

African-American Postal Workers in the 19th Century

African Americans began the 19th century with a small role in postal operations and ended the century as postmasters and letter carriers, and in positions at Post Office Department headquarters. By the beginning of the 21st century, one in five United States postal employees was African-American, serving at all levels of the Postal Service.

The abilities of African Americans were acknowledged by two Postmasters General around 1800. After the Civil War, African Americans moved quickly and ably into positions throughout the Post Office Department, which later continued to benefit from their contributions despite post-Reconstruction efforts to limit their rights in the voting booth and in their local communities.

Just after the 19th century, President Theodore Roosevelt began to test the power of the federal government – through the Post Office Department – to “interfere in the race problem” when he refused to allow a community to drive out an African-American postmaster, Minnie M. Cox of Indianola, Mississippi.¹ Her story, and those of other pioneering African Americans, is an important part of American postal history.

Earliest Known African-American Mail Carriers

The earliest known African Americans employed in the United States mail service were slaves who carried the mail in the South prior to 1802.

In 1794, Postmaster General Timothy Pickering wrote, regarding a mail route in Maryland, that

. . . if the Inhabitants . . . should deem their letters safe with a faithful black, I should not refuse him . . . I suppose the planters entrust more valuable things to some of their blacks.

In an apparent jab at the institution of slavery itself, Pickering added, “If you admitted a negro to be a man, the difficulty would cease.”² Pickering hated slavery with a passion; it was in part due to his efforts that the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 specifically forbade slavery in the territory north of the Ohio River.³

In April 1801, Postmaster General Joseph Habersham acknowledged that “some objections” had been made to Mr. Taylor, the mail contractor on the Frankfort, Kentucky, to Cincinnati, Ohio, route, “employing a slave as the Carrier of the Mail.”⁴ Defending Taylor’s use of the slave, Habersham wrote to the Frankfort postmaster that using slaves as mail carriers

. . . was generally allowed in the Southern States by my predecessors in office. I made no objection to it especially as it came within my knowledge that slaves in general are more trustworthy than that class of white men who will perform such services – the stages . . . [on] the Main Line are driven by Slaves & most of the Contractors employ them as mail carriers in the Southern States.

*Mr. Taylor may therefore be allowed to employ one for his route.*⁵

Island Rebellion Triggers U.S. Fears

The employment of African Americans as mail carriers was outlawed in 1802. A well-planned slave rebellion in 1791 in the French colony of St. Domingue (now Haiti), closely watched by the American press, had contributed to a growing fear among Southern whites that American slaves would organize a rebellion.⁶ Gideon Granger succeeded Habersham as Postmaster General in November 1801 and, in March 1802, wrote to Senator James Jackson of Georgia, Chairman of the Committee of the Senate on the Post Office Establishment:

. . . After the scenes which St. Domingo has exhibited to the world, we cannot be too cautious . . . plans and conspiracies have already been concerted by [slaves] more than once, to rise in arms, and subjugate their masters.

. . . The most active and intelligent [slaves] are employed as post riders . . . By travelling from day to day, and hourly mixing with people . . . they will acquire information. They will learn that a man's rights do not depend on his color. They will, in time, become teachers to their brethren.

. . . One able man among them, perceiving the value of this machine, might lay a plan which would be communicated by your post riders from town to town, and produce a general and united operation against you.⁷

Congress heeded Granger's warning, and in an Act of May 3, 1802, declared that

after the 1st day of November next, no other than a free white person shall be employed in carrying the mail of the United States, on any of the post-roads, either as a post-rider or driver of a carriage carrying the mail.⁸

This prohibition endured until March 3, 1865, when Congress directed that "no person, by reason of color, shall be disqualified from employment in carrying the mails" (13 Stat. 515).

African-American Vote Influences Elections

An Act of Congress of March 2, 1867, made universal male suffrage one of the conditions for southern states to be readmitted into the Union, and put federal troops in the South to protect this right and maintain order.⁹ In 1870, the 15th Amendment guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race.¹⁰ For the first time in the nation's history, African-American men had political power, and, in many areas of the South, they comprised the majority of voters. In three states – Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina – the majority of the population was African-American.¹¹ After the Civil War, the black vote was decisive in the election of several Republican Presidents, including President Ulysses Grant in 1868.¹² In keeping with the political patronage system of the 19th century, more than 1,400 African Americans were appointed to political office in the South by the victorious Republicans, in what historian Eric Foner termed America's first attempt at a "functioning interracial democracy."¹³ Foner noted that

because of the black population's concentration, nearly all of these officials served in or represented plantation counties, home of the wealthiest and, before the Civil War, most

James W. Mason First Known African-American Postmaster

James W. Mason was born a slave in Chicot County, Arkansas. His father, Elisha Worthington, was one of the wealthiest plantation owners in Arkansas. Worthington's wife left him and had their marriage annulled because of his relationship with a female slave, which produced James and his sister Martha. James and Martha were Worthington's only children, and he raised them as his own. They attended Oberlin Academy in Ohio as teenagers and were sent to France for further study. During the Civil War, Worthington left them in charge of Sunnyside, his largest plantation.

After the war, on February 22, 1867, James Mason was appointed postmaster of the Sunny Side Post Office. He served as postmaster until about 1871. He also served in the state senate, 1868-1869 and 1871-1872; as county judge, 1871-1872; and as county sheriff, 1872-1874. The 1870 census shows that he owned property worth \$12,000. James Mason died in 1875.

Martha Mason, James' sister, successfully sued the administrators of her late father's estate for a portion of his assets after Elisha Worthington died intestate in 1873. The verdict was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which decided the case in her favor in 1880.

For more information on James Mason, see Eric Foner's Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction, as well as Shadows Over Sunnyside: An Arkansas Plantation in Transition, 1830-1945, edited by Jeannie M. Whayne.

*powerful Southerners Former slaves . . . assessing taxes on the property of their former owners, and serving on juries alongside them, epitomized the political revolution wrought by Reconstruction.*¹⁴

While 19th-century postal records do not list the race of employees, more than 630 African Americans are known to have served during Reconstruction and beyond, including 142 as postmaster. (See “List of Known African-American Postmasters, 1800s.”) These individuals likely represent only a small fraction of the total number who served.¹⁵ They reflected the diversity of the African-American population of the time – some had been born as slaves, others as free men and women.

Earliest Known African-American Postmasters

The earliest known African-American postmaster was James W. Mason, who was appointed postmaster of Sunny Side, Arkansas, on February 22, 1867. The highest-paid African-American postmasters were Charles W. Ringgold of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Dr. Benjamin A. Boseman of Charleston, South Carolina; each earned \$4,000 annually. Both men were well-liked by the communities they served. In New Orleans, the newspapers of both political parties considered Mr. Ringgold a popular, honest, and able public servant.¹⁶ A front-page article in the March 19, 1873, *Charleston Daily News* heralded Dr. Boseman’s appointment as postmaster, providing a brief biography and describing him as “intelligent, courteous and educated.” His obituary in the February 24, 1881, issue of Charleston’s *The News and Courier* noted that as postmaster he was “civil and accommodating” and that “he enjoyed, deservedly, the reputation of being thoroughly honest.”

Of the known African-American postmasters appointed in the 1800s, twelve were women. The earliest known and longest serving was Mrs. Anna M. Dumas, who was appointed postmaster of the Covington, Louisiana, Post Office on November 15, 1872, and served until about June 1885. One of the best known was Mrs. Minnie M. Cox, who served two terms as postmaster of Indianola, Mississippi, beginning in 1891.

Many 19th-century African-American postmasters also served as elected representatives at the local, state, and/or national level, and helped establish schools for their communities.¹⁷ Pierre Landry, postmaster of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, from 1871 to 1875, had become the first known African American to serve as

Minnie M. Cox Postmaster



Credit: Zellie Orr

Minnie M. Geddings Cox was born in Lexington, Mississippi, in 1869, and was educated at Fisk University. In the late 1800s, she was among the most well-respected and prosperous citizens of Indianola in predominantly black Sunflower County, Mississippi. She assisted her husband, Wayne Cox, when he was principal of the Indianola Colored Public School. He later served as a Railway Mail Service clerk.

Postmaster General John Wanamaker appointed Mrs. Cox as postmaster of Indianola, Mississippi, on January 16, 1891. She served until around April 17, 1893. On May 22, 1897, she was appointed to a second term. In January 1900, the Indianola Post Office was advanced to third-class due to increased office revenue, and Cox was reappointed by President William McKinley. Postmasters of Presidential (first- through third-class) Post Offices were appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Cox continued to serve as postmaster under President Theodore Roosevelt.

In the fall of 1902, some white citizens of Indianola drew up a petition demanding that Minnie Cox resign as postmaster. Following veiled threats to her safety, Cox decided to resign. However, President Roosevelt refused to accept her resignation. According to a report in *The New York Times* on January 3, 1903,

The case was discussed by the Cabinet and the President decided that this was the best possible time to test the question whether a community could force out an office holder appointed by the Executive, and also the question whether the Federal government was powerless to interfere in the race problem.

On January 3, 1903, the President ordered that the Indianola Post Office be closed until the townspeople accepted Minnie Cox as postmaster. The town’s mail was sent to Greenville, 25 miles away.

The situation resolved itself in January 1904 at the expiration of Cox’s term. Minnie Cox adamantly refused to be reappointed postmaster and requested the appointment of William B. Martin, one of her bondsmen and a loyal friend throughout her troubles. Cox and her husband went on to found the Delta Penny Savings Bank, the largest African-American-owned bank in Mississippi.

mayor of a U.S. city when he was elected mayor of Donaldsonville in 1868. While serving as postmaster, he also served in the Louisiana House of Representatives and, later, the Louisiana State Senate.¹⁸

Difficulty in Obtaining Bonds

Like other political appointees, postmasters needed to be bonded for anywhere from several hundred to several thousand dollars before taking office. John R. Lynch of Mississippi, a former slave who was elected and served as a U.S. Congressman from 1873 to 1877, described his own troubles securing a bond following his appointment as a justice of the peace in 1869:

Then the bond question loomed up, which was one of the greatest obstacles in my way, although the amount was only two thousand dollars. How to give that bond was the important problem I had to solve, for, of course, no one was eligible as a bondsman who did not own real estate. There were very few colored men who were thus eligible, and it was out of the question at that time to expect any white property owner to sign the bond of a colored man. But there were two colored men willing to sign the bond for one thousand dollars each who were considered eligible by the authorities. These men were William McCary and David Singleton.¹⁹

William McCary became postmaster of Natchez, Mississippi, in 1883 and was the son of a prosperous, free black barber.²⁰

Early African-American Letter Carriers

About 250 African-American letter carriers are known to have been appointed during Reconstruction and beyond. (See "List of Known African-American Letter Carriers, 1800s.") The earliest known was James B. Christian, appointed at the Richmond, Virginia, Post Office on June 1, 1869. Later that same year Civil War hero William Carney began his work as a letter carrier at the New Bedford, Massachusetts, Post Office. Carney – the first African American to earn a Congressional Medal of Honor – carried the mail for nearly 32 years until he resigned on October 15, 1901.²¹

John W. Curry, another early letter carrier, started as a clerk at the Washington, D.C., Post Office in 1868, then joined the carrier force on April 20, 1870. He served until about 1899. His obituary, which appeared in the June 1899 issue of *The Postal Record*, the monthly publication of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), praised his "steadfast devotion to duty" and his advocacy of carriers' rights. The April 29, 1899, issue of the African-American newspaper *The Washington Bee* reported that Curry was "the first colored letter carrier" in Washington and "did much to open the way

"Z. T." and Jennie Fletcher Postmasters



Credit: Library of Congress

Zachary T. "Z. T." Fletcher was appointed as the first postmaster of the Nicodemus, Kansas, Post Office on September 12, 1877. His wife, Frances Jennie, was postmaster from 1889 to 1894, and also served as the town's first schoolteacher.

Nicodemus was a frontier town founded in 1877 by African Americans from the South seeking a better life. The town was designated a National Historic Site by Congress in 1996.

For more information on the history of Nicodemus, visit the National Park Service's website at www.nps.gov/archive/nico/home.htm (1/10/2007).

William H. Carney Letter Carrier



Credit: Library of Congress

William H. Carney was appointed a letter carrier at New Bedford, Massachusetts, on November 16, 1869, and served until he resigned in 1901.

Carney was the first African American to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor, for his valor during the Civil War. The bravery displayed by Carney and the rest of Massachusetts' 54th Regiment in the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, inspired the acclaimed 1989 movie *Glory*.

For more information on William Carney, see "NALC Pioneer William Carney: From runaway slave to Civil War hero," in the February 2001 issue of the *Postal Record*, at <http://nalc.org/news/precord/0201-civilwar.html> (12/20/2004).

for admission of other colored carriers.” The *Bee* noted that Curry was “an active participant in political affairs and assisted in securing to our colored citizens the system of public schools which we now enjoy.”

David W. Washington, a letter carrier in Memphis, Tennessee, from 1874 to at least 1911, served as Sergeant-at-Arms of the NALC in 1891 and was profiled in Marshall Cushing’s book, *The Story of Our Post Office*.²² Another African American prominent in the NALC was John H. Sherman, who worked for the Railway Mail Service in Florida beginning in 1874 before being appointed as one of Jacksonville’s first letter carriers on April 14, 1883. Sherman carried the mail until July 31, 1886, and then again from 1890 through 1911. The June 1899 issue of *The Postal Record* noted that he had been elected as a state delegate to the national convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers. Sherman helped organize the Knights of Labor (a labor organization) in Jacksonville, was a charter member of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Association, and served as the first elected city marshal of greater Jacksonville.²³

In 1879, all five of the letter carriers at Petersburg, Virginia, were African-American. One – Joseph P. Evans – had served as a state senator in 1871-1873 and 1874-1875.²⁴ Prior to the Civil War, Petersburg had one of the largest communities of free African Americans in the United States.

At least 16 African Americans served as letter carriers in Washington, D.C., in the late 1800s.²⁵ In February 1895, ten of Washington’s African-American letter carriers served as pallbearers at the funeral of Frederick Douglass. One of the carriers so honored, Richard B. Peters, explained

*when the news of the death of Frederick Douglass was whispered around amongst the carriers, a meeting was immediately called, and a committee sent to ask the family the privilege of appointing or selecting pall-bearers from our force. The offer was accepted . . .*²⁶

Afterwards, along with a military escort, they accompanied the hearse to the train depot, making their way through a crowd of thousands of mourners.²⁷

African-American Postal Inspector Solves Notorious Cases

About two hundred and forty other African-American employees are known to have served in the Post Office Department in other capacities in the 19th century, including 109 Post Office clerks; 62 Headquarters employees; 48 Railway Mail Service employees; and 23 mail carriers, contractors, and others. (See “List of Known African-American Post Office Clerks, 1800s,” and “List of Known African-American Employees, 1800s: Headquarters Employees, Railway Mail Service Employees, U.S. Mail Carriers, Contractors, and Others.”) Isaac Myers of Baltimore, Maryland, was the first known African-American Postal Inspector. According to his obituary in the April 1891 issue of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review*, Myers served from 1870 to 1879 and helped solve several notorious cases,

George B. Hamlet Chief Postal Inspector



Credit: Postal Inspection Service

George B. Hamlet is the only African American known to have been appointed as Chief Postal Inspector.

Originally from Oberlin, Ohio, Hamlet became involved in politics in Louisiana after the Civil War. He served as sheriff of Ouachita, Louisiana, and then as a Louisiana State Senator, 1876-77. He was well-known as a champion of the rights of African Americans in Louisiana (*The Washington Post*, July 25, 1900).

Hamlet became a Postal Inspector on May 19, 1897; Inspector-in-Charge of the Washington Division on July 8, 1897; and Chief Postal Inspector on August 3, 1897, at a salary of \$3,000 a year. By November 1898 Hamlet was demoted back to Postal Inspector because of what *The Washington Post* (August 17, 1900) termed “executive incapacity.”

In 1900 Hamlet garnered unwanted attention in local newspapers when he was charged with improper use of government transportation, apparently having let a contractor who was building a house for him use his inspector’s badge and railroad pass for trips to purchase materials (*The Washington Post*, July 25, 1900). While still under investigation, Hamlet was allowed to resign from the Post Office Department in August 1900. Because of his political connections, he was reinstated in 1901 for the sole purpose of transferring him to a position in the Treasury Department (*The Washington Post*, January 13, 1901, and June 11, 1903).

including the case of the “English swindler, William Parker, M.D.,” and the “celebrated Dead Letter Office case.”²⁸ His investigations also helped lead to the arrest of George W. Claypole, a thieving clerk in the Baltimore Post Office. A story in the August 24, 1874, issue of *The New York Times* noted Claypole had “puzzled the efforts of the shrewdest detectives in the Post Office Department.”

Threats Against Some African-American Postmasters

In the 1876 Presidential election, Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes eked out a narrow victory in a hotly disputed election. As a compromise with Southern Democrats, the newly-elected President agreed to pull federal troops out of the South.²⁹ Soon, fraud, intimidation, gerrymandering, and exclusionary voting requirements such as the poll tax excluded many African Americans from the polls and from political life.³⁰

African Americans continued to serve in the Post Office Department. However, African Americans in general, and political appointees in particular, became targets of racial violence. National newspapers reported on black postmasters who were threatened, intimidated out of their jobs, and even murdered. In September 1897, attempts were made to kill Isaiah Loftin, postmaster of Hogansville, Georgia, to stop him from serving as postmaster; he eventually resigned.³¹ Frazier B. Baker, postmaster of Lake City, South Carolina, was murdered along with his infant daughter, and his house was set afire by an angry mob in February 1898.³² In response, the Post Office Department sent Post Office Inspectors to investigate the murders, closed the Post Office in Lake City, and forbade the mail agent on the train to receive letters from the town. Thirteen prominent citizens were tried for the murder, but the case resulted in a mistrial when the jury could not reach a unanimous decision.³³

Support for and from Coworkers

In New Jersey, letter carriers stood by their own. A story in *The New York Times* on April 17, 1893, reported:

A slight put upon Letter Carrier [Louis A.] Sears because of his color has aroused considerable excitement among Newark wheelmen. Sears is a colored man who has been many years engaged in the Post Office. He is the first, so it is said, who utilized a bicycle in the performance of his duties. Several of the other letter carriers followed his example.

Recently a party of wheelmen known as the “Select Few” arranged a run and sent invitations to bicycle riders throughout the county. Cards were received by every bicyclist among the Newark letter carriers except Sears. His fellow-carriers became indignant at the slight, and have unanimously voted to decline the invitation . . .

Department Appoints African Americans to Higher Positions

The Post Office Department continued to appoint African Americans to postal positions. For example, John T. Jackson, Sr., served as postmaster at the Alanthus, Virginia, Post Office for nearly 49 years, from 1891 until his retirement in 1940. Joshua E. Wilson served as postmaster of Florence, South Carolina, on four different occasions, beginning in 1876 and ending in 1909. James Cantrell was postmaster of Lyles, Indiana, from 1898 to 1920.

**Louis A. Sears
Letter Carrier**



Detail of an early 1888 photograph of Newark, New Jersey, letter carriers. The carrier at the center may be Louis A. Sears, said to be the first carrier in Newark to use a bicycle to deliver the mail.

In 1897, two African Americans were appointed to high-ranking positions in the Post Office Department: George B. Hamlet became Chief Postal Inspector and John P. Green became the Postage Stamp Agent. Green's office inspected each stamp issued by the Department to ensure that the stamps exactly matched the contract between the Government and the Bureau of Printing and Engraving with respect to paper, color, perforations, and adhesive.³⁴ An article in the August 3, 1897, issue of *The Washington Post* noted that Green's position was "one of the most lucrative sinecures in the department," and that he would supervise "a force of eight white persons."³⁵

In a circa-1899 Republican Party publication, *The Colored American Republican Text Book*, Green was quoted as saying that President William McKinley gave

*more official patronage to the colored American than any other President before him; and would have done more for the colored Republicans of the South, if the murderous assaults made on federal appointees there had not discouraged it.*³⁶

Green served as Postage Stamp Agent until 1906, when the clerical force of the Postage Stamp Agency was transferred to the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General and his position as Postage Stamp Agent was discontinued.³⁷

Letter Carrier, Richmond, Virginia, circa 1899

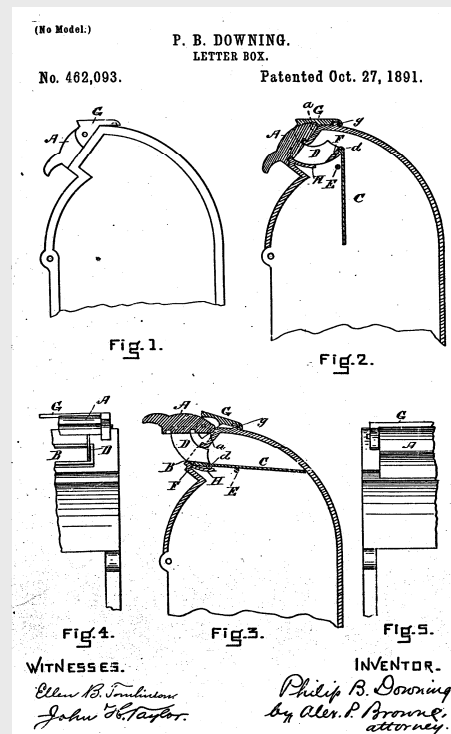


Credit: Library of Congress

An unidentified letter carrier paused for a photograph (detail shown) in front of S. J. Gilpin's shoe store in Richmond, Virginia, circa 1899. That year, 12 of Richmond's 49 regular carriers – nearly 25 percent – were African-American.

Philip B. Downing

Although not a postal employee, Philip B. Downing, an African American from Boston, Massachusetts, invented improvements to street letter collection boxes for which he received a patent in 1891. Collection boxes had been in use since 1858. His design gave mail greater security from theft and weather.



¹ *The New York Times*, January 3, 1903, 1.

² Pickering to John Hargrove, August 8, 1794, National Archives Microfilm Publication 601, *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General, 1789-1836*, Roll 3, 372-373. Pickering, from Massachusetts, served under General George Washington during the Revolutionary War and filled several top government posts during the 1780s and 1790s (see his biography at http://blue.usps.gov/postalhistory/pmg_pickering.htm).

³ "To suffer the continuance of slaves until they can gradually be emancipated in States already overrun with them may be pardonable, because unavoidable without hazarding greater evils; but to introduce them into countries where none now exist . . . can never be forgiven," Pickering wrote to Rufus King (member of the Continental Congress), 3/16/1785. "Your ideas have had weight with the committee who reported this ordinance," King to Pickering, 4/15/1785. "Mr. King of Massachusetts has a resolution ready drawn . . . for preventing slavery in the new State. I expect Seven States may be found liberal enough to support it," William Grayson to James Madison, 5/1/1785. Pickering letter cited in Charles R. King, editor, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, Comprising His Letters, Private and Official, His Public Documents, and His Speeches* (New York: De Capo Press, 1971), Volume I, 46. Text of King and Grayson letters, as well as the Northwest Ordinance, are available online in the Library of Congress' American Memory online collections, at <http://memory.loc.gov>. For further information on Pickering's opposition to slavery, see "Negro President": *Jefferson and the Slave Power*, by Garry Wills (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003).

⁴ Habersham to Isaac E. Gano, postmaster of Frankfort, Kentucky, National Archives Microfilm Publication 601, *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General, 1789-1836*, Roll 10, 321.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For information on the influence of events in St. Domingue on American politics, see Donald R. Hickey, "America's Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti, 1791-1806," in the *Journal of the Early Republic*, 1982, 2 (4), 361-369, and Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

⁷ Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklin, eds., *American State Papers, Class VII: Post Office Department* (March 4, 1789, to March 2, 1833) (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 27.

⁸ *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America from the Organization of the Government in 1789, to March 3, 1845 . . . Volume II* (Boston, MA: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 191.

⁹ *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations, of the United States of America, from December, 1865, to March, 1867* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1868), 429.

¹⁰ *The Statutes at Large and Proclamations of the United States of America, from December 1869 to March 1871, and Treaties and Postal Conventions* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1871), 1131.

¹¹ Henry Gannett, *Statistics of the Negroes in the United States*, Occasional Papers, No. 4 (Baltimore: The Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund, 1894), 21. [<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aapchtml/aapchome.html>, 11/30/2004]

¹² John R. Lynch, *The Facts of Reconstruction* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1913), 96-98. The Republican party was the party of Abraham Lincoln and, after the Civil War, espoused a strong federal government and civil rights for blacks. Socially-conservative Southern Democrats wanted a return to the old social order.

¹³ Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹⁵ For example, in a letter to Booker T. Washington, First Assistant Postmaster General James S. Clarkson claimed to have appointed "over eleven hundred" African Americans, but only 39 employees listed here are known to have been appointed during his term (March 14, 1889, to September 29, 1890). [Letter of February 7, 1896, in *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Volume 4 (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 111, online at <http://www.historycooperative.org/btw/Vol.4/html/111.html>, 1/12/2007].

¹⁶ *The Daily (New Orleans) Picayune*, April 8, 1875; *The New Orleans Weekly Louisianian*, April 10, 1875.

¹⁷ See individual biographies in Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction*.

¹⁸ Landry biography at www.amistadresearchcenter.org/pdfs/finding-dunn.pdf, 11/24/2004.

¹⁹ Lynch, 28-29.

²⁰ Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers*, 1993, 145.

²¹ See "NALC Pioneer William Carney: From Runaway Slave to Civil War Hero," in the February 2001 *Postal Record*.

²² Marshall Cushing, *The Story of Our Post Office* (Boston, Massachusetts: A. M. Thayer & Co., 1893), 817.

²³ *The Postal Record, A Monthly Journal of the National Association of Letter Carriers*, June 1899, 161.

²⁴ Virginia State Library, *The General Assembly of Virginia, July 30, 1619 – January 11, 1978* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1978), 514, 519.

²⁵ In 1890 about a third of the city's residents were African-American. www.census.gov/population/documentation/twps0056/tab23.pdf, 1/3/2005.

²⁶ *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1895, 9.

²⁷ *The Washington Post*, February 22, 1895, 2. The February 24, 1895, issue of *The Washington Post* identifies the carriers who served as pallbearers as Dorsey Seville, John W. Curry, John H. George, Richard B. Peters, W. H. Marshall, W. H. Cowan, H. W. Hewlett, Raymond Russell, Mercer S. Alexander, and John D. Butler.

²⁸ *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review*, vol. 7, no. 4, April 1891, 354-355 at <http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam/> 12/20/2004].

²⁹ Lynch, 130.

³⁰ For examples of disenfranchisement tactics, see Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 319-328.

³¹ *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1897, 1; January 27, 1900, 9.

³² Some sources spell Baker's first name "Fraser."

³³ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 23, 1898, 1; *The Washington Post* April 3, 1901, 4.

³⁴ *The New York Times*, March 18, 1899, 12.

³⁵ The 1899 *Official Register* lists Mr. Green as the head of the Postage Stamp Agency, earning an annual salary of \$2,500, with a staff of a chief clerk, six clerks, and three laborers working for him.

³⁶ *The Colored American Republican Text Book* (Washington, D.C.: The Colored American Publishing Company, ca. 1899), 36, online at <http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam/>, 1/4/2005.

³⁷ John P. Green, *Fact Stranger Than Fiction. Seventy-Five Years of a Busy Life With Reminiscences of Many Great and Good Men and Women*, (Cleveland, OH: Riehl Printing Company, 1920), 272, online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/greenfact/green.html>, 1/4/2005.