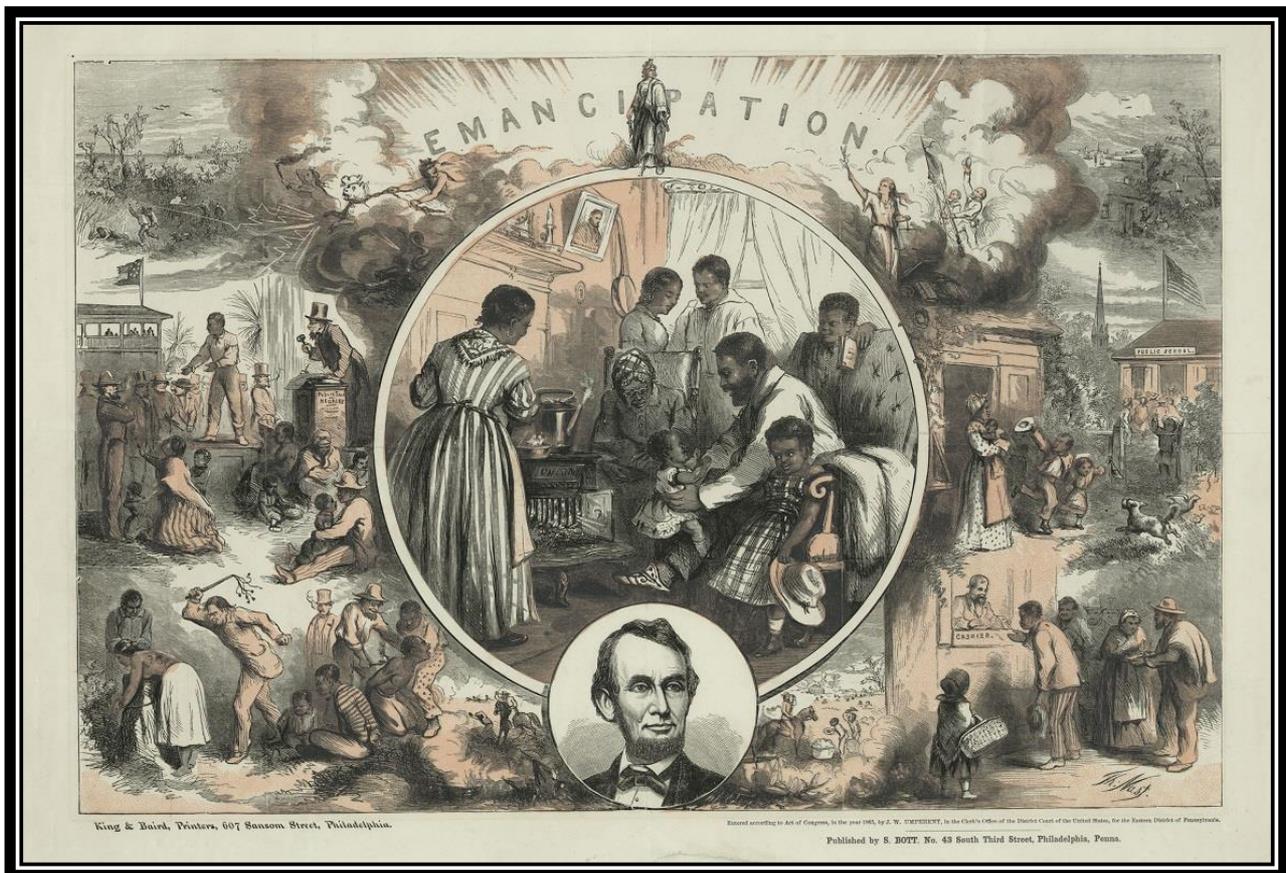
*See also* [CIVIL-RIGHTS MOVEMENT](#), [ANTEBELLUM TEXAS](#), [TEXAS TROUBLES](#), [SLAVE INSURRECTIONS](#), [ABOLITION](#), [NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE](#), [ELECTION LAWS](#), [BLACK EXTENSION SERVICE](#), [COLORED FARMERS' ALLIANCE](#), [FARM TENANCY](#), *and* [DALLAS BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE](#).

# POLITICS

## II. African Americans and Politics

By Chandler Davidson

Racial conflict is a basic feature of Texas history. From 1865 onward its primary political manifestation has been the struggle of [African Americans](#) to vote, have their ballots fairly counted, elect their preferred candidates, develop effective coalitions with other groups, and thereby achieve equality of opportunity in a white-dominated society that, from its beginning, relegated people of color to the status of an inferior caste. In 1860, on the eve of the [Civil War](#), blacks made up 30 percent of the state's population. Most were slaves, and even the few who were free could not vote. Emancipation was announced in Texas on June 19, 1865 (Juneteenth),



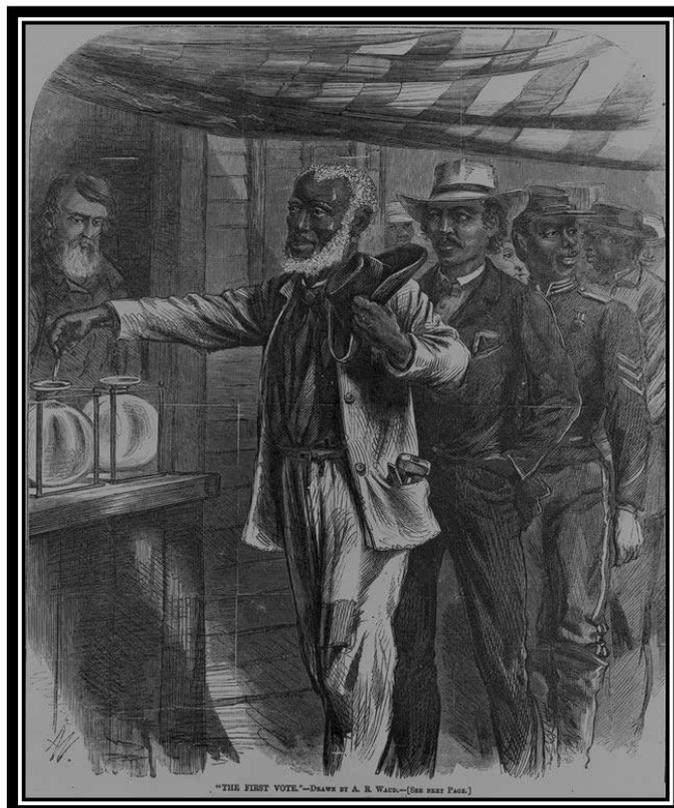
Harper's Weekly illustration of the benefits of emancipation.

but the newly formed government withheld black political rights. An all-white constitutional convention in 1866 refused to grant suffrage even to literate blacks. The all-white legislature then refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment forbidding states from depriving citizens of equal protection of the laws. Seeking to restore plantation discipline, it passed [Black Codes](#) that severely restricted freedmen's economic options. And it prohibited voting, office holding, jury service, and racial intermarriage by freedmen.

These actions by white lawmakers, similar to those in other Southern states, prompted the Republican-dominated Congress to respond with a series of statutes applicable to the former Confederacy, including one to enfranchise black males. The implementation of these statutes was known as Congressional Reconstruction. In Texas the Republican reformers, called radicals, entered into an uneasy alliance with the great majority of freedmen.

Another Republican faction, the conservatives, sometimes joined with Democrats, who generally opposed most civil rights for blacks.

In July 1867 twenty whites and 150 blacks attended a Republican convention in Houston, where they endorsed free common schools and free homesteads from public lands for blacks and whites alike. Thus began a decades-long tradition of black Republicanism in the state. Despite widespread violence and intimidation by the [Ku Klux Klan](#) and Democrats, many black men registered for the first election in which they could



African-American Voters

participate-the 1868 referendum on whether to hold another constitutional convention and elect delegates. More blacks than whites cast ballots, and, with their white allies, they overcame the opposition of the majority of white voters and voted to hold another convention. The Convention of 1868–69, dominated by Republicans, included ten African-American delegates out of ninety. Among them was [George T. Ruby](#) of Galveston, a Northern journalist and teacher who had moved to Texas to work in freedmen's schools; he became a well-known Republican leader. All ten were active on committees and presented important resolutions. Though frustrated in attempts to secure certain constitutional safeguards for their people, they contributed to the accomplishments of the convention, which paved the way for the readmission of Texas to the Union in March 1870.

The election of [Edmund J. Davis](#), a white radical, as governor in 1869 gave blacks additional influence, as did the election of two black state senators-G. T. Ruby and [Matthew Gaines](#), a minister and former slave-and twelve representatives to the Twelfth Legislature. Dominated by reform-minded Republicans, this body ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments and passed several important though controversial laws, including ones establishing a militia and the Texas [State Police](#), open to blacks, to control lawlessness and violence in the state. The legislature also passed a homestead act, a measure protecting homesteads from forced sale, and a law establishing public schools.



Matthew Gaines

Reconstruction ended in 1873 with the defeat of Davis, an event hailed by a former governor as "the restoration of white supremacy and Democratic rule." The number of blacks in the legislature dropped, and white Democrats began reestablishing control of Texas politics. This was accomplished by continuing violence and intimidation aimed at blacks. In a state now controlled by white Democrats, African Americans experimented with three options: involvement in the [Republican Party](#), alliance with factions of Democrats, and collaboration with third parties. None of these proved satisfactory, however, given blacks' worsening legal status and shrinking share of the state's population. (Black Texans declined from 31 to 20 percent of the population between 1870 and 1900.) African-American activity in the Republican Party focused on preventing the conservative faction from gaining control and driving out blacks, who in the 1880s formed 90 percent of the party's membership. By attracting like-minded whites, conservative Republicans hoped to compete effectively with the Democrats. [Norris Wright Cuney](#) of Galveston, an early protégé of Senator Ruby, was the astute leader of the black Republicans from the death of E. J. Davis in 1883 to his own death in 1897. Black influence in the party of Lincoln was sharply curtailed at the turn of the century, when a combination of factors—mainly the struggle among black leaders over the inheritance of the late Cuney's mantle and the success of the conservatives' efforts to obtain control of federal patronage—led to the lily white movement. The conservative Republicans, who now called themselves "lily whites," gained ascendancy over the Black and Tans, the Negro faction of the party.

Alliances with Democrats also offered limited prospects. Their party, after all, was the home of most white supremacists. For tactical reasons, however, blacks sometimes "fused" with a Democratic faction. Though he was a Republican national committeeman in 1892, Cuney, for example, urged blacks to support [George Clark](#), the conservative Democratic candidate, against the economically progressive governor, [James S. Hogg](#), in hopes of

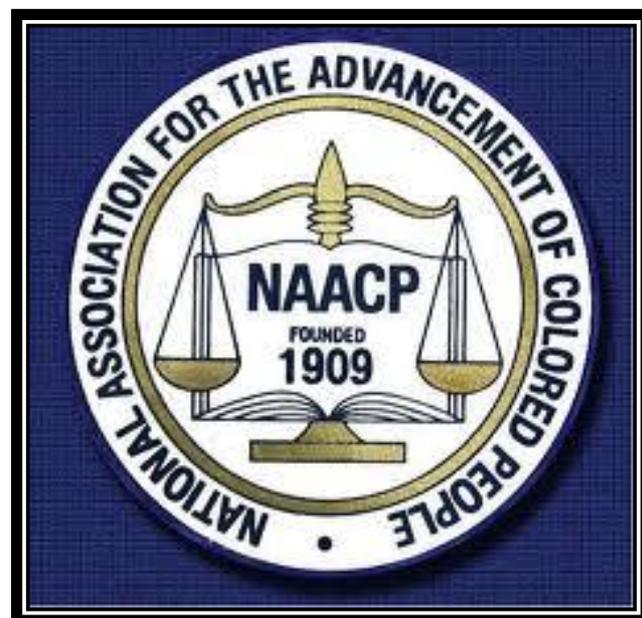
dividing the Democrats and increasing Cuney's influence. Only about half the black vote went to Clark, however, and Hogg was reelected.

Alliances with third parties proved alluring but were also unsuccessful. The [Greenback party](#), addressing farmers' economic troubles, attracted black support in 1878, shortly before it collapsed. The [People's party](#) also garnered black support in statewide races—roughly 20, 35, and 50 percent of the black vote in 1892, 1894, and 1896, respectively. This upsurge came from the educational efforts of the [Colored Farmers' Alliance](#), the organizing work and oratorical skills of such black Populists as [John B. Rayner](#), a schoolteacher from Calvert, and the Populists' inclusion of platform planks addressing blacks' concerns and election of blacks to party-leadership posts. Ironically, these actions probably contributed to the defeat of Populism and black disfranchisement soon thereafter.



First banner of the Southern Farmers' Alliance, organized in Texas, 1878.

Disfranchisement, however, had been under way since the end of Reconstruction. Intimidation, harassment of black leaders, violence (including the [lynching](#) of 300 to 500 blacks late in the century), the growth of Jim Crow institutions, repeated efforts by conservative legislators to pass a poll-tax law from 1875 onward, and Democrats' fear of the third parties' biracial appeal culminated in the effective removal of blacks from the electorate. The last of forty-two black Reconstruction-era legislators, [Robert L. Smith](#) of Colorado County, attended his final sessions in 1897, offering an impassioned resolution on May 4 against lynching. Gerrymandering had cut the numbers of black legislators sharply. Violence had taken a toll on black voter turnout even before the constitution was amended in 1902 to impose the poll tax. But the tax, which fell hardest on those least able to pay, had an independent effect, as did restrictive registration laws mandated in 1903 and 1905, and county Democratic leaders' widespread adoption of the [white primary](#). As nomination by the [Democratic party](#) was tantamount to a significant force in most elections.



NAACP Official Emblem

Black Texans nonetheless continued to pursue their rights through such institutions as the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#), established in 1909; black civic, political, religious, business, and professional groups; a few interracial groups; the urban black press, a source of information and an instrument of social protest; and the courts, a somewhat more promising avenue for progress than the other branches of government. The NAACP was especially important. Until 1923 the white primary operated at the discretion of county executive committees, and blacks in some areas could still vote in Democratic contests. That year,

however, the legislature passed a law preventing blacks from participating in any Democratic primary election. [Lawrence A. Nixon](#), a black El Paso physician, challenged the law with the help of NAACP legal assistance and funding. The United States Supreme Court, in *Nixon v. Herndon* (1927), invalidated the statute as violating the equal-protection clause. The state legislature then shifted authority to prohibit black participation in political parties' state executive committees. The Democratic committee limited primary participation to "white Democrats...and none other." Dr. Nixon sued and won again in the Supreme Court, which held in *Nixon v. Condon* (1932) that the new law was just an extension of the earlier one. The Democratic committee, the court reasoned, lacked authority to act for the party and was acting for the state. But the party's state convention had such authority, the court said. Predictably, the state convention adopted a rule excluding blacks from its primaries. Houstonian [Richard Randolph Grovey](#), against the advice of the national NAACP, attacked this rule in *Grovey v. Townsend* (1935), arguing that the Democratic Party was an instrument of the state, not a voluntary association. This time the Court, quoting a Texas Supreme Court opinion holding that political parties were voluntary associations, let the law stand.

A major upswing in black Texans' involvement in the NAACP occurred in the 1930s. At the initiative of [Antonio Maceo Smith](#), a black Dallas businessman, the State Conference of NAACP Branches was formed in 1937. Mobilizing civic leaders and lawyers in black communities, the conference revived the five state branches and before long had more than 170 local chapters. It cooperated with the national office to finance and execute successful legal attacks on the Texas white primary and racial segregation at the University of Texas law school and to file legal actions throughout the state attacking segregated municipal facilities, juries, and schools. Leaders in the state conference during this period, in addition to Smith, were Juanita Craft of Dallas, [William J. Durham](#) of Sherman, and Carter Wesley, Lulu White, and

Christia Adair of Houston. White and Craft were effective fieldworkers who helped revive dormant local chapters, raise money, and develop strategy. Conference activity declined sharply after 1956 when the state, in reaction to the conference's many achievements, temporarily enjoined the NAACP from doing business in Texas and charged it with violating the state's barratry statutes.

But in the 1940s the state NAACP was boldly advancing. [Lonnie Smith](#), a Houston dentist, was prevented from voting in the Democratic primary. Represented by local and national attorneys, including Texan W. J. Durham and Thurgood Marshall, general counsel of the newly formed NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Smith filed suit in 1942. In *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) the Supreme Court overrode its prior reasoning in *Grovey*, holding that the Democratic primary, because regulated by Texas law, was an agency of the state and violated the



Lonnie Smith

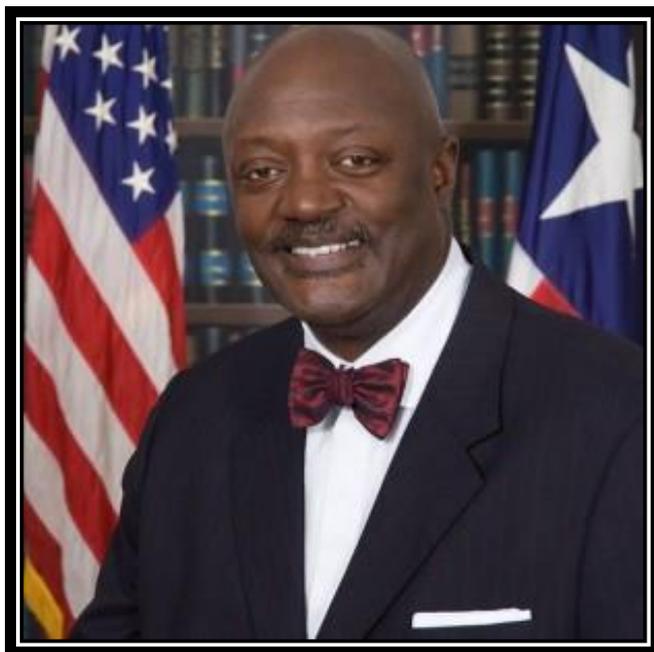
Fifteenth Amendment's protection against racial discrimination in voting. The white primary, by then the major Texas disfranchising barrier, was dead. By 1946 75,000–100,000 blacks—at a maximum, 20 percent of those eligible—voted in the primary, compared to 33 percent of whites.

In earlier years, while still locked out of the Democratic organization, blacks had also been marginalized in the Republican party by the dominant lily whites. In 1932, Texas black precincts began to vote for the national Democratic ticket, a trend encouraged by the New Deal's popularity. After *Smith* was decided, blacks quickly joined the emerging liberal wing of the

Texas Democrats, who were locked in conflict with party conservatives, and they supported liberal Ralph Yarborough in his campaigns for governor and United States senator from 1952 to 1972. They also supported other liberal white and Hispanic candidates in Democratic primaries and joined the liberals in party conventions. Several black Texans ran for office after Smith, but two of the first to succeed were [Garlington J. Sutton](#), who won a post in 1948 on the governing board of a San Antonio junior-college district, and Hattie Mae White, who in 1958 won a Houston school-board post with a plurality of the votes but less than a majority. By 1965, the year Congress passed the Voting Rights Act and more than two decades after the end of the white primary, at most only a half-dozen black Texans held office.

As a result of legislative reapportionment in 1966-mandated by the Supreme Court's recent one-person, one-vote decisions-blacks were nominated for posts above the level of precinct chairmen in the Texas Democratic primary for the first time, at least, in this century. Barbara Jordan, a young Houston attorney, won election that year from a newly drawn single-member senatorial district in which blacks and [Mexican Americans](#) made up about half the population, after twice having unsuccessfully run at large in Harris County-which had a 20 percent black population-for a seat in the legislature. She was elected to Congress in 1972 from a district less than half white. In 1973 she was one of the first two Southern blacks to serve in Congress since 1901; she went on to a distinguished political career, achieving national recognition on the House Judiciary Committee during the Watergate hearings after the 1972 presidential election. Two blacks won seats in the Texas House in 1966-Curtis Graves of Houston and Joe Lockridge of Dallas. Each succeeding legislature also had black members. In 1993 two black senators and fourteen black representatives composed 9 percent of the legislature, while about 11 percent of the Texas voting-age population was black. All black members were Democrats that year, and all were elected from districts in which blacks, or blacks and Hispanics, were a majority.

Across the state African-American elected officials increased from fewer than seven in 1964 to 472 in 1993. These included Morris Overstreet, a justice on the [Texas Court of Criminal Appeals](#) and the first black elected statewide in Texas history, who in 1990 had defeated a single opponent, a black appointed by the Republican governor to fill an unexpired term. Among the other officials were 2 members of Congress, 13 mayors, 128 city-council members, 85 school-board members, and 17 county commissioners. The three black members of Congress elected since Jordan-Mickey Leland and Craig Washington of Houston and Eddie Bernice Johnson of Dallas-had served first in the legislature; all were elected from districts in which whites were a minority.



**Morris Overstreet**

The increase in black officeholding would have been much smaller without extensive revision of discriminatory election laws, beginning in the 1960s. The Twenty-fourth Amendment abolished the poll tax in federal elections in 1964, and the Supreme Court overturned its use in state and local elections in *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections* (1966). The onerous annual voter registration system that a conservative-dominated legislature had substituted when the poll tax was invalidated was ruled unconstitutional in *Beare v. Smith* (1971). The Supreme Court in *Bullock v. Carter* (1972) struck down the state's candidate filing fees, which the Court said weighed "more heavily on the less affluent segment of the community." Another form of discrimination was attacked in a series of vote-dilution cases. In white-majority jurisdictions where whites voted as a bloc against candidates preferred by most black or Mexican-American voters, the whites could systematically deny election to the minorities' candidates, who often belonged to minorities themselves. This occurred when certain election

structures or practices existed. These were mostly of two kinds: at-large systems with a majority-runoff requirement; or, where elections were by district, gerrymandering. In either case, white bloc voting often defeated candidates of minority voters and weakened their political strength. The Supreme Court first found minority vote dilution unconstitutional in *White v. Regester* (1973), which held that the round of legislative redistricting in Texas during the 1970s violated the equal-protection clause. As a remedy, district boundaries were redrawn in San Antonio and Dallas. Further litigation soon attacked other districts and produced a sharp increase in black and Hispanic legislators in the 1970s. In 1975 Congress extended to Texas coverage of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, requiring all proposed changes in voting procedure, including redistricting, to be precleared by the United States attorney general. Justice Department oversight diminished gerrymandering against minorities by the legislature and other entities such as cities and counties. In addition, minority plaintiffs invoked the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act to sue numerous cities, school districts, county commissioners' courts, and other entities, alleging minority vote dilution and demanding changes from at-large to district elections or the establishment of more fairly drawn districts. From the early 1970s on, these suits enabled many blacks and Hispanics to win office. In addition, the Justice Department from 1975 on refused to preclear numerous proposed election changes in Texas that would have undercut minority voting strength.

Most of these measures securing black and Hispanic voting rights were fashioned during the so-called Second Reconstruction, the period beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), when several federal statutes and judicial decisions were formulated to destroy the Jim Crow system, discourage racial discrimination, and enable Southern blacks to participate equally in politics. The new laws were largely a response to the black-led [civil-rights movement](#), in which Texans, both black and white,



President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, July 2, 1964.

participated. The Second Reconstruction also led to a party realignment in Texas. As Senate majority leader, [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) guided the 1957 Civil Rights Act through the upper house; and as president he played a crucial role in the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which abolished the Jim Crow system of segregated public accommodations, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Ralph Yarborough, the only Democratic United States senator from Texas from 1961 to 1971, was the only Southern senator to support the 1964 bill and only one of three Southern senators to support the Voting Rights Act. Backing epochal civil-rights policies in the late 1950s and 1960s, these two Texas Democrats, dependent on a solid black vote, were among the leaders of the national party's mainstream. At the same time, virtually no Texas Republican leader supported civil-rights legislation of the era. Senator [John Tower](#) opposed both the 1964 and 1965 bills. George H. W. Bush, opposing Yarborough for the Senate in 1964, attacked him for supporting the Civil Rights Act. That year Bush and Tower backed Barry Goldwater, who opposed the Civil Rights Act as a violation of states' rights and who was the first modern Republican presidential candidate to employ a "Southern strategy" in a campaign appealing to conservative whites while largely ignoring black voters. The polarized positions of party leaders on civil-rights issues resulted in a gradual exodus of white voters from the Democratic Party, the strengthening of black and Hispanic ties to it, and a

remarkable growth in Republican voting and officeholding. The Texas Democratic party became disproportionately black, Hispanic, and liberal, while the Republicans remained overwhelmingly white and conservative.

If a survey of the history, status, and prospects of black Texans had been conducted as the 1990s began, it would have revealed that many hard-fought battles for political equality had been won, even as challenging problems remained and others loomed on the horizon. The right of blacks to vote was obtained during Reconstruction, lost at the turn of the century, and won again long decades later. The same was true for their ability to hold office and participate in government. As a racial minority that had made striking social and economic progress since the 1940s even while struggling with serious social problems—including discrimination, poverty, unemployment, crime, family breakdown, infant mortality, and drug abuse—black Texans attempted to shore up and expand their own community institutions while looking to politics and government for additional support. Yet even when they coalesced at the polls and in governmental bodies with white and Mexican-American Democrats—who were their most reliable allies from the 1950s onward—the coalition's size was often insufficient to achieve such goals as equal school funding, a more progressive tax base, adequate protection from discrimination, fair provision of municipal services, and similar items on black Texans' long-term egalitarian agenda. Moreover, the rapid growth of the Mexican-American population in Texas in the latter part of the century, partly from illegal immigration, encouraged the perception that scarce jobs were being taken by newcomers from Mexico. This, along with clashes of culture between the two groups in inner-city neighborhoods and struggles over political turf, created tensions that threatened to weaken the liberal Democratic coalition. It was thus not only with pride in past achievements against great odds but also with a wariness of what the political future held in store that thoughtful African Americans anticipated the new century. *See also* [RECONSTRUCTION](#), [ELECTION LAWS](#).

# III. Barbara C. Jordan

By Mark Odintz

Barbara Jordan, politician and educator, was born in Houston, Texas, on February 21, 1936, the youngest of three daughters of Benjamin and Arlyne (Patten) Jordan. She grew up in the [Fifth Ward](#) of Houston and attended public schools. Her father, a warehouse clerk and Baptist minister, assisted her in attending Texas Southern University, where she graduated *magna cum laude* in 1956. She received a law degree from Boston University in 1959 and passed bar exams in Massachusetts and Texas the same year. After teaching at Tuskegee Institute for a year, Jordan returned to Houston in 1960. She opened a law practice and worked from her parents' home for three years until she saved enough to open an office. She became involved in politics by registering black voters for the 1960 presidential campaign, and twice ran unsuccessfully for state office in the early 1960's. In 1967 redistricting and increased registration of black voters secured her a seat



Barbara C. Jordan during “Governor for a Day” ceremonies on June 10, 1972.

in the Texas Senate, where she was the first black state senator since 1883. Her career was endorsed and facilitated by [Lyndon Baines Johnson](#). Eschewing a confrontational approach, Jordan quickly developed a reputation as a master of detail and as an effective pragmatist and gained the respect of her thirty white male colleagues. While in the legislature she worked for minimum-wage laws and voter registration and chaired the Labor and Management Relations Committee. In 1972 she was unanimously elected president pro tempore of the Senate.

The following year Jordan successfully ran for the United States House of Representatives from the Eighteenth Texas District. She was the first black woman from a Southern state to serve in Congress, and, with Andrew Young, was the first of two [African Americans](#) to be elected to Congress from the South in the twentieth century. With her precise diction and booming voice, Jordan was an extremely effective public speaker. She gained national prominence for her role in the 1974 Watergate hearings as a member of the House Judiciary Committee when she delivered what many considered to be the best speech of the hearings. In that speech she asserted, "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total. I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution." Impressed with her eloquence and stature in the party, the [Democratic Party](#) chose her to deliver the keynote address at the 1976 Democratic national convention; she was the



Barbara C. Jordan at the 1976 Democratic National Convention.

First woman to do so. Her speech, which addressed the themes of unity, equality, accountability, and American ideals, was considered by many to be the highlight of the convention, and helped rally support for James E. Carter's presidential campaign. In 1979, after three terms in congress, Jordan retired from politics to accept the Lyndon Baines Johnson Public Service Professorship at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin. She taught courses on intergovernmental relations, political values, and ethics. She published her autobiography, *Barbara Jordan: A Self Portrait*, in 1979. She served as ethics advisor to Governor Ann Richards in the early 1990s. In 1992 she once again delivered the keynote address at the Democratic national convention. She served as chairwoman of the United States Commission on Immigration Reform in 1994.

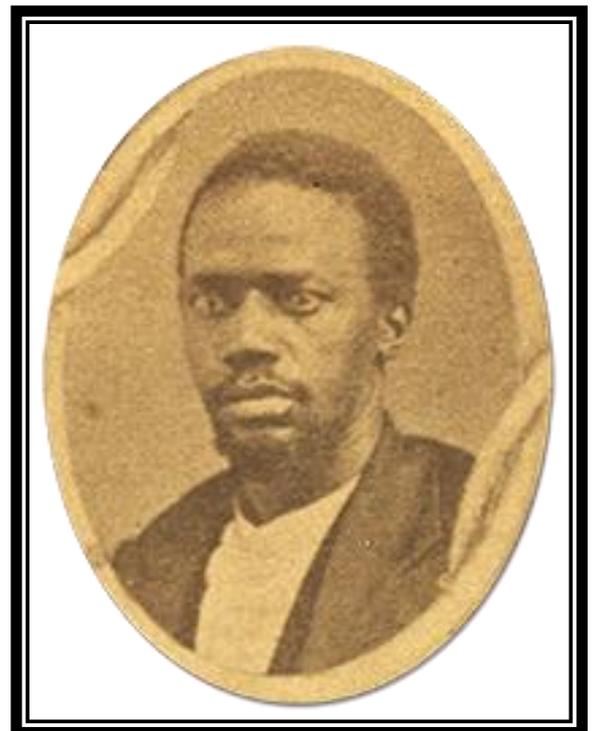
Among her many honors were induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1990 and a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994. She suffered from a number of ailments in her later years, including a form of multiple sclerosis, and was confined to a wheelchair. She survived a near-drowning incident at her home in 1988, but succumbed to pneumonia and leukemia in Austin on January 17, 1996. Barbara Jordan is buried in the [State Cemetery](#) in Austin. Her papers are housed at the Barbara Jordan Archives at Texas Southern University.

# IV. Matthew Gaines

By Merline Pitre

Matthew Gaines, black senator and Baptist preacher, was born on August 4, 1840, to a slave mother on the plantation of [Bernardo Martin Despallier](#) in Pineville, near Alexandria, Rapides Parish, Louisiana. Her owner was widow Candida Grande Despallier, mother of [Alamo](#) hero [Charles Despallier](#). Gaines biographies mention that in the old Despallier house, English, French, and Spanish were spoken, which is very probable because Bernardo Martin Despallier was of French descent, and he had worked for the Spanish in both Louisiana and Texas. Grande was of Spanish descent. Matthew Gaines learned to read by candlelight from books smuggled to him by a white boy who lived on the same plantation. Gaines, however, never told who the boy was, but it may have been young Blaz Philippe II Despallier. The boys were about the same age, and Blaz did attend school.

Gaines escaped to freedom twice but each time was caught and returned to [slavery](#). His first escape came after 1850, when he was sold to a man from Louisiana and was subsequently hired out as a laborer on a steamboat. Using a false pass, he escaped to Camden, Arkansas. He left Arkansas six months afterwards and made his way to New Orleans, where he was caught and brought back to his master. Later, Gaines was sold to a Texas planter from Robertson County, and in 1863 he made another escape attempt. His destination was Mexico, but he made it only as far as Fort McKavett in Menard County before being caught by the [Texas Rangers](#). He was taken back to Fredericksburg and remained in that area until the end of

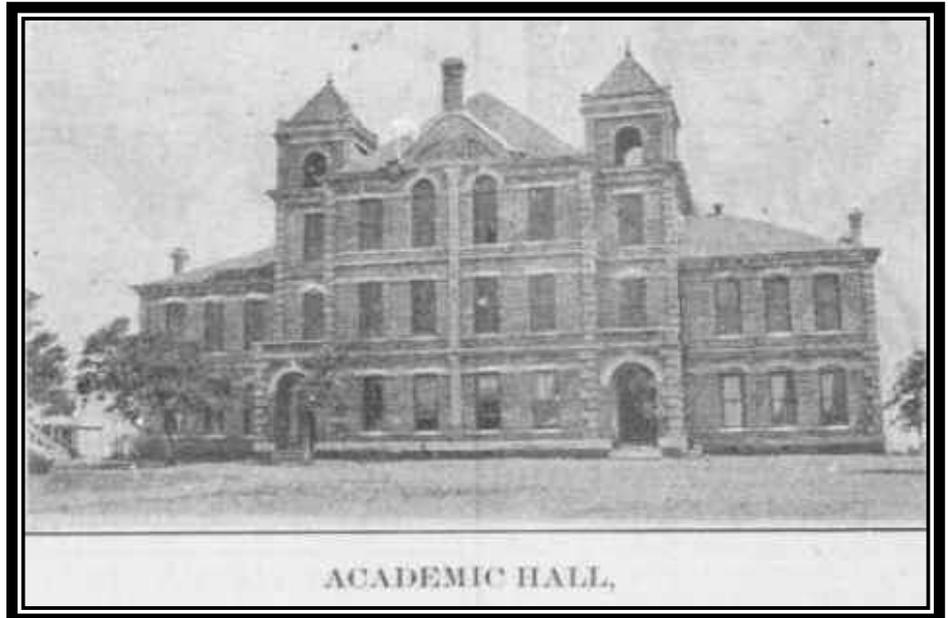


Matthew Gaines

the [Civil War](#). During his tenure as a slave in Fredericksburg, Gaines worked as a blacksmith and a shepherd. After Emancipation Gaines settled in Burton, Washington County, where he soon established himself as a leader of the black community, both as a minister and a politician. During he was elected as a senator to represent the Sixteenth District in the Texas legislature.

Gaines was a vigilant guardian of the rights and interests of [African Americans](#). Among the many issues he addressed were education, prison reform, the protection of blacks at the polls, the election of blacks to public office, and tenant-farming reform. To encourage educational and religious groups to work toward educational improvement in their communities,

Gaines sponsored a bill that called for exempting such organizations from taxation. Buildings and equipment used for charitable or literary associations were also exempted; the bill became law on June 12, 1871. Gaines was also responsible for the passage of a bill authorizing his district to levy a special tax



Gaines' support led to the construction of Prairie View A&M University.

for construction of a new jail. His concern for prison reform stemmed from his concern for the protection of blacks from mob violence. In keeping with this belief, Gaines waged an unrelenting war in the Senate for the passage of the Militia Bill. It was Gaines's feeling that if blacks were protected (via the Militia Bill) in the exercising of the Fifteenth Amendment, they could make a difference at the polls. Hence, after the successful passage of the Militia Bill, Gaines made a concerted, but unsuccessful, effort to drum up support to elect a black Texan to the United States House of Representatives. Gaines

was very sympathetic to the plight of the black masses. He was one of the few blacks who served in the legislature from 1870 to 1900 to voice an opinion in opposition to the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1872. As such, he proposed a law (which failed) to give the tenant the first lien on the crop.

Gaines was elected to a six-year term to the Senate, but served only four years because his seat was challenged when he was convicted on the charge of bigamy in 1873, and he subsequently relinquished his post. The charge was overturned on appeal, and he was reelected, but the Democratic and white majority seated his opponent. Gaines continued to be active in politics and made his political views known in conventions, public gatherings, and from his pulpit. He died in Giddings, Texas, on June 11, 1900.

# CIVIL RIGHTS

## V. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

By Michael L. Gillette

By organizing and financing landmark civil-rights lawsuits, the NAACP in Texas became an important component of the national organization. The state's [African Americans](#), who included a significant number of well-educated, urban professionals, had the financial resources and organizational talent to press for racial equality through litigation. As part of a national trend, Texas NAACP memberships increased dramatically during the [World War I](#) era. The state's first chapter, which had been established in El Paso in 1915, was joined by four new branches in 1918. In December of that year national board member Mary B. Talbert toured the state



Mary B. Talbert

promoting Liberty Loans and organized NAACP branches in nine cities. With 7,046 members and thirty-one branches, Texas became the association's leading state in these categories. A series of events in 1919, however, revealed the racial hostility that the organization faced. In July a Longview mob burned black homes and businesses and beat a teacher, precipitating a sense of alarm among both blacks and whites (see [LONGVIEW RACE RIOT OF 1919](#)). Soon afterward the state attorney general subpoenaed the Austin branch's records to scrutinize its right to conduct business in

conduct business in Texas. When NAACP national secretary John Shillady learned of the impending challenge, he traveled to Austin to meet with state officials. He soon found himself an unwelcome visitor and, after receiving verbal abuse, was beaten by a gang composed in part of local officials. Governor [William P. Hobby](#) blamed Shillady and recommended that the organization stay out of Texas. The atmosphere of intimidation grew worse in the 1920s with the revival of the [Ku Klux Klan](#). Many of the state's branches discontinued operations. Only five remained active by 1923. The Beaumont branch thought it best to disband temporarily "on account of the high race feelings in this part of the state." In Galveston the organization's leaders seemed unwilling to pursue association programs that might displease whites. An NAACP member in Dallas reported that the branch president and officers seemed "afraid to death" to hold a meeting because of the Klan. When branches were unwilling to meet, however, the New York office encouraged them to raise funds quietly for activities elsewhere.

These cycles of activism and dormancy continued through the organization's first twenty-five years. A modest resurgence in the late 1920s gave way to another decline during the [Great Depression](#). The branches did not revive again until the late 1930s. Typically, new leaders would wrest control of stagnant branches, and brief flurries of activity and membership drives would follow, but ultimately the chapters would lapse into inactivity. Six or seven years might pass before the New York headquarters again heard from a "revitalized" branch. Letters urging the local branches to rally went unanswered. Requests for investigations of reported racial discrimination or violence failed to generate responses. National field secretaries might rally the branches briefly while touring the state, but the units would soon fade out again. Some branches did flourish for a time. El Paso, which the national office regarded as "so thoroughly cooperative and so immediately responsive," mounted a sustained assault on the [White Primary](#). With more than a thousand members, the San Antonio branch thrived under the

leadership of J. A. Grumbles but became dormant after his death. Houston, Fort Worth, Galveston, Yoakum, and Beaumont were active at various times. The overall pattern, however, was one of a few individual branches rousing themselves temporarily only to retire again. Only after the formation of the Texas State Conference of Branches in 1937 was the NAACP able to mount a sustained, statewide movement. Under the leadership of [A. Maceo Smith](#) of Dallas, the State Conference expanded dramatically during [World War II](#) and the immediate postwar years to become the second-largest in the nation by 1945. Its total membership in more than a hundred branches averaged almost 30,000 until 1949.

Several factors contributed to the NAACP's phenomenal growth. Improved economic conditions with almost full employment meant that more blacks could afford to contribute to such causes. The war itself generated a spirit of awareness and militancy among African Americans: if they were obliged to battle totalitarianism abroad, they also saw a duty to fight racism at home. A successful assault on the Democratic white primary elections in the Supreme Court case *Smith v. Allwright* also gave the NAACP momentum. Not only did the suit give the organization an issue with which to rally Texas blacks, but the victory provided ample proof of the NAACP's effectiveness. The State Conference followed the white primary litigation with a systematic attack on segregated public education. After a successful four-year battle to secure [Heman M. Sweatt](#)'s admission to the University of Texas law school, additional lawsuits were filed to desegregate undergraduate, secondary, and elementary education. Although victories at the college level came swiftly, the association met strong resistance at the lower levels. Mobs prevented the desegregation of Mansfield High School and elsewhere (see [MANSFIELD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION INCIDENT](#)), while other public school desegregation cases were tied up in the courts for years.

Like other Southern states, Texas retaliated against the NAACP. In September 1956 the attorney general seized the association's records and filed a lawsuit

in Tyler to ban the organization from doing business in Texas. The charges were failing to pay the franchise tax and inciting lawsuits under the principle of barratry. The seizure of NAACP files by armed state troopers, a lengthy court proceeding, and a subsequent injunction against operations intimidated the organization so much that became almost dormant. The Texas legislature followed suit with a rash of anti-NAACP bills. Since the 1960s the NAACP has pressed for the implementation and extension of that decade's civil-rights legislation and subsequent court decisions. Texas branches have been frequent litigants in school desegregation and legislative redistricting cases. NAACP lawyers have also targeted discriminatory practices in employment, housing, and the criminal justice system. The State Conference of Branches has estimated its average membership level in recent years at 19,000. In 1995 the state president was Austin attorney Gary Bledsoe. *See also* [CIVIL-RIGHTS MOVEMENT](#).

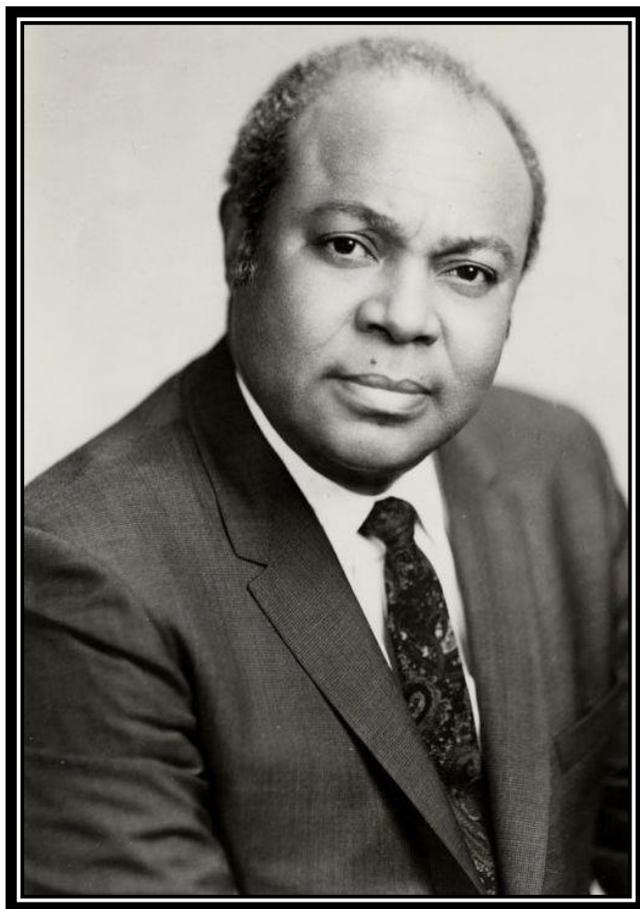


NAACP Southwest Region, circa 1950.

## VI. James L. Farmer Jr.

By Gail K. Beil

James Leonard Farmer, Jr., civil rights leader and founder of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), was born on January 12, 1920, in Marshall, Texas, to [James Leonard Farmer, Sr.](#), and Pearl Marion Houston Farmer. His father was a professor of religion at Wiley College. When James Jr. was six months old the family moved to Holly Springs, Mississippi, where his father taught at Rust College. In 1925 the family moved to Austin, Texas, where James Sr. joined the faculty at Samuel Huston College (now Huston-Tillotson College). After a move to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1930, the Farmer family moved back to Marshall, Texas, in 1933. He graduated at age fourteen from Pemberton High in Marshall and, with a four-year scholarship, entered Wiley College that same year. There, under the guidance of Melvin B. Tolson, he became a member of the 1935 debate team that defeated the national champions from the University of Southern California. Tolson, Farmer, and the success of the Wiley debate team were the subjects of a 2007 film, *The Great Debaters*, which starred Denzel Washington.



James L. Farmer Jr.

After his 1938 graduation from Wiley, Farmer entered Howard University in Washington, D.C., and intended to become a minister in the Methodist Church. Under the wing of Professor Howard Thurman, Farmer was introduced to the concept of nonviolent protest pioneered by Mohandas Gandhi. He graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Divinity

degree in 1941. Farmer intended to enter the Methodist ministry, but in 1941, the year he would have been ordained, the Methodist Church North and South reunited and isolated its African-American members into a segregated jurisdiction. Rejecting the pulpit, Farmer chose instead to lead the fight against Jim Crow laws.

Farmer went to work for the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in Chicago and in 1942 led other members of FOR to form what he called the Committee of Racial Equality. The name was soon changed to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and its initial activities were sit-ins in the restaurants of Chicago. During the following decade he was employed by the NAACP as its program director (1959–60), and he worked with several labor unions seeking to end racial segregation. In 1961 he became the executive director of CORE. Convinced that mere victory in court cases would not provide equality, he decided to employ the confrontational but nonviolent tactics he had learned under Tolson and Thurman to challenge segregation in the bus stations of the South.

After a brief first marriage to Winnie Christie in 1945, Farmer married Lula Peterson in 1949. His wife played an important, though volunteer, role as comptroller of CORE until her death in 1977. The couple had two daughters, Tami and Abbey.

In May 1961, with twelve other black and white members of CORE, Farmer set out from Washington, D.C., on two buses headed for New Orleans. The Freedom Rides had begun. The death of his father when the Freedom Riders



James L. Farmer Jr., Lula Peterson, and family.

reached Atlanta sent Farmer back to Washington, D.C. In his absence one of the buses was torched in Anniston, Alabama, and freedom riders on the other were brutally beaten when the bus rolled into Montgomery, Alabama. Farmer rejoined the freedom rides a week later and was jailed in Mississippi's Parchman Prison for thirty-nine days, the first of many times he clashed with local law enforcement officers in the South. He was incarcerated in Plaquemine, Louisiana, in 1963, for example, and was unable to attend Martin Luther King's March on Washington, D.C. In 1964 the murder of three CORE workers—Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney—during the "Freedom Summer" effort to register voters in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, galvanized the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the national press. Farmer wrote of his CORE experiences in *Freedom, When?* (1965).

Unhappy with the militant direction CORE was taking, Farmer resigned his position as director in 1966. He taught classes at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and at New York University.

He ran unsuccessfully against Shirley Chisholm for the United States Congress in 1968. Saying that no political party

should count on the vote of black America, he ran as a Republican. He was rewarded for the effort by President Richard Nixon with an appointment as Assistant Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in April 1969. Less than two years after his appointment Farmer resigned, saying that he was frustrated by the Nixon administration's lack of support for civil rights issues and by government bureaucracy. He accepted a position with the Coalition of American Public Employees (CAPE) and remained there for five years



Farmer directed the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

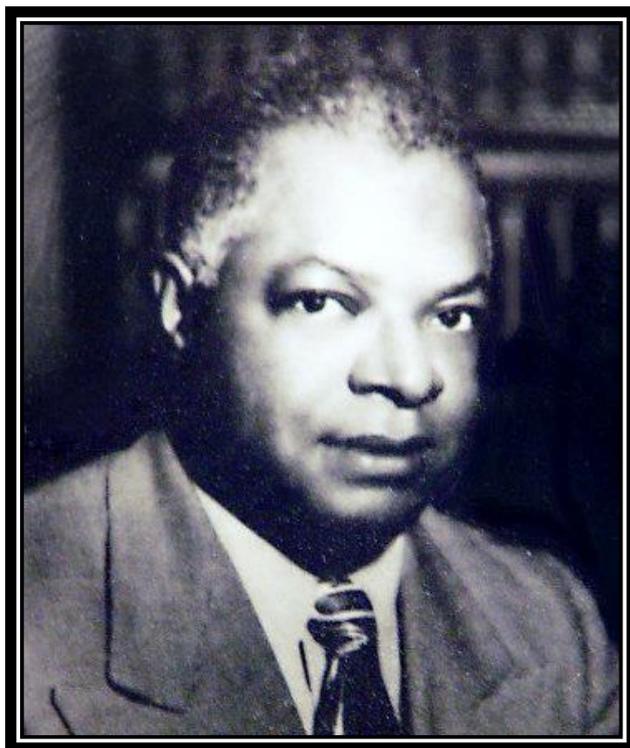
when his health began deteriorating. He lost his sight and both legs to the ravages of diabetes. In 1984 he joined the faculty of Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where he remained until his retirement in 1998. His autobiography, *Lay Bare the Heart*, was published in 1985.

Farmer received numerous honorary doctorates and awards, including the Omega Psi Phi Award (1961 and 1963), American Humanist Award (1976), and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York American Civil Liberties Union (1998). He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Bill Clinton in 1998. James Farmer, Jr., died on July 9, 1999, in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

# VII. Antonio Maceo Smith

By Neil Snapper

Antonio Maceo Smith, civil-rights leader, was born in Texarkana, Texas, on April 16, 1903, to Howell and Winnie Smith. After attending segregated schools in Texarkana, he earned an AB at Fisk University in 1924, an MBA degree at New York University in 1928, and pursued additional graduate studies in economics and business law at Columbia University. Before moving to Dallas, he owned a New York advertising agency and a Texarkana real estate company. After he arrived in Dallas in late 1932 he taught business administration in the Dallas Independent School District and served as publisher of the weekly [Dallas Express](#). He became the first executive secretary of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce in 1933 and in 1936 was appointed deputy director of the [Hall of Negro Life](#) at the [Texas Centennial](#) Exposition. In 1937 he became an administrative aid with the Federal Housing Administration. In



Antonio Maceo Smith

1939 the United States Housing Authority appointed Smith regional relations advisor in Region VI. Sometimes referred to as "Mr. Civil Rights" or "Mr. Organization" of Texas, Smith was a lifelong activist in the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) in Texas, participating in the legal campaign against the white primary in the state that culminated in *Smith v. Allwright* (1944). (The plaintiff in this case was [Lonnie E. Smith](#), not A. Maceo Smith.) Smith also participated in the legal campaign against educational segregation in Texas, culminating in *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950). As the cochairman of the Biracial, later Triracial, Committee for the City of Dallas, Smith played a prominent role

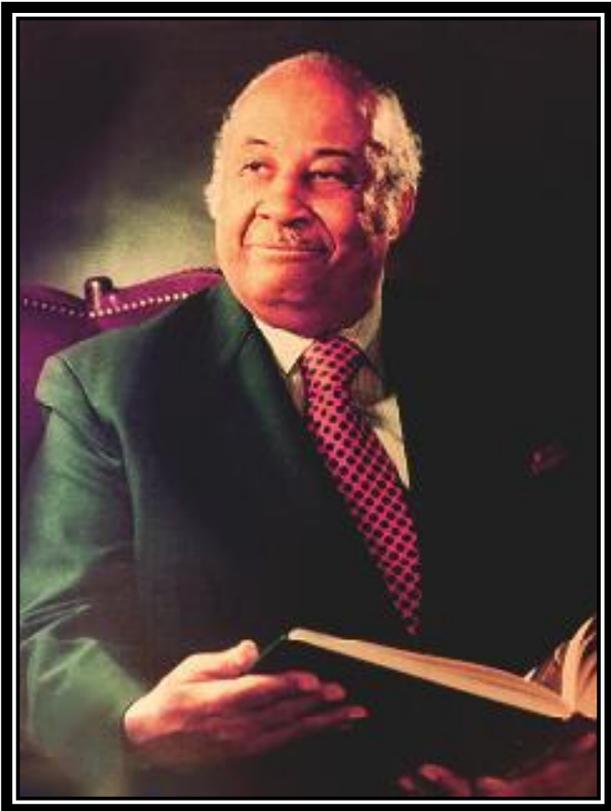
in the peaceful desegregation of public facilities and schools in the city. He served on the national board of directors of the NAACP from 1953 until 1957, when his supervisors at the FHA forced him to resign. Additionally, Smith participated in the founding and leadership of the Texas State Negro Chamber of Commerce, the [Texas Council of Negro Organizations](#), the Dallas Urban League, and the Texas State Progressive Voters League. A career federal employee, Smith retired as assistant regional administrator for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1972. In addition to his many contributions as a civil rights activist, Smith also served as general president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity from 1952 until 1954 and was a member of the Rotary Club of Dallas and the [Knights of Pythias](#), a member and trustee of New Hope Baptist Church in Dallas, and a member of the board of trustees of Bishop College. He was honored as Fisk University Alumnus of the Year in 1949. Smith married Fannie C. Fletcher in 1936. He died on December 19, 1977.

# BUSINESS

## VIII. Mack H. Hannah Jr.

By Paul M. Lucko

Mack Henry Hannah, Jr., black business, civic, and political leader, was born on February 8, 1904, in Brenham, Texas, the son of Mack Henry and Daisy (Brown) Hannah. During his childhood the family moved to Port Arthur, where Hannah graduated from Lincoln High School in 1922. He enrolled at Bishop College in Marshall in 1924, graduated in 1927, and won All-American honors as a football player. After serving as a football coach for Lincoln High School in 1929–30, he entered upon numerous business ventures that eventually made him a millionaire and probably the wealthiest black in Texas. From 1930 to 1944 he traveled in Texas, Louisiana,



Mack H. Hannah Jr.

Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Florida as a salesman for the Orange Casket Company. He organized the Metropolitan Service Life Insurance Company in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1939. He formed a partnership with New Orleans businessman Joseph A. Porter the next year and eventually became the sole owner of their casket company. Hannah also entered into a partnership with a church-construction company and joined a shrimping venture with Leander Perez of Louisiana. He organized a savings and loan association, engaged in real estate developments, and operated the Mack H. Hannah and Sons Funeral Home in Port Arthur.

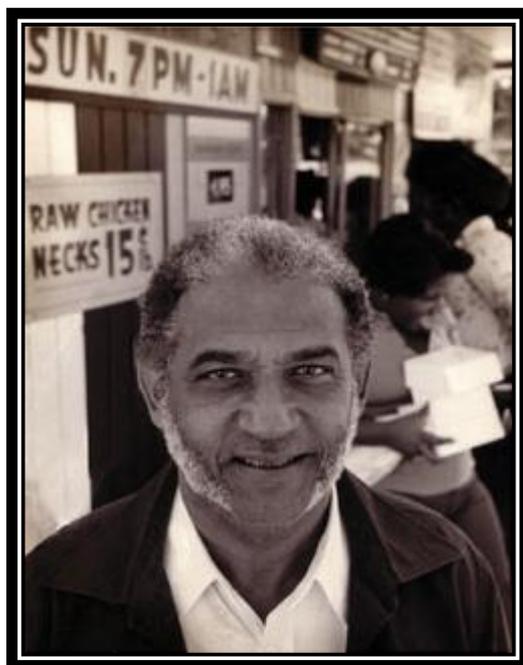
He was a founder and president of the Texas Federation of Burial Associations and served as chairman of the board of directors for the Negro Day Nursery of Port Arthur. Hannah was a Methodist, assisted the YMCA and the Camp Fire Girls, and was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Masons, and the Elks lodge. He served as chairman of the board of directors for Texas Southern University and was a trustee for Bishop College. As a Democrat he reportedly influenced black voters in Jefferson County elections and helped win votes for state leaders Allan Shivers and [Lyndon Baines Johnson](#). He served as United States consul to Liberia for a number of years. He married Reba Othelene Hicks in 1927; the couple had three children. Hannah was the cousin of another black Texas millionaire, [Hobart T. Taylor](#). Hannah died on April 2, 1994.

# IX. Percy P. Creuzot Jr.

By Charlene Taylor Evans

Percy Pennington Creuzot, Jr., business pioneer, community leader, and philanthropist, was born on May 28, 1924, in New Orleans, Louisiana, to Dr. and Mrs. Percy P. Creuzot, Sr. During [World War II](#), Creuzot Jr. served in the United States Navy. He received an honorable discharge in 1946 and married Sallie Coleman in 1947. They had three children. He graduated from Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1949 and worked as an insurance agent throughout the 1950s. He and his wife moved to Houston, Texas, by the mid-1960s. Initially, Creuzot worked as a traveling salesman at Herff-Jones Jewelry, a graduation supply company that produced graduation paraphernalia (ring, robes, etc.) On his own, he also sold shaved ice treats known as New Orleans style “sno-balls.”

On July 3, 1969, Creuzot and his wife opened Frenchy’s Po-Boys, a sandwich shop that specialized in the Southern cuisine of his birthplace such as Creole hot sausage, shrimp or oyster loaf, and roast beef sandwiches. After urgings from a local businessman, he added fried chicken to the menu. In competition with [Church’s Fried Chicken](#), a larger chain which was located across the street from his famous Scott Street location, Creuzot extended his hours of operation until 5 a.m. the following day to compete with the Church’s store. After hours, he served only his “seasoned” fried chicken and French fries and collected the money first, so “that way he never fried in vain.”



Percy P. Creuzot Jr.

Frenchy's was so successful that in 1977, Creuzot expanded his business enterprise and established Frenchy's Sausage Company. The goal was to produce and market Creole foods to restaurants and grocery stores in the Houston area. The successful business was passed to his son, Percy III.

The original Frenchy's location became a business training ground for Creuzot's family members. In 2006 Creuzot licensed Glennlock Foods to operate restaurants in the Houston area. In 2010 the company had seven satellite locations for Frenchy's restaurants. Creuzot personally trained cooks in all of the new restaurants.

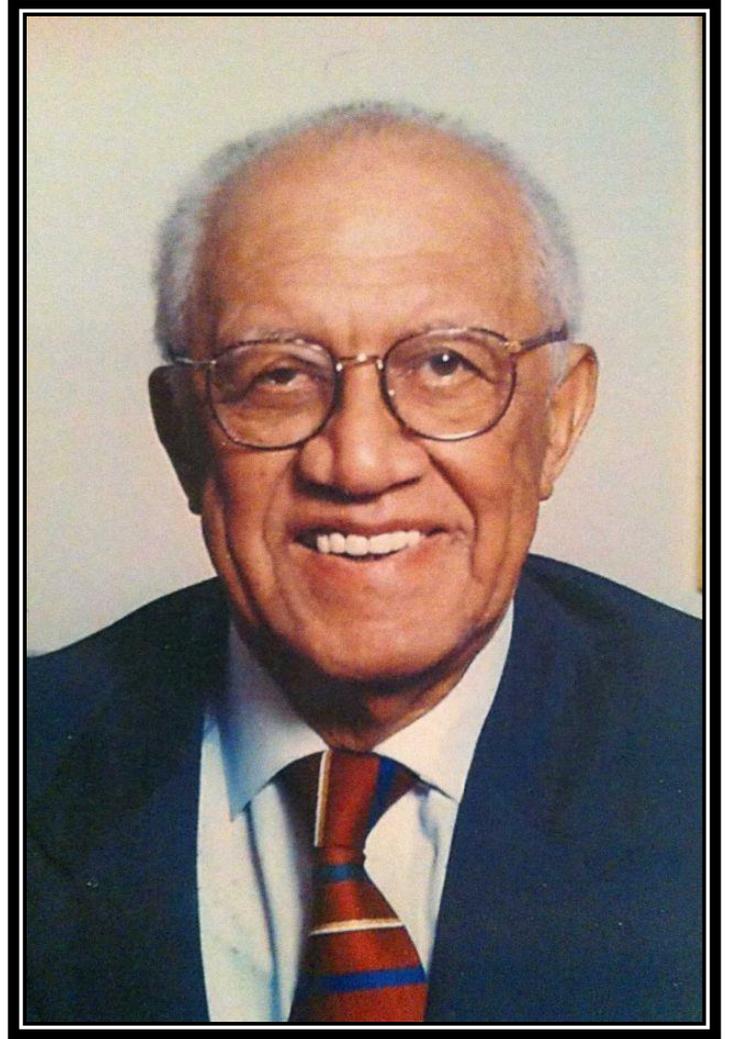
Creuzot was active in civic affairs and was a staunch supporter of Texas Southern University in Houston. He was appointed by Texas Governor Bill Clements to Texas Southern University's board of regents, where he served for twelve years and was eventually elected vice-chair. Governor Clements also named Creuzot to the Texas Private Industry Council. Creuzot was a member of the Houston Citizens Review Board, the National, Texas, and Houston Restaurant associations, and the Catholic Charities board of directors. He was a longtime member of Alpha Phi Alpha and Sigma Pi Phi (Nu Boule) fraternities and the Knights of St. Peter Claver. He contributed to the United Negro College Fund, the Urban League, [NAACP](#), Texas Southern University, the University of Houston, Xavier University, and Hampton University. Creuzot died of a stroke on Sunday, June 6, 2010. He was eighty-six years old. A funeral Mass was held at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, and he was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Houston.

# LEGAL

## X. Aloysius Martin Wickliff Sr.

By Merline Pitre

Aloysius Martin Wickliff, Sr., attorney and civil rights activist, was born in Liberty Texas, on October 11, 1921, to Edward and Ellen (Ozan) Wickliff. He received an early education in the public schools of Liberty before attending Prairie View A&M College (now Prairie View A&M University). While matriculating at Prairie View, Wickliff participated in the ROTC and subsequently served in the United States Army during [World War II](#). After receiving an honorable discharge from the armed services, Wickliff, a Catholic, entered the law school at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., graduated in 1949, and became a member of the District of Columbia Bar in 1950.



Aloysius Martin Wickliff Sr.

When Wickliff returned to Texas in 1950, he faced the choice of practicing law in Liberty or in Houston, but he decided on Houston because he thought that he would achieve greater success in starting a practice there. He engaged in the practice of law from 1952 to 2000 with the law firm of Dent, King, Nowlin and Wickliff and was a general practitioner of civil,

criminal, and family law. In 1955, unable to join the Houston Bar Association, Wickliff and his fellow African-American attorneys organized the Houston Lawyers Association to address issues affecting minorities. Later he served as president of that association. While practicing law in the early 1950s, he also served as an associate professor of law at Texas Southern University.

Wickliff engaged in many civic, community, and political activities. By so doing, he worked with student activists, future lawyers and judges, and politicians. In 1960 when Texas Southern University students staged sit-in demonstrations to integrate eateries in downtown Houston, Wickliff was called upon by Mayor [Lewis Cutrer](#) to be a member of the Biracial Committee to come up with a solution. This committee consisted of two sub-committees—a majority committee headed by [Leon Jaworski](#) and a minority committee, the Citizens' Relations Committee, chaired by Aloysius Wickliff. His committee prevailed as the city of Houston decided to integrate various public places. For several years, Wickliff was president of the Harris County Council of Organizations (an umbrella group of civic and community organizations) which has political influence in the city of Houston and Harris County. He was also a member of several boards of directors, including Houston Area Urban League, Eliza Johnson Home for Aged Negroes, Tejas Finance & Investment Company, and Texas Southern Finance Corps. Wickliff, an influential mentor for aspiring lawyers and politicians, served as the campaign manager for [Barbara Jordan](#) during her successful run for the Texas Senate, as well as the United States Congress.

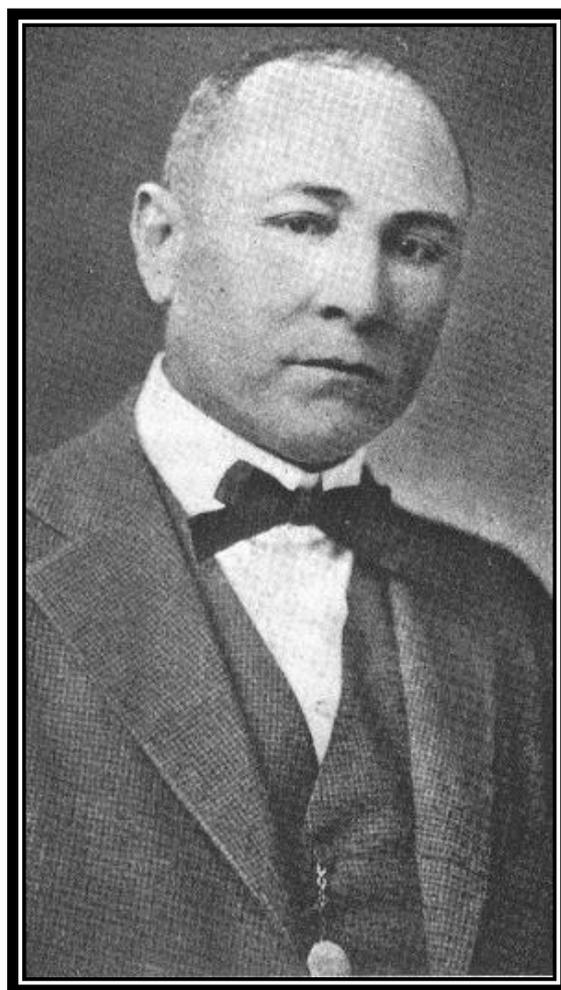
Wickliff died in Houston on December 13, 2012. His funeral Mass was celebrated at Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church in Houston, and he was buried in Houston Memorial Gardens. His wife, Mary Elizabeth Wickliff, had preceded him in death in 2004. He was survived by son A. Martin Wickliff, Jr.

# XI. Richard D. Evans

By Ida Carey and R. Matt Abigail

Richard D. Evans, noted African-American civil rights attorney and first president of the Texas State Conference of Branches of the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP), son of Col. Tom Evans and Belle (Durham) Evans, was born in Burleson County, Texas, in about 1873. He attended Prairie View Normal and Industrial College (now Prairie View A&M University) and taught in the rural schools of Burleson County until about 1909. While teaching he founded a library for black students in Tunis, Texas, and was president of the local colored men's conference (also known as the colored race council). He earned his law degree from the Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., in 1912 and was admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court in April 1916.

Evans practiced law briefly in Brenham, Texas, before relocating to Waco in 1913 to become that city's only black attorney. In 1919 he garnered considerable fame after he successfully argued the first legal challenge to the use of the [white primary](#) in the case *Sublett v. Duke*.



Richard D. Evans

The court's decision temporarily prevented the Waco Democratic Executive Committee from instituting an all-white primary, but this was later overturned in 1922. Following *Sublett v. Duke*, Evans became the NAACP's chief attorney and organizer in the state

of Texas and led the United States Supreme Court. When the Houston Democratic Executive Committee barred blacks from voting in local primaries in 1921, Evans was recruited to represent [Charles N. Love](#) in the case *Love v. Griffith*. In 1924 *Love v. Griffith* became the first case regarding the use of all-white primaries to be argued before the United States Supreme Court. The suit was unsuccessful, but successful cases were later brought to the Supreme Court by El Paso doctor [Lawrence A. Nixon](#) (*Nixon v. Herndon*, 1927 and *Nixon v. Condon*, 1932). Evans was also one of the first black members of the National Bar Association (NBA), and he held a number of executive positions within that organization. He spoke at several of the NBA's conventions and was instrumental in urging its members to use their services to fight civil rights cases for their African-American constituents.

In 1936 he was elected to the national board of directors of the NAACP. In this role he joined forces with NAACP leaders [A. Maceo Smith](#), [Juanita Craft](#), and Juanita Jackson to revive some of its older branches and to organize new branches in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. In 1937 he organized and was elected president of the first Texas state conference of NAACP branches in Dallas. In addition to the NAACP and NBA, Evans was also a leader in the Lincoln League, Elks, Knights of Tabor, Independent Colored Voter's League, and was a member of Tau Delta Sigma Fraternity. He was also a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1920.

Evans married Adelia Smith of Burleson County, Texas, in 1890. The couple had one son. In 1914 he married Maggie Faust of Hempstead, Texas. Following Maggie Faust's death in 1919, Evans married Myrtle Glenrose Gant, a teacher from Waco. The couple had two children—Gloria Bell Evans and Richard D. Evans, Jr.

Tragically, on June 26, 1938, Evans was killed in a train accident in Waco. He was buried in Waco's Greenwood Cemetery.

## XII. Carter W. Wesley

By Richard Allen Burns

Carter Walker Wesley, newspaperman and lawyer, was born in Houston, Texas, on April 29, 1892, to Mabel (Green) and Harry Wesley. Educated at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. degree in 1917, Wesley attended the newly opened black officers' training camp in Des Moines, Iowa. He graduated on October 15, 1917, and was commissioned a first lieutenant. Like other well educated black men, Wesley was later passed over for the higher ranks in favor of less



Carter W. Wesley

educated white men, a disparity between black and white officers that was one of many Wesley observed during his experiences in the military, leaving a deep and lasting impression that informed his later career as a newspaper editor. First assigned to the Ninety-second Division at Camp Funston, Kansas, Wesley and other newly commissioned black officers were saluted by only a tenth of the white soldiers stationed there, a show of military demeanor that black soldiers at Camp Funston made a successful organized effort to rectify. In 1918 he was assigned to the 372nd Infantry Regiment in France, where the regiment underwent further training

with French officers and, as part of the French Army, saw action in June in the Argonne, moving into the Verdun region by August. Transferred the following month to the 370th, Wesley participated in the battle of Oise-Aisne on September 27, 1918. At the time of the armistice, Wesley was in command of his company after the captain had been severely wounded a few days before. Returning with the Ninety-third Division in February 1919,

Wesley was released from service on April 5, 1919. That fall, he enrolled in the Northwestern University Law School in Illinois, where he received a J.D. degree in 1922. With his college friend, Jack Alston Atkins, whom he had met at Fisk and who had graduated from Yale Law School, Wesley set up a law practice in Muskogee, Oklahoma, from 1922 to 1927. Wesley devoted most of his time to defending blacks who were freed slaves of Indians in Oklahoma and who, therefore, were entitled at birth to 160 acres, land that was increasingly coming under control of white men that the local courts assigned as guardians after white lawyers had the blacks declared incompetent. Eleven of the thirteen cases Wesley took to the Oklahoma Supreme Court were successful.

In 1923 Wesley married Gladys Dunbar, a woman from Ohio he had met while a student at Fisk. Wesley's son, whose mother is unknown and who had been born in Houston in 1911, came to live with them. Gladys died in 1925 of complications relating to childbirth, and Wesley sent his son back to Houston soon afterward. In 1927 Wesley moved to Houston, bringing Atkins and his family with him, and engaged in the construction and brokerage business. That year he and Atkins became associated with the *Houston Informer* (see [HOUSTON INFORMER AND TEXAS FREEMAN](#)), a newspaper for [African Americans](#), whose publisher and owner, C. F. Richardson, publicized the manner in which blacks' rights were being subverted and the notion that blacks could do something to effect change. If they paid their poll taxes, blacks could vote in the general election, but the [Democratic Party](#), whose candidate was certain to win, did not allow blacks to vote in primaries, rendering the black vote ineffective. After Wesley, Atkins, Richardson, and others formed a corporation to help finance the newspaper, Wesley joined the State Bar and was allowed to practice law in Texas. As he became increasingly aware of the power of owning a publication that served the community, he limited his law practice and focused more and more on his new investment. He was auditor of the paper in 1929, vice president in 1930, and treasurer and general manager by the end of 1932; he later became publisher of the newspaper. He also owned

THE HOUSTON INFORMER

"A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER FOR ALL THE PEOPLE"  
409-11 SMITH STREET

Houston, Texas

June 30, 1934

13-39-50  
Dr. W. E. B. DuBois  
Atlanta University  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Sir:

Both Mr. Atkins, the editor, and I have followed with interest the controversy in which you have been involved in the Crisis, and that has raged in the press, concerning your statement of what you believe to be the correct attitude in regard to segregation.

We believe that you are eminently correct and that you have expressed the basis upon which we will have to work if we are going to get anywhere with this problem.

We know that you have severed your connection with the NAACP and the Crisis. We are writing to offer you a column in the three papers that we now own, and in any others that we may establish. We now own The Houston Informer, which has a circulation of more than 8,500, and which is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation; The Beaumont Informer, with a circulation audited by a public accountant of Beaumont, and which now has a circulation of 1,550; and The Austin Informer, which does not have an audited circulation, and is less than three months old. Its present paid circulation is approximately 1,000. The papers under our ownership cover Texas pretty well.

The Houston Informer has some circulation throughout the country, but such circulation is negligible. Our aim is to build a large circulation in Texas. You will be interested to know that at this moment, contractors are pouring concrete for the foundation of a high speed press. Although our total circulation now is only about twelve thousand, we have every hope that by the end of the year, we will have twenty thousand.

We believe that our papers offer an effective medium through which you can express yourself. At present, we are not in position to offer anything for the column in the line of pay, except, of course, that we could and would furnish stamps and stationery. We believe it would be worth as much to carry whatever you chose to write as it would cost us to furnish you space and means to write it. In fact, we are frank to say that we have the hope that it would be worth much more.

If I have not succeeded in saying it above, the purpose of this letter is to frankly offer you space in the publications owned by The Informer Publishing Company to be used to write whatever you choose to write, free of charge.

Hoping that you will accept our offer, I am

Very truly yours,  
*Carter W. Wesley*  
Carter W. Wesley  
General Manager.

Letter from Carter W. Wesley to W. E. B. DuBois, June 30, 1934.

the [Dallas Express](#), one of a group of papers published by Freedmen's Publishing Company. The Houston *Informer* at one time had a statewide circulation of 45,000, and it was a crusading voice for equal rights for blacks before the integration of hotels, restaurants, and theaters in Texas in the early 1960s. It was in Wesley's office that his friend and [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) attorney Thurgood Marshall dictated a brief that resulted in granting African Americans the right to vote in the primary elections in Texas. Wesley was also personally and financially supportive of [Heman Marion Sweatt](#) when he appointed Sweatt circulation manager for the Houston *Informer*, and when he later helped plan Sweatt's case in the landmark suit against the University of Texas (see [SWEATT V. PAINTER](#)). Wesley was a founder of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. In 1948 he was sent to Germany along with ten other black publishers to investigate claims of discrimination against black servicemen in that country. He married Doris Wooten in 1933; they were the parents of three children. Wesley died on November 10, 1969, in Houston, and he was buried in Paradise Cemetery North.

## XIII. Julia S. Reed

By Daniel J. Nabors and W. Marvin Dulaney

Julia Scott Reed, trailblazing African-American journalist in Dallas, daughter of Johnnie and Nina McGee, was born Julia McGee in Dallas, Texas, on July 17, 1917. Her father died when she was very young, and for the first eight years of her life she lived in the home of her mother's employers in a fashionable white neighborhood. After moving with her mother to one of Dallas's African-American communities, she attended Booker T. Washington High School and graduated in 1935. Reed then attended Wiley College Extension for two years and received journalism and communications training from Philip's Business School. Sometime between her graduation from high school and 1950 she married Jack Scott. In 1950 she began her career as a reporter for the *Kansas City Call*, a weekly African-American newspaper in Missouri; she served as the publication's Texas correspondent.



Julia S. Reed

The first big break in Reed's career came in 1951 when she was hired by the [Dallas Express](#), the city's leading African-American newspaper. Although she began as a secretary, the tight payroll typical of black newspapers ensured Reed opportunities to contribute in a more impactful manner. She was promoted to telephone reporter and wrote "soft news" articles on African-American social events under the name "Julia Scott." Reed was soon assigned to more hard-hitting subject matter and regularly covered politics and civil rights activities in Dallas. She

eventually became city editor at the *Express* and also impressed her colleagues with her passion for photography.

Reed also gained notoriety at the *Express* for her coverage of major historical events at the state and national level, reporting on the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, as well as the tornado that ravaged Waco, Texas, in the same year. Reed had a front-row seat to Dallas history on November 24, 1963, when she witnessed the assassination of [Lee Harvey Oswald](#) at the hands of gunman [Jack Ruby](#). Her coverage of Ruby's subsequent trial cemented her reputation as a trusted journalistic voice in the Dallas black community. While still working at the *Express*, Reed was also a radio personality for eight years at KNOK, where she presented "News and Views."

Julia Scott divorced her husband in 1957. On December 3, 1966, she married Ewell "Jimmy" Reed. In her last six months as an editor of the *Dallas Express* she wrote under the byline, "Julia Scott Reed." Julia Scott Reed and Ewell Reed divorced on January 27, 1971.

Although she established herself as one of the most capable journalists in Dallas while at the *Express*, Reed's enduring legacy was not truly solidified until July 1967, when she became the first African American hired at the [Dallas Morning News](#). As "Julia Scott Reed" she became the first African American to write a regular column for the *Dallas Morning News*. The hiring itself was a watershed moment in race relations, and the appearance of Reed's thrice-weekly column, entitled "The Open Line," came at a time when a racially-tense Dallas needed her most. As urban riots spread throughout many of America's metropolitan centers in the mid-to-late 1960s, some blamed the media for its negative influence on an already difficult situation. In response, there was a call for newspapers to hire more black journalists who would report on the positive aspects of the black community.

Reed's columns informed readers about the triumphs and struggles of the hard-working Dallas black community thereby empowering a formerly

voiceless black community while also easing fears of an urban race riot in Dallas. To what extent Reed can be given any credit is debatable, but the fact is Dallas did not experience a full-scale urban race riot as so many other metropolitan centers did during the 1960s. Reed helped open the lines of communication between the black and white communities in Dallas. Unfortunately, she suffered a stroke in December 1978, which forced her premature retirement from the *Dallas Morning News*. Though her career was cut short, her impact on the city of Dallas was profound.

Reed's lasting legacy may be attributed to her trailblazing role at the *Dallas Morning News*, but her involvement stretched well beyond the world of journalism. Beginning in the 1950s while still at the *Express*, Reed was not shy about inserting herself into the political world or about participating directly in the crusade for African-American [civil rights](#). In 1953 she took part in coordinated demonstrations at several of Dallas's department stores and exposed the discrimination black women experienced while shopping. Reed also protested the segregated Tea Room at [Sanger Brothers](#) department store in 1960. In 1958 she won election as a [Democratic Party](#) chair of Precinct No. 306, a position she held for twenty-three years.



Julia S. Reed receives the inaugural Joseph Lockridge Scholarship Foundation award of excellence.

Reed was an active member of the Dallas [NAACP](#) and received a certificate of lifetime membership in 1971. In addition to sitting on numerous advisory boards, including the War on Poverty, Planned Parenthood, and the Goals for Dallas Task Force, Reed also served as the first president of the Dallas Urban League from 1972 to 1974. She continued to exhibit her propensity

for trailblazing by becoming the first African-American member of the Dallas Press Club in 1965, two years before her time at the Dallas *Morning News* began. She was also the first black member of the Altrusa Club of Dallas, as well as the Dallas Movie Classification Board.

Her enormous contributions to journalism and the Dallas community were recognized through countless awards, including being named “Woman of the Year” by multiple organizations, including the Zeta Phi Beta sorority in Julia Scott Reed died in her Dallas home on October 19, 2004, at the age of eighty-seven. Her funeral was held at Golden Gate Baptist Church, and she was buried in Laurel Land Cemetery. She was survived by her daughter, Gayle Eubanks Coleman, who carried on Reed’s legacy through the Julia Scott Reed Community Foundation, providing mentoring and financial assistance to the next generation of aspiring journalists. Reed’s daughter Gayle paid fitting tribute following her mother’s passing, saying, “I am proud to say that I am the daughter of Julia Scott Reed. If I were to note two of the many things you taught me, they would be: ‘Always carry yourself like a lady’ and ‘Always stand up for what you believe in.’”

# EDUCATORS

## XIV. Education for African Americans

By Anna Victoria Wilson



The education of African-American children during the late period of [slavery](#), after 1800, was sporadic and unreliable in Texas as in other Southern states. Formal education was practically nonexistent for [African Americans](#). Education most often consisted of on-the-job training in a variety of occupations. Before the [Civil War](#) most people believed education of African Americans would lead to discontent and rebellion. A few did support instruction and often volunteered their services. According to the census of 1850, 58,558 African Americans, representing 27.5 per cent of the population, lived in Texas. Fewer than 1 percent, or 397, were free, of which 217 were believed to be literate, 20 were in

school, and 58 were illiterate adults. There are no actual statistics available on the 58,151 enslaved African Americans, but available data indicate that a portion of the slave population had been instructed in the basic rudiments of reading and writing.

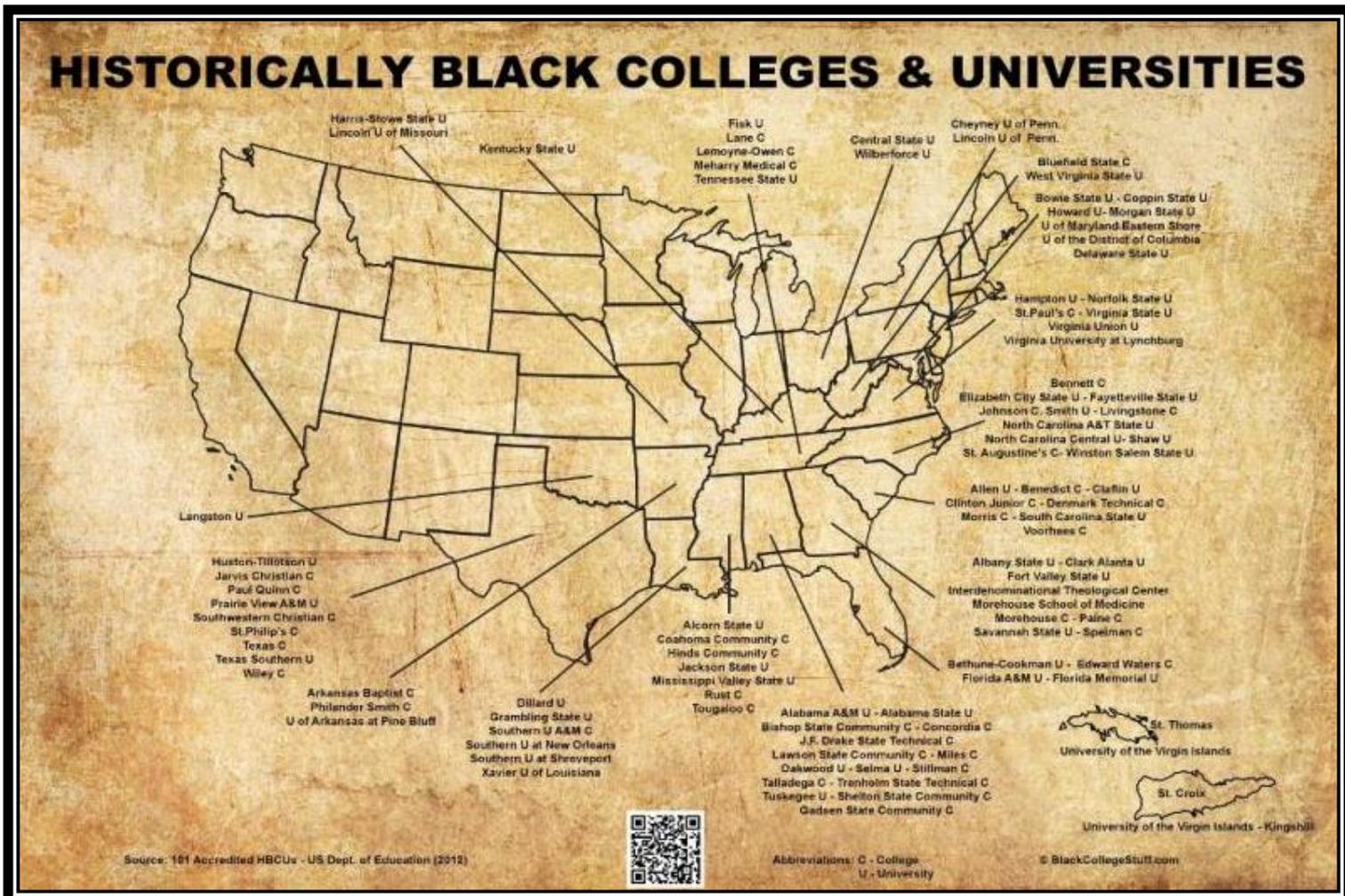
In 1865 the United States Congress instituted the [Freedmen's Bureau](#). The bureau's primary function was to supervise and coordinate a vast educational enterprise located in Texas, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. The bureau supervised schools offering classes from the elementary level through college. These schools provided a formal curriculum of arithmetic, reading, writing, history, and geography. In addition, a practical curriculum of civics, politics, home economics, and vocational training was provided. Most teachers were supplied by the American Missionary Association, with the majority initially coming from the Northern states. Soon thereafter, a few Southern whites and educated African Americans were recruited to teach in these schools. In January 1866, Texas began with ten day and six night schools for black children. There were ten teachers with a total enrollment of 1,041 students (many of whom were adults). Six months later, on July 1, 1866, the Freedmen's Bureau in Texas had ninety schools (including day, night, and Sabbath schools), forty-three teachers, and 4,590 students attending. John W. Alvord, the first and only inspector of schools and finances for the bureau, described Texas schools during this period as prosperous. He found that Texas freedmen's schools had needed only minimal assistance from Northern states and attributed this to what he perceived as the minimal impact of the Civil War upon the economic base of Texas. By the end of 1870 there were eighty-eight schools (both day and night) in Texas, eighty-five teachers of whom forty-four were African American, and 4,478 students. In addition, there were twenty-seven Sabbath schools with twenty-eight teachers (twenty-three were black) and 1,350 students.

The advent of schools staffed by Northern white missionaries was not acceptable to all the Southern white population. Some persons, alarmed by mandatory acceptance of African Americans in state politics, were vehemently opposed to the Freedmen's Bureau and exhibited their resentment by burning schools and intimidating the missionary teachers. This attitude was not universal in Texas. The Texas teachers' convention of 1866, for example, passed a resolution urging training for the newly freed African Americans of Texas. Divergences of opinion and fluctuating attitudes were most distinctly revealed in legislative enactments from 1866 to 1876. The [Constitution of 1866](#) provided that the "income derived from the Public School Fund be employed exclusively for the education of white scholastic inhabitants," and that the "legislature may provide for the levying of a tax for educational purposes." African Americans were taxed for "the maintenance of a system of public schools for Africans and their children." The [Reconstruction](#) legislature of 1870, by eliminating segregation, gave Texas a single educational system in which all children shared, but in 1873 and 1875 the state legislature repealed most of the laws of the Reconstruction period.

In 1871, Texas organized a public school system. The succeeding system, formed under the [Constitution of 1876](#), reestablished the segregation of races but make impartial provision for each. Between 1873 and 1893 at [black state conventions](#), African Americans from all sections of the state met to express their opinions, to delineate their needs, and to shape educational policies. Most significant were the Waco and Brenham conventions and the first meeting at Austin in 1884 of the Colored Teachers Association (see [TEACHERS STATE ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS](#)). The state Board of Education conducted its first survey of black schools in 1921. At that time 6,369 pupils were enrolled for secondary work, the majority being in city high schools. By 1925 there were 150 institutions in Texas offering one or more years of high school work for African Americans; included in this number were fourteen city high schools, six or more country high schools, and high school departments in every junior and senior college. In the 1920s to 1930s the average length of the school term for black children was only about four days shorter than

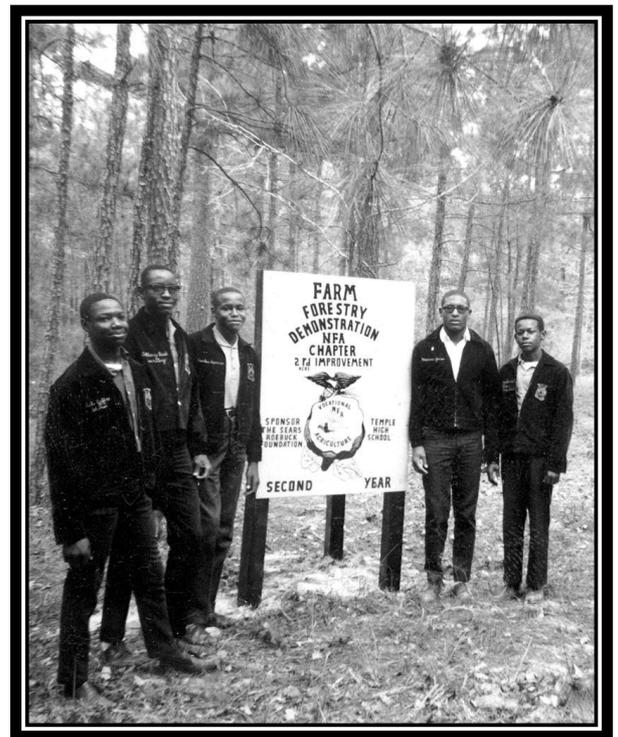
that for white children. However, Texas spent an average of \$3.39 or about a third less for the education of African-American students than for white students. During the same period, black teachers were paid significantly less than white teachers (\$91.60 a month, compared with \$121.03). In 1940 there were 222,715 black pupils in 116 accredited Texas high schools, twelve of which were rated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Approximately half of the 6,439 teachers had degrees.

The early 1950s marked several changes. These included improvements in school buildings and facilities, equalization of teachers' salaries, and an increase in funds for classroom instruction and libraries. The Texas Association of New Farmers of America, the African-American equivalent of Future Farmers of America, had chartered chapters in 178 high schools, with a membership of more than 9,000 high school boys studying vocational agriculture. The operating headquarters for the New Farmers of America program in Texas was at Prairie View A&M University. The NFA state adviser



was also stationed at Prairie View, where the staff of the school of agriculture, in cooperation with the state staff in agricultural education, sponsored and planned jointly such activities as the annual state NFA convention and state livestock and poultry judging contests. They also participated in various fairs, shows, contests, and conventions at local, district, state, and national levels.

The United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) outlawed segregated education and consequently had tremendous influence on programs of education for African Americans. Texas was one of the leaders in desegregation throughout the South. Two black students had been admitted to previously all-white schools in Fiona, Texas, before the 1954 decision. Shortly after the 1954 decision, the San Antonio school district became one of the first districts nationwide to comply. San Antonio had the advantages of good race relations and an articulate policy statement. This desegregation process began in September of the 1955–56 school year. Though San Antonio's desegregation of its schools moved quite smoothly, other school districts, such as Houston's, were amazingly slow. In 1964 Texas accounted for about 60 percent of the desegregated school districts in the South and for more than half of all African-American students attending integrated schools in the South. The progress of civil-rights legislation and the process of school desegregation effected many changes in the education of black children in Texas. In 1965 the New Farmers of America was merged with the Future Farmers of America. The annual state conference of African-American teachers of vocational agriculture was discontinued. A similar change was made in the Four-H Club work of the [Texas Agricultural Extension Service](#)



New Farmers of America

and in conferences of extension agents. Sponsorship of segregated participation in various fairs, shows, and contests was discontinued. By 1967, in the process of initial adjustment to the transition, the number of African Americans teaching vocational agriculture had declined 20 percent and the number in agricultural extension had declined 8 percent. This change was more than matched, however, by the increased employment of African Americans in professional positions that were formerly occupied almost exclusively by whites.

From Reconstruction to the present in Texas, conflicts have abounded on the subject of educating black children. The questions of what the schools should teach and who should control them have been foremost. Arguments persist about the effects of the quality of educational environments and resources on African-American students' achievements on standardized tests such as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. Although black students overall have greater difficulty than white students with the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test, many educators attribute the problem to poverty and lack of educational resources. Legislation in the 1990s equalizing school financing may mitigate the problem. Another issue is that in many urban areas of Texas, re-segregation appears to be occurring. In 1989, 63 percent of black students in Texas still attended predominantly black schools; this was exactly the national average (only ten states had higher percentages). It is impossible at the moment to assess the long-term consequences of this phenomenon. *See also* [CIVIL-RIGHTS MOVEMENT](#), [EDUCATION](#), [HIGHER EDUCATION](#).

# XV. Isaiah Q. Hurdle

By Ramona Houston and R. Matt Abigail

Isaiah Quit Hurdle, African-American minister and public school educator, son of Rev. [Andrew Jackson Hurdle](#) and Viney James (Sanders) Hurdle, was born in Greenville, Texas, on August 12, 1886. Raised on a farm in Hunt County, I. Q. Hurdle grew up in a family of seventeen children. His father, A. J. Hurdle, was a slave on a plantation in Dangerfield, Texas. However, he escaped during the [Civil War](#) and found refuge with a unit of Federal soldiers. He later became a reverend in the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#), served as president of the Northeast Texas Christian Missionary Convention, and opened the Northeast Texas Christian Theological and Industrial College in Palestine in 1912.

As a youth, I.Q. Hurdle was educated at the Center Point School of Hunt County. In 1906 he enrolled at Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College (now Prairie View A&M University), where he studied science and excelled in football,

tennis, and choir. After graduating in 1913, he moved to Gregg County, where he taught at the Post Oak School. On June 30, 1915, he married Erma Bowser of Davilla. Together they raised three children—Irving, Zenobia, and James. I. Q., ordained by his father's church, edited the *Texas Christian Evangelist* from 1912 to 1916. In 1916 he moved to Palestine where he became president of Northeast Texas Christian Theological and Industrial College, the institution founded by his father.



Isaiah Q. Hurdle

In 1920 the college burned down, and Hurdle decided to move to Austin, where he began an illustrious thirty-four-year career as a teacher and school administrator. From 1920 to 1925, he taught science at [L. C. Anderson](#) High School, where he eventually became head of the science department. Following that, he attended graduate school at the University of Colorado. From 1927 to 1930, he served as principal of the Gregory Town School, which was later renamed Blackshear Elementary. Then, in 1930 he became principal of Kealing Junior High School, the first junior high school for black students in Austin. (The school closed in 1971 but was later reopened as a magnet school in 1986.) After his time at Kealing, Hurdle continued to serve as a school administrator. Eventually, he became principal of the Clarksville School, an honors school for black students, where he worked until his retirement in 1954.

Over the course of his career, Hurdle was also closely involved with the [Colored Teachers State Association of Texas](#) (CTSAT). He was elected to a one-year term as president of that organization in 1936 and served as an editor for the CTSAT's quarterly publication, the *Texas Standard*, from 1937 to 1938. While president of the CTSAT, he led the fight for the passage of Texas House Bill 678. Since Texas had no graduate schools for blacks, this bill provided state funding for black students who wished to attend out-of-state graduate programs. Aside from H.B. 678, which eventually became law, Hurdle helped organize the Central Texas District of the CTSAT, promoted the spread of Boy and Girl Scout groups in communities across the state, requested provisions to allow for fully-funded retirement plans for teachers, and called for the CTSAT to assist the state in caring for the blind and deaf, as well as juvenile delinquents. Hurdle was a member of the CTSAT's Division of Research and Investigation and worked as the CTSAT's special agent on higher education in 1947. Additionally, he was a member of the CTSAT's executive committee. He was also a firm supporter of the National Education Association and was the first black member of the NEA's Texas delegation in 1945. Moreover, he voiced his concerns about the unequal distribution of state funds for public schools—according to the April 1933 issue of the *Texas*

*Standard*, in 1930 blacks comprised 16.9 percent of Texas’s public school population, but the value of black school facilities amounted to only 5.5 percent of the total value of all public schools statewide.

Hurdle was a Master Mason, and he spent his retirement as a public relations officer for the St. Joseph Grand Lodge in Austin. He also served as secretary of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation (1952–53) and was on the executive board of the Texas Commission on Race Relations (1955). Following the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Texas Commission on Race Relations worked to foster cooperation between local citizens, school boards, and superintendents in order to formulate an amiable path toward school desegregation.

Hurdle maintained a lifelong commitment to his church. While in Austin, he was head of the 12th Street Christian Church and served as president of the Texas United Christian Missionary Convention in 1943. He was also a parliamentarian in that church’s national convention from 1949 to 1956, a delegate to the World Convention on Christian Education in Toronto in 1950, and a trustee of Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas (1945–57). In the late 1950s he moved to San Antonio, for a time, and was pastor at the Willow Park Christian Church there. His religion certainly influenced his educational philosophy, and, as president of the CTSAT, he had spoken out publically against the degrading effects of drink, [jazz](#), and the “frivolous



Hurdle House in Austin, Texas.

attitude of some scientific minds...bent toward birth control,” and reminded his fellow teachers that the Ten Commandments were the cornerstone of a proper education.

In 1968 Hurdle suffered a stroke and died in Dallas on January 14, 1968. The people of Austin remembered his contributions to their city, and his house at 1416 East 12th Street was eventually made a historical landmark of the city. Due to the efforts of educators such as Hurdle, by 1930 Texas boasted the highest number of black high schools and the highest black literacy rate of all southern states.

# XVI. Nathaniel Q. Henderson

By Patricia S. Prather

Nathaniel “Nat” Q. Henderson, educator and civic leader, was born on September 28, 1866, in Columbus, Texas, to Henry Henderson and Mariah Campbell Henderson. His father was a teacher so his educational leadership began long before moving to Houston. After graduating from Prairie View State Normal School (now Prairie View A&M University) in 1885, Nathaniel Henderson returned to his hometown of Columbus and served as principal of the Columbus Colored School for twelve years. He then served as principal of a school in Weimar, Texas. Henderson pursued further studies at Fisk University, the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and Tuskegee Institute.

Before moving to Houston, Henderson had a distinguished political career. He served as deputy revenue collector in the Third District of Texas (Galveston), appointed by President William McKinley. At least once, he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention. He married Mamie L. Williams in Colorado County on September 4, 1893, and they became the parents of six children who all became teachers. Many of their descendants followed their lead as educators.

Nat Q. Henderson was the principal of Bruce Elementary School in Houston from 1909 to 1942 and in this capacity helped shape the lives of thousands of students. He and his faculty provided clothing and food for needy students. Henderson saw the school progress from classes being held in what was known as the “Old Red Barn” to the construction of a modern facility in 1920. Under his leadership the faculty grew to twenty-six teachers, a secretary, doctor, and nurse when he retired in 1942.

While serving as principal, Henderson took a leadership role in all aspects of the community. He was so engaged in civic, community, and educational

affairs that he was known as the “Mayor of [Fifth Ward](#).” He helped establish the first public library (Colored Carnegie Library) for [African Americans](#) in Houston, the city’s first Negro day nursery, the Dorcas Home for delinquent females, and a farm for delinquent black youth.

In 1912 he helped victims of the Great Fifth Ward Fire, a major fire which destroyed some forty blocks in Houston’s central city and left hundreds homeless. [Ira B. Bryant](#) noted in his book, *The Development of Houston Negro Schools*, that “Professor Henderson was very largely responsible for the excellent manner in which relief was brought to the unfortunate” during the fire. To alleviate the conditions created by the fire, Henderson helped establish an organization that later became known as the Colored Federated Charities.

Henderson was an elder of Gregg Street Presbyterian Church (now Pinecrest Presbyterian). He and his family became pioneer members after the church opened in the 1920s. He also played an active role in supporting the Houston Negro Hospital (now [Riverside General Hospital](#)) when it opened in 1926. He was an active member of several fraternities including the Masons, Odd Fellows, and [Knights of Pythias](#).

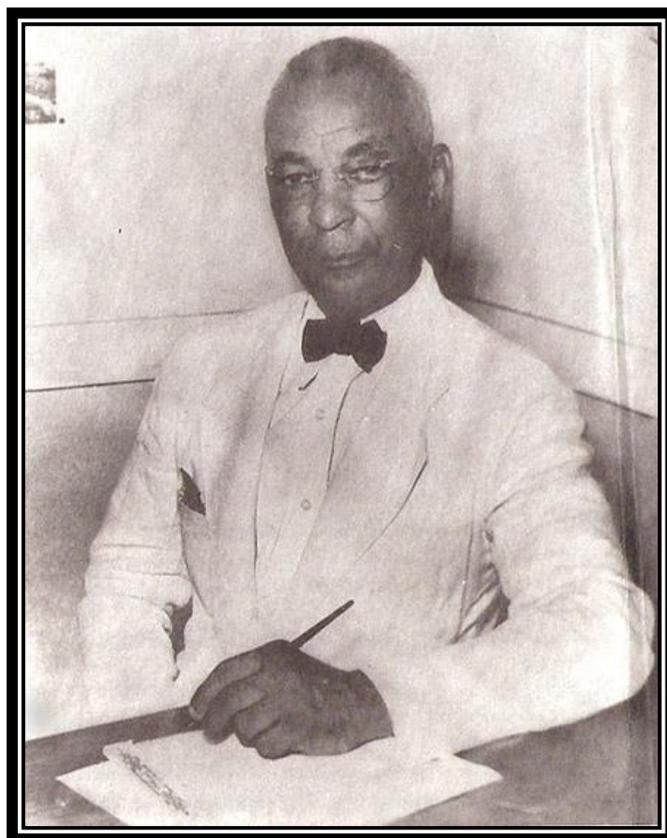
Residents of the Fifth Ward considered Henderson a pioneer among men who functioned as mayor of communities during times when city officials paid little or no attention to African-American neighborhoods. Though he never witnessed his students having the right to be educated alongside white children, he assumed a leadership role in every effort toward community improvements. Henderson died in Houston on January 24, 1949, and was buried in Houston’s Oak Park Cemetery (now Golden Gate Cemetery). Nat Q. Henderson Elementary School is located not far from where he lived and worked in the heart of Houston.

# XVII. Samuel W. Houston

By Paul M. Lucko

Samuel Walker Houston, black school founder and administrator, son of Joshua Houston and Sylvester Lee, was born into [slavery](#) at Huntsville, Texas, on February 12, 1864. His father, Joshua, was owned by [Sam Houston](#).

Perhaps inspired by his father's career as a Walker County commissioner during the years after emancipation, Houston attended Hampton Institute in Virginia, Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, and Howard University in Washington, D.C. He worked in Washington as a government clerk at the War, State, and Navy departments in the Ford's Theatre Building for five years. He returned to Texas around 1900 and founded the Huntsville *Times*, which he edited from about 1902 until 1907. During this time he taught in the public school of Red Hill in Grimes County.



Samuel W. Houston

In 1907 Houston founded the Galilee Community School, later known as Houstonian Normal and Industrial Institute, near Galilee in Walker County. His school, which enrolled students in grades one through eleven, was probably the first county training school for black children in Texas. The Houston school received financial support from the state government, private citizens, and such philanthropic organizations as John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board, the Jeanes Fund, the Rosenwald Fund, and the Slater Fund. Influenced by the curriculum at colleges he had attended, Houston emphasized a vocational and mechanical academic program with course offerings in cooking and sewing, woodwork, carpentry, and

agriculture. However, because he also believed that black children should learn music, the humanities, and science, his school offered instruction in traditional academic areas. The Houstonian Normal Institute began with a single teacher; when its enrollment peaked around 1928 the school employed nine teachers and enrolled over 400 students, who came from various parts of the state and lived in dormitories on the campus. In 1930 Houston's school was consolidated with the Huntsville Independent School District; he became the supervising principal for nine of the Walker County Schools, including Galilee, Colony, Cotton Creek, Cumberland, Ollie Hill, Smither's Farm, Phelps, Sand Hill, and Mount Prairie. Houston also accepted the position of principal at the new Samuel W. Houston High School for black students.

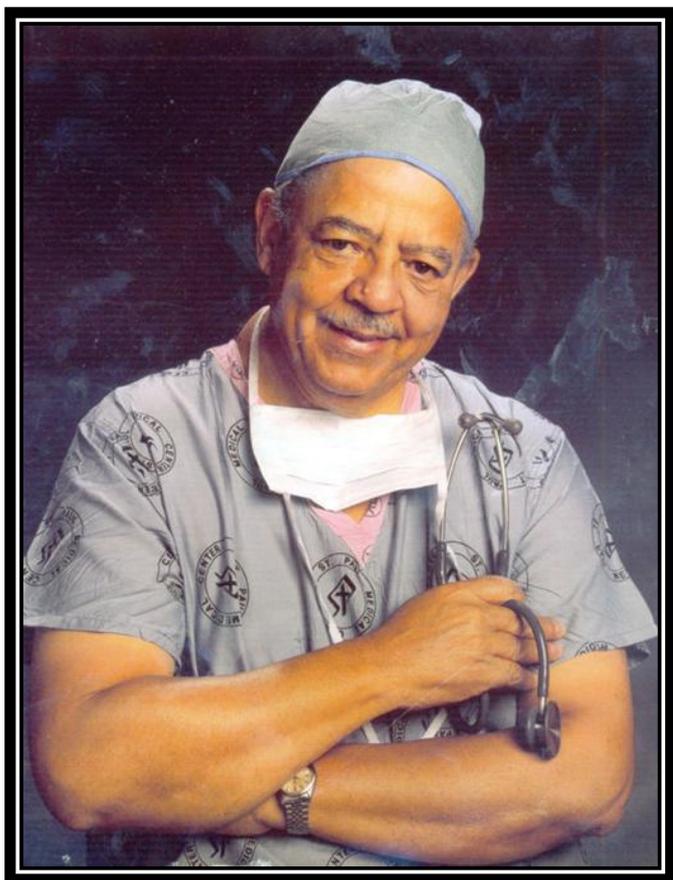
He was a Baptist and a Republican. He served on the advisory committee for the National Republican Organization in 1928 and attended the national Republican convention. He also served as field secretary for the Texas Commission on Inter-Racial Cooperation and was vice president of the [Teachers State Association of Texas](#). Houston was a member of the Southern Sociological Congress, the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, the National Association of Applied Psychology, and the National Travel Club. He also served on the state executive committee of the Young Men's Christian Association and was a director for the [Texas Centennial](#) Exposition in Dallas in 1936. He married Hope Harville on April 28, 1915, and they had three children. Houston died on November 19, 1945.

# SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

## XVIII. Emmett J. Conrad

By Randolph B. Campbell

Emmett James Conrad, African-American surgeon and Dallas civic leader, son of John and Flora Paulfrey Conrad, was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on October 6, 1923. He graduated from McKinley High School and studied pre-medicine at Southern University in Baton Rouge for two



Dr. Emmett J. Conrad

years before being drafted into the United States Army during [World War II](#). Conrad's performance on an Army IQ test earned him a scholarship to complete pre-medicine studies at Stanford University. Following the war, he entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville and earned his M.D. degree in 1948.

Dr. Conrad served an internship at Homer Phillips Hospital in St. Louis and then joined the United States Air Force, rising to the rank of captain while stationed at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois.

During his internship, he married Eleanor Nelson on July 15, 1949. The couple had one child, Cecilia Ann Conrad, born on January 4, 1955. After two years in the Air Force, Conrad returned to St. Louis, completed his

surgical training, and served as chief resident at Homer Phillips Hospital. He also was a research fellow at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

In 1955, at the urging of friends among the African-American doctors in Dallas, Conrad relocated to that city. He arrived only one year after St. Paul's Hospital became the first white hospital in Dallas to extend privileges to black physicians and shortly before the [Texas Medical Association](#) removed the word "white" from its constitution, opening the door for blacks to join the staffs of white hospitals. In 1956 Conrad became the first African-American surgeon on the staff of St. Paul's, and in 1980 he became Chief of Staff there, a position that made him the leader of more than 700 doctors. Conrad continued to practice medicine until his retirement in 1992.

Doctor Conrad became heavily involved in the civic life of Dallas during the 1960s, playing an important role in the move to break down segregation in the city. In 1967 he won election to the board of trustees of the Dallas Independent School District, and as the board's first African-American member, he served for ten years. He promoted free-lunch programs for poor students and worked for the integration of administrative staffs. The DISD school board secretary called Doctor Conrad "a very steady and yet determined influence for the African-American children in the district. Through his political and medical career, he served as a role model. He paved the way for all of the African-American officials we've had since."

In 1983 Doctor Conrad served on the Select Committee on Public Education that proposed major reforms to improve education in Texas, including the controversial "no pass, no play" rule. The next year Gov. Mark White appointed Conrad as the first African-American member of the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE), a position that he held until his death from lung disease on April 24, 1993. Eleanor Conrad completed his SBOE term, which ended in 1995.

A partial list of the many civic activities participated in by Doctor Emmett Conrad includes membership on the boards of trustees at Southern Methodist University and Huston-Tillotson College and on the planning committee for the University of Texas at Dallas, president of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches, board member of the Dallas Urban League and the Dallas Branch of the NAACP, board of governors of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and board of trustees for the Dallas Arboretum. His innumerable honors included honorary life membership in the [Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers](#) (1975), Father of the Year (1977), and Outstanding Volunteer of the Year (1985). In 1986 his portrait was hung in Dallas City Hall as a Living Legend. Dr. Emmett Conrad's funeral service was held at the [Hall of State](#) Building at [Fair Park](#) in Dallas on April 29, 1993. He was buried at Laurel Land Memorial Park. Another, and highly appropriate tribute, came in 2006 when the Dallas Independent School District opened Emmett J. Conrad High School on Fair Oaks Avenue.

# XIX. Connie Y. Connor

By Kharen Monsho

Connie Yerwood Connor, pioneer in public health in Texas and the first black physician named to the Texas Public Health Service (now the [Texas Department of Health](#)), the oldest daughter of Dr. Charles R. and Melissa (Brown) Yerwood, was born in Victoria, Texas, around 1908. She decided to become a doctor when she was a young girl. She and her sister Joyce, who also became a doctor, accompanied their father on house calls in his largely rural practice in Gonzales County. At first they traveled by horse-drawn buggies, later by automobile. Connor attended public school in Austin and graduated from the Samuel Huston College Academy in 1925. She received the bachelor of arts degree *cum laude* from Samuel Huston College (now Huston-Tillotson College). In 1933 she graduated *cum laude* from Meharry Medical School. She began her residency in pediatrics but became interested in public health. She earned a scholarship to study public health at the University of Michigan and returned to Texas in 1937, when she joined the Texas Public Health Service. During the early years of her work with the state health agency, Connor was responsible for training midwives in East Texas. She also served as a consultant in setting up health clinics that offered services such as well baby clinics and prenatal care to the rural poor of Texas. In the beginning her duties were limited to work among the black population in East Texas, but as the need and demand grew she eventually



Connie Y. Connor

worked with all cultures throughout the state. She led the state's efforts in early periodic screening diagnosis, treatment, and chronic diseases for pregnancy and pediatrics. When she retired on August 31, 1977, she was director of health services.

Connor was president of the [Lone Star State Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association](#), secretary of the Charles H. Christian Medical Society, and a member of the [Texas Medical Association](#). When she retired she received outstanding service awards from the Texas Department of Health (renamed the Texas Department of State Health Services in 2003), the commissioner of health, and the staff of the maternal and child health division. She was the first black to be appointed to serve on the Human Relations Committee, the predecessor of the Human Rights Commission (a local group of the Texas Commission on Human Rights). She was appointed to the first board of trustees of the Mental Health-Mental Retardation Center of Austin and Travis County. She also served on the boards of the Austin Child Guidance Center, Austin Evaluation Center, Citizens Advisory Committee to the Juvenile Board of Travis County, Girl Scouts, YWCA, and Travis County Grand Jury Association. She was a trustee of Samuel Huston College for fifteen years and was one of the board members who signed the merger agreement of Huston-Tillotson College in 1952; she continued on the board after the merger. Her retirement on March 22, 1991, was the culmination of over fifty-four years of service to the college. At her retirement from the board of trustees of the college she received its highest award, the Crystal Ram with Golden Horns. She was the second person to receive this prestigious award. She also received several awards as outstanding alumna from both Huston-Tillotson College and Meharry Medical College and an honorary degree of doctor of sciences from Samuel Huston College.

Connor was active in the Wesley United Methodist Church, where she served as chairman of the board of trustees. Even when she was traveling throughout the state as a young woman, she returned to Austin every

weekend to teach a Sunday school class. She was a lay leader and received a distinguished service award from Church Women United for services in religious leadership. For fifteen years she served as grand treasurer in the Order of the Eastern Star. She was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, the [Links, Incorporated](#), the [American Association of University Women](#), the Community Welfare Association, and many other organizations. Connor died on June 11, 1991, in Austin, and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

# SPORTS

## XX. Black Professional Baseball in Texas

By Mark Preswood  
From the Texas Almanac

Though much has been written and researched about the Negro National and American professional leagues, little is known about black minor league and semiprofessional baseball in Texas. Unfortunately, the major newspapers of the day, whose archives are readily available, carried little information about black ballgames or their organization, and the black



Houston Monarchs, 1926.

newspapers have little or no archives chronicling the early years of organized black baseball.

Dr. Layton Revel, of the Center for Negro League Baseball Research in Dallas, and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City have done a very credible job of gathering interviews and researching what archives exist but still much is not known. What we do know is the great impact Texas-born black baseball stars had not only in Texas but across the nation as they founded and shaped the black baseball leagues.

Rube Foster, who was born and raised in Calvert, is credited with the formation of the Negro National League in 1920. Foster started playing for amateur and semiprofessional teams in the late 1800s and early 1900s, primarily with teams from Waco and Fort Worth. His skill as a pitcher soon earned him recognition on a national scale, and barnstorming teams throughout the country were securing his services.



**Rube Foster**

Barnstorming was a common occurrence in the early part of the 1900s, as all-star teams would organize, travel around the country, and play local amateur, semiprofessional or professional teams. Professional baseball players were paid specifically to play baseball and were held to that team by contract or team agreement. Semiprofessional players were paid only if the gate receipts exceeded the cost of the event and a profit for the promoter.

Early black baseball teams in Texas were primarily barnstorming semiprofessionals but included some of the best baseball in the nation. The Fort Worth Wonders formed in 1905 and featured at different times George “Dibo” Johnson and Louis “Big Bertha” Santop from Tyler, who both would find recognition as some of the greatest black baseball stars of the era.

Several times during this period attempts were made to form professional leagues in Texas. One of those was a circuit started in 1916 called the Colored Texas League. Fort Worth native Hiram McGar served as league president and also manager of the Fort Worth Black Panthers. Other cities in the league included Cleburne (Yellow Jackets), Dallas, Waco, Houston, San Antonio, Beaumont and Galveston. The teams played a 142-game schedule but travel was difficult and expensive, and it is unknown whether the league finished the season.

In 1920, another attempt at organization led to the formation of the Texas Negro League. McGar again was a leader in the organization and was assisted by A.S. Wells of Dallas. Wichita Falls (Black Spudders), San Antonio (Black Indians), Beaumont, Houston (Black Buffalos), Dallas (Black Giants) and Fort Worth formed the nucleus of teams the first year. Austin (Black Senators), Abilene (Eagles), Paris (Giants), San Angelo and Waco also would field teams in later years. This organization lasted through the 1927 season, when poor economics and other circumstances led to its disbanding.

The next attempt at forming a professional black league happened in 1929. Quincy Gilmore, a former secretary of the Negro National League, called several black community leaders and met at the Pythian Temple in Dallas. Shreveport, Dallas, Houston, Tulsa, San Antonio, Oklahoma City, Wichita Falls and Fort Worth were all represented and all agreed to form teams. These teams, as had been done in former leagues, would play in the ballparks of

the white Texas League teams when they were on the road and would usually adopt their nickname, though prefaced with the word black.

It was recorded that one game in Dallas between the Black Giants and the Fort Worth Black Panthers drew almost 6,000 fans. William Tresivant of Fort Worth served as the league's first commissioner, and the league lasted through the 1932 season. The Great Depression caused too many financial difficulties for the league to survive, as was the case with many other minor leagues, both black and white.

The Depression did not deter black ballplayers from playing the game they loved but caused them to return to barnstorming and amateur organizations. The Fort Worth Black Cats, the Mineola Black Spiders, the Waco Tigers, the Jasper Steers and the Dallas Brown Bombers played all over Texas and as far north as Canada. These teams and a few others were recognized as having some of the greatest black baseball talent not in the Negro National or American leagues, and many of these players went on to play in those leagues.

When integration of Major League Baseball occurred in 1947, many of the great stars of the Negro professional leagues turned their attention to playing in the major leagues. This led to an economic decline of professional black leagues, but it was also the only time a Texas city was part of the Negro American League. In 1949, the Newark Eagles were sold and moved to Houston. The Houston Eagles had a two-year run before being sold and moved to New Orleans, but manager "Red" Parnell and Bill "Fireball" Beverly led the team to a competitive finish.

Integration for the Texas League happened shortly thereafter when Dave Hoskins was signed to play for the Dallas Eagles. Maury Wills and Eddie Moore signed with the Fort Worth Cats in 1955, and many other teams

followed suit. Shreveport was the lone holdout in the Texas League, and teams visiting Shreveport were given roster exemptions to add white ballplayers to their teams because black players were still not allowed to play in Shreveport. Although integration removed the need to organize professional black leagues, black semiprofessional leagues still offered opportunities not yet offered to all.

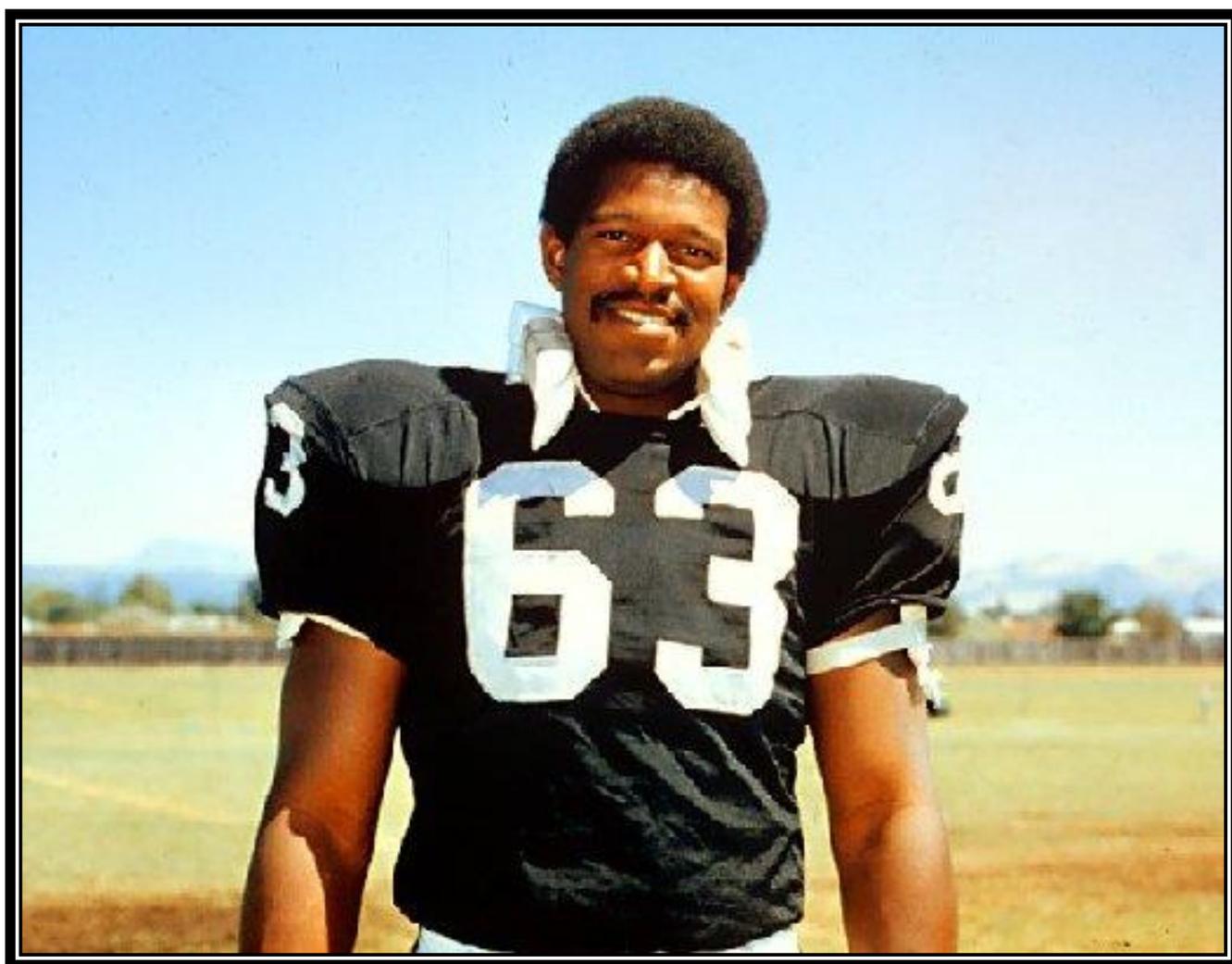
The South Texas Negro League and the West Texas Colored League were two examples of strong semiprofessional competition throughout Texas. For many years, a Texas “colored” team championship was held in Waco but was moved to Fort Worth when a tornado tore through Waco’s Katy Park. These segregated leagues also led to an unexpected story when Jerry Craft, who currently is the mayor of Jacksboro, became the first white player in an all-black league. His story is being chronicled by author Kathleen Sullivan in her tentatively titled book *Our White Boy*, due to be printed by the Southern Methodist University Press Sports Series.

Today the black community is challenged with reintroducing baseball to the black youth. Football and basketball have a stronghold with many in these communities; however, Major League Baseball’s RBI program and other efforts have been formed to spur renewed interest in baseball.

# XXI. Eugene (Gene) T. Upshaw Jr.

By Robert Fink and Laurie E. Jasinski

Eugene Thurman Upshaw, Jr., football player and union leader, was born on August 15, 1945, in Robstown, Texas. He was the oldest child of Eugene Upshaw, Sr., an employee of an oil company, and Cora (Riley) Upshaw, a domestic laborer. Gene and his brothers worked in area cotton fields during their childhoods in an effort to raise extra money to assist the family. Upshaw attended Robstown High School, distinguishing himself academically and athletically. Specifically, Upshaw served as the star pitcher on the school's baseball team.



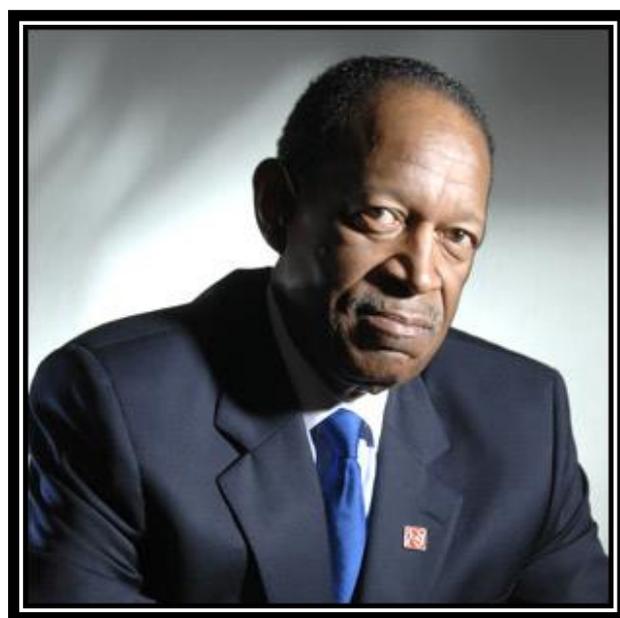
Eugene (Gene) T. Upshaw Jr.

Upon graduation from high school, Upshaw, though tempted to start a baseball career, followed his father's wishes that he obtain a college education. Upshaw attended Texas College of Arts and Industries (later Texas A&I University and currently Texas A&M University-Kingsville) and played tackle and center on the college football team under Coach Gil Steinke. Even though Upshaw had only one year of football experience in high school, Coach Steinke, known as one of the first football coaches in Texas to integrate minority players into his teams, saw promise in the young player. During his four years in Kingsville, Upshaw grew to be 6'5" tall and weighed 255 pounds. His size and speed helped him earn National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA) All-American status, and he played a part in establishing Texas A&I as a national powerhouse among small universities, with the school winning six NAIA national championships in the decade following Upshaw's graduation. While in college, he also joined Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. On December 30, 1967, he married Jimmye Hill. They had one son, Eugene III, but later divorced. Upshaw graduated from Texas A&I with a B.S. degree in 1968.

In 1967 the Oakland Raiders drafted Upshaw in the first round (seventeenth over-all) in the first combined American Football League/National Football League draft. Because of his size and agility, the Raiders' coaching staff felt Upshaw would make an excellent offensive guard. Their intuition proved correct as Upshaw, beginning with the first game of his rookie season, started at left guard for the team in more than 200 straight regular season games. During the 1981 season he missed one game because of injury, before returning to finish the season. The following year he missed the entire season because of injuries, and subsequently chose to retire.

Upshaw accumulated numerous accolades as a player. He competed in ten conference championship games and seven Pro Bowls. Upshaw was named AFC Lineman of the Year in 1973, 1974, and 1977, as well as being named NFL Lineman of the Year in 1977. For eight years he served as the Raiders' offensive captain, and he is the only player to have played in three different Super Bowls (II, XI, and XV) in three different decades; the Raiders won Super Bowls XI and XV. Finally, Upshaw was named to the NFL's All-Decade Team for the 1970s, the NFL seventy-fifth anniversary All-Time Team (1994), and in 1987 received induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame—he was the first honoree to have played exclusively as a guard.

Off the field, though, Upshaw made his longest lasting mark on the NFL through his tireless efforts for players' rights. From 1970 through 1976 Upshaw served as union representative for the Oakland Raiders. Then in 1980 he became the president of the NFL Players Association. In 1983 he became executive director, a position he held until his death. This role made him the first African American to head a major players union. The union,



**Eugene (Gene) T. Upshaw Jr.**

itself, was in financial trouble when Upshaw took over. Through his work, he turned the union into a major force in American sports labor, earning himself a position on the AFL-CIO executive council in 1985. He played a role in the Players Association strike in 1987. His greatest achievement came with the 1993 agreement between the union and the NFL that brought limited free agency to football and dramatically increased players' salaries.

Upshaw married Teresa "Terri" Buich in 1986. They had two sons, Justin and Daniel. In addition to leading the Players Association, in 1994 he helped

establish Players Inc., an organization designed to market football players off the field through promotional events, broadcast specials, licensed retail products, corporate sponsorships, and other projects. During his life, Upshaw received a number of honors, including the Byron “Whizzer” White Humanitarian Award (1980) and the A. Phillip Randolph Award (1982) as an outstanding black leader. Upshaw made his home in Great Falls, Virginia, near the Washington, D.C., area. He was a Democrat and a Baptist.

While on vacation at his home in Lake Tahoe in 2008, Upshaw began to feel ill. After going to the doctor, he learned he had pancreatic cancer. Days later at Forest Hospital in Lake Tahoe, on August 20, 2008, Gene Upshaw passed away at the age of sixty-three.

# XXII. Charles C. Flood

By Kallie Kosc

Charles Curtis Flood (Curt Flood), three-time All-Star Major League Baseball centerfielder and labor rights advocate, was born on January 18, 1938, in Houston, Texas, to Herman and Laura Flood. Flood and his mother lived in Houston for nearly two years before returning to the family's home in Oakland, California. Flood, inspired and instructed by his father, showed an early aptitude for art. Growing up in a working-class home within a racially-charged city, however, he quickly



Charles C. Flood

learned that talent alone would not guarantee him a successful life. His artistic and athletic skills along with his work ethic caught the attention of his teachers and coaches. Despite being shorter and thinner than most boys, Flood quickly outperformed the other kids on his childhood baseball teams. His athletic prowess was so well-recognized that on January 30, 1956, he signed a contract with the Cincinnati Reds almost immediately after graduating from high school.

Flood was soon confronted with the realities of the segregated South upon his arrival at spring training and during his tenure with the Red's farm team, which was located at High Point in North Carolina. Though Flood performed well within the Red's organization, he was traded to the St. Louis Cardinals in December 1957. Flood played his first major-league game with the Cardinals after being on their farm team for only three weeks. His first two seasons

with the team were rough, as he and other black players were often benched, despite their superior performances. Eventually, they became a cohesive and successful team. Flood and his teammates flourished under new management and fostered a rare interracial camaraderie in the 1960s. Flood went on to play twelve seasons with the Cardinals in which he earned some of baseball's most prestigious honors. He won the Gold Glove Award for his position every season from 1963 to 1969 and played on the National League's All-Star team in 1964, 1966, and 1968. He helped lead his team to three World Series appearances and two victories (1964 and 1967) during his tenure.

In his twelve seasons with the Cardinals, Flood firmly established himself in St. Louis. On February 13, 1959, he married the single-mother of two children, Beverly Collins, and added to the family three children of their own. Keeping his interest in art alive, Flood also opened his own portrait and photography business in St. Louis. He was president of Aunts and Uncles, a St. Louis organization that furnished clothing and shoes to underprivileged children. Though Flood seemed to live the American dream, he had difficulty balancing his career with his family life. He and Beverly divorced, remarried, and separated once more.

While Flood acquired an impressive MLB record, it was his departure from sports and his contribution to the free-agency movement that left an indelible mark on the league. In 1969 Flood was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies against his will. While it was common-place (and legal) for a player to be traded without regard to their wishes under baseball's reserve clause, Flood decided to fight the decision and sue MLB for violating the Thirteenth Amendment and antitrust laws. This controversial decision earned him much praise and criticism. His comment in an interview to sportscaster Howard Cosell about being a "well-paid slave" offended some, while others believed

it to be an apt description of baseball's reserve clause—the manner in which teams bought and sold baseball players like commodities.

The landmark case *Flood v. Kuhn* made it all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled 5 to 3 against Flood. Although he did not win his case, his decision to take a stand influenced other ballplayers to unify in an effort to challenge MLB for more rights in the trading process. The product of that subsequent movement ushered in the free agency era that exists today.

During the court process, Flood made a brief but unsuccessful return to baseball with the Washington Senators. With mounting criticism and an inability to recapture his old form, Flood left the team in 1971 before the end of the season. After the Supreme Court decision, Flood left the United States for a few years to seek refuge in such locations as the Mediterranean, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, from media scrutiny. He ultimately returned to Oakland, California, where he lived out his life working for the Little League program with the Oakland Department of Parks and Aquatics.

In the aftermath of his baseball career and lawsuit, Flood suffered from alcoholism. He began to turn his life around with his marriage to actress Judy Pace in 1986. He also began to receive recognition for his pioneering efforts on behalf of players' rights from his fellow baseball players. In 1994 he was among those featured in Ken Burns' documentary television series *Baseball*. Other documentaries by director Spike Lee and the ESPN sports network profiled Flood. He was diagnosed with throat cancer in 1996 and passed away at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles on January 20, 1997. He was buried in Inglewood Park Cemetery in Inglewood, California. In 1998 the United States Senate passed the Curt Flood Act—legislation that abolished baseball's antitrust exemption. His life and the trial have been the subject of many books and subsequent broadcasts, including an HBO sports documentary entitled, *The Curious Case of Curt Flood* (2011).

# MUSIC

## XXIII. Duke-Peacock Records

By Martin Donell Kohout

Duke and Peacock were two record labels that were influential in shaping the course of American [blues](#), rhythm and blues, [gospel](#), and soul music after [World War II](#). They were also notable as what music historian Roger Wood has called “the largest and most influential African American-owned-and-operated record conglomerate in the world during the 1950s and early 1960s.”



Don Robey

Houston businessman and nightclub owner [Don Robey](#) had become the personal manager of [Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown](#) in 1947 and felt that Brown’s label, Aladdin Records, had been insufficiently zealous in promoting the guitarist’s recordings. Convinced he could do a better job himself, Robey founded Peacock Records (named after the Bronze Peacock, his nightclub in the heart of Houston’s [Fifth Ward](#)) in 1949.

Over the next quarter century, Robey continued to expand his musical empire. In the early 1950s, the Peacock roster, in addition to Brown, included Memphis Slim, Marie Adams, [Floyd Dixon](#), and [Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton](#), whose 1953 recording of “Hound Dog” was covered by [Elvis Presley](#). In April 1953 Robey acquired full control of the Duke label, founded by David J. Mattis and Bill Fitzgerald in Memphis in 1952, and with it the recording contracts of, among others, Bobby “Blue” Bland, Junior

Parker, and Johnny Ace. Also in 1953 Robey moved his expanding record label operations from Lyons Avenue in northeastern Houston to 2809 Erastus Street, the site of his now-closed Bronze Peacock. He constructed his own studio facility there, though it served primarily as a rehearsal and demo studio. Robey used Houston's ACA Studios to cut many of his finished recordings, and he often sent out recordings for mastering to [Bill Quinn's Gold Star Studios](#) in the city.

Ace, who accidentally shot and killed himself backstage during a show at Houston's City Auditorium on Christmas Day 1954, was initially the most successful Duke artist. He had eight Top 40 hits in his brief career, including "My Song," "The Clock," and "Cross My Heart," all of which reached the Number 1 spot on the R&B charts.

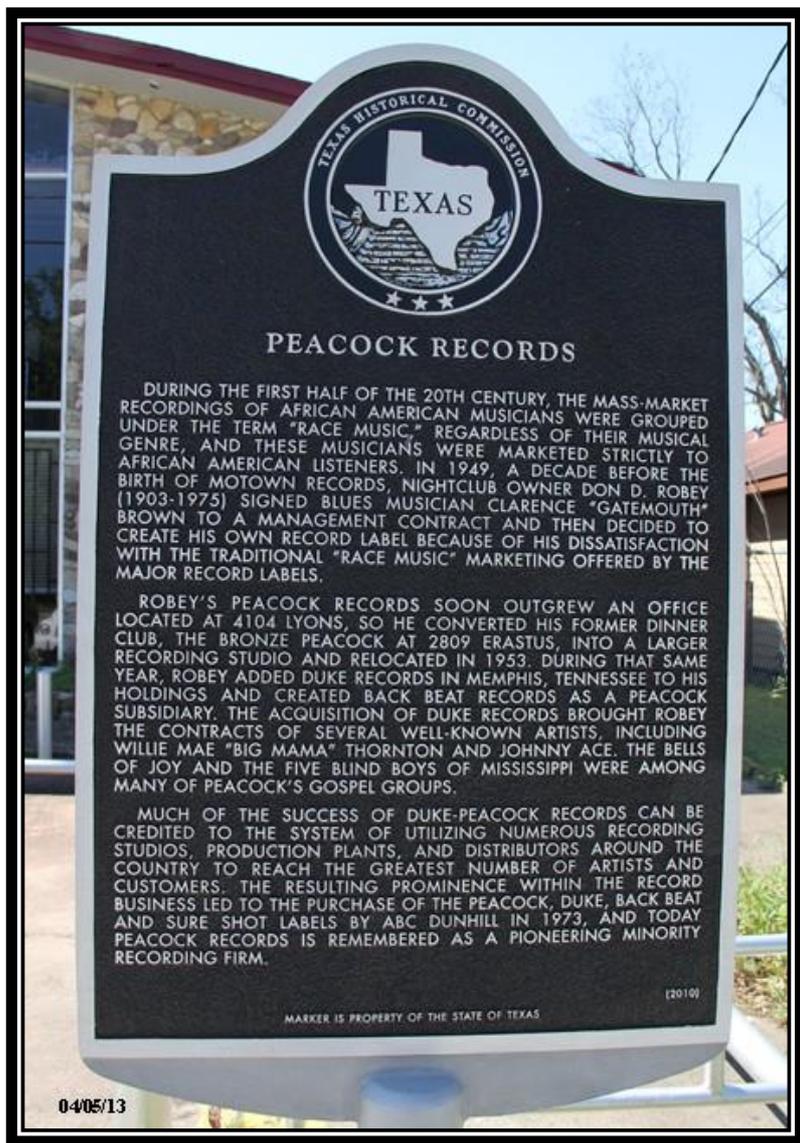


Early Peacock Records album

Bland proved even more successful, putting forty-six songs on the R&B charts from 1957 to 1972, including Number 1 hits "Farther On Up the Road" (1957), "I Pity the Fool" (1961), and "That's the Way Love Is" (1963). His recordings are considered exemplars of the "Duke-Peacock Sound," which has been described as "a combination of gospel-soaked vocal deliveries...and taut, brass-heavy arrangements from [Joe Scott Bland's bandleader and arranger] and bandleader Bill Harvey." Among the musicians who played on those recordings were guitarists [Clarence Hollimon](#) and Wayne Bennett, pianist [Teddy Reynolds](#), bassist Hamp Simmons, and drummer Sonny Freeman.

Duke and Peacock also benefited from the managerial talents of [Evelyn Johnson](#), whom Roger Wood called "the true genius" behind the enterprise. For more than twenty years, Johnson filled a variety of important but often

unacknowledged roles at his nightclub, record labels, Buffalo Booking Agency, and Lion Publishing Company. Buffalo Booking Agency client B. B. King called Johnson “a remarkable lady” and “one of the pioneers” behind Robey’s enterprise and the recording industry in general. The gracious, soft-spoken Johnson often acted as intermediary between the hard-nosed Robey, who was frequently accused of unethical and even violent behavior, and his artists.



**Peacock Records Historical Marker**

subsidiaries, founded in 1957 and 1963–64 respectively. Among Back Beat’s more successful artists were the Original Casuals, whose “So Tough” reached Number 6 on the R&B charts in 1958; Joe Hinton, whose version of Willie

Peacock also had an extremely successful gospel division, which released recordings by such well-known acts as the Austin-based Bells of Joy, the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Sensational Nightingales, the Mighty Clouds of Joy, and Inez Andrews. The steady sales of Peacock’s gospel artists kept the label afloat during the lean periods between secular rhythm-and-blues hits. The Dixie Hummingbirds won a Grammy for Best Soul Gospel Performance for their 1973 recording of Paul Simon’s “Loves Me Like A Rock.”

Robey’s holdings also included the Back Beat and Song Bird

Nelson's "Funny (How Time Slips Away)" hit Number 1 in 1964; Roy Head and the Traits, whose "Treat Her Right" reached Number 2 on both the pop and R&B charts in 1965; and O. V. Wright, whose "8 Men 4 Women" reached Number 4 on the R&B charts in 1967. Song Bird, a gospel label, had a substantial crossover hit with "Lord Don't Move That Mountain" by Inez Andrews in 1972.

By then, however, the Duke-Peacock empire had yielded primacy in the R&B/soul field to the Motown and Stax labels, which had superior promotion and distribution networks. Robey was almost seventy years old; his children were uninterested in the music business, and he was entangled in a costly lawsuit with Chess Records.

On May 23, 1973, he agreed to sell his Duke-Peacock holdings, which included some 2,700 song copyrights, contracts with approximately 100 artists, and 2,000 unreleased master recordings, to New York-based ABC-Dunhill Records. In return, Robey reportedly was to receive \$25,000 a year for four years and reimbursement of the cost of leasing a new Cadillac for his personal use. He served as a consultant to ABC, but he died just over two years later. Shortly thereafter ABC closed the old Duke-Peacock offices on Erastus Street. On April 16, 2011, the Harris County Historical Commission dedicated a Texas Historical Marker to Peacock Records at its original offices (now the Louis Robey Professional Building) on Lyons Avenue.

# XXIV. Sam (Lightnin’) Hopkins

By Alan Lee Haworth

Sam (Lightnin’) Hopkins, [blues](#) singer and guitarist, was born in Centerville, Texas, on March 15, probably in 1911. Though some sources give his year of birth as 1912, his Social Security application listed the year as 1911. He was the son of Abe and Frances (Sims) Hopkins. After his father died in 1915, the family (Sam, his mother and five brothers and sisters) moved to Leona. At age eight he made his first instrument, a cigar-box guitar with chicken-wire strings. By ten he was playing music with his cousin, Texas Alexander, and [Blind Lemon Jefferson](#), who encouraged him to continue. Hopkins also played with his brothers, blues musicians John Henry and Joel.

By the mid-1920s Sam had started jumping trains, shooting dice, and playing the blues anywhere he could. Apparently he married Elamer Lacey sometime in the 1920s, and they had several children, but by the mid-1930’s Lacey, frustrated by his wandering lifestyle, took the children and left Hopkins. He served time at the Houston County Prison Farm in the mid-1930s, and after his release he returned to the blues-club circuit. In 1946 he had his big break and first studio session—in Los Angeles for Aladdin Recordings. On the record was a piano player named Wilson (Thunder) Smith; by chance he combined well with Sam to give him his nickname, Lightnin’. The album has been described as “downbeat solo blues” characteristic of Hopkins’s style. Aladdin was so



Sam “Lightnin” Hopkins

impressed with Hopkins that the company invited him back for a second session in 1947. He eventually made forty-three recordings for the label.

Over his career Hopkins recorded for nearly twenty different labels, including Gold Star Records in Houston. On occasion he would record for one label while under contract to another. In 1950 he settled in Houston, but he continued to tour the country periodically. Though he recorded prolifically between 1946 and 1954, his records for the most part were not big outside the black community. It was not until 1959, when Hopkins began working with legendary producer Sam Charters, that his music began to reach a mainstream white audience. Hopkins switched to an acoustic guitar and became a hit in the [folk](#)-blues revival of the 1960s.

During the early 1960s he played at Carnegie Hall with Pete Seeger and Joan Baez and in 1964 toured with the American Folk Blues Festival. By the end of the decade he was opening for such [rock](#) bands as the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. During a tour of Europe in the 1970s, he played for Queen Elizabeth II at a command performance. Hopkins also performed at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. In 1972 he worked on the soundtrack to the film *Souther*. He was also the subject of a documentary, *The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins*, which won the prize at the Chicago Film Festival for outstanding documentary in 1970.

Some of his biggest hits included “Short Haired Women / Big Mama Jump!” (1947); “Shotgun Blues,” which went to Number 5 on the *Billboard* charts in 1950; and “Penitentiary Blues” (1959). His albums included *The Complete Prestige /Bluesville Recordings*, *The Complete Aladdin Recordings*, and the *Gold Star Sessions* (two volumes). Hopkins recorded a total of more than eighty-five albums and toured around the world. But after a 1970 car crash, many of the concerts he performed were on his front porch or at a bar near his house. He had a knack for writing songs impromptu, and frequently wove legends around a core of truth. His often autobiographical songs made him a

spokesman for the southern black community that had no voice in the white mainstream until blues attained a broader popularity through white singers like Elvis Presley. In 1980 Lightnin' Hopkins was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame.

Hopkins died of cancer of the esophagus on January 30, 1982, in Houston. He was survived by his caretaker, Antoinette Charles, and four children. His funeral was attended by more than 4,000, including fans and musicians. He was buried in Forest Park Cemetery in Houston. In 2002 the town of Crockett in Houston County, east of the birthplace of Hopkins, erected a memorial statue honoring the bluesman in Lightnin' Hopkins Park. He is also honored in the Houston Institute for Culture's Texas Music Hall of Fame. In the 2010s a documentary, *Where Lightnin' Strikes*, was in production.

# XXV. Henry (Ragtime Texas) Thomas

By Dave Oliphant

Henry "Ragtime Texas" Thomas, an early exponent of country blues, was born in Big Sandy, Texas, in 1874, one of nine children of former slaves who sharecropped on a cotton plantation in the northeastern part of the state. Thomas learned to hate cotton farming at an early age and left home as soon as he could, around 1890, to pursue a career as an itinerant "songster." Derrick Stewart-Barker has commented that for his money Thomas was the best songster "that ever recorded."



Henry "Ragtime Texas" Thomas

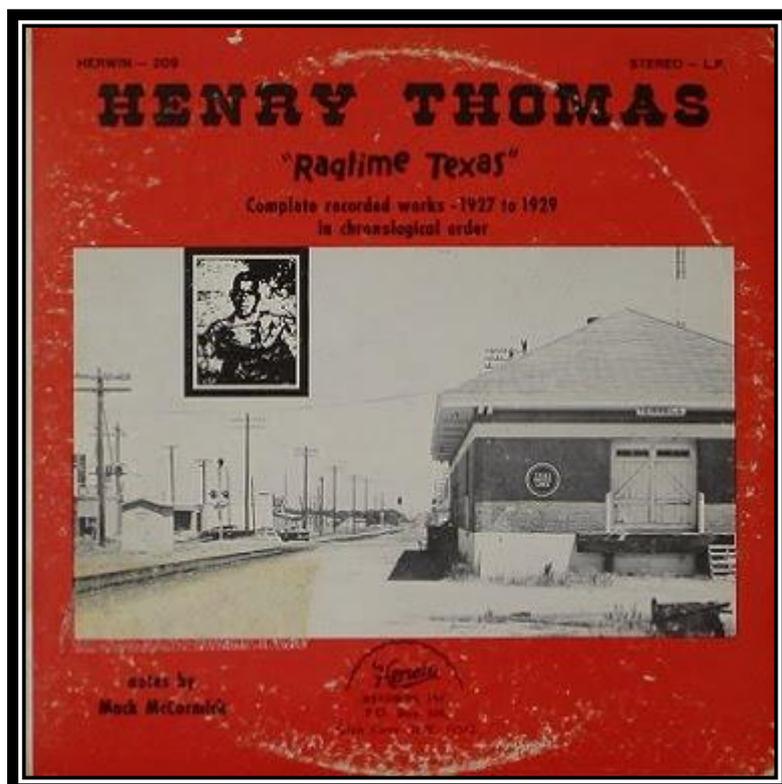
Thomas first taught himself to play the quills, a type of American panpipe made from cane reeds and similar to the Italian *zampogna*; later, he picked up the guitar. On the twenty-three recordings he made from 1927 to 1929, he sings a variety of songs and accompanies himself on guitar and at times on the quills. His accompaniment work on guitar has been ranked "with the finest dance blues ever recorded." According to Stephen Calt, "its intricate simultaneous treble picking and drone bass would have posed a challenge to any blues guitarist of any era."

The range of Thomas's work makes him something of a transitional figure between the early minstrel songs, spirituals, square dance tunes, hillbilly reels, waltzes, and rags and the rise of [blues](#) and [jazz](#). Basically his

repertoire, which mostly consists of dance pieces, was out of date by the turn of the century, when the blues began to grow in popularity. Thomas's nickname, "Ragtime Texas," is thought to have come to him because he played in fast tempos, which were synonymous for some musicians with ragtime. Five of Thomas's pieces have been characterized as "rag ditties," among them "Red River Blues," and such rag songs have been considered the immediate forerunners and early rivals of blues.

Out of Thomas's twenty-three recorded pieces, only four are "bona fide blues," so that he has been looked upon as more of a predecessor rather than a blues singer as such. One commentator has claimed that Thomas's blues are original with him and that other musicians seem not to have performed his pieces. However, Thomas's "Bull Doze Blues" ends with the four bar "Take Me Back," a Texas standard of the [World War I](#) era, which [Blind Lemon Jefferson](#) had recorded around

August 1926 as "Beggin' Back." It would seem, then, that Thomas's blues represent many traditional themes and vocal phrases. For example, Thomas's "Texas Easy Street Blues" contains the verse made famous by Jimmy Rushing and Joe Williams in their 1930s to 1950s versions of the Basie-Rushing tune, "Goin' to Chicago." Another well known phrase found in this same Thomas piece is "blue as I can be." But perhaps most indicative of Thomas's transitional position between the early black music and jazz is his "Cottonfield Blues," which contains several standard blues themes: field labor, the desire for escape, and the role of the railroad in providing a freer lifestyle.



Henry Thomas' Album

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**"COTTONFIELD BLUES"**  
 Voice, Whistling & Guitar  
**VOCALION RECORD No. 1094**  
**HENRY THOMAS**  
*"Ragtime Texas"*

HAVE you heard this great hit? If you haven't, just take yourself down to your nearest Vocalion dealer and listen to it. You'll agree that "Cottonfield Blues" is something new and different and that Henry Thomas "Ragtime Texas" plays, sings and whistles in a class all by himself. On the other side he gives us "John Henry," another knockout. Two great numbers on one record. Hear this record without fail today!

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Yoke and Collar - The Guitar Kingmaker	Edward W. Clarbore
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Nobody Can Take His Place	1129
Memphis, Guitar and Piano	Singing Comedian: Her Armstrong
The Prayer Meeting in Hell	1124
After the Ball is Over	1124
Sermons with Slap	Rev. A. W. Hix and His Congregation

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*Electrically Recorded!*  
 Ask your dealer to play these records for you TODAY. If he won't supply you with in his store.

Advertisement for Henry Thomas record

Thomas took to the rails to escape from a life of farm work and made a living by singing along the Texas and Pacific and Katy lines that ran from Fort Worth and Dallas to Texarkana. In "Railroadin' Some," he supplies his itinerary, which includes such Texas towns as Rockwall, Greenville (with its infamous sign, "Land of the Blackest Earth and the Whitest People"), Denison, Grand Saline, Silver Lake, Mineola, Tyler (where Thomas was last active in the 1950s), Longview, Jefferson, Marshall, Little Sandy, and his birthplace, Big Sandy. Texas communities are not the only ones cited in this song, for Thomas traveled into the Indian Territory, as he still called it, to Muskogee, over to Missouri and [Scott Joplin](#)'s stomping grounds of Sedalia, and on up to Kansas City, then into Illinois: Springfield, Bloomington, Joliet, and Chicago, where he attended the 1893 Columbian Exposition, as did Joplin. William Barlow calls this piece the most "vivid and intense recollection of railroading" in all the early blues recorded in the 1920s. The cadences in this early rural blues "depict the restless lifestyle of the vagabonds who rode the rails and their boundless enthusiasm for the mobility it gave them."

Thomas's recordings represent a wide variety of sources for his Texas brand of country music, dating back to a time before the blues became popular and before they subsumed many other popular song forms. This perhaps accounts for the fact that three of Thomas's songs—"Fishing Blues," "Woodhouse Blues," and "Red River Blues"—are not really based on the blues but may have taken the name as a way of capitalizing on the form's growing popularity. According to Stephen Calt, both "Fishing Blues" and "Woodhouse Blues" are of vaudeville origins, while "Red River Blues" has been related melodically to "Comin' Round the Mountain," published in sheet music form in 1889 but deriving from an earlier spiritual.

The importance of Thomas's recordings as something of a compendium of the popular song forms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—from spiritual to "coon song," from "rag" song to blues—is enhanced by the similar range of instrumental techniques found in his work

with guitar and quills. In a sense, then, Henry Thomas represents a vital link between the roots of black music in Africa, nineteenth and twentieth century American folksong (including spiritual, hillbilly, "rag," and "coon"), and the coming of the blues—all of these contributing in turn to the formation of jazz in its various forms, which are reflected in the varied approaches to rhythmic, tonal, and thematic expression practiced by "Ragtime Texas" decades before he made his series of recordings from 1927 to 1929.

# MILITARY AND AVIATION

## XXVI. Buffalo Soldiers

By Mark Odintz

Buffalo soldiers was the name given by the Plains Indians to the four regiments of [African Americans](#), and more particularly to the two cavalry regiments, that served on the frontier in the post-Civil War army. More than 180,000 black soldiers had seen service in segregated regiments in the Union Army during the [Civil War](#), and many units had achieved outstanding combat records. When Congress reorganized the peacetime regular army in the summer of 1866, it recognized the military merits of black soldiers by authorizing two regiments of black cavalry, the Ninth United States Cavalry and the Tenth United States Cavalry, and six regiments of black infantry. In 1869 the black infantry regiments were consolidated into two units, the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry and the Twenty-fifth United States Infantry. The two cavalry and two infantry

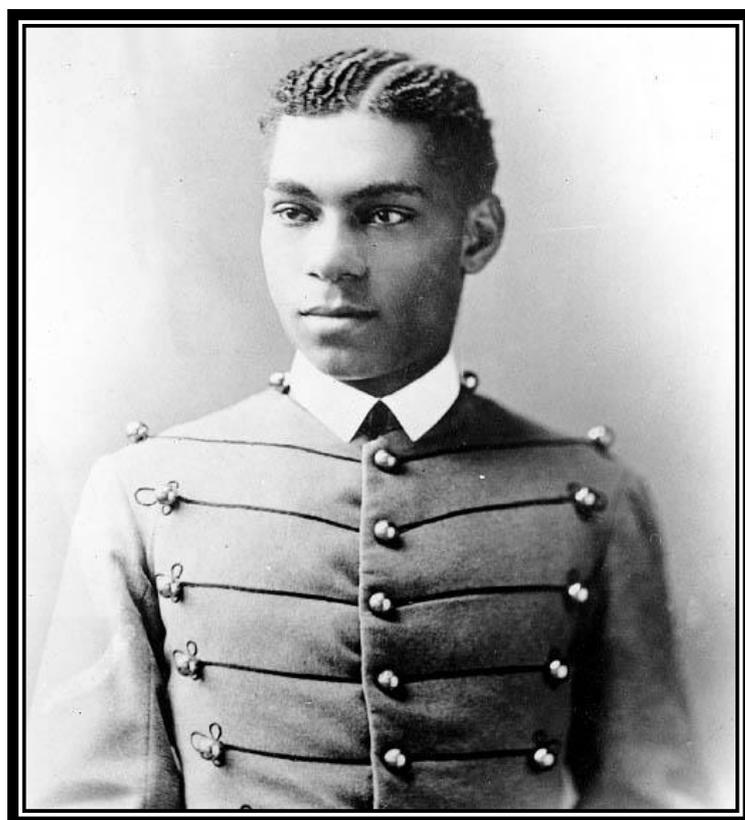


Buffalo Soldiers during Reconstruction.

regiments were composed of black enlisted men commanded, with a very few exceptions such as [Henry O. Flipper](#), by white officers. From 1866 to the early 1890s the buffalo soldiers served at a variety of posts in Texas, the Southwest and the Great Plains.

They overcame prejudice from within the army and from the frontier communities they were stationed in, to compile an outstanding service record. Often divided into small company and troop-sized detachments stationed at isolated posts, the buffalo soldiers performed routine garrison chores, patrolled the frontier, built roads, escorted mail parties, and handled a variety of difficult civil and military tasks. They also participated in most of the major frontier campaigns of the period and distinguished themselves in

action against the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, Sioux, and Arapaho Indians. With outstanding officers such as Benjamin H. Grierson, Abner Doubleday, William Rufus Shafter, Joseph A. Mower and Edward Hatch, they were an important component of the frontier army. Thirteen enlisted men from the four regiments earned the Medal of Honor during the Indian wars, as did six officers, and a further five enlisted men won that decoration during the Spanish-American War.



Henry O. Flipper

After the Indian wars came to an end in the 1890s the four regiments continued in service, with elements participating in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and [John J. Pershing](#)'s 1916 punitive expedition. The buffalo soldiers found themselves facing increasing racial prejudice at the turn of the century. They were cut off from the

segregated towns they were stationed near, and were the victims of slurs, beatings, harassment by law officers, and, on several occasions, sniper attacks. As armed veterans of active service, they occasionally responded with violence. The Ninth Cavalry was involved in racial disturbances in Rio Grande City in 1899, the Twenty-fifth regiment allegedly attacked civilians in the [Brownsville Raid of 1906](#), and the Twenty-fourth regiment was involved in the [Houston Riot of 1917](#). None of the buffalo soldier regiments went to France during [World War I](#), though they provided a cadre of experienced noncommissioned officers to other black units that did go into combat. In the 1920s and 1930s, as black newspapers and civil-rights groups anxiously



**Buffalo Soldiers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in 1890.**

monitored the process, soldiers from the four regiments were increasingly used as laborers and service troops. The Ninth and Tenth cavalries were disbanded, and their personnel were transferred into service units during [World War II](#). The Twenty-fifth saw combat in the Pacific during the war, and was deactivated in 1949. The Twenty-fourth also served in the Pacific during the Second World War, and fought in the opening stages of the Korean War. The Twenty-fourth, the last segregated black regiment to see combat, was deactivated in 1951, and its personnel were used to

integrate other units serving in Korea at the time, an important step in the efforts of the United States Army to desegregate its units.

Popular interest in the Buffalo soldiers began to grow in the 1960s, stimulated by a John Ford film, *Sergeant Rutledge*, and the publication of several scholarly histories. In 1965 a reenactment unit, the Tenth Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers, was formed. In the 1990s a reenactment group with the [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) offered a number of interpretive programs on the buffalo soldiers and performed at state parks and other venues.

# XXVII. Bessie Coleman

By Roni Morales

Bessie Coleman (Brave Bessie or Queen Bess), the world's first licensed black pilot, daughter of Susan Coleman, was born in Atlanta, Texas, on January 26, 1892, the twelfth of thirteen children. She grew up in Waxahachie. Her father left the family in 1900 to return to Indian Territory. Bessie, along with several siblings still living at home, helped ease the family's financial troubles by picking cotton or assisting with the washing and ironing that her mother took in. Upon graduation from high school she enrolled at the Colored Agricultural and Normal University (now Langston University) in



Bessie Coleman

Langston, Oklahoma. Financial difficulties, however, forced her quit after one semester. She moved to Chicago, where a brother was then living, and attended beauty school for a time. She spent the early years of [World War I](#) working as a manicurist at the White Sox Barbershop. She then operated a small but profitable chili parlor. Apparently in early 1917 Bessie Coleman married Claude Glenn, but she never publicly acknowledged the marriage, and the two soon separated.

In 1920 Coleman, acting on a lifelong dream of learning to fly, traveled abroad to attend aviation school in Le Crotoy, France, after she discovered that no American school would accept [African Americans](#). Robert S. Abbott, editor of the *Chicago Weekly Defender*, assisted her in contacting schools abroad. After studying for ten months in France she was issued a license on June 15, 1921, by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, giving her the distinction of being the first black person in the world to become a licensed pilot. She returned to the United States in 1921. Her goal,

in addition to making flying her career, was to open a flying school for black students. In 1922 she made a second trip to Europe and during her studies took lessons from the chief pilot for the Fokker Aircraft Company in Germany.

Coleman's first American air show was at Curtiss Field, near Manhattan, on September 3, 1922. She followed the success of this show with exhibition flights all over the country, many of them in her native South. After several years of touring the East and West coasts, she traveled back to Texas and established her headquarters in Houston in 1925. Her first performance in Texas took place in that city on June 19, 1925. Her daredevil stunts and hair-raising maneuvers earned her the nickname "Brave Bessie." She primarily flew Curtiss JN-4D planes and army surplus aircraft left over from the war. During her trips she often gave lectures to schools and churches to encourage young black men and women to enter aviation. On one occasion



**Bessie Coleman aboard the Curtiss JN-4D airplane**

in Waxahachie she refused to give an exhibition on white school grounds unless blacks were permitted to use the same entrance as whites. The request was granted, although blacks and whites remained segregated once inside. Early in her career she was presented a loving cup for her achievements from the cast of *Shuffle Along*, a black Broadway musical. By 1926, the year of her death, Coleman had become one of America's most popular stunt fliers.

She had her first major accident in 1924 while barnstorming in California, and she took a year off to recover. On April 30, 1926, she died during a test flight before a show sponsored by the Negro Welfare League in Jacksonville, Florida. About twelve minutes into the flight, the plane did not pull out of a nosedive as planned; instead, it did a somersault and dropped Bessie Coleman to her death. Her mechanic and publicity agent, William Wills, fell with the plane and died on impact. Although the charred condition of the wreckage prevented a full investigation, the crash was believed to have been caused by a loose wrench that jammed



**Bessie Coleman**

the plane's controls. After funeral services in Jacksonville, which were attended by hundreds of admirers, Coleman's body was returned to Chicago, where she had made her home. She is buried there in Lincoln Cemetery. Although her dream of establishing a flying school for black students never materialized, the Bessie Coleman Aero groups were organized after her death. On Labor Day, 1931, these flying clubs sponsored the first all-black air show in America, which attracted 15,000 spectators. Over the years,

recognition of Coleman's accomplishments has grown. In 1977 a group of black female student pilots in Indiana organized the Bessie Coleman Aviators Club. In 1990 a street in Chicago was renamed Bessie Coleman Drive, and May 2, 1992, was declared Bessie Coleman Day in Chicago. In 1995 the United States Postal Service issued a thirty-two-cent commemorative stamp in her honor.

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