

## ALVIN AILEY'S MOVES

NAVASOTA  
Afr-Am Dancer, 1931  
Time: 1:11

Born in Rogers, Texas, in 1931, Alvin Ailey grew up in Navasota, where he and his mother, Lula, picked cotton and took in laundry and attended the True Vine Baptist Church. Every Sunday Alvin would slide into the front pew to watch his mother sing in the gospel choir. They swayed and sang and raised their hands in revelation, and Alvin moved right along with them. He was going to miss that church when they moved to Los Angeles!

But it was in Los Angeles on a junior high field trip that he found a new use for those rhythmic moves: dance! And when he saw Katherine Dunham and Lester Horton perform, he knew he'd found the life for him.

Dancer Alvin Ailey made his debut in Los Angeles in 1953 and moved to New York the next year. In 1958 he performed in his first choreographic success, *Blues Suite*. He retired from dancing in 1965 and devoted himself entirely to choreography, and his company, the Ailey Troupe, is now known as the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center with a repertory company that performs all over the world.

Ailey died in 1989, leaving as his best-known choreographic work a piece called *Revelations*, with music and movement straight from the soul of the True Vine Baptist Church in Navasota, Texas.

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*The New Handbook of Texas* 1: 74-75.  
Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Alvin Ailey* (Picture Book). New York: Hyperion, 1993.  
[www.alvinailey.org/aabio.html](http://www.alvinailey.org/aabio.html)

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

ANNIE BUCHANAN, PSYCHIC  
(Sometimes *Annie West*)

LIMESTONE/FREESTONE  
Afr-Am Woman /Time: 1:14

People said strange things about African-American Texan Annie Buchanan, like that white doctor from Groesbeck who attended her birth—he said she was clairvoyant. She WAS, after all, a seventh child, and she WAS born with a full set of teeth. In 1900, on her first day at school, Annie read another child's palm. The teacher told her to go home and never come back. They said she never did.

By the 1920s, Annie was giving psychic readings in her Corsicana office from nine in the morning until sundown every day. They said her waiting room was always packed with people of all races and stations in life. For two dollars, she would read anyone's fortune.

Well, except for that one white woman who came through the front gate wearing pants. Annie raced out and shouted, "Don't you come in here wearing pants, you nasty, stinking heifer!"

Some patrons thanked Annie generously for the fortunes she had led them to—especially during the Mexia oil boom. They said Howard Hughes Sr. never drilled without consulting "Miss Annie." And Annie shared, too: she paid off the mortgage on a school and built seven churches.

Then, in 1962 in Smith Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, 70-year-old Annie Buchanan was praying on her knees. She stood up and fell over dead.

At least, that's what they said.

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Owens, Bill. "Seer of Corsicana." *And Horns on the Toads*. Dallas: SMU Press, 1959, pp. 14-31.  
Pemberton, Doris Hollis. *Juneteenth at Comanche Crossing*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1983, pp. 176-80.  
Wolfe, Cheri, Oral History tape: Interviews with African American Texans.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures

BARBARA JORDAN'S VOICE

AUSTIN/HOUSTON  
Afr-Am Woman, 1996  
Time: 1:11

Although it may be hard to imagine, the commanding, booming baritone heard in the Richard Nixon impeachment proceedings and twice delivering the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention also called the roll in a college classroom. In fact, for the last 16 years of her life, Barbara Jordan spent Monday afternoons teaching a politics and ethics class to lucky students at the University of Texas at Austin.

Registration for the class was very competitive, pitting friend against friend, one student said. The former Texas senator and U.S. Congresswoman both challenged and inspired her students, and many tried for several semesters to get in.

Ms. Jordan's personal secretary for nine years, Sharon Tutchings, said that, although her boss was a sought-after orator, nothing interfered with her Monday afternoon class. She could only remember two occasions when Jordan missed the class: when she testified at Robert Bork's Supreme Court nomination and when a treacherous ice storm stranded her at home.

"The few times she was sick, she'd teach class and then go to the hospital."

Barbara Jordan truly believed what her baritone voice bellowed, that "Education is an indispensable ingredient for our democracy."

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ITC vertical files: African American; Wilson, Laurie. "Jordan's passion for education will be missed" clipping identified only as "Inside Education" and the column note: "Laurie Wilson writes for Education Extra."

c. 2000, Institute of Texan Cultures

BLACK "IMMIGRATION MAN"

EL PASO  
Afr-Am, 1940  
Time: 1:10

Sam Calvert had lived in El Paso since he was seven years old, but, after he graduated from high school, he took a job riding the rails out of town as a porter for the railroad. An African American Texan, Calvert rode in the finest cars as a paid servant of white patrons, but off the train he couldn't sit in the front seats of streetcars or eat in most restaurants. Texas was still adhering to its unjust Jim Crow laws and would hold on to them until forced to change in the mid-1960s.

In the summer of 1940, Calvert applied for and won a job in a field long reserved for white men, as a Border Patrol agent for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. He became El Paso's first black "immigration man." His first boss with the INS, Chief G.J. McBee, told him he would be traveling, and he would be segregated. Calvert said he was born in the South, and he was used to it. He met with resistance right away, for the officers at the international bridge did not welcome the new kid on the block. He worked dutifully, merited awards for outstanding service, and earned promotions.

When Sam Calvert retired in 1986, it was to loud applause for three decades of service to the INS and for a lifetime of leadership in El Paso's African American community.

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Conley, Jim. "Black pioneer NAACP cites foundations laid by 'immigration man.'" *El Paso Times*, July 8, 1986.

c. 1999, Institute of Texan Cultures

BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON

FREESTONE CO.  
Afr-Am Musician, 1897  
Time: 1:10

From the gate of the old Wortham Negro Cemetery, you can see a Texas historical marker, and, closer, you can read the dedication to jazz and blues artist Blind Lemon Jefferson.

The day of Jefferson’s birth was not recorded, but the year was 1897. By the age of 15, he was playing guitar and singing at dances in Freestone County, then music and money called him to Dallas, to “Deep Ellum,” where the Central tracks cross Elm Street.

There he met blues artists Huddie Ledbetter and “T-Bone” Walker. He made 79 hit recordings during the ’20s, and his style influenced the work of Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Tommy Dorsey, Bessie Smith, and other nationally known artists. When he died in Chicago in 1929—no one knows exactly when or how—he had been a performing musician for less than two decades. His “Match Box Blues” continued to be performed by later musicians including Elvis Presley and even the Beatles.

Blind Lemon Jefferson was buried in the Wortham Negro Cemetery, although no one is sure exactly where, for there is no stone. So it was with a sense of irony that, at the dedication of the historical marker in 1967, fellow Texas bluesman Mance Lipscomb played Jefferson’s song “See that My Grave Is Kept Clean.

“Tombstone Blues: ‘See That My Grave Is Kept Clean.’” *Houston Blues Society Newsletter* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 5.  
*The New Handbook of Texas* 3: 924. “Jefferson, Blind Lemon.”

c. 2000, Institute of Texan Cultures

"BONES"

POTTER CO.  
Afr-Am  
Time: 53 + actuality

Most folks in the Panhandle know who "Bones" was: Matthew Hooks, cowboy, railroader, civic leader, and early settler in the Amarillo area.

Born to former slaves in 1867, Hooks left East Texas before he was 12 years old, following trail herds west and north, winding up in the Panhandle in 1886 when he was 19 years old. An expert bronc-riding cowboy, he helped to create the industry which built the high plains. Then, for 20 years, he worked for the industry that filled it with people: the Santa Fe Railroad. And when he retired, he directed his energy to civic projects within and beyond the black community, such as founding the "Dogie Club," a citizenship organization for African American boys, and helping found the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society.

While many praise him for his role in making the Panhandle what it is today, African American Texan Matthew "Bones" Hooks once passed the credit along to another group.

*We've given men the credit, but men coming to the Panhandle brought (that lawless town of) TASCOSA....the women demanded milch cows, chickens, schools, churches, and all the other attributes of civilization and culture.*

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ITC, *The Afro-American Texans*, p. 17.  
Sanders, G. "The Empty Saddle." In Clara T. Hammond. *Amarillo*. Amarillo: George Autry, Printer, 1971, pp. 139-42.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures

"BRAVE BESSIE" COLEMAN

CASS CO.  
Afr-Am, 1926  
Time: 1:13

Every Memorial Day, African American pilots fly over Lincoln Cemetery in Chicago to drop flowers over the grave of Texan Bessie Coleman.

Bessie was born in the 1890s in Atlanta, Texas, and grew up in Waxahachie, reading and picking cotton, worshipping in the Baptist church, and washing white people's clothes. At 23 she moved in with a brother in Chicago and went to beauty school, then began working as manicurist at the White Sox Barber Shop.

When another brother returned from World War I and told her about French women pilots, Bessie decided she was going to fly. No flying school in the United States would accept a black woman student, but one of Bessie's clients, publisher of the city's black newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*, helped her enroll in a French flying school. Thus Bessie became the first American woman with an international pilot's license.

In a 1926 Memorial Day exhibition for the Negro Welfare League of Jacksonville, Florida, Bessie was catapulted from the rear seat of an antiquated World War I plane and fell 1,000 feet to her death.

*The Chicago Defender* said of her: "Whatever is accomplished by members of the race in aviation will stand as a memorial to Miss Coleman."

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ITC vertical files: African American; Coleman, Bessie.  
"Bessie Coleman 1893-1926." *A Salute to Historic Black Women*. Chicago: Empak Enterprises, Inc., 1984, p. 10.  
Hunt, Rufus A. "Bessie Coleman—The World's First Black Female Pilot." *Buffalo (for the Black American Military Professional)*, August 1981, pp. 9-11.  
Book review of *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator* by Doris L. Rich (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), in *Texas Monthly*, November 1993, p. 116.  
Mary Williams at the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago, Ill., 312-747-6900, 11-24-93.

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

BUFFALO SOLDIERS, BEGINNING TO END

MEMORIAL DAY  
Afr-Am, 1866  
Time: 1:12

Soon after the end of the Civil War, the United States government offered food, clothing, shelter, and 13 dollars a month to black males who would serve in the army.

Several infantry units were formed, and the ninth and tenth cavalry units were created to serve in the Great Plains and Southwest, including Texas. Led almost exclusively by white officers, the black cavalry companies, or "Buffalo Soldiers," compiled outstanding records in spite of prejudice inside and outside the army. Eighteen Buffalo Soldiers and six of their officers earned medals of honor during the Indian wars and the Spanish American War.

As the 19th century rolled into the 20th, black soldiers faced increasing racial prejudice and occasionally responded with violence, as in Rio Grande City in 1899, Brownsville in 1906, and Houston in 1917. More and more black companies began to be utilized as laborers and service personnel. By the time they were disbanded in World War II, the ninth and tenth cavalry units were invisible on the fields of action. In 1951 the last black infantry regiment was deactivated and its personnel integrated into other units serving in Korea.

That was the end of the all-black units, and the beginning of a fully integrated U.S. Army.

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(AP) "'Buffalo Soldiers' anniversary is noted," *San Antonio Express-News*, September 24, 1994, p. 14A.  
<<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/BB/qlb1.html>> [Accessed Tue Feb 6 17:29:25 US/Central 2001].

c. 2001, Institute of Texan Cultures

## BULLDOG BILL

WILLIAMSON CO.  
Afr-Am, Rodeo Star  
Time: 1:09

By the age of 13, African American Texan Bill Pickett had learned from his father and other cowboys how to ride, rope, and brand, and how to care for injured animals. On a buying trip to Williamson County for his famous 101 Ranch in Oklahoma, Colonel George Miller noticed young Bill's well-trained pony and his calm manner of maneuvering the cattle into a corral. He sat tall and muscled in the saddle, and when the Colonel offered him a job, he took it.

At the 101 Ranch, Bill helped care for the Wild West Show animals who wintered there. Once he leaped onto a runaway steer, held the animal's horns, and twisted its neck. Then he actually bit its lip and pulled the beast to the ground. When onlookers cheered, he decided to perfect the stunt and began performing with the famous 101 Wild West Show in North America, England, and Mexico during the 1920s.

Bill's feat was inspired by a trick of Texas cattle dogs—or "bull" dogs. To rile a stubborn longhorn into freeing its horns from brush, the dog would bite its lip and tug; the bull would resist by turning its head.

Bulldogging, now called steer wrestling, soon became a standard feature of American rodeo—although lip biting is no longer a part of it.

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O'Brien, Esse Forrester. *The First Bulldogger*. San Antonio: Naylor, 1961.  
*The New Handbook of Texas* 3: 730-31.

c. 1997, Institute of Texan Cultures

## CAMELLIA'S ICE DREAMS

DALLAS  
Afr-Am, c. 1961  
Time: 1:10

When Camellia Hudson was eight years old, she went to see her uncle in California and did something she'd never done before in her life: she went ice skating. Oh, she'd seen ice performances on TV and Olympic skating, too, but she'd never skated herself. How grand it was!

Of course, when she came home to south Dallas, she wanted to keep on skating. But this was the early 1960s, and Dallas's Fair Park Ice Arena didn't allow African Americans into the rink.

So her parents, Sam and Ella Lois Hudson, went to work! It took a month for them to negotiate an agreement with the management to allow Camellia to skate with a white girl scout troop, for she was a brownie, after all. But Camellia's love of skating outlasted the girl scouts', so her parents negotiated again to let her skate before the rink opened to the public—the *white* public. Every day she rode the bus from James Madison High school to the end of the route, then ran the last few blocks to Fair Park to skate.

In 1973 Camellia Hudson became the first black Texan to join the cast of the Ice Capades, and when they came to Dallas, she was finally able to perform *publicly* in Fair Park the graceful movements she'd practiced there *privately* throughout her childhood.

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Wade, Norma A. "Pioneers remember setting goals, struggling to reach milestones." *Dallas Morning News*, February 3, 1985, p. 1A ff.

c. 2001, Institute of Texan Cultures

CHRISTIA ADAIR

KLEBURG/HARRIS CO.  
Afr-Am Woman  
Time: 1:04

African American humanitarian Christia V. Adair reached across racial boundaries to improve life for all. She worked for women's suffrage, even though black Texans still could not vote in the important party primaries. In Kleburg County she enlisted the help of an all-white Mother's Club in a successful effort to close gambling houses which hired teenage boys.

Most Texas blacks were lifetime Republicans, but Christia did not commit to a political party until she was 27 years old.

That was in 1920. Her husband, a Missouri Pacific brakeman, called her long distance to tell of the arrival of Warren Harding, Republican candidate for president. Christia recalled:

I went over to the school...and asked to take ten children...to see the candidate. Since I was always meeting the train to pick up my husband, I knew exactly where (it) would stop.... When...(Harding) stepped out, he reached over my children and shook the white children's hands. I...decided at that moment that I would become a Democrat.

In 1973 the Harris County Democrats honored her for 50 years of service to human rights, and in 1977 Harris County named a park for Christia V. Adair.

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Davis, Alicia. "Christia V. Adair: A Servant of Humanity." *Texas Historian*, September 1977, pp. 1-7.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures

DEATH MUSIC ON THE BRAZOS      BRAZORIA CO.  
Afr-Am Legend  
Time: 1:08

There used to be haunting music heard near the mouth of the Brazos River. A strange humming, some said; still others declared it was a bell.

It was said that, in the late 1830s, a slave ship was chased into the Brazos by a United States man-of-war. Near Seaview Bend, the crew scuttled the ship, and it went down, some say, with 300 slaves nailed into the hold. Others say the healthy Africans were landed and carried through the woods, and those who were sick were weighted down with chains and thrown into the river.

In the 1920s, a white resident of Velasco recalled an elderly African American woman called "Mammy Kitty," who worked in her parent's home when she was a child. Every evening when the bell tolled, she would run to the chimney corner where Mammy Kitty sat and put her head in the old woman's lap. Mammy Kitty ran her dark hands through the child's hair and crooned until the bell stopped, the "death bell" she called it. The "death bell" other Negroes called it, too, and they stood in reverence the whole time it rang.

After the jetties were built and the traffic on the river picked up, the music could no longer be heard. Ask someone old, though. Someone very old. Someone may still remember.

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Dobie, Bertha McKee. "The Death Bell of the Brazos." *Legends of Texas*, ed. J. Frank Dobie. Texas Folk-Lore Society, no. 3 (1924): 141-42.

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

DORIS MILLER ("DORRIE")

McCLENNAN CO.  
Afr-Am  
Time: 1:12

At 7:55 a.m. on December 7, 1941, Doris Miller was performing his assigned duties in the junior officers' mess aboard the U.S.S. *West Virginia*. The call to battle stations was sounded, and the 22-year-old African American Texan raced to the deck just as Japanese torpedoes struck the *Arizona* and the *Oklahoma*. Bombs hit the deck of Miller's ship, mortally wounding the captain. The young sailor carried the officer to safety, then dashed to an unmanned machine gun. In the next few minutes, he shot down four attack planes.

Miller's marksmanship may have been the result of boyhood squirrel hunts in the Brazos River bottom near Waco. The son of a sharecropping family, he distinguished himself as a star fullback on the Moore High School football team. At the age of 20, he joined the United States Navy and had nearly finished his first enlistment when the Japanese attack was launched. It was his heroism on that historic day for which he was awarded the Navy Cross.

In November of 1943, Miller found himself in the South Pacific aboard the carrier *Liscombe Bay* when that ship was sunk in the Gilbert Islands.

Doris Miller was lost at sea, but the memory of this brave Texan has been preserved in parks and schools and in a Navy destroyer, the U.S.S. *Miller*, launched in 1972.

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ITC: *The Afro-American Texans*, 1975.

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

THE DREAM OF "80 JOHN"

MITCHELL CO.  
Afr-Am Rancher, 1889  
Time: 1:09

Daniel Webster Wallace was one of the many little boys who dream of becoming cowboys. Born of slaves in Victoria County in 1860, his dream didn't seem likely to come true, but, at the age of 16, young Wallace joined a cattle drive that was passing through. Later, he worked as a wrangler and horsebreaker for a number of ranching outfits, eventually winding up in Mitchell County working for a white cattleman named Clay Mann. It was there, branding cattle with the large "80" on one side, that Wallace received his nickname, "80 John."

Clay Mann and "80 John" quickly developed a relationship of mutual admiration. They also developed a plan by which "80 John" was able to purchase cattle, rare acquisitions for a black Texan during—well, during most of our state's history! Mann hired Wallace at \$30 a month, but, for two years, he paid him \$5 in cash and set aside \$25. Wallace was able to invest his savings in cattle, and Mann also allowed him to pasture them on his land.

Clay Mann died in 1889, and a couple of years later, "80 John" Wallace purchased 12½ sections of land and moved his ranching dreams to his own dream ranch.

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*The New Handbook of Texas*  
ITC, *The Other Cowboys* file.

c. 1997, Institute of Texan Cultures

## EMANUEL STANCE

MENARD CO.  
Afr-Am, 1870  
Time: 1:08

Emanuel Stance was among the first of the newly freed slaves in the South to sign up for the Ninth Cavalry, an all-black army unit created in 1866. He was sent to Fort McKavett in Menard County, where he soon achieved the rank of sergeant, the highest rank available to black soldiers.

In the spring of 1870, Sergeant Stance led a small company to intercept a party of Kickapoos who'd stolen some horses and two children from the nearby Loyal Valley community.

Finding the Kickapoos, Stance took them by surprise, and they abandoned the horses, but the children were nowhere to be seen. The company started back to the fort to return the horses, when they encountered some Kickapoos preparing to attack a government wagon train. Stance routed them, saving the wagon master's life and recapturing five more horses. Later, at Eight Mile Creek, the Kickapoo party attacked again but were routed a third time. In all three skirmishes, the army's only casualty was one wounded horse. Although the children were not found, the distraction caused by Stance's men resulted in the escape and eventual return of one of them.

Emanuel Stance was commended by his captain, and, on July 24, 1870, he became the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor.

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Guetzow, Mark Alan. "Stance Takes a Stand." *Texas Historian* 57, no. 2 (November 1996): 9-11.

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

## ESTE VÁNICO

NEW SPAIN  
Spaniard/African  
Time: 1:09

Of Cabeza de Vaca and the three who wandered across Texas with him, it was Estevánico, the Moroccan slave, who emerged with the most favorable reputation among the native tribes. Handsome, sociable, and gifted in languages, he was said to be in constant conversation with the Indians.

When the four reached Mexico after eight years of wandering, it was Estevánico who was sent with Fray Marcos de Niza as translator and advance guard on a search for the mythical cities built of gold with turquoise doorways.

Wearing feathered armbands and bracelets with bells, followed by a company of Indians, and flanked by two Spanish greyhounds, the magnificent African approached a pueblo in New Mexico. Here, his gift for communication failed him. He sent ahead his sacred medicine gourd as a sign of friendship, but likely the Zuñi citizens misinterpreted the object's meaning. When he approached the pueblo, he and his company were showered with arrows.

Survivors told Fray Marcos of Esteban's death, and the Franciscan returned to Mexico with the news that the cities existed and Estevánico el Negro had named them "Cíbola."

The next year, 1540, Coronado began his quest for the Seven Cities of Cíbola.

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ITC vertical files: African American; Estevánico (Esteban).  
Web site: [www.estevanico.org](http://www.estevanico.org)

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

HENRY FLIPPER

FT. CONCHO/FT. DAVIS  
Afr-Am Military Officer  
Time: 1:12

Henry Flipper knew that success at West Point would require extraordinary self-discipline on his part. Born to slavery in Georgia, bolstered by the experiences of predecessor black cadets who had NOT made it through, he became, in 1878, the first African American to graduate from West Point, and, for four years, he distinguished himself in service at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, and, in Texas, at Forts Elliott, Concho, and Davis.

But in 1882 he was framed for embezzlement and court-martialed. Civilian residents of Fort Davis rallied to the aid of the innocent and respected officer, and though Flipper tried to repay the alleged debt from his personal funds, he was dishonorably discharged.

Starting over as a civilian surveyor and engineer, Henry Flipper became a recognized researcher and expert on Spanish land grants in the Southwest. Later, he helped in the planning and construction of the Alaskan Railway and worked as a petroleum engineer in Venezuela.

He died in May of 1940 and was buried in Atlanta. A quarter of a century later, the army issued a certificate of HONORABLE discharge, and the remains of Henry Flipper were re-interred with full military honors in his home town of Thomasville, Georgia.

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Research files for ITC traveling exhibit "Profiles of Black Texans."  
ITC, *The Afro-American Texans*.

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

GEORGE McJUNKIN'S HUNCH

NEW MEXICO  
Afr-Am, 1908  
Time: 1:11

George McJunkin was a black cowboy born in South Texas in 1851, but he'd drifted a ways since then, all across Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. He had little or no formal education, but he was well-read. He liked the prairie dogs and hawks and coyotes that kept him company in his ranging, and he was always willing to stop and pick up an arrowhead or a fossil.

McJunkin was punching cattle near Folsom in northern New Mexico in 1908. One day out on the range, he noticed some large bones, probably uncovered by recent flooding. He dug at the clay with his knife and pulled out a few flint points, not like others he'd seen! He had a hunch that they were important.

Almost 20 years later, archaeologists from the Museum of Natural History in Denver began excavating the site and made an important discovery. Whereas they had believed that people had lived in North America for about 3,000 years, these leaf-shaped projectile points were found among the bones of an extinct species of bison, placing the date of a hunting culture in the area at 8000 B.C.

Subsequent research has uncovered evidence of even earlier cultures, but the discovery of the "Folsom culture" was the result of George McJunkin's hunch.

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Agogino, George. "The McJunkin Controversy." *New Mexico Magazine*, May-June, 1971, pp. 41-47.

ITC vertical files: African American; McJunkin, George.

Mayhill, Mildred P. "George McJunkin's Pile of Bones." *Old West*, Winter 1973, p. 19ff.

McEwan, Donald, 210-494-6767.

c. 1996, Institute of Texan Cultures

HENRY MORGAN'S BARBER COLLEGE TYLER  
Afr-Am, 1932  
Time: 1:10

In the 1920s, Henry Morgan was a young man happily cutting hair in his own barbershop in his home town, Tyler, in the African American neighborhood called "St. Louis."

In the 1930s, new regulations required Henry and all barbers to obtain a license in order to practice their craft. Thousands went out of business or went back to school—to barber college.

But wait! Schools, even barber colleges, were segregated then; they accepted white students only. Morgan decided to find a way to train black barbers to pass the exams.

In 1932 Henry and his wife, Mabel, both took the Board of Barber Examiners test for an instructor's license, which was a requirement for operating a barber college. Henry failed, but Mabel passed the exam, and in 1934 they opened "Tyler Barber College."

Soon their school was operating at peak capacity, and its graduates were in great demand. For eight years, it was the only school of its kind in the nation, and the Morgans established branches in Houston, Dallas, and Beaumont, and in four cities outside of Texas, too.

Tyler Barber College no longer exists, but the organization Henry founded, the Texas Association of Tonsorial Artists, is "clipping along" to this very day.

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From the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* (Saturday, Jan. 1, 2000, p. 9E), reprinted in *The Chronicles of Smith County* 39, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 57. Tyler: Smith County Historical Society.

Correspondence with Mr. James Edward Smith, Executive President, TAOTA (900 Nottingham Drive/Cedar Hill, TX 75104, 972-293-8573/office 214-371-9411; fax 972-906-4967.

c. 2001, Institute of Texan Cultures

HIRAM WILSON & CO.

GUADALUPE CO.  
Afr-Am  
Time: 1:12

When Reverend John Wilson of Seguin needed to supplement his income in the 1850s, he started a pottery business with two of his slaves. They had learned the craft from some potters whom they identified only as "foreigners."

Their technique, using an alkaline glaze, seems to have leapfrogged across the mid-South and was brought to Texas by both white and black craftsmen.

After emancipation, one of the reverend's freed slaves, Hiram Wilson, opened his own pottery works east of Seguin in the Capote Hills. There he found some fine clay, and using wooden and iron tools, he turned jugs, crocks, butter churns, and jars on a wheel. He gave storage vessels a flat lip and lid so that they could be stacked, and he embellished all his pieces with horseshoe-shaped handles. They were marked "H. Wilson and Co.," then fired for 24 hours in a groundhog kiln, a long kiln built into the hillside like a groundhog's burrow.

Hiram ran the business for some 20 years—and he preached, too, and founded a Baptist church for the Capote community. He died in the 1880s, but the pottery works operated until 1903. Today, the fine clay products of this enterprising minister are collector's items.

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ITC, *The Afro-American Texans*.

ITC vertical files: African American; Wilson, Hiram.

c. 1996, Institute of Texan Cultures

JACOB FONTAINE

TRAVIS CO.  
Afr-Am, 1898  
Time: 1:10

Jacob Fontaine was the slave of politically active Reverend Edward Fontaine, who founded St. David's Episcopal Church near the capitol in Austin. Jacob's exposure to high political and social circles placed him in a position to use his wisdom and talents in service to his fellow Texans after emancipation. He founded six Baptist churches in the Austin area and published a newspaper, *The Gold Dollar*, to serve Austin's black communities of Wheatsville and Clarksville.

In 1867 Reverend Jacob Fontaine was the 15th black citizen to register to vote. He served actively in the Republican Party and as friend and advisor to Reconstruction governor Edmund J. Davis during the 1870s. In 1881 he campaigned in black communities around the state, advocating Austin as the location for the new University of Texas.

Although Jacob Fontaine had fought the good fight, nurturing the hopes born in emancipation, he had not won the battle. By the time of Fontaine's death on December 10, 1898, Texas and other Southern states had begun passing the harsh "Jim Crow" laws, which isolated black and white citizens from each other in public places...and in their hearts.

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Fontaine, Jacob III, with Gene Burd. *Jacob Fontaine*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1983.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures

JAMES FARMER AND SON

TEXARKANA etc.  
Afr-Am, 1961  
Time: 1:09

James Leonard Farmer was Texas's first African American with a Ph.D. In the 1920s, he served churches in Texarkana and Galveston, then taught philosophy and religion at Wiley College in Marshall. He took other university positions around the country, including a five-year stint at Austin's Huston-Tillotson. He was a poet and author of two books and numerous articles as well as Sunday school lessons.

A man of his time, Dr. Farmer took the position of compromise rather than confrontation in the struggle for racial equality, but his son, James Farmer Jr., was an advocate of nonviolent civil disobedience and the founder of CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality.

In the spring of 1961, when Dr. Farmer was seriously ill, James Jr. boarded a bus, one of two filled with Freedom Riders and bound for New Orleans. On the night of May 14, he got a call that his father had died, so he returned home. The next day one bus was burned, and the Freedom Riders on the other bus were beaten at the Alabama state line, then attacked in Birmingham.

Mrs. Farmer always believed that her husband had chosen the time of his own passing to call his son back from the certain danger, even death, that the Freedom Fighters, indeed, did face when they entered the Deep South.

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Beil, Gail K. "James Leonard Farmer: Texas' First African American Ph.D." *East Texas Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1998).  
*The New Handbook of Texas* 2: 952.

c. 1999, Institute of Texan Cultures

## JAMES THOMAS'S CHURCHES

HOUSTON  
Afr-Am, 1980  
Time: (adjust to 1:07,  
then add "trailer.")

James M. Thomas is a graduate of Prairie View College, where he worked with the famous black architect Louis E. Fry on the first three buildings at Prairie View. In 1930 he began teaching mechanical drawing at Phillis Wheatley High School in Houston, and in 1937, near the end of the depression, he began working as a contractor building churches.

*Back then there were no black architects in Houston. Colored people didn't think plans were needed to build a church. They wouldn't give a nickel or a dime for a plan.*

So Thomas devised his own plans. Beginning with Damascus Baptist Church on Center Street, he designed churches to look like churches. He built over 50 churches in Houston and always held to that philosophy.

*You look at the last four or five churches I've done, and you'll see what the next five will look like. The style stays essentially the same.*

That's true for all of James Thomas's churches: the Fourth Missionary Baptist Church on Webster Street, Fifth Ward Baptist on Noble, Rose of Sharon Baptist on Valentine, Olivet Baptist and Miles Chapel CME on Lyons, Greater Zion Baptist on Trully, Greens Chapel Methodist on Link Road, the Church of God on Burkett, Command Baptist on Main, Mt. Ararat Baptist on Montgomery, St. John Baptist **(Play closing music & words, then follow with the continuation of church names until time is up.)** Damascus Baptist, Church of the Living God, Greater Northside Antioch....

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Moore, Louis. "Thomas helps black churches put dreams into brick." *Houston Chronicle*, November 15, 1980, sec. 6, p. 1.

c.1999, Institute of Texan Cultures

## JIM CROW

STATEWIDE  
Afr-Am Hist., 1889  
Time:

Originally from an 1830s song, the name "Jim Crow" came to mean, first "Negro," then the system of laws by which whites in the South held blacks to a lower social and economic caste.

The first "Jim Crow" law in Texas in 1889 required separate train compartments and was followed by laws regarding streetcars, waiting rooms, and eating places. When the Supreme Court upheld the trend in the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, such laws multiplied to require separate parks, neighborhoods, prisons, and hospitals. Businesses catering to whites could either establish separate areas for blacks or refuse to serve them at all.

In 1922 black Disabled American Veterans in Waco protested that white DAV leaders blocked them from the hotel where the DAV conference was being held. In 1927 black women in Dallas complained that they could not buy clothes that fit since they were not allowed to try them on. Singers from Marshall's Wiley College refused to give a concert in 1928 because hotel officials forced them to use the back stairs.

Even under the severe "Jim Crow" system, courageous black Texans were laying the groundwork for the great Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

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Glasrud, Bruce Alden. *Black Texans, 1900-1930: A History*, dissertation, Texas Tech, 1969, pp. 173-206.  
*The Strange Career of Jim Crow*,

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

J. MASON BREWER

BRAZOS RIVER  
Afr-Am  
Time: 1:10

From the 1930s to the '70s, African American Texan Dr. J. Mason Brewer collected stories in many black Texas communities and published them in articles and in books.

Brewer contended that African American culture is not derived solely from African sources but from European sources as well. The preacher stories he collected and published in *The Word on the Brazos* trace their roots to the folklore of medieval Europe and Britain, even to Chaucer's tales. The ghosts of animals do not appear in traditional AFRICAN tales at all; creatures such as those in his anthology *Dog Ghosts*, derived from Irish, English, and Scottish oral traditions. While cherishing the stories from their homelands, Africans also drew story themes from the world in which they found themselves.

When American blacks began retracing their African heritage during the 1960s and '70s, Brewer warned against overlooking the European tradition with which it had merged. American black storytelling was richer, he said, because of its DUAL roots.

Certainly American black folktales are unique in the world! And Dr. J. Mason Brewer would be glad to know that Americans of all backgrounds are listening!

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ITC , *The Afro-American Texans*.

Brewer, J. Mason. *Dog Ghosts and The Word on the Brazos*. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976.

ITC vertical files: African American; Brewer, J. Mason.

ITC Oral History interview: John Mason Brewer.

c. 1996, Institute of Texan Cultures

JOHANNA JULY

KINNEY, 1871  
Black Seminole Woman  
Time: 1:09

Johanna July came from Mexico to Fort Clark with her family, part of a band of Black Seminoles who had contracted with the U.S. Army in 1871 to help clear the Texas side of the Rio Grande of fierce Indians.

When her father died and her brother ran away, Johanna began breaking horses. She wore ropes of beads around her slender neck, bright dresses, long gold earrings, and thick black braids. She ran barefoot, flashing among the horses like a bright bird, soothing them with a masterful hand and soft words. She rode sideways, bareback without a bridle—just a rope around their necks and looped over the nose. Pinched between her lips was a cigarette, hand-rolled in a cornshuck.

Johanna never learned to cook or sew. Married three times, she ran away from the first husband, who was cruel to her, and outlived the other two. Wily and daring, she never did anything but care for horses, ride horses, break horses.

When she was interviewed in the 1930s at the age of 77, Johanna July was active and nimble, gliding barefoot over the rocks around her Brackettville home and rolling her cigarettes with a steady hand.

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ITC, *The Other Cowboys* files.

c. 1997, Institute of Texan Cultures

JOHN HENRY YATES CENTENNIAL

HOUSTON  
Afr-Am, 1897  
Time: 1:09

John Henry Yates was born to slaves in Virginia and would never have been literate at all if the master’s child hadn’t taught him to read. He continued his own education at night by reading a Bible or songbook by the light of a pine knot.

Yates married Harriet Willis, from a neighboring farm, who bore 11 children. When her owners moved to Texas in 1863, Jack begged and was able to accompany his wife and children. After emancipation, they moved to Houston, where he worked as a drayman by day and preached at night and on Sundays. In 1866 he was called to serve the city’s first black Baptist congregation, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.

Under his leadership, the Antioch congregation and that of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church purchased Emancipation Park. Yates was instrumental in founding Houston Academy, a school for black students, and the Old Land Mark Association for Houston’s black Baptists.

Reverend John Henry Yates died on December 22, 1897, but the community leader is remembered today by—among others—the students of Houston’s Jack Yates High School.

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*The New Handbook of Texas* 6, “Yates, John Henry,” p. 1113.

c. 1997, Institute of Texan Cultures

JUNETEENTH

GALVESTON, 1865  
State Holiday  
Time: 1:10

General Gordon Granger arrived at Galveston on June 19 in 1865 to proclaim the freedom of all slaves in Texas. Although his order was not instantly effective, most slaveholders freed their bondsmen sometime during that summer. The next year, freedmen began to celebrate the anniversary of “Juneteenth,” the day which symbolized the end of slavery. But whether or not it would become the legal, as well as the symbolic, date remained to be tested by law.

As the fortunes of the Confederacy waxed and waned during the Civil War, Texas slaveholders carried on with their dealings. At the end, the question of the official date of emancipation became important because of its bearing on the legality of contracts signed during the Civil War. Could a buyer be refunded the price of a slave purchased after Lincoln’s emancipation proclamation on January 5, 1863, but before June 19, 1865? Or was the legal date not until December 18, 1865, when the 13th amendment was passed?

Of course, such matters wound up in the courts, and it was not until 1874 that the legal date for the end of slavery in Texas was set at June 19, 1865, to coincide with the symbolic date “Juneteenth.”

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Campbell, Randolph B. “The End of Slavery in Texas: A Research Note.” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (July 1984): 71-80.

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

LITTLE BOB’S BARBECUE

DALLAS  
Afr-Am, 1964  
Time: 1:09

Every year Dallas’s Bob Nash put on his blue suit, his only suit, and made his annual visit to the State Fair of Texas management office. Every year he got the same answer he’d always gotten: “There’s just no openings. Try next year.” No one said, “We don’t want any black vendors.”

Nash ran what he called a little two-bit beer joint and café in Dallas that took in about \$50 a week. He dreamed of operating a barbecue concession during the State Fair’s annual three-week October run.

It was in 1964 that he finally got a different answer. The answer wasn’t quite yes; it was that there was one opening, and it would have to be made available to all 31 black barbecue businesses in Dallas. Nash tried to organize them into a group, hoping that they could help each other get the \$300 for the contract, but the “group” soon dwindled to six, and on the day the money was due, Bob Nash was the only member left waiting to meet with the Fair officials. He didn’t have the money, but he pretended he did. And his “pretending” came true: one of his satisfied customers lent him the money!

He became the first African American granted a contract to operate his business at the State Fair, and for 10 years Little Bob’s Barbecue was the only black-owned concession there.

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Wade, Norma A. “Pioneers remember setting goals, struggling to reach milestones.” *Dallas Morning News*, February 3, 1985, p. 1A ff.

c. 2001, Institute of Texan Cultures

MANCE LIPSCOMB

GRIMES COUNTY  
Afr-Am  
Time: 1:14

He called himself a "songster." Blues and ballads, spirituals, rag, and rock 'n' roll—he sang them all; wrote them, too; called it "grass roots ear music"; ran his pocketknife up and down the neck of the guitar; leaned so low you couldn't tell who was singing, the guitar or Mance Lipscomb.

He got a battered cast-off guitar in 1908 when he was 13. Already farming and picking cotton from dark 'til dark, now he was up all night singing, too. Through two wars and the depression, the '50s, aching days, overseers' threats, injury, and sweat, Mance worked, playing at Navasota honky-tonks on weekends and on his front porch at night.

Then, one evening when he was in his 60s, two men came to the house and asked him to sing. He was tired from working but unsure of the motives of the white men, so he did. Turned out they were from a record company.

Concerts followed, and record albums with songs like “Big Boss Man,” “Shake, Momma, Shake,” and “Tom Moore's Farm.”

The chance to sing for a living without also working all day eased his later years. The recordings preserved his unique music for posterity, but they didn’t make him rich. In 1975 Mance Lipscomb suffered a series of small strokes, and he died in the Grimes County Hospital early in '76.

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ITC vertical files: African-American; Lipscomb, Mance.  
Lipscomb, Mance, and A. Glenn Myers. *I Say Me for a Parable: The Life and Music of Mance Lipscomb*. El Rito, N.M.: Possum Heard Diversions, 1981.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures

## THE MOST ORIGINAL MUSTANGER

## CARRIZO SPRINGS

Afr-Am, 1864 ff.

Time: 1:09

Cowboys needed horses, and they got them from those South Texas ranches where *mustangers* rounded up the wild, handsome descendants of the Spanish mustangs. One of the all-time best mustangers was black cowboy Bob Lemmons. J. Frank Dobie called Lemmons "the most original mustanger I ever met."

Born into slavery, brought to Frio County, then freed at the age of 17, the young man began working for rancher Duncan Lemmons around Eagle Pass, and, as a sign of respect for his mentor, he adopted the man's last name. Bob saved every cent he made, hoping to buy his own cattle and land.

The reason he was such a good mustanger? Lemmons said it was because he lived like a mustang.

*"I acted like I was a mustang—I made the mustangs think I was one of them; maybe I was in those days. After I stayed with a bunch long enough, they'd foller me instid of me having to foller them."*

When fences started breaking up the open range, the life of the mustanger changed, but by then, Lemmons had been able to purchase his own ranch along the Nueces River near Carrizo Springs. Taking only his Mexican blanket to serve as both cover and slicker, he continued to mustang alone, living in the brush off the land just as he had always lived.

Only now, it was his *own* brush and his own land.

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Dobie, J. Frank. "As the Mustangers Told It." *The Mustangs*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952.

*The New Handbook of Texas* 4: 147, 915. "Lemmons, Bob" and "Mustangs." ITC vertical files: African American, article from unknown source, July 23, 1933, "Once a Slave, 'Uncle Bob' Lemmon Now Is Rich."

c. 1999, Institute of Texan Cultures

## MOVING HOUSES; MOVING HEARTS

## HOUSTON

Afr-Am Activist

Time: 1:10

African American Texan G.F. Sampson got up early in the morning. He fed his ducks, his goats, his hogs, his chickens, his cows... Maybe he did some butchering or tended the garden. Then he went to work moving houses. He didn't have a winch truck like most other house-movers in Houston. Even as late as the 1960s, he was using a team of mules.

Maybe he didn't want his children to have to work so endlessly. Maybe that was why in 1964, when he went to enroll Vernon and Chesley in Aldine High School and the district personnel enrolled them in George Washington Carver, an all-black high school, instead, he sued. The case went to court as *Sampson and the United States vs. the Aldine Independent School District*. Sampson and the United States won, though the ruling was not implemented until after his own sons had graduated.

On another occasion, residents of his neighborhood considered hiring a private water service. Sampson argued that black residents should not have to pay a private company for services the city of Houston was already providing for its white citizens.

G.F. Sampson died in 1983, having worked hard all his life—moving houses some days, and, on others, moving hearts.

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Sampson, Erika. "George Franklin Sampson: The Effect of One Man." *Texas Historian*, March 1990, pp. 4-5.

c. 1998, Institute of Texan Cultures

THE MURAL AT THE YWCA

HARRIS CO.  
Afr-Am Artist  
Time: 1:12

African American artist and teacher John Biggers was commissioned to paint a mural for the Blue Triangle Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association in Houston in 1952. He visualized a work which he would call *The Negro Woman in American Life and Education*.

One day a group of middle-aged African American women—like those whom Biggers sought to glorify—gathered around the ladder on which he was perched. They were clearly disturbed. One woman spoke for the group:

*“Come down, young man. Get down from the wall and stop the flagrant disrespect immediately.”*

The women objected to his painting of slaves sweating and struggling, with gnarled, calloused hands and bruised feet and bodies. It disgraced Negro womanhood, they said. Biggers stopped work while YWCA officials convinced the women of the value of his approach.

When the mural was unveiled in 1953, the images of powerful people, sweating and struggling with courage and endurance, awed the audience. Biggers had painted pride and strength into every limb, the pride and strength needed for black women who "not only organized the family," Biggers said, "but (led) in struggles to build a society in which that family could grow."

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Biggers, John, and Simms Carrol with John Edward Weems. *Black Art in Houston: The Texas Southern University Experience*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978, pp. 60-63.

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

THE REAL GLORY OF WILLIE'S BOOTS

LUBBOCK  
Afr-Am, 1946  
Time: 1:09

He started out earning a dollar a day making boots in San Angelo, then he moved to Lubbock and worked for Brown's Boot and Saddle Shop. This African American Texan never stamped a label of any kind on his work, but by the time he died in 1976, the name "Willie Lusk" was known by boot lovers all over the world.

It started in 1946 when Billy Binion asked Lusk why he didn't buy his own shop.

When Lusk replied that he didn't have the \$2,500 it would take, the Las Vegas millionaire handed him twenty-five \$100 bills!

In six months, Lusk's Boot Shop was six months behind in orders—a sure sign of success. His customers included actors such as Chill Wills, Hoot Gibson, Red Ryder, Audie Murphy, and even Shirley Temple! Singers need boots, too, so Ray Price and Merle Haggard walked out of Lusk's place of business wearing their own personal boots. So did heavyweight boxing champ Joe Louis and radio's "Amos" and "Andy."

And their walk was smoother when Willie made their boots. As Lusk himself used to say: "When a man puts on my boots, they don't hurt his feet, and he can walk straight; that's the real glory of it!"

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Brockway, Ruthanne. "Black Lubbock Pioneer Helped City." *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, February 18, 1979, Sunday Morning, p. 1 ff.

c. 1997, Institute of Texan Cultures

## SERGEANT WARD'S RESCUE

BRACKETTVILLE  
Black Seminoles, 1875  
Time: 1:11

South of Brackettville is a little graveyard like hundreds of other rural cemeteries, except this one contains tombstone after tombstone marked “Congressional Medal of Honor.” There lie the remains of many of the Black Seminole Scouts who served the U.S. Army during the late 19th century.

As one example, witness the courage of Sergeant John Ward and his companions in 1875. They became involved in an altercation involving 25 or 30 Comanches and four soldiers, that is, three Black Seminole Scouts and their commander, Lieutenant John Bullis. There came a moment when the Comanches realized how pitifully small the enemy was, and they began to advance relentlessly. The soldiers retreated, but when Ward turned around to look, he realized Bullis was left afoot, his horse having broken away in the excitement. Ward wheeled around and went back while his two companions fired cover. As he lifted Bullis onto the back of his horse, Comanche bullets cut his carbine sling and shattered the stock of his gun, but the other scouts covered him, and all four reached safety.

Bullis acknowledged that the scouts had saved his life—“saved my hair,” he said. All three were awarded Congressional Medals of Honor, which are displayed to this day on their grave markers in the little Brackettville cemetery.

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Baker, T. Lindsay. “T for Texas,” unidentified photocopy of magazine column.

c. 2000, Institute of Texan Cultures

## SLAVE LAWS OF MEXICO

TEXAS HISTORY  
Afr-Am, 1813  
Time: 1:11

In 1813, as Mexico struggled for independence from Spain, insurgent leader José María Morelos declared that “Slavery is forbidden forever.” Unpleasant words to Stephen F. Austin!

In Mexico City Austin argued that many of his Texas colonists had slaves. They needed to bring their own labor force with them, he said, since attempts to enslave Indians had been unsuccessful. Furthermore, there was insufficient labor available in Texas at any price. Back home, he continued to reassure settlers that Mexico would come around to his way of thinking.

In 1822 a compromise was proposed to allow colonists to bring African slaves, but those slaves’ Texas-born children would become free at the age of 14. Two years later, Mexico’s Constitution of 1824—the most liberal of its day—prohibited all slave trade.

But in 1828 a new law reversed the trend again by recognizing foreign “contracts of labor.” Slaveholders who wanted to settle in Texas simply wrote contracts, and a slave’s best hope was to submit to the terms.

In 15 years Mexican law affecting Africans went from “slavery forbidden forever” to a legalized form of lifetime servitude.

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Prince, Robert. “The Evolution of Slavery in Texas.” *Dallas from a Different Perspective*. Nortex Press, 1993, pp. 1-8.

c. 1996, Institute of Texan Cultures

SWEATT v. PAINTER

HOUSTON/AUSTIN  
Afr-Am, 1946  
Time: 1:11

The University of Texas Law School was desegregated in 1946, but challenging the state's separate-but-equal law at the graduate school had been a goal of the NAACP for many years. The difficulty was finding a suitable plaintiff, one who was a graduate of an accredited college willing to enroll and able to pay tuition and attend classes. He would face giving up several years of his life to meetings and court dates, and he and his family would assuredly become a target of racist harassment and hostilities. In 1945, when the NAACP had almost given up hope, Heman Sweatt appeared.

Five feet six, glasses, prematurely bald—Sweatt was the "Clark Kent" needed for the superhuman task. His family had long confronted racism in Houston. When his father became ill, the Wiley College graduate changed his plans for law school in Michigan and applied at UT. That was in February of 1946.

In March UT President T.S. Painter announced that Heman Sweatt was duly qualified "except for the fact that he is a Negro." In the action that became the beginning of the end of segregation at the University of Texas Law School, Heman Sweatt filed suit.

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Gillette, Michael L. "Heman Marion Sweatt: Civil Rights Plaintiff." *Black Leaders: Texans for Their Times*, ed. Alwyn Barr and Robert A. Calvert. Texas State Historical Association, 1981, pp. 157-88.  
ITC vertical files: African American; Sweatt, Heman M.

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

A TEACHER CAN BE PROUD

RUSK  
Afr-Am, 1987  
Time: 1:11

His teacher, Mrs. Hooper at the Rusk Colored Public Free School, saw a lot of promise in young Irvin Conley, saw that persistence, that smile, that quiet demeanor. She saw that hard-working child carry his hopes on to Frederick Douglas High School and Tyler Barber College and Texas College, then off to World War II. And she saw him off to the Chicago School of Art on the G.I. Bill, then on to Northwestern University.

And she saw him bring all that promise back to Rusk.

Conley served on the Board of the Community Action Program and as president of the NAACP. He was always an officer in his CME church or in St. John's Masonic Lodge. He taught at Bradford School and later owned a business called "The Village," which had a barber and beauty shop, café, washeteria, even a recreation hall! He raised money to clean the black side of the cemetery and helped arrange the paving of Martin Luther King Drive and get water and sewer lines in the African American community. He even worked with the Cherokee County Historical Commission to get a marker for the Rusk Colored Public Free School.

In 1987 the city of Rusk dedicated the Irvin C. Conley Park, and his teacher, Mrs. Hooper?—if she could have seen that, she'd have been so proud!

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"Irvin Conley leaves rich legacy of community service, achievements," *Cherokeean/Herald of Rusk, Texas*, August 17, 1995, p. 2.

c. 1996, Institute of Texan Cultures

VALMO BELLINGER  
REGISTERS HIS DISCONTENT

BEXAR CO.  
Afr-Am  
Time: 1:11

In April of 1931, Valmo Bellinger stepped into the offices of the weekly newspaper *The Inquirer*, which was serving the black population of the East Side of San Antonio at the time. An African American himself, Valmo was planning to buy a full-page ad for a city politician whom the influential Bellinger family was supporting, but the editor of *The Inquirer* was of a different political stripe. He refused to run the ad.

Valmo tried reasoning with the man, he offered to pay a higher rate, he argued, and at last, he threatened:

"All right!" he said. "Don't run it! But you've just bought yourself some competition."

And he turned and walked out the door. The editor must have breathed a sigh of relief as he returned to his work.

But Valmo Bellinger was a man of his word. Undaunted by his complete lack of journalistic experience, Valmo began competing the following week with the first issue of the *San Antonio Register*.

And, inquiring minds want to know, who won that competition? Well, *The Inquirer* folded in 1937. *The Register* continues to serve San Antonio's African American community today.

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ITC vertical files: African American newspapers  
Oral History interview with Josephine Bellinger

c. 1995, Institute of Texan Cultures

WILLIAM GOYENS

NACOGDOCHES CO.  
Mulatto Businessman  
Time: 1:12

When William Goyens's slave grandfather fought in the American Revolution, he was rewarded with freedom. But Goyens, a mulatto who could pass for white, was unsatisfied with life as a Free Negro in North Carolina. He decided to move to Mexico, where the laws did not differentiate between black and white citizens and where his heritage was unknown. He chose Nacogdoches, Texas, which in 1820 was part of Mexico.

Fluent in Spanish, English, and several Indian dialects, Goyens served as a negotiator for Mexico. Shrewd in business, he reinvested the profits of his first blacksmith shop in other enterprises and gained social and political influence. Scholarly and witty, Goyens and his wife hosted many prominent Texans in their Nacogdoches mansion.

William Goyens's life stands in sharp contrast to that of many others of African descent in Texas. Had his heritage been clear, his path might have been more rocky, for with the coming of the republic, then the state, laws tended to support the privileges of legislators and voters—white Texas men.

But Goyens held the personal respect of his peers. When an 1840 law prevented Negroes from owning land, over four dozen citizens petitioned the legislature and gained an exception for their friend William Goyens.

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ITC vertical files: African American; Goyens, William.

c. 1994, Institute of Texan Cultures