

# BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS



## *An Introduction*

The arrival of Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi and Representative Joseph Rainey of South Carolina on Capitol Hill in 1870 ranks among the great paradoxes in American history; just a decade earlier, these African Americans' congressional seats were held by southern slave owners. Moreover, the U.S. Capitol, where these newest Members of Congress came to work—the center of legislative government, conceived by its creators as the “Temple of Liberty”—had been constructed with the help of enslaved laborers.<sup>1</sup> From this beginning, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* chronicles African Americans' participation in the federal legislature and their struggle to attain full civil rights.

The institution of Congress, and the careers of the 121 black Members who have served in both its chambers, have undergone extensive changes during this span of nearly 140 years.<sup>2</sup> But while researching and writing this book, we encountered several recurring themes that led us to ask the following questions: What were black Members' legislative priorities? Which legislative styles did African Americans employ to integrate into the institution? How did they react to the political culture of Capitol Hill and how did they overcome institutional racism? Lastly, how did the experiences of these individuals compare to those of other newly enfranchised Americans?

### **SHARED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS**

In striking aspects, the history of blacks in Congress mirrors that of other groups that were new to the political system. Throughout African-American history in Congress,

Members viewed themselves as “surrogate” representatives for the black community nationwide rather than just within the borders of their individual districts or states.<sup>3</sup> George White of North Carolina (1897–1901) and Robert Elliott of South Carolina (1871–1874) first embodied these roles, serving as models for 20th-century black Members such as Oscar De Priest of Illinois (1929–1935), Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York (1945–1971), and Shirley Chisholm of New York (1969–1983). Surrogate representation was not limited to black Members of Congress; nearly half a century after blacks entered Congress, woman Members, too, grappled with the added burdens of surrogate representation. In 1917, women throughout the country looked to the first woman to serve in Congress, Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana, for legislative support. Indeed, Rankin received so many letters she was forced to hire additional secretaries to handle the workload.<sup>4</sup>

Twentieth-century African-American pioneers' experience was similar in some respects to that of women.<sup>5</sup> Known and admired by blacks nationally, Representative De Priest and those who followed him were often sought out by individuals across the country, many of whom expected unfailing receptiveness to the long-neglected needs of the black community. In late 1934, the *Atlanta Daily World* memorialized De Priest, who lost re-election in his Chicago-centered district to Arthur W. Mitchell (1935–1943), the first black Democrat to serve in Congress. De Priest, the editors wrote, lifted his “voice in defense of those forgotten people he represented” in Chicago and nationally. Lionizing De Priest as a “gallant statesman and fearless defender”

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*An 1867 Harper's Weekly cover commemorates the first vote cast by African-American men. The passage and ratification of the Reconstruction Amendments (13th, 14th, and 15th) between 1865 and 1870 catapulted former slaves from chattel to voters and candidates for public office.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

of blacks in the North and South, the editors expressed frustration with Mitchell, who explicitly noted during a speech to an Atlanta church congregation that he did not intend to represent “black interests” per se. Mitchell, the editors noted, “dashed the hopes of every Negro who sat within hearing of his voice, most of whom looked to him as their personal representative in the federal government.”<sup>6</sup>

Collectively, African Americans in Congress overcame barriers by persevering through three eras of participation that can be classified as pioneering (1870–1901), apprenticeship (1929–1970), and mature integration (1971–2007).<sup>7</sup> These stages were typical of those experienced by other minority groups, such as women, that integrated into the established political system. However, Black Americans were distinct from other groups because they experienced a prolonged period of contraction, decline, and exclusion that resulted from segregation and disfranchisement. After winning the right to participate in the American experiment of self-government, African Americans were systematically and ruthlessly excluded from it: From 1901 to 1929, there were no blacks in the federal legislature.



*Under the leadership of Chairman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York, the Committee on Education and Labor approved more than 50 measures authorizing increases in federal educational programs. Fellow committee members referred to Powell’s leadership as the most productive period in their recent committee history.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

While seeking to advance within Congress and adapt to its folkways, each generation of black Members was challenged by racial prejudice, both overt and subtle; exclusion; marginalization; and, because they were so rare, an inability to organize that lasted for many decades. Black Members of Congress also contended with increased expectations from the public and heightened scrutiny by the media. They cultivated legislative strategies that were

common on Capitol Hill, but took on an added dimension in their mission to confront institutional racism and represent the interests of the larger black community. Some, such as Representatives Chisholm and Powell, became symbols for African-American civil rights by adopting the “show horse” style; circumventing prescribed congressional channels, they appealed directly to the public and media. Others pursued an institutionalist, “work horse” strategy; adhering to the prevailing traditions and workways



*As the first black politician from west of the Mississippi River elected to the House, Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California earned the nickname “Silent Warrior” for his persistent work on behalf of minorities and the urban poor.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

of the House and Senate, they hoped to shape policies by attaining positions of influence on the inside.<sup>8</sup>

Representative William Levi Dawson of Illinois (1943–1970), Powell’s contemporary, and others like him, such as Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California (1963–1991) and William H. (Bill) Gray III of Pennsylvania (1979–1991), favored the methodical “work horse” legislative style, diligently immersing themselves in committee work and policy minutiae.<sup>9</sup>

*Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* follows the contours of this tumultuous, and ultimately triumphant, history. The first section of this volume encompasses the careers of former Members who served from 1870 through 2007. Seventy-nine individuals, grouped into four distinct chapters, or generations (described in the following sections), are profiled in chronological order. Each generation of Members is accompanied by a contextual

essay on the congressional history and U.S. social history that shaped its Members' careers. The second section of this book includes profiles of the 38 black incumbent Members who have served two or more terms. The black freshman Members of the 110th Congress (2007–2009) are profiled in Appendix A using a résumé format.

### THE SYMBOLIC GENERATION, 1870–1887

This group of 17 black Congressmen symbolized the triumph of the Union and the determination of Radical Republicans to enact reforms that temporarily reshaped the political landscape in the South during Reconstruction. These pioneers were all Republicans elected from southern states. Though their educational, professional, and social backgrounds were diverse, they were all indelibly shaped by the institution of slavery. Eight were enslaved, and their experience under slavery disrupted their early lives. Others, as members of strictly circumscribed southern mulatto, or mixed-race, communities and free black classes, were relatively well-to-do. However, mulatto heritage was a precarious political inheritance; mixed-race Members of Congress were shunned by southern whites and were never fully trusted by freedmen, who often doubted they had blacks' interests at heart.

Though these black Members adopted various legislative strategies, each sought to improve the lives of their African-American constituents. Their agendas invariably included three primary goals: providing education, enforcing political rights, and extending opportunities to enable economic independence. "Place all citizens upon one broad platform. . . ." declared Richard Cain of South Carolina (1877–1879) on the House Floor. "All we ask of this country is to put no barriers between us, to lay no stumbling blocks in our way; to give us freedom to accomplish our destiny."<sup>10</sup>

Despite their distinguished service and their symbolic value for African-American political aspirations, these black Members produced few substantive legislative results. They never accounted for more than 2 percent of the total congressional membership. Their exclusion from the internal power structure of the institution cut them off from influential committee assignments and at times prevented them even from speaking on the House Floor, leaving them little room to maneuver. Most of the key civil rights bills and constitutional amendments were enacted before a single African American served in Congress. The Ku Klux Klan Acts and the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which

embodied black legislative interests, depended solely on the impermanent support of the shifting but uniformly white House leadership. Black Members of Congress often were relegated to the sidelines and to offering testimonials about the malfeasance of racially conservative southerners against freedmen.



*On February 27, 1869, John Willis Menard of Louisiana became the first African American to address the U.S. House while it was in session, defending his seat in a contested election. In November 1868, Menard appeared to have won a special election to succeed the late Representative James Mann—a victory that would have made him the first African American to serve in Congress. But his opponent, Caleb Hunt, challenged Menard's right to be seated. The House deemed neither candidate qualified, leaving the seat vacant for the remainder of the final days of the 40th Congress (1867–1869).*

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

After Reconstruction formally ended in 1877, ex-Confederates and their Democratic allies wrested power from Republican-controlled state governments and, through law and custom, gradually built a segregated society during the next several decades, effectively eliminating Black Americans from public office and ending their political participation. As the next group of African-American Members discovered, the federal government reacted impassively to blacks' disfranchisement by the states.

### “THE NEGROES’ TEMPORARY FAREWELL,” 1887–1929

This era was defined by a long war on African-American participation in state and federal politics, waged by means of local southern laws, Jim Crow segregation, and tacit federal assent. Between 1887 and 1901, just five



A U.S. Senator encounters a hanging anti-lynching bill outside the Capitol in this Edmund Duffy cartoon. The Senate's unique parliamentary procedures allowed southern Democrats to kill civil rights and anti-lynching legislation, allowing the upper chamber to act as a bottleneck for measures seeking to overthrow Jim Crow until the mid-20th century.

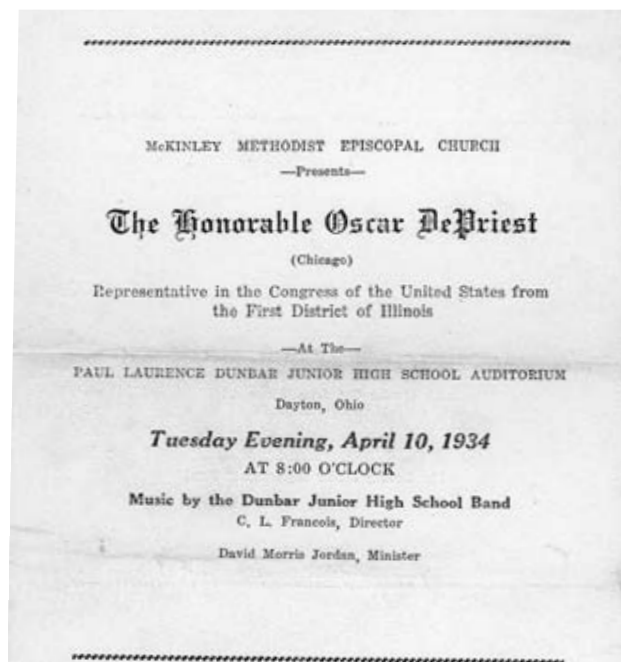
IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

blacks served in Congress. Black Members of Congress encountered an institution that was often inhospitable to their very presence and their legislative goals. With their middling to lower-tier committee assignments and few connections to the leadership, they were far from the center of power.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, black Members of Congress were so rare that they were incapable of driving a legislative agenda.

Over the years, electing African Americans to Congress grew more difficult. Obstacles included violence, intimidation, and fraud by white supremacists; state and local disfranchisement laws that denied increasing numbers of blacks the right to vote; and contested election challenges in Congress. Moreover, the legislative focus shifted from the idealism of the postwar Radical Republicans to the business interests of a rapidly industrializing nation. Ambivalence toward protecting black civil rights bolstered southern racial conservatives, who sought to roll back the protections that were extended to African Americans during Reconstruction. "I beg all true men to forget party and partisanship and right the great wrongs perpetrated upon humble and

unoffending American citizens," said Representative George W. Murray of South Carolina (1893–1895; 1896–1897). "I declare that no class of people has ever been more misrepresented, slandered, and traduced than the black people of the South."<sup>12</sup>

Though Black Americans were excluded from Congress after 1901, larger social and historical forces portended future political opportunities for African Americans in the northern United States. Southern black political activism transferred northward changing the social and cultural dynamic of established black communities in northern cities, as rural, agrarian African Americans were lured to industrialized cities by jobs and greater political freedoms. Advocacy groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded during this era, lobbied Congress on issues that were important to the black community. Geographical relocation also contributed to the gradual realignment of African Americans from the Republican Party to the ranks of northern Democrats during the mid-20th century.

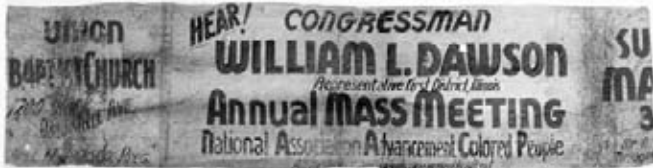


On April 10, 1934, Illinois Representative Oscar De Priest addressed a group of supporters at the Paul Laurence Dunbar Junior High in Dayton, Ohio. The three-term Member broke racial barriers when he became the first African American elected to Congress in nearly three decades. De Priest served as a symbol of hope for African Americans and spoke at venues across the nation.

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Without a single black Member to advocate black interests, both major political parties in Congress refused

to enact legislation to improve conditions for African Americans. Except for a few stalwart reformers, Congress responded to civil rights measures with ambivalence or outright hostility. During this era, too, a corps of southern racial conservatives was positioned, by virtue of their seniority, to hold a strong grip on the levers of power when Democrats gained control of the chamber in 1931.



*The third consecutive African American to serve from a South Chicago district, Representative William Dawson of Illinois participated in an NAACP annual meeting held at the Union Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## KEEPING THE FAITH: AFRICAN AMERICANS RETURN TO CONGRESS, 1929–1970

In 1929, African Americans' long exile from Congress ended when Oscar De Priest entered the House. All 13 African Americans elected during this era represented northern constituencies, all (except Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts, 1967–1979) were elected from majority-black, urban districts, and all except De Priest and Brooke were Democrats. By promising fuller participation in American society, the New Deal reactivated black political participation and brought greater numbers of African Americans into the Democratic Party.<sup>13</sup> World War II also rekindled African-American political activism, and black contributions to the war effort helped pave the way for the civil rights movement.

Black Members of Congress embarked on a long institutional apprenticeship in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, attaining more-desirable committee assignments and accruing the requisite seniority to gain leadership positions.<sup>14</sup> Their apprenticeship coincided with the blossoming of the civil rights movement on the streets of the South.<sup>15</sup> Although Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) spearheaded the nonviolent protest movement, everyday

Americans from all walks of life formed the core of the movement, but outside advocacy groups such as the NAACP, and black Members of Congress, also played an important role.

While the SCLC, the NAACP, and black Members of Congress shared the same goals, they often diverged over tactics. Some black Members made substantive legislative achievements. For example, Representative Powell crafted an amendment banning discrimination in federal contracts that was incorporated in the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Other black Members, who preferred to work within the institution of Congress to effect change, or who placed party imperatives ahead of black interests, were chided by civil rights advocates for insufficient commitment.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the greatest consequence of the civil rights movement for black Members was its decisive effect on the early political development of many who entered the institution after 1970.

Throughout this period, African Americans constituted a small percentage of Congress. Even in the 91st Congress (1969–1971), with a record high 11 black Members, African Americans accounted for just 2 percent of the combined membership of the House and the Senate. But change was underway. Within a decade, the number of



*Propelled by the Congressional Black Caucus, African-American Members of Congress steadily gained seniority and power in the House of Representatives. In this late 1970s picture from left to right (standing) are: Louis Stokes of Ohio, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, Charles Rangel of New York, Andrew Young, Jr., of Georgia, Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan, Ralph Metcalfe of Illinois, Robert Nix, Sr., of Pennsylvania, Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia, Harold Ford, Sr., of Tennessee; seated from left to right: Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, and Shirley Chisholm of New York.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF MOORLAND–SPINGARN RESEARCH CENTER, HOWARD UNIVERSITY

African Americans in Congress doubled. As their numbers increased, their momentum for organizing strengthened.

### PERMANENT INTERESTS: THE EXPANSION, ORGANIZATION, AND RISING INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CONGRESS, 1971–2007

This post–civil rights movement generation of lawmakers created a legislative groundswell on Capitol Hill. Civil rights acts of the 1960s and court-ordered redistricting opened new avenues of political participation for millions of African Americans. Consequently, many more blacks were elected to political office, and even to Congress. Eighty-six of the 121 African Americans who have served in congressional history—more than 70 percent—were seated in Congress after 1970. Many of these Members were elected from southern states that had not been represented by blacks in seven decades or more, for example, Representative Andrew Young of Georgia (1973–1977), Barbara Jordan of Texas (1973–1979), and Harold Ford, Sr., of Tennessee (1975–1997). During the 1992 elections alone the total black membership in Congress grew by



Despite the predictions of *Jet* magazine and other news media, Shirley Chisholm of New York became the first African-American Congresswoman in 1969. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California eventually entered the House of Representatives in January 1973.

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one-third and Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois (1993–1999) was elected as the first black woman and the first African-American Democrat to serve in the U.S. Senate.

With the ranks of African Americans growing in Congress, the time for formal organization and coordination of black efforts had arrived. In early 1971, 13 African-American Members of Congress led by Charles C. Diggs, Jr., of Michigan (1955–1980), formed the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to address “permanent interests” that were important to Black Americans, to advance black Members within the institution, and to push legislation, sometimes with potent results. Among the CBC’s notable legislative achievements were the passage of the Humphrey–Hawkins Act of 1978 to promote full employment and a balanced budget, the creation in 1983 of a federal holiday commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and legislation in 1986 that imposed the first sanctions against South Africa’s all-white government for its practice of apartheid. Within Congress, the CBC used its influence as a growing unit within the Democratic Caucus to push party leaders to appoint blacks to better committees and more leadership positions. “Blacks never could rely on somebody in Congress to speak out on racial questions; they can with the caucus,” declared Representative Louis Stokes of Ohio (1969–1999), a cofounder of the CBC.<sup>17</sup>

During this era, African-American Members of Congress entered a mature phase of institutional development. This generation had more experience in elective office, particularly in state legislatures. In Congress, blacks held positions on a full cross-section of panels, including the most coveted committees, such as Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Rules. In doing so, they were involved in legislative issues that affected every facet of American life. Representing



*Top: Andrew Young of Georgia won election to the U.S. House in 1973, becoming one of the first African Americans to represent a southern state since Reconstruction.*

*Bottom: North Carolina Representative Eva Clayton became the first African-American woman to represent the state as well as the state’s first black Representative since George Henry White left office in 1901.*

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districts that overall were electorally safe, many African-American Members enjoyed long careers that allowed them to accrue the seniority they needed to move into leadership positions. Fourteen black Members chaired congressional committees between 1971 and the end of the first session of the 110th Congress (2007–2009).<sup>18</sup> And for the first time, black Members rose into the ranks of party leadership, including: Bill Gray, Democratic Majority Whip (1989–1991); J. C. Watts of Oklahoma, Republican Conference Chairman (1999–2003); and James Clyburn of South Carolina, Democratic Majority Whip (elected in 2007).

Nevertheless, African-American Members continued to face new challenges. By the end of the first session of the 110th Congress, the 41 black Representatives and one black Senator represented constituencies whose unique geography and special interests expanded their legislative agendas. Additionally, gender diversity also shaped the bloc of black Members of Congress. After Shirley Chisholm was first elected in 1968, another 25 African-American women were elected to Congress—making them a uniquely influential component of the story of blacks in Congress. Finally, although leadership positions afforded African Americans a more powerful institutional voice and greater legislative leverage, they exposed latent conflicts between party imperatives and perceived black interests.

## THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS

The present volume originated with the first edition of *Black Americans in Congress* (H. Con. Res. 182, House Document No. 95–258, 95th Congress, 3 November 1977), which was compiled and published shortly after the U.S. bicentennial. Organized by Representative Corinne (Lindy) Boggs of Louisiana and Senator Brooke, the booklet featured the 45 African Americans who had served in Congress (42 Representatives and three Senators). A résumé-style format included basic biographical information, congressional service dates, party affiliation, committee assignments, and information about Members' other political offices. Entries were arranged chronologically, with one section for Senators and another for Representatives. A thumbnail image accompanied each profile. In a brief introduction, the renowned African-American historian Benjamin Quarles of Morgan State University wrote that black Members on Capitol Hill were “living proof that Blacks could produce an able leadership of their own. Moreover, their presence in the halls of

Congress, made their Black constituents feel that they were more than bystanders—they were participants, however vicariously, in the political process.”<sup>19</sup>

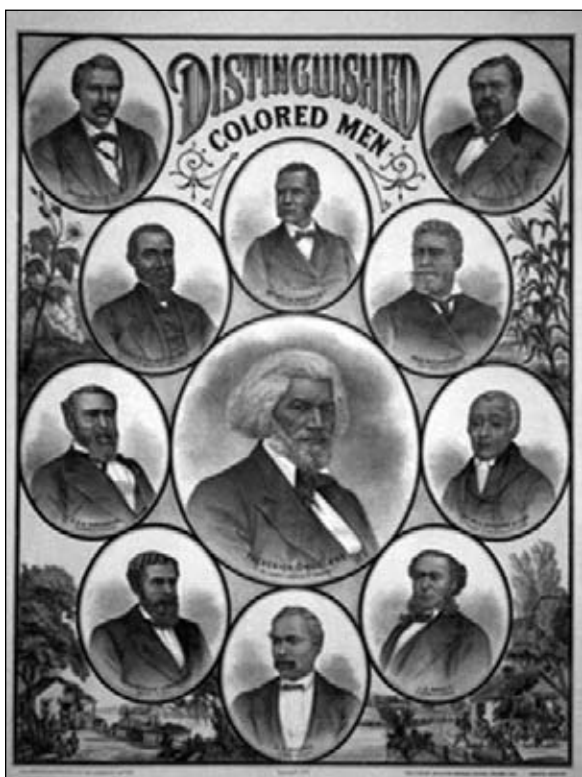
The second edition of *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1989* (H. Con Res. 170, H. Doc. No. 101-117) was authorized by the House and the Senate in the fall of 1989 and was published in 1990. By that point, 66 African Americans (63 Representatives and three Senators) had served in Congress. The volume was dedicated to the memory of Representative George Thomas (Mickey) Leland of Texas (1979–1989) who was killed, as the book went to press, in a plane crash while delivering food to starving Ethiopians. Representative Ronald V. Dellums of California (1971–1998), then the chairman of the CBC, contributed a brief introduction for the volume: “For Black Americans the promise of republican government and democratic participation was delayed well beyond the founding of the federal government in 1789.” Dellums also observed, “In this bicentennial year of Congress and the federal government, it is important to recognize that the Constitution we enjoy today evolved over a number of years



*George Thomas (Mickey) Leland of Texas poured his energy into raising awareness of hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world. In 1984, Leland successfully persuaded the House to create the Select Committee on Hunger, which he chaired.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION





*Abolitionist Frederick Douglass anchors an 1883 chromolithograph of “distinguished colored men.” Among those featured are Representatives Robert Elliott and Joseph Rainey of South Carolina, John Langston of Virginia, and Senator Blanche Bruce of Mississippi. The image also includes Henry Highland Garnet, minister at Washington’s Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. He became the first African American to speak in the House Chamber when he addressed a crowd of Sunday worshippers on February 12, 1865.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

and did not protect the civil rights of Black Americans until after a Civil War and passage of significant amendments.”<sup>20</sup> Created partly to commemorate the bicentennial of Congress in 1989, the volume contained 500- to 1,000-word profiles of Members, with basic biographical information. Suggestions for further reading were provided at the end of each profile. Profiles of former and current Members, arranged alphabetically, were merged into one section and accompanied by larger pictures.

### *The Present Edition*

In the spring of 2001, House Concurrent Resolution 43 was introduced. The resolution, which passed the House on March 21, 2001, and was agreed to by the Senate on April 6, 2001, authorized the Library of Congress to compile “an updated version” of *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1989*. In late 2001, the Library of Congress transferred the project to the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. Subsequently, the Office

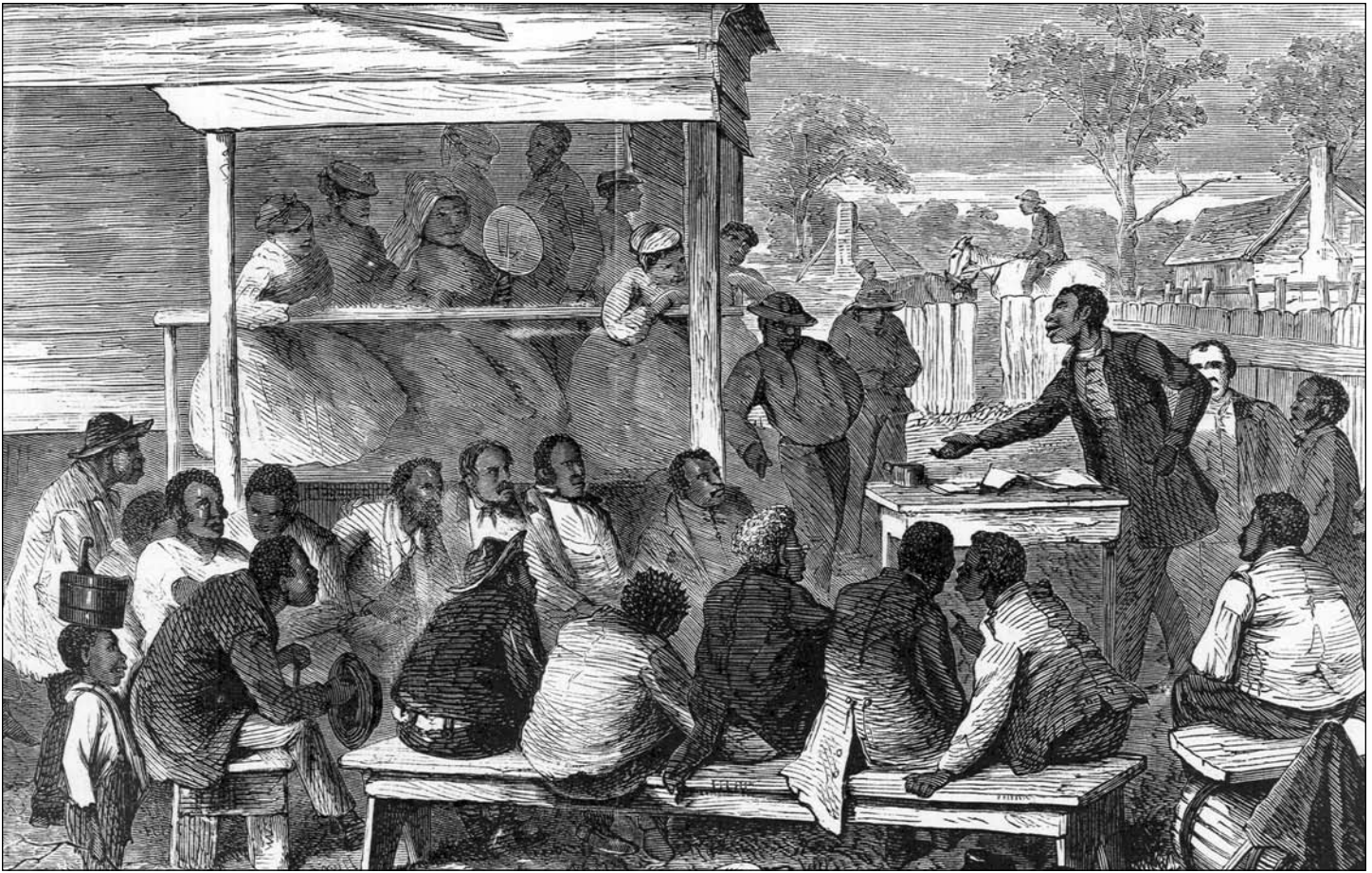
of History and Preservation (OHP) was created under the Clerk of the House, and OHP staff began work on this publication.

This volume reflects the far-reaching changes that have occurred since the second edition of the book. When the 1990 edition was published during the 101st Congress (1989–1991), 25 black Members served in the House. There were no African-American Senators. But within less than two decades there were a number of unprecedented developments. In 1992 alone, 17 new blacks were elected to Congress, the most ever in any single election and more than in any previous decade in congressional history. From 1991 through the end of 2007, 55 African Americans were elected to Congress—roughly 45 percent of all the blacks who have served in the history of the institution. By the closing of the first session of the 110th Congress, there were 42 African Americans in Congress (41 in the House and one in the Senate).

Moreover, the appreciable gender gap between male and female African-American Members of Congress narrowed during this period. Before 1991, just five black women had been elected to Congress. But in 1992 alone, five new women were elected. Between 1991 and the end of 2007, 20 African-American women were elected to Congress (36 percent of all blacks elected to Congress in that period).

The structure, scope, and content of this edition of *Black Americans in Congress* reflect the dramatic growth, changing characteristics, and increasing influence of African-American Members. Like the first edition, this volume is organized chronologically, to represent more accurately the effects of historical trends on blacks’ entry into Congress. In contrast to the Members’ profiles in both of the previous editions of *Black Americans in Congress*, the profiles in this edition have been expanded, with more emphasis on elections and congressional service. Additionally, the political and institutional developments affecting African Americans’ participation in Congress are analyzed in contextual essays. Appendices include committee assignments, leadership positions (committee, subcommittee, and elected party posts), familial connections in Congress, CBC chairs, and major civil rights acts since 1863. Charts and graphs illustrate historical statistics and trends. Photographs of each Member are also included, as well as an index.

Throughout this book, we use the terms “black” and “African American” interchangeably. The title of this volume, *Black Americans in Congress*, was specified in the print resolution and follows the first two editions of this book. However, since the last edition of this book was published



An illustration in Harper's Weekly, July 1868, depicts a political meeting of African Americans in the South. Personal campaigns conducted among their neighbors in majority-black districts throughout the South propelled 22 black men into the U.S. Congress between 1870 and 1901.

IMAGE COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

in 1990, the term “African American” has become more commonplace in both academic and general usage. Our use of both terms reflects these considerations.

Part I of *Black Americans in Congress* contains profiles of former black Members, averaging 1,500 words; some profiles of Members with longer House and Senate careers exceed 2,500 words. Each profile describes the Member's precongressional career and, when possible, contains a detailed analysis of the subject's first campaign for congressional office as well as information about re-election efforts, committee assignments, leadership, and major legislative initiatives, and a brief summary of the Member's postcongressional career.

Part II contains profiles of current black Members, with information on precongressional careers, first House or Senate campaigns, committee and leadership positions, and legislative achievements. Because these Members' careers are still in progress, comprehensive accounts must await a later date. At approximately 750 words each, the

profiles in Part II are about half as long as those for former Members. These profiles are arranged alphabetically, rather than chronologically.

We hope this volume will serve as a starting point for students and researchers. Accordingly, bibliographic information is provided for former and current Members. When applicable, information about manuscript collections and other repositories with significant holdings (e.g., the transcript of an oral history or extended correspondence) is included at the end of each Member's profile. This information was drawn from the House and Senate records that were used to compile the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress* at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.

The literature on African-American history, which has grown into one of the most dynamic fields in the profession, has been created largely since the 1960s. John Hope Franklin, the post-World War II dean of black history, wrote the textbook *From Slavery to Freedom* (first published in 1947; later editions were written with Alfred

A. Moss, Jr.); with eight editions in half a century, this textbook remains an excellent starting point for those who wish to appreciate the breadth of the African-American historical experience. The ample literature on black history is far too complex for a detailed discussion here. As often as possible we have pointed readers, in the endnotes of the essays and profiles of this volume, toward standard works on various aspects of black history and congressional history. However, the following studies proved exceptionally important and deserve mention: Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880–1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909–1950* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1980); Carol Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Robert L. Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1998). We also consulted several general texts that profile black Members of Congress and major politicians: Maurine Christopher, *Black Americans in Congress* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1976); Stephen Middleton, ed., *Black Congressmen During Reconstruction: A Documentary Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002); and Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction*, revised edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

Historians now know a great deal more about the lives of early African-American politicians than they did even

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*Top: Earning a seat in the House of Representatives by special election, Robert Nix of Pennsylvania went on to serve there for 21 years. He was one of the first blacks elected to Congress during the civil rights era, and once commented that he dedicated himself "to ending the oppression of black people."*

*Right: A former Olympic track star, Illinois Representative Ralph Metcalfe broke ranks with the Chicago political machine to investigate allegations of police brutality in the city. Despite the loss of party support from the machine, Metcalfe successfully won re-election. "There is only one issue," Metcalfe declared. "The right of black people to choose their own public officials and not have them picked from downtown."*

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a brief generation ago. The civil rights movement of the 1960s renewed black participation in the political process and refocused interest on this long-neglected aspect of history. As the field of African-American history has grown, a number of political biographies have been published on 19th-century black Members of Congress, including Revels, Elliott, White, Murray, Robert Smalls of South Carolina (1875–1879; 1882–1883; 1884–1887), John Mercer Langston of Virginia (1890–1891), and Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi (1875–1881). The lives of major 20th-century black Members of Congress have been chronicled in recent biographies, including Mitchell, Powell, and Young. But a number of prominent legislators have yet to be studied thoroughly, including 19th-century figures such as Rainey and John Roy Lynch of Mississippi (1873–1877; 1882–1883) and many 20th-century Members, including De Priest, Dawson, Diggs, Hawkins, and Jordan.

Several sources were indispensable starting points in the compilation of this book. Inquiries into Members' congressional careers should begin with the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov>. Maintained by the House Office of History and Preservation and the Senate Historical Office, this publication contains basic biographical information about Members, pertinent bibliographic references, and information about manuscript collections. It is easily searchable and updated regularly. In the early phase of research, we also consulted standard reference works such as the *American National Biography*, the *Dictionary of American Biography*, the *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, and *Current Biography*. We used various editions of the *Almanac of American Politics* (Washington, DC: National Journal Inc.) and *Politics in America* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press) as a starting point in our research involving current Members as well as many former Members who served after 1971.

Much of the information was researched using primary sources, particularly published official congressional records and scholarly compilations of congressional statistics. Following is a summary of the sources consulted for information related to congressional elections, committee assignments, legislation, votes, floor debates, news accounts, and images.

Congressional election results for the biennial elections from 1920 onward are available in the Clerk's "Election





In 1977, 15 of the Congressional Black Caucus members posed on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, from left to right: (front row) Barbara Jordan of Texas, Robert Nix, Sr., of Pennsylvania, Ralph Metcalfe of Illinois, Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, Gus Hawkins of California, Shirley Chisholm of New York; (middle row) John Conyers, Jr., of Michigan, Charles Rangel of New York, Harold Ford, Sr., of Tennessee, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia; (back row) Ronald Dellums of California, Louis Stokes of Ohio, and Charles C. Diggs, Jr., of Michigan.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Statistics,” published by the Government Printing Office (GPO) and available in PDF/HTML format at [http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/electionInfo/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/index.html). Michael J. Dubin et al., *United States Congressional Elections, 1788–1997* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Publishing, Inc., 1998) contains results for both general and special elections. For information on district boundaries and reapportionment, we relied on Kenneth C. Martis’s *The Historical Atlas of Political Parties in the United States Congress, 1789–1989* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989) and the three-volume work by Stanley B. Parsons et al., *United States Congressional Districts* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

Committee assignments and information about jurisdiction can be found in two indispensable scholarly compilations: David T. Canon, Garrison Nelson, and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789–1946*, four volumes (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2002) and Garrison Nelson, *Committees in*

*the U.S. Congress, 1947–1992*, two volumes (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1994). We also consulted the *Congressional Directory*, a GPO publication that dates back into the 19th century. From the 104th Congress onward, it is available online at GPO; see <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cdirectory/index.html>.

Legislation, floor debates, roll call votes, bills, resolutions, and public laws as far back as the 1980s can be searched on the Library of Congress’s THOMAS Web site at <http://thomas.loc.gov>. Two particularly useful print resources that discuss historical acts of Congress are: Steven V. Stathis’s *Landmark Legislation, 1774–2002: Major U.S. Acts and Treaties* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2002) and Brian K. Landsberg, ed., *Major Acts of Congress*, three volumes (New York: Macmillan Reference, Thompson–Gale, 2004). Floor debates about legislation can be found in the *Congressional Record* (1873 to the present), which is available at the THOMAS Web site from 1989 to the present; an index of the *Record* from



In 1992, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois became the first black woman and the fourth African American to win election to the U.S. Senate. Moseley-Braun was one of 17 new African-American Members elected in the 1992 campaign. As a result, the Congressional Black Caucus's numbers increased to a significant voting bloc of 40 members.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE U.S. SENATE HISTORICAL OFFICE

1983 to the present is available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cri/index.html>. Electronic copies of the *Congressional Globe* (the predecessor to the *Congressional Record*) are available at “A Century of Lawmaking,” part of the Library of Congress’s online American Memory Collection. We also consulted the official proceedings in the *House Journal* and the *Senate Journal*. For House roll call votes back to the second session of the 101st Congress, please visit the House History page on the Web site of Clerk of the House at [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/house\\_history/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/index.html). For Senate roll call votes back to the 1st session of the 101st Congress, see the following page on the U.S. Senate Web site: [http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a\\_three\\_sections\\_with\\_teasers/votes.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm). For print copies of the *Congressional Directory*, the *Congressional Record*, the *House Journal*, or the *Senate Journal*, please consult a local federal depository library. A GPO locator for federal depository libraries is accessible at <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp>.

Using an online database, we reviewed key newspapers for major historical time periods covered in this book, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe*, and

the *Atlanta Constitution*. We also consulted old editions of African-American newspapers, including the *Chicago Defender*, the *Atlanta Daily World*, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *New York Amsterdam*. News accounts and feature stories, particularly for Members who served before 1945, helped fill in obscure details. Many of these newspaper citations appear in the notes.

This edition of *Black Americans in Congress* involved a significant amount of photo research. Previous editions of this book included only a head-and-shoulders image of each Member. Individual picture credits were not included in the 1977 edition, though the book contained an acknowledgement page. In the 1990 edition, each picture was accompanied by a photo credit, but many images were credited to Members’ offices that no longer exist or to the collection of the House Historian whose office closed in the mid-1990s.

Anticipating that some readers might want to acquire photo reproductions, we strove to provide accurate information for images that are accessible from public, private, and commercial repositories. We used the following photo collections: Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress (Washington, DC); the Still Pictures Branch of the National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, MD); the Moorland–Spingarn Research Center at Howard University (Washington, DC); the Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC); the John Mercer Langston Collection, Fisk University Franklin Library (Nashville, TN); the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (Abilene, KS); the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (Boston, MA); the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (Austin, TX); the *Philadelphia Inquirer* archives; the Mike Espy Collection at the Congressional and Political Research Center at Mississippi State University (Starkville, MS); and the Texas State Senate Media Services (Austin, TX). Additionally, some images were provided by the Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives; the Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives; the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office; the Collection of the U.S. Senate; and the U.S. Senate Historical Office. The images of current Members were provided by their offices, which are the point of contact for persons seeking official images.

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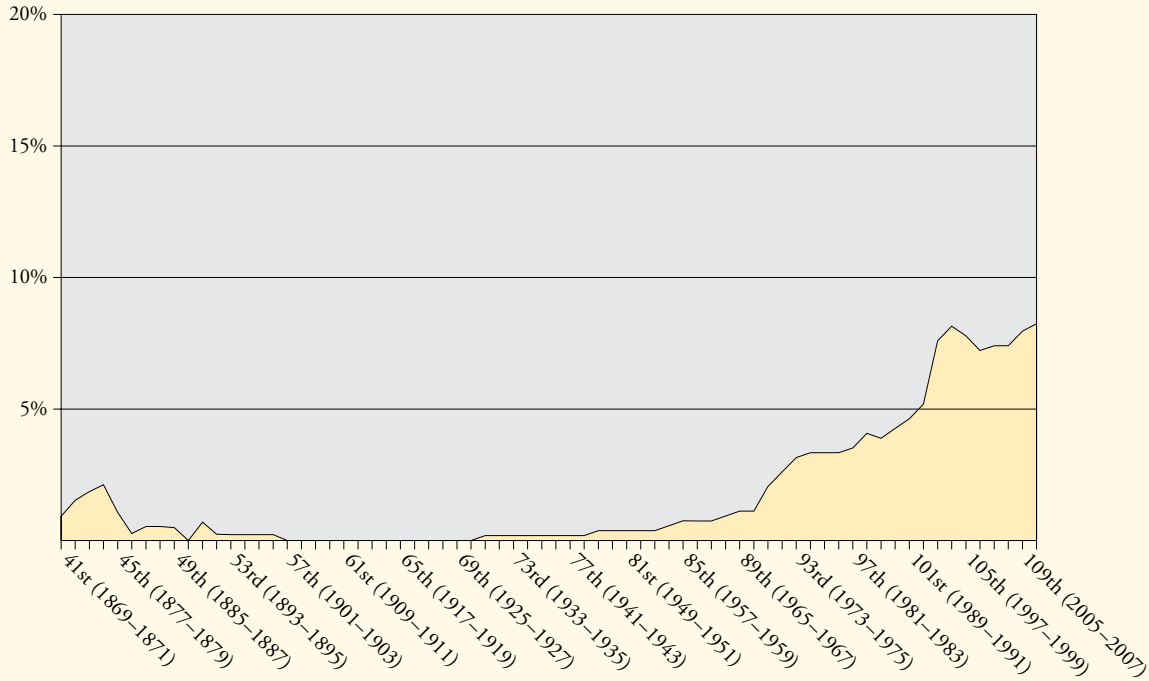
Matthew Wasniewski  
*Historian and Editor-in-Chief,*  
*Office of History and Preservation*

Erin Marie-Lloyd Hromada, Kathleen Johnson,  
Terrance Rucker, and Laura K. Turner  
*Writers and Researchers,*  
*Office of History and Preservation*

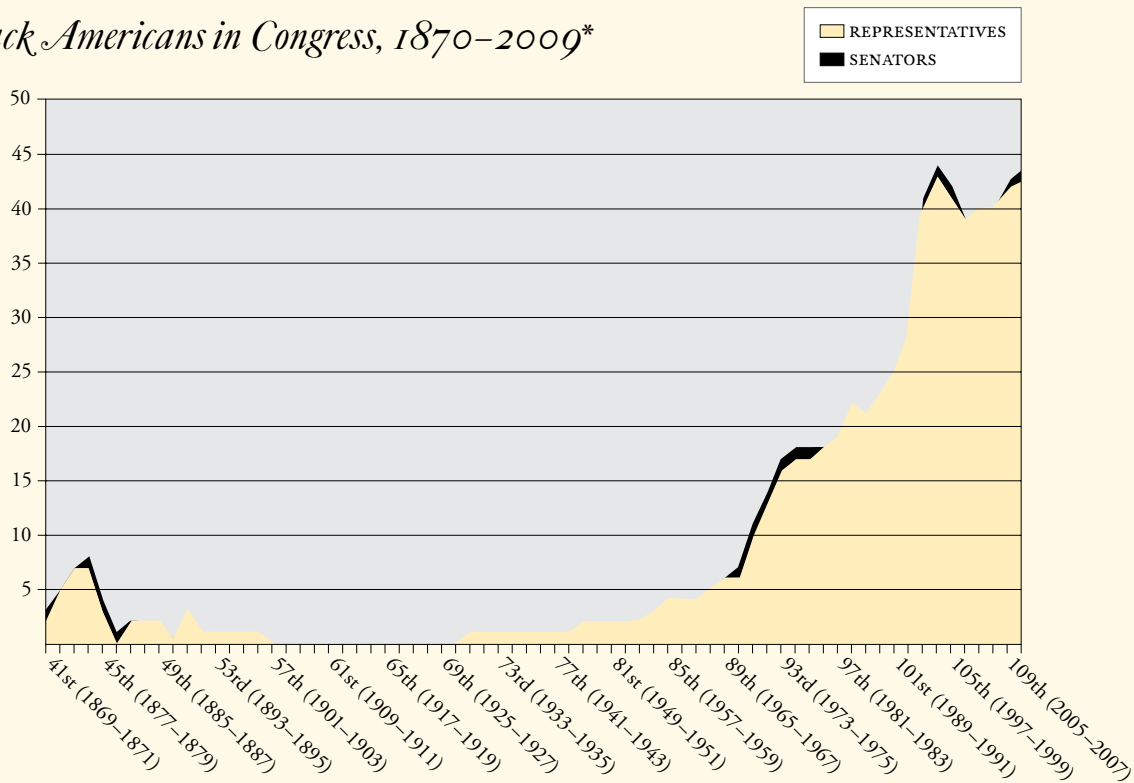
## NOTES

- 1 See William C. Allen with a foreword by Richard Baker and Kenneth Kato, *History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol* (Washington, DC: Architect of the Capitol, 2005), a report commissioned by the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate Slave Labor Task Force. Available at [http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/art\\_artifacts/slave\\_labor\\_report.pdf](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/art_artifacts/slave_labor_report.pdf) (accessed 28 February 2008). For a detailed analysis of Congress's management and, often, avoidance of central questions related to the practice of slavery from 1789 to 1860, see Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 2 The closing date for this volume was December 31, 2007.
- 3 Jane Mansbridge, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes,'" *Journal of Politics* 61 (1999): 628–657. See also Carol Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993): 3–19.
- 4 Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007): 26.
- 5 Charlayne Hunter, "Shirley Chisholm: Willing to Speak Out," 22 May 1970, *New York Times*: 31. For additional perspective, see William L. Clay, *Bill Clay: A Political Voice at the Grass Roots* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2004): 7.
- 6 See the *Atlanta Daily World*: "The Battle Royal in the Old First Illinois," 9 November 1934: 4; "Congressman Mitchell," 11 November 1934: 4; and "Congressman Mitchell Speaks," 13 March 1935: 6.
- 7 See Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 1–5.
- 8 For the "work horse" versus "show horse" styles, see James L. Payne, "Show Horses and Work Horses in the United States House of Representatives," *Polity* 12 (Spring 1980): 428–456; see also James Q. Wilson, "Two Negro Politicians: An Interpretation," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 5 (1960): 349–369.
- 9 For descriptions of these legislative styles in both chambers of Congress, see Payne, "Show Horses and Work Horses in the United States House of Representatives," and Donald R. Matthews, *U.S. Senators and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), especially the chapter "Folkways of the U.S. Senate."
- 10 *Congressional Record*, House, 43rd Cong., 1st sess. (3 February 1875): 957.
- 11 For a discussion of the relative influence and attractiveness of individual House committees during this era, see Charles Steward III, "Committee Hierarchies in the Modernizing House, 1875–1947," *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (1992): 835–856.
- 12 *Congressional Record*, House, 53rd Cong., 1st sess. (5 October 1893): 2161.
- 13 Nancy Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983): 227. Black voting loyalty underwent a fundamental shift during the 1930s, as voters left the Republican Party and joined the Democratic Party, but this development was multidecadal. Scholars often point to several milestones to map that movement: the promise of the New Deal and the relatively moderate racial policies of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration; President Harry S. Truman's continuation of racial progressivism, embodied by the desegregation of the military and the creation of the Civil Rights Commission; the appeal of President Truman and northern Democrats versus the racially conservative Dixiecrats in 1948; Barry Goldwater's embrace of racial conservatism during the 1964 presidential campaign; passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act; and the trend, beginning in the 1960s and extending for several decades, of old-line white southern Democrats switching their allegiance to the GOP. See also Michael K. Fauntroy, *Republicans and the Black Vote* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007): 41, 42–55.
- 14 Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 136–153, 324–343; Irwin Gertzog, *Congressional Women: Their Recruitment, Integration, and Behavior*, 2nd edition (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995): 254–257.
- 15 For more on this complex subject, see Taylor Branch's landmark three-volume history, which uses Martin Luther King, Jr., as a lens for viewing the movement and its many factions: *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).
- 16 Even Powell, who did not shy from publicly confronting racism, had a strained relationship with the movement. According to his chief biographer, the charismatic Harlem Representative viewed civil rights leaders outside Congress as competition for the mantle he had grown accustomed to wearing as the leading spokesperson for black civil rights. See Charles V. Hamilton, *Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.: The Political Biography of an American Dilemma* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1991): 283–284; see also Branch, *Pillar of Fire*: 45–46, 95–96.
- 17 Quoted in Robert Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1998): 105.
- 18 See Appendix E, Black Americans Who Have Chaired Congressional Committees, 1877–2007.
- 19 *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1977* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977).
- 20 *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1989*, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives, Bruce A. Ragsdale and Joel D. Treese, eds. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990): 1.

*Black Americans as a Percentage of Congress, 1870–2009\**



*Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2009\**



Sources: Appendix B: Black-American Representatives and Senators by Congress, 1870–2007; Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives; U.S. Senate Historical Office.

\*110th Congress (2007–2009) as of December 31, 2007.