

Biographies of 24 Colored Men Who Served in the U. S. Congress

JAMES THOMAS RAPIER (1837-1883)

Born in Florence, Lauderdale County, Ala., November 13, 1837; educated in private schools in Alabama and studied in Canada. Studied law and was admitted to the bar; taught school, returned to the South and traveled as a correspondent for a Northern newspaper. He went to Florence, Ala., and became a cotton planter; appointed notary public by the governor in 1866; member of the first Republican convention held in Alabama, was one of the committee that framed the platform; member of the State Constitutional Convention at Montgomery in 1867. Unsuccessful candidate for secretary of State of Alabama in 1870.

Appointed assessor of internal revenue in 1871; named State commissioner to the Vienna Exposition in 1873 by the governor of his State; also commissioner for the U. S. at the World's Fair in Paris, France, 1878.

Elected as a Republican in 1872 to the House of Representatives in the Forty-third Congress and served from March 4, 1873, to March 3, 1875; unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1874 to the Forty-fourth Congress.

JEFFERSON FRANKLIN LONG (1836-1900)

Congressman Long was born near Knoxville, Crawford County, Ga., March 3, 1836; received a primary education and became a merchant tailor at Macon. Mr. Long was elected to the Forty-first Congress to fill the vacancy created when the House declared Samuel F. Gove, white, not entitled to his seat.

He served from December 22, 1870, to March 3, 1871, and was not a candidate for re-election. Resigning from the House, he resumed his occupation as a tailor.

Mr. Long, second colored man elected and seated in the House, the first from Georgia, died February 5, 1900.



JOHN MERCER LANGSTON (1829-1897)

Born in Louisa, Louisa County, Va., December 14, 1829; attended the common schools in Ohio, graduated from the literary department of Oberlin College in 1849 and from the theological department in 1852. Studied law in Elyria, Ohio, assisted in recruiting colored men in the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Regiments during the Civil War.

Appointed inspector-general of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands in 1868. Practiced law in Washington, dean of the law department of Howard University, 1869-1876; commissioned by President Grant a member of the board of health of the District of Columbia in 1871.

Elected president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, Petersburg, Va., in 1885. Successfully contested as a Republican the election of Edward C. Venable, white, to the Fifty-first Congress, served from September 23, 1890, to March 3, 1891; unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1890 to the Fifty-second Congress. Died in Washington November 15, 1897.



JERE HARALSON (1846-1916)

Born in Muscogee County, Ga., April 1, 1846. A slave until emancipated in 1865; removed to Alabama; elected a member of the State legislature in 1870 and to the Alabama Senate in 1872. He was elected as a Republican to the Forty-fourth Congress March 4, 1875 and served until March 3, 1877, when he resigned. Appointed U. S. custom inspector in Baltimore in 1879, and served until his resignation in 1882.

He then removed to Louisiana, then Texas. Later he removed again to Oklahoma, then Colorado where, in the latter State, he engaged in coal mining, and in 1916 was killed by wild beasts.

