

EXPLORER
POLITICIANS
SPORT ICON

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

FROM THE 19TH CENTURY



INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 19th and 20th Centuries brought momentous changes in American history. Free blacks and former slaves forged paths of exploration, leadership, ingenuity, and political leadership while fighting prejudice and atrocities beyond most understanding.

YAAHA is proud to share some of these Profiles in Leadership and believes that **Black history is American history.**



JIM BECKWOURTH

1798-1866

Beckwourth was born into slavery in Virginia, his mother was a mulatto, and his father, who was his master, freed him.

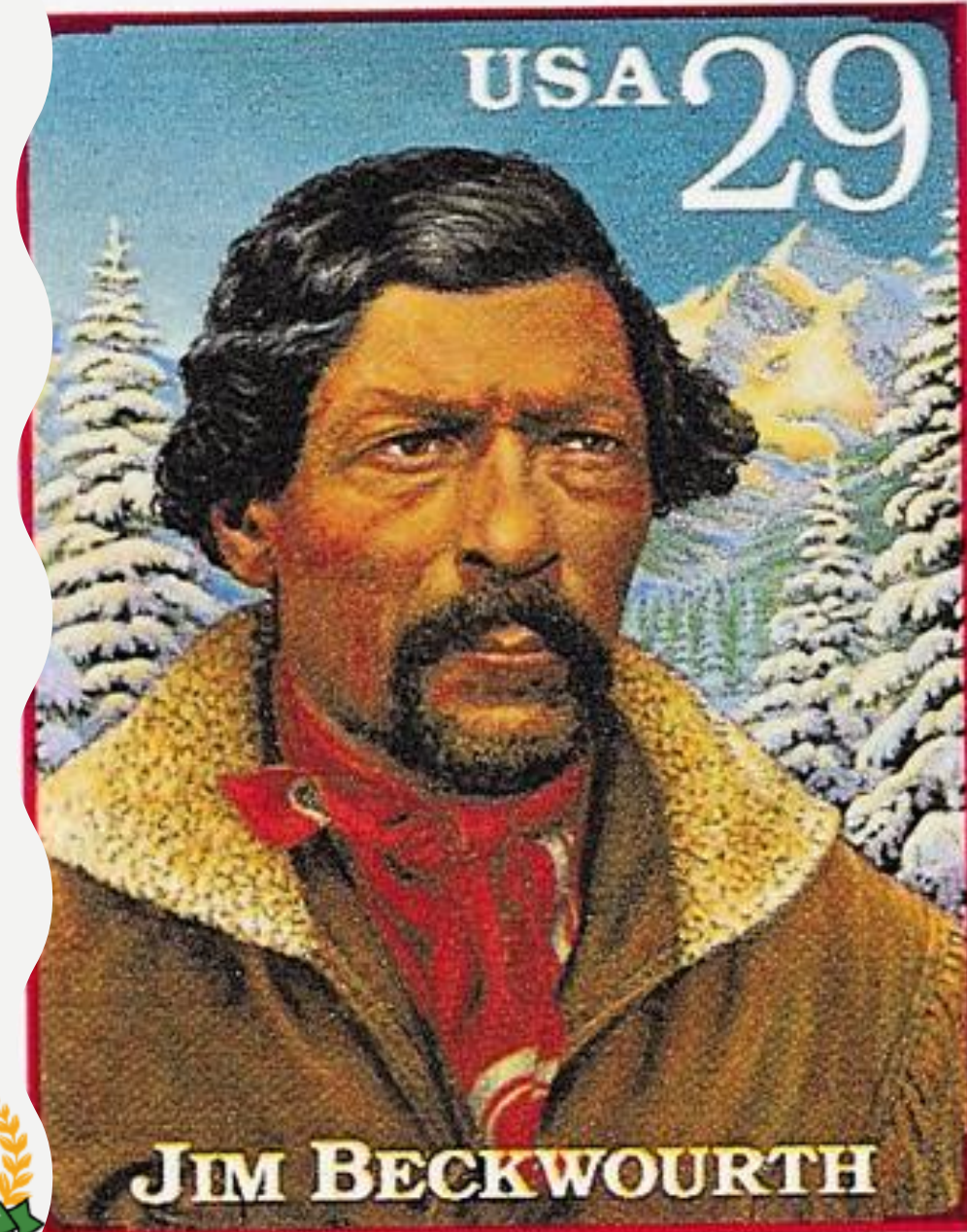
He was a mountain man, fur trader, and explorer who apprenticed as a blacksmith.

Beckwourth made great contributions to the West and was the most impactful, influential and impressive mountain man of his time.

He did not let societal obstacles get in his way with his success.

Beckwourth blazed trails across the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada and was sought out by the army and settlers as a guide and scout.

On October 18, 1994, the United States postal service honored this African American with this U.S. Postal stamp.





JOHN MERCER LANGSTON

1829 - 1897

Langston was one of the most prominent African Americans in the United States before and during the Civil War.

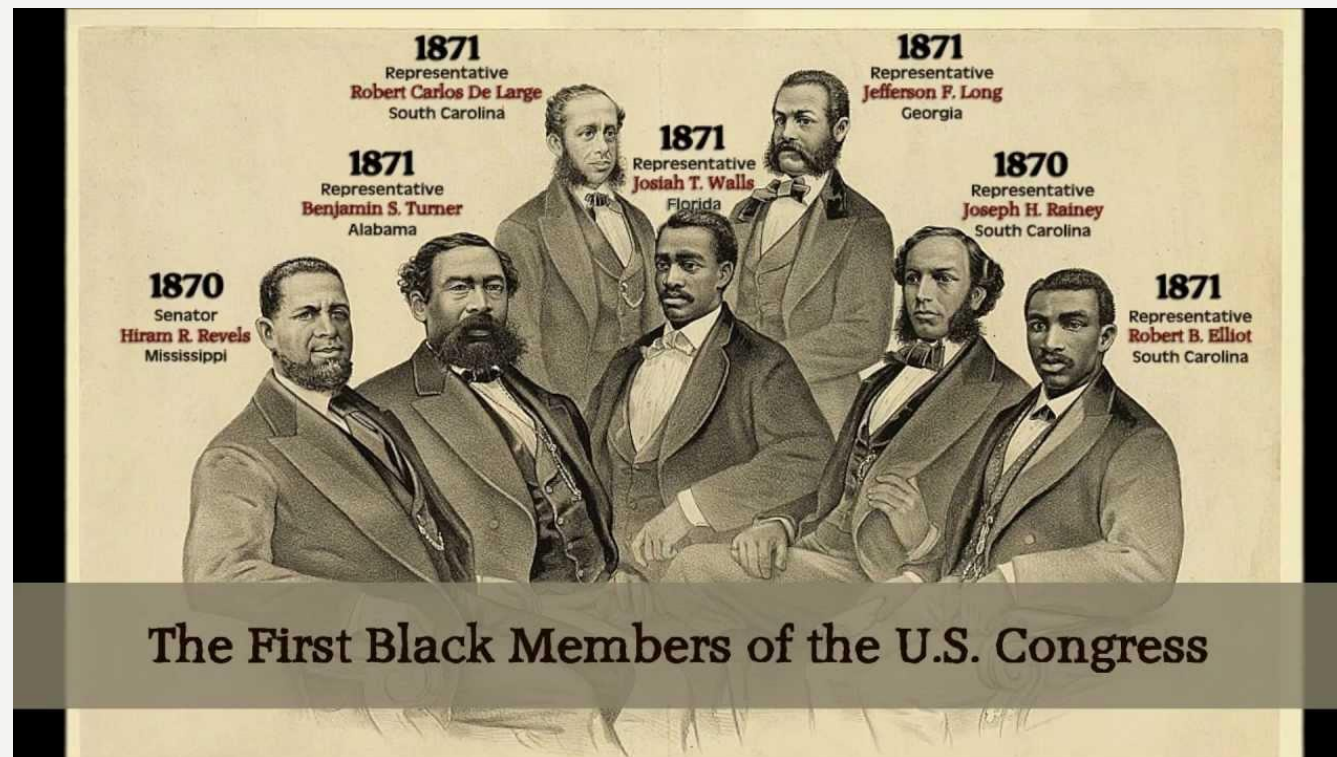
He was an abolitionist, attorney, educator, activist, diplomat, and politician.

He was first black dean of the law school at Howard University.

He graduated from Oberlin in 1849 and received a masters in theology in 1852.



FIRST REPUBLICAN BLACK MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS



HIRAM R. REVELS

1827-1901

Hiram R. Revels was born free in North Carolina; he was a barber, teacher, minister, college president, and the first black American to serve in either House of Congress.

He attended Quaker Seminary in Indiana and Knox College in IL.

Hiram was ordained as an AME minister in 1845.

In 1854, he was briefly imprisoned in Missouri for “preaching the gospel to Negroes.”

In 1870, Revels was elected to fill an unexpired seat in the U.S. Senate.

After leaving the Senate, he was appointed as the first president of Alcorn Agricultural College, later known as Alcorn University.



BENJAMIN S. TURNER

1825-1894

Turner was a former slave owned by Elizabeth Turner and sold to Major W.H. Gee to pay debts.

Gee allowed Benjamin to manage his hotel and livery stable and keep part of the profits.

Gee went into the Confederate Army and left Turner in charge of his businesses; Turner became a prosperous merchant and farmer.

After the Civil War, in 1865, Turner established a school for black children in Selma, Alabama.

He was elected to the U.S. Congress for one term and served 1871-1873 as the first black representative from Alabama.



ROBERT C. DE LARGE

1842-1874

Robert was born free, and a son of a slave holding free black tailor and Haitian mother.

He was a member of a fraternal and charitable association, Brown Fellowship Society, that only admitted mulatto members.

During the Civil War, he was reluctantly employed by the Confederate Navy, and after the war worked for the Freedman's Bureau.

Robert petitioned the States Constitutional Convention of 1868 asking for impartial suffrage but acknowledged that the "ignorant" of both races could be barred from voting.

He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1868 -1870 from South Carolina.



JOSIAH THOMAS WALLS

1842-1905

Josiah Thomas Walls was born a slave and was an editor, planter, teacher, lawyer, and politician.

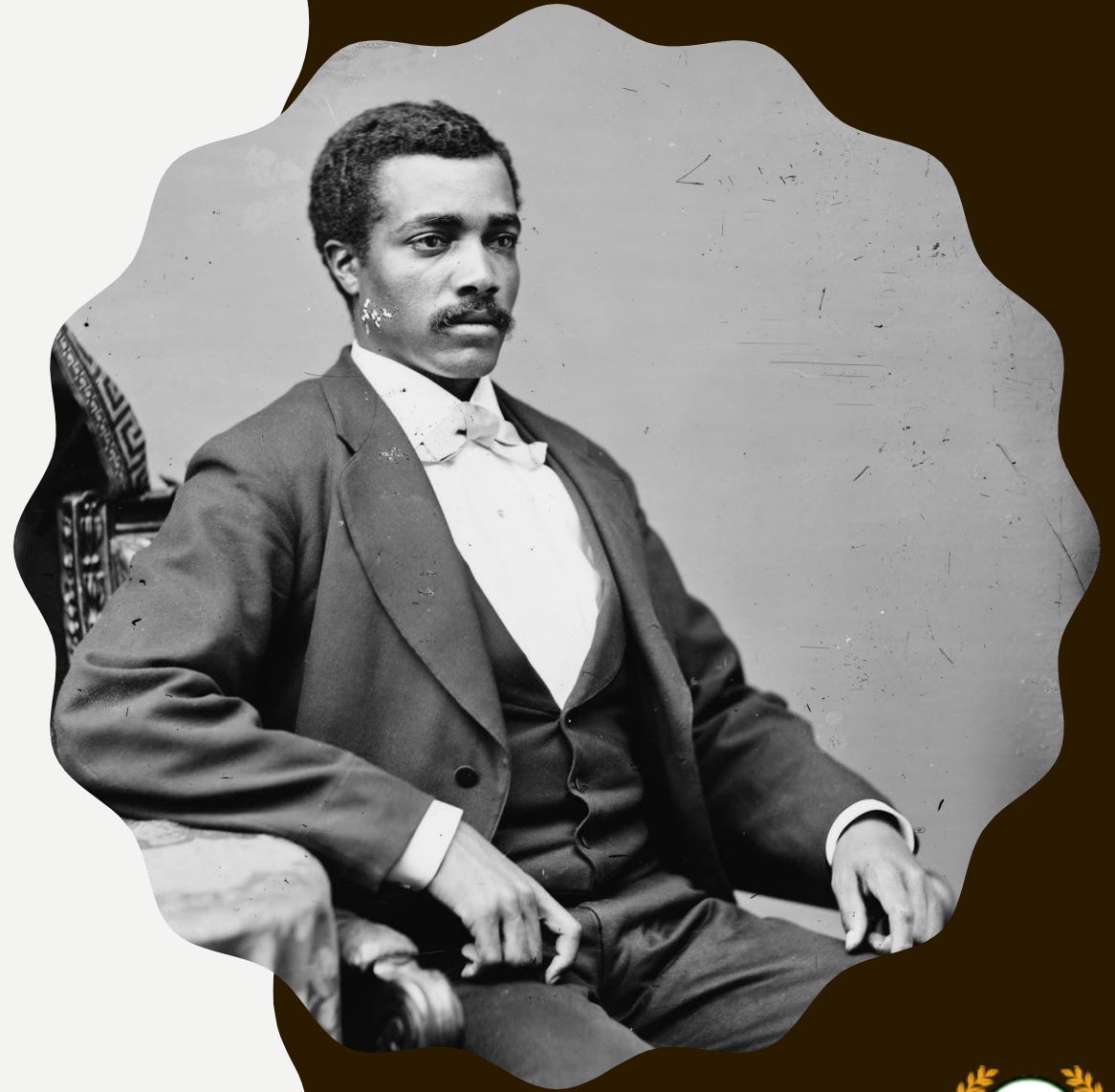
He was a servant in the Confederate Army and rescued by the Union forces and later served in the 3rd U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) in 1863.

Josiah was the first black elected to the U.S. Congress from Florida during the Reconstruction Era in 1871.

He served three terms, 42nd Congress 1871-1873, 43rd Congress 1873-1875, 44th Congress 1875-1877.

In 1873, he purchased the Gainesville ***New Era***, making it the first black-owned newspaper in Florida.

In 1883, he was the largest truck farmer in Florida. A freeze in 1895 wiped out his agricultural business.



JEFFERSON F. LONG

1836-1901

Jefferson was born to a slave mother and was a tailor, storekeeper and the first black Congressman elected from Georgia.

He was elected to serve only in the short session (December 1870-March 1871) of the 41st Congress.

On February 1, 1871, Long became the first black representative to speak on the House floor. He opposed the removal of bans against the Confederate leaders from office holding. He pleaded with his colleagues to acknowledge the atrocities committed by white supremacists; these were “the very men who have committed the Ku Klux outrages.”

After serving in the 41st Congress, he trained as a tailor and opened a successful business in Macon, Georgia serving a mostly white clientele.



JOSEPH H. RAINEY

1832-1887

Joseph H. Rainey was born a slave; he was a successful barber and a four-term congressman from South Carolina.

He was the longest serving black congressman during Reconstruction serving for a total of eight years.

He worked to pass civil rights legislation and to fund public schools.

Joseph was an excellent orator and called for the passage of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871.

Congressman Rainey called on the federal government to suppress the violence of the KKK.

The KKK Act was signed into law by President Ulysses Grant on April 20, 1871.



ROBERT B. ELLIOTT

1842-1884

Robert Elliott was born free and was a lawyer, editor and politician.

He was one of the most brilliant politicians from the Reconstruction Era; he often condemned KKK violence.

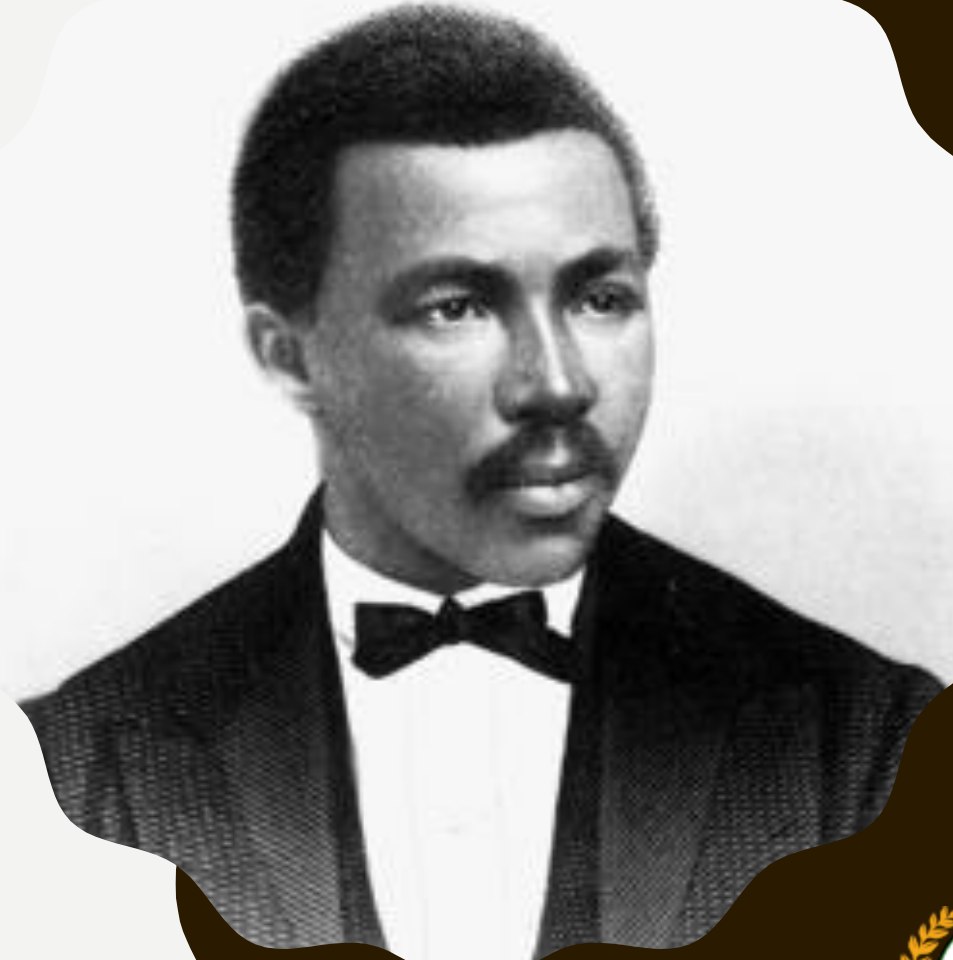
Robert was also the editor of *South Carolina Leader*.

He opened a law practice in 1868.

The Chicago Tribune wrote, "Some think he is the ablest Negro intellectually in the South." (November 1872)

Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from SC in 1870.

Elliot delivered his famous speech "The Shackle Broken," in favor of the 1875 Civil Rights Act delivered at the House of Representatives on January 6, 1874.



JAMES RAPIER

1837-1883

James was born into a prosperous free black family in Florence, Alabama and was a planter, editor, lawyer, teacher, and politician.

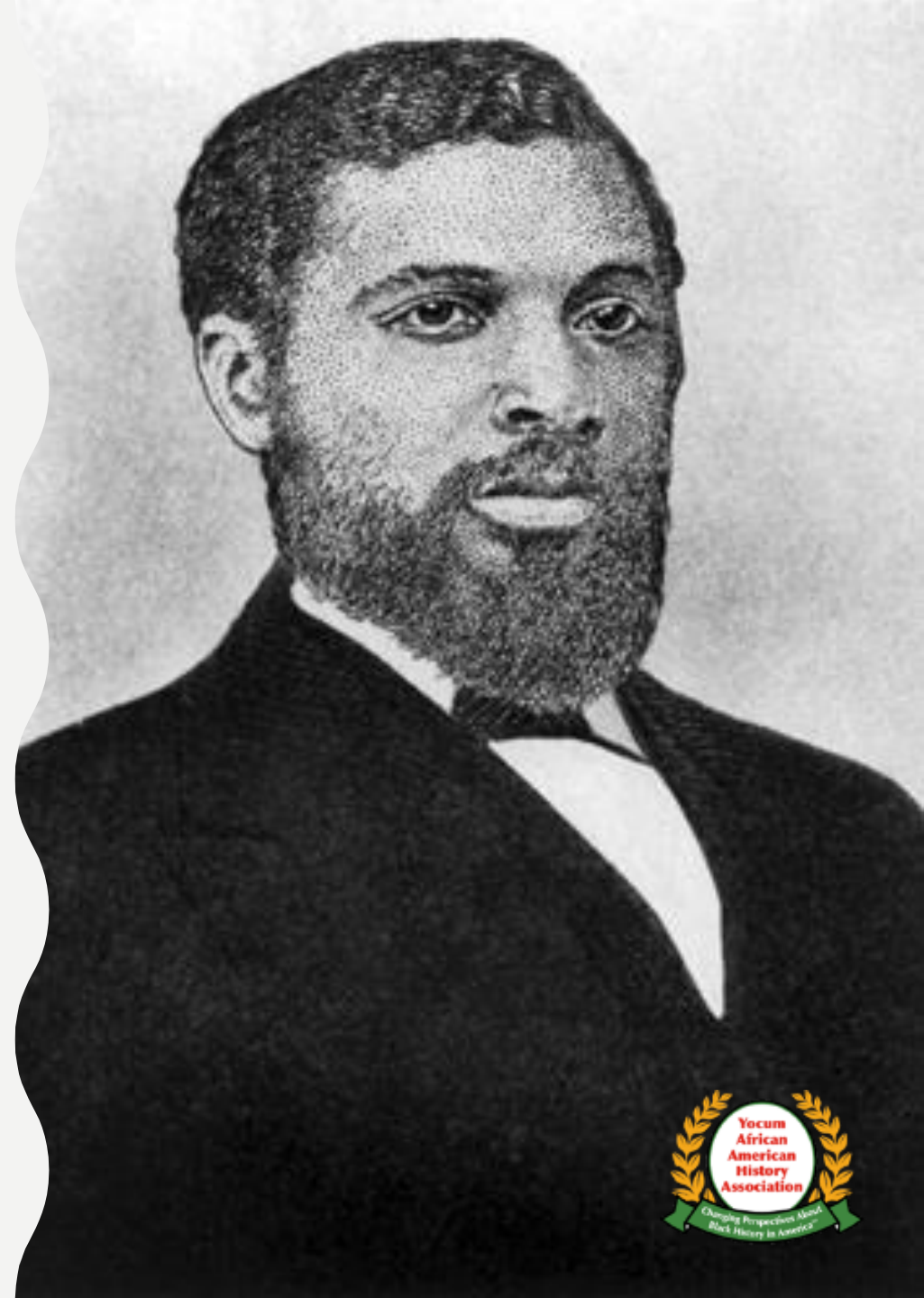
He was educated at the University of Glasgow in Scotland and the Montreal College in Canada; he was then admitted to the bar in Tennessee.

He published the Montgomery *Sentinel* in 1872.

He was elected to the 43rd Congress and worked to pass the Civil Rights Bill of 1875. He served in Congress from 1873-1875.

James was an advocate of black suffrage, black education, and black land ownership.

Once a wealthy man, he died penniless by using his fortune on black schools, churches, and other black projects.





BLANCHE BRUCE

1841-1898

He was the son of a slave and a white planter and was educated by the same tutor as his master's son.

He escaped to Kansas in 1861 and returned to Mississippi in 1864 to establish a black school.

Blanche was the first black to serve a full term in the U.S. Senate from 1875-1881.

In Bolivar County, he served as sheriff, school superintendent, tax collector, and editor of the *Star*.



WILLIAM MONROE TROTTER

1872 - 1934

William was a newspaper editor, a real estate businessman, a civil rights activist, and a graduate and postgraduate of Harvard.

He and W.E.B. Du Bois were the founders of the Niagara Movement in 1905. This civil rights organization wanted a “mighty current” of change in the civil rights for blacks. It was the precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

He joined the NAACP but later left and started the National Equal Rights League.

In 1914, he met with Democrat President Woodrow Wilson to protest Wilson’s segregation in federal workplaces.



W.E.B DU BOIS

1868-1963

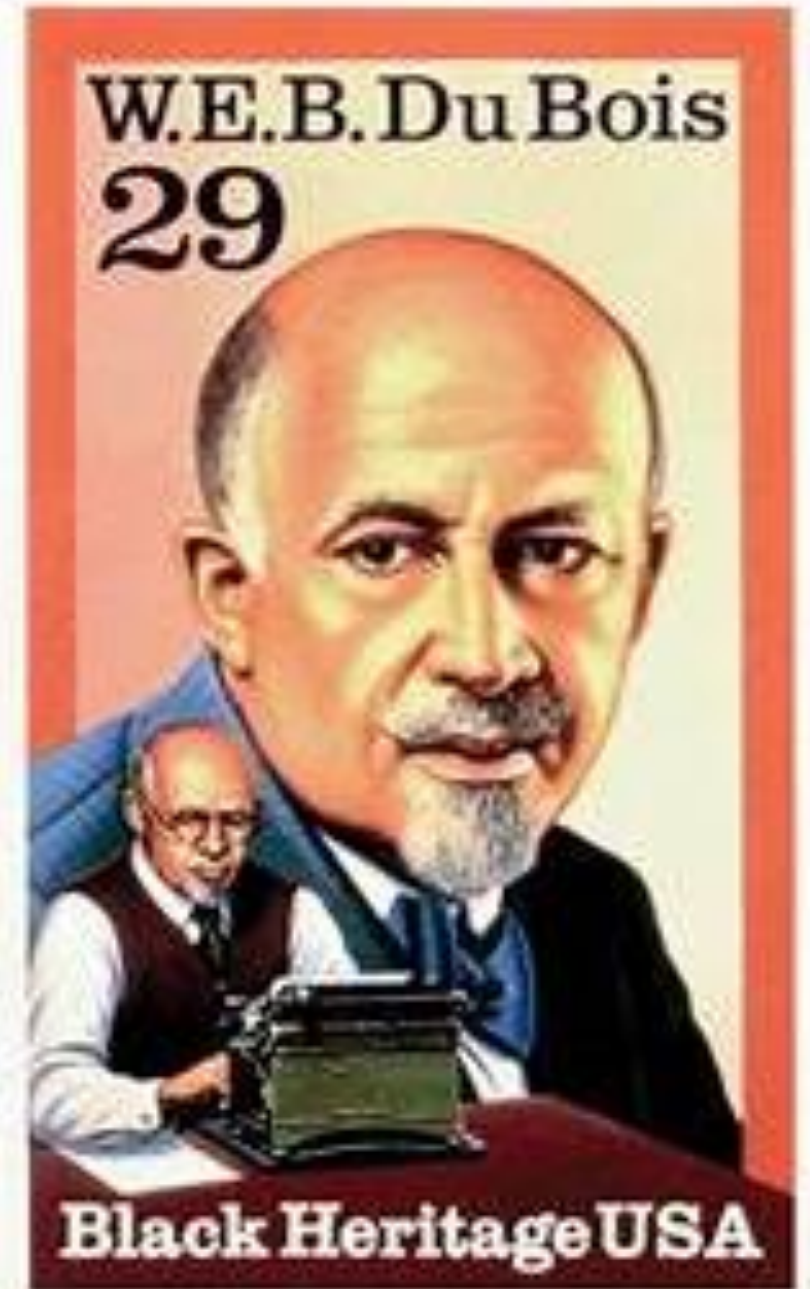
Du Bois was one of twenty-nine civil rights activists that founded the Niagara Movement.

He was an American socialist, historian, civil rights activist, and author of *Souls of Black Folk* in 1903.

He became a founding member of the NAACP and the editor of *The Crisis* from 1910 – 1934. He resigned from the NAACP in 1934.

He clashed with Booker T. Washington on how to lead blacks in the civil rights movement. DuBois thought social change was accomplished only through agitation and protest. Washington preached a philosophy of accommodation due to his belief that former slaves could achieve prosperity within American society through education and self-reliance.

DuBois preached black nationalism.



MARY CHURCH TERRELL

1863-1954

Mary was one of the first African American women to earn a college degree and became an activist for women's suffrage and civil rights.

She went to Oberlin College in Ohio and was a member of the Republican Party. Terrell earned her master's degree in education and taught at Wilberforce University.

She was a charter member of the NAACP and the Colored Women's League of Washington in 1894. She also helped found the National Association of Colored Women in 1896.

She is the author of *A Colored Woman in a White World*.



JACK JOHNSON

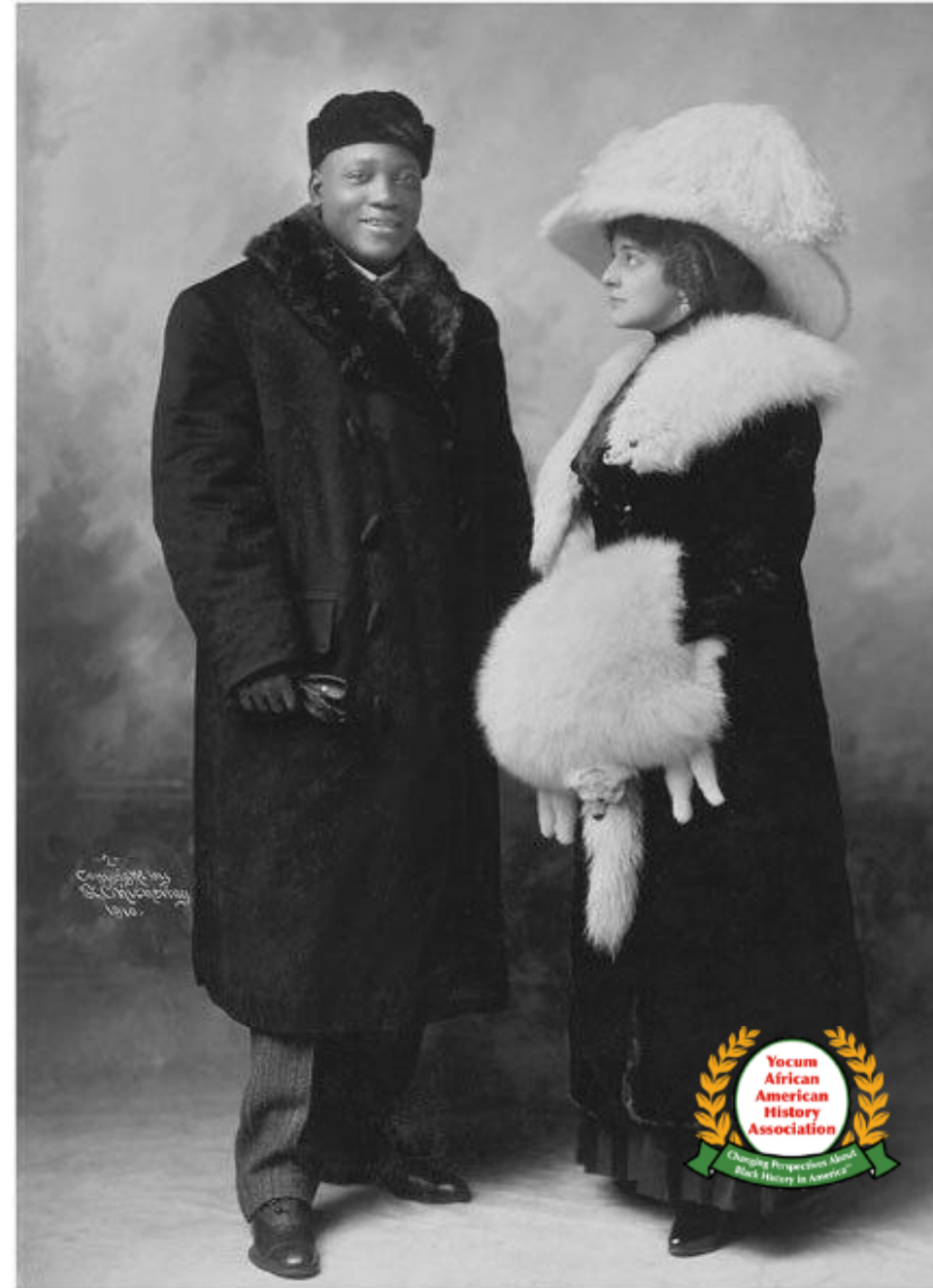
1878-1946

Jack Johnson, known as the *Galveston Giant*, was the son of ex-slaves and the first black boxing heavyweight champion with a career of 73 wins.

He had contempt for racial rules and had an extravagant lifestyle and dated white women. He was convicted in 1912 for violating the Mann Act which was designed to prevent human trafficking but was used to punish interracial relationships.

He was sentenced and fled to Europe and did not return until 1920 to serve out his sentence.

In May 2018, President Trump pardoned Jack Johnson posthumously nullifying his conviction by an all-white jury.



SUMMARY

- Some stories about black leaders in the 19th and 20th Centuries have been shrouded in obscurity. Some of these stories have been told in a contradictory way or altered purposefully to change a political narrative.
- YAAHA is dedicated to giving the documented facts about this history and reminding the public that **black history is American history**.

