



MASS BLCU-2: 556

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Great and General Court

Massachusetts Black Caucus

State House, Boston 02133

✓

SENATOR

ROYAL BOLLING, SR.
1st and 2nd SUFFOLK DISTRICT

Tel. 722-2680
722-2681
722-2682

REPRESENTATIVES

RAYMOND JORDAN
12th HAMPDEN DISTRICT

LAUNDRA GRAHAM
13th MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

BYRON RUSHING
14th SUFFOLK DISTRICT

GLORIA FOX
15th SUFFOLK DISTRICT

AUGUSTO GRACE
16th MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

SHIRLEY OWENS-HICKS
17th SUFFOLK DISTRICT

MASSACHUSETTS BLACK LEGISLATIVE

CAUCUS

"BLACKS ON BEACON HILL"

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
LIST OF BLACK MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COURT

1867/1987

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|-----|
| 1867 | EDWIN GARRISON WALKER OF CHARLESTOWN (LAWYER) | (R) |
| | CHARLES LEWIS MITCHELL OF BOSTON (PRINTER) | |
| 1868-1869 and 1872 | JOHN JAMES SMITH OF BOSTON (HAIRDRESSER) | (R) |
| 1870-1871 | GEORGE LEWIS RUFFIN OF BOSTON (LAWYER, JUDGE) | (R) |
| 1873 | LEWIS HAYDEN OF BOSTON (MESSENGER) | |
| 1873-1874 | JOSHUA BOWEN SMITH OF CAMBRIDGE (CATERER) | |
| 1878-1879 | GEORGE WILLIAM LOWTHER OF BOSTON (MESSENGER, & HAIRDRESSER) | (R) |
| 1883-1886 | JULIUS CAESAR CHAPPELLE OF BOSTON (JANITOR) | (R) |
| 1887-1888 | WILLIAM OSCAR ARMSTRONG OF BOSTON (PORTOR) | (R) |
| 1889-1890 | ANDREW BERKLEY LATTIMORE OF BOSTON (CLERK) | (R) |
| 1892-1893 | CHARLES EDWARD HARRIS OF BOSTON (CATERER) | (R) |
| 1894-1895 | ROBERT THOMAS TEAMOH OF BOSTON | (R) |
| 1896-1897 | WILLIAM LOUIS REED OF BOSTON (TOBACCONIST) | (R) |
| 1902 | WILLIAM HENRY LEWIS, SR., OF CAMBRIDGE (LAWYER) | (R) |
| 1947-1948 | LAURENCE H. BANKS OF ROXBURY (LAWYER) | (R) |
| 1951-1954 | HERBERT LORING JACKSON OF MALDEN (TAILOR) | (R) |
| 1957-1964 | LINCOLN G. POPE, JR., OF ROXBURY (ENGINEER) | (D) |
| 1959-1960 | OSWALD LOUIS JORDAN OF ROXBURY (LAWYER) | (D) |
| 1961-1964 | ALFRED S. BROTHERS OF ROXBURY (REAL ESTATE BROKER) | (D) |
| 1961-1968 and 1971-1972 | ROYAL L. BOLLING OF ROXBURY (REAL ESTATE BROAKER) | (D) |
| 1965-1970 | REV. MICHAEL E. HAYNES OF ROXBURY (CLERGYMAN & (Became member of Parole Bd. 11/5/ SOCIAL/WORKER | (D) |
| 1970(2/18/70) | *GEORGE A. JOHNSON (Spec. Election) (EDUCATOR) | (R) |
| 1965-1972 | FRANKLIN W. HOLGATE OF ROXBURY (INVESTMENT COUNSELLOR) | (D) |
| 1971-1972 | CARTER D. KIMBREL OF DORCHESTER (INSURANCE BROKER) | (D) |

* REPLACED REVEREND MICHAEL E. HAYNES

*REPLACED DORIS BUNTE

BLACK MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COURT (CON'T)

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| 1973 | ROYAL L. BOLLING, JR., OF MATTAPAN (REAL ESTATE BROKER) | (D) |
| 1973 | DORIS BUNTE OF ROXBURY (MEMBER OF BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY) | (D) |
| 1973-1974 | BILL OWENS OF MATTAPAN (EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR) | (D) |
| 1973-1982 | MELVIN KING OF SOUTH END (PROFESSOR-MIT) | (D) |
| 1975-1978 | ROBERT FORTES OF MATTAPAN (ASSOC. DIRECTOR USES) | (D) |
| 1975-1978 | MARY GOODE OF ROXBURY (ASSOC. DIRECTOR WINNERS) | (D) |
| 1975 | RAYMOND A. JORDAN, JR. OF SPRINGFIELD (ADMINISTRATOR AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE) | (D) |
| 1977 | SAUNDRA GRAHAM OF CAMBRIDGE (CITY COUNCILOR OF CAMBRIDGE) | (D) |
| 1983 | BYRON RUSHING OF SOUTH END (PRES. MUSECUM OF AFRO AMERICAN HISTORY) | (D) |
| 1986 | GLORIA FOX OF ROXBURY (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROXBURY/ *SPECIAL ELECTION-REPLACED ^{DORCHESTER APAC} DORIS BUNTE' | (D) |
| 1987 | AUGUSTO GRACE OF BURLINGTON, (ATTORNEY) | (D) |
| 1987 | SHIRLEY OWENS HICKS OF MATTAPAN, (BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER) | (D) |

BLACK MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| 1975-1982 | BILL OWENS OF MATTAPAN (EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR) | (R) |
| 1983 | ROYAL BOLLING SR. OF MATTAPAN (REAL ESTATE BROKER) | (D) |

Introduction

1867 marked a very important year for the residents of Massachusetts, particularly Black residents, because it was in this year that the first Black legislators were elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Both Edwin Walker, a Boston attorney, and Charles Mitchell, a printer also from Boston, were elected to serve one-year terms in the State Legislature. Thus they became not only the first Black Massachusetts legislators, but also the first Black state legislators in the United States. From 1867 to the turn-of-the-century, there were a total of fourteen Blacks, from widely varying backgrounds, chosen to serve in the Legislature. Some of these Blacks included George Lowther of Boston, formerly a messenger for the State Treasurer, Andrew Lattimore, a clerk from Boston, and George Ruffin, a Boston lawyer, who was also Massachusetts' first Black judge. All in all, there was at least one Black in the House for twenty-three of the thirty-five years from 1867-1902. Traditionally these representatives tend to be from the Boston area, as it is the only area in Massachusetts which has a substantial enough Black population to elect a Black representative.

After 1902 there were no Blacks elected to the Legislature again until 1947; there are several reasons for this void. The main reason was that Black communities in Boston were the constant targets of gerrymandering. The Legislature managed to successfully dilute Black voter strength on several occasions.

A second major reason was the influx of foreigners, mainly the Irish, who entered the Boston area. Not only did this influx dilute Black voter strength, it also caused many traditional allies of the Black community to shift their priorities and become preoccupied with this immigrant community.

Other reasons for the lack of Black representation were the result of factors within the Black community itself. First, Black immigrants from the South were beginning to compose a sizable portion of the Black population in Boston. As this process continued, splits developed within the Black community between these new Southern immigrants and the Boston Blacks. This already tenuous situation was further complicated by the introduction of Black immigrants from the West Indies.

Also, this was a period of transition, because many Blacks moved from the West End to the South End. This further reduced the concentration of voters which had earlier helped to elect the Black Representatives.

In the 1940's a resurgence of Black political activity began which culminated in the election of Laurence Banks of Roxbury as the first Black in the House of Representatives in almost half a century. The fifties and sixties were a time of growing influence as in 1957 Lincoln Pope, a civil engineer from Roxbury was elected to four consecutive terms, which was unprecedented for a Black Representative. In 1961 Pope was joined in the House by Alfred Brothers, a Boston real estate broker, and Royal Bolling, Sr. another Boston real estate broker, to give Blacks three Representatives serving simultaneously for the first time.

During the late sixties and early seventies some of the Representatives included: Rev. Michael Haynes of Roxbury, Franklin Holgate, an investment counsel or from Roxbury, George Johnston, a Boston-area educator, and Insurance broker Carter Kimbrel of Dorchester.

1973 marked the beginning of a new era for Blacks on Beacon Hill as an unprecedented five Blacks were elected to the House. More gains were made in 1975 when this number was increased to seven, and for the first time, a Black man, Bill Owens, an administrator in the educational system, was elected to serve in the Senate. These elections were also extremely significant, because they marked the election of the first Black women to the House of Representatives. Rep. Doris Bunte became the first Black woman with her election in 1973 and she was joined in 1975 by Mary Goode of Roxbury and in 1977 by Sandra Graham, a teen counselor from Cambridge.

In January 1973 the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus was formed, as these Black Legislators joined together to identify and pursue certain common goals. They stated their purpose, "to work toward Black empowerment across the State of Massachusetts, with priority attention being given to the problems of Boston's Black community with a view toward developing models for problem-solving/community development that can be transported." Their major goal was to develop a power base which would make the political and legislative process accountable and accessible to the Black community. Their priority legislation included employment opportunities and Affirmative Action programs, housing, human services, and economic development in the inner

city. This basic focus has not changed very much in the past few years.

Some of these Legislators who have been members of the MBLC have included: Senator Bill Owens, a education administrator from Mattapan; Robert Fortes, the Associate Director of USES, also of Mattapan, and former Chairperson of the MBLC Mary Goode of Roxbury, Associate Director of Winners. Rep. Goode served from 1975-78. Another former Caucus member and two-time Boston mayoral candidate is Melvin H. King of the South End, who served from 1973-82.

Edwin Garrison Walker (Sept. 28, 1831-Jan. 13, 1901)

Year in Office: 1867
Party: Republican
District: Charlestown
Place of Birth: Boston

Education: Boston Public Schools
self-taught lawyer
Occupation: Lawyer, Businessman
Leather Worker
Organizations: Colored National
League (Pres.-1896).
Charles Street AME
Church

Biographical Sketch:

Edwin Walker was born in 1831 to Eliza and David Walker. His mother was probably a fugitive slave, and his father was the publisher of an incendiary pamphlet, the Appeal (1829). In this pamphlet David Walker said that Blacks were "the most oppressed and degraded set of beings since the world began," and that most whites were their "natural enemies," and lastly he called for Blacks to revolt world-wide. A Georgia man offered a \$10,000 reward for Walker's capture. In 1830, before Edwin was born, the elder Walker died, under mysterious circumstances, possibly poisoning.

Edwin began to earn his living as a leather-worker, and finally established his own shop where he employed as many as 15 workers. He began to read Blackstone's Commentaries and to study law. He later studied with a Charlestown firm. In May, 1861 he passed the law exam and became only the third Black admitted to the Suffolk Bar. Walker quickly became a prominent Boston lawyer, with many of his clients being Irish.

In 1867 he was elected to the Massachusetts State Legislature as the Representative from Ward 3, which had only three Black voters. For years, Walker carried on a friendly rivalry with Charles Mitchell over who was the first Black elected. Although Mitchell was elected in the same election, Walker claimed that since the polls in Ward 3 closed earlier than the polls in Mitchell's district, he was the first Black elected to a United States State Legislature.

In the next election Walker opposed the Republican Party's policies, so he was not nominated. He later became a Democrat. He again began to concentrate on his private practice. As a Democrat he supported Benjamin Butler's campaign for Governor. When elected, Butler responded by nominating Walker for a judgeship; however Walker's Republican foes rejected him three times. In 1890 Walker was nominated for U. S. President on a Negro Party ticket.

Walker was described as "a tall dark man of imposing figure" with "argunentative skills and fine oratorical ability." Throughout his life he promoted the rights of "all the downtrodden." He was also one of the first Blacks to criticize blind party loyalty; he once said, "Union among ourselves, division between the two political parties."

Charles Lewis Mitchell (Nov. 10, 1829-April 13, 1912)

Year in Office: 1867

Education: ?

Party: Republican

Occupation: Printer, Soldier

District: Boston

Place of Birth: Hartford, Conn.

Biographical Sketch:

Charles Lewis Mitchell was born in 1829 to parents, who were free Blacks and well-known throughout the Hartford area. In 1853 they moved to Boston, where Mitchell later got a job working with William Lloyd Garrison publishing The Liberator. Midway through the Civil War, Mitchell enlisted in the Union Army. He was stationed in South Carolina, where he lost a foot in combat at Honey Hill. His remaining combat time was spent in hospitals.

Soon after he returned to Boston he was elected to the State House of Representatives. For years he maintained a good-natured feud with Edwin Walker over who had been the first Black elected to a State Legislature in the U. S., as Walker was elected in the same year.

One year after finishing his term Mitchell became the first Black Inspector of Customs in Boston. And he served as the Clerk of the Customs House from 1871-1899. In 1877 he married Nellis Brown, a music teacher and a local singer. He later died of apoplexy.

John James Smith(Nov. 2,1820-Nov. 4,1906)

Years in Office:1868, 1869, 1872

Education: ?

Party: Republican

Occupation:Barber,

District: Boston

Hairdresser

Place of Birth: Richmond, VA

Biographical Sketch:

John James Smith became the first Black to serve more than one term in the Massachusetts Legislature, as he was elected to serve three terms. As a free Black, Smith left his Richmond, Virginia home and moved to Boston in 1848. One year later Smith along with many other Americans went West in the California Gold Rush, but soon returned to Boston.

Upon his return, Smith opened a barbershop at the corner of Howard and Bulfinch Streets . This shop served as the focal point for much of Boston's Black Abolitionist activity. Smith's practice was soon interrupted by the Civil War, as he was stationed in Washington, D. C. There he worked as a recruiting officer for the all-Black 5th Cavalry.

Lewis Hayden(Dec. 3,1811-April 7,1889)

Year in office: 1873

Party: Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth: Lexington,Kentucky

Education: ?

Occupations: Underground

Railroad Operator, Business-
man, Clothier

Organization: National Masonic
Lodge(Grandmaster

Biographical Sketch:

Lewis Hayden was born the slave of a Presbyterian minister in Kentucky. His mother was both Indian and white, while his father was a Black who worked in a factory. His mother was sold and Lewis was traded for a pair of carriage horses. While still in his late teens, Hayden married a woman named Harriet who already had three children. He had opportunities to escape, but rejected them because he could not take his family.

In 1844 Calvin Fairbank and Celia Webster, underground railroad operators, arranged the Hayden family's escape to Canada. Both Fairbank and Webster were arrested and charged with slave-stealing. The Haydens lived in Canada for four years. They then moved to Detroit, where Lewis built a "colored school" and a Methodist Church, where he preached against slavery.

Soon the family moved again, this time their destination was Boston. Once there, Hayden opened a clothing store. His house soon became the main Boston stop on the Underground Railroad. Harriet Beecher Stowe reported having seen as many as 12 fugitive slaves upon one visit to the Hayden home. There are several other interesting stories about vents involving the Haydens. For instance, one slave, Shadrach, was arrested and rushed to the Boston Courthouse. An angry crowd of Blacks, led by Hayden and Robert Morris stormed the building and took Shadrach. They proceeded to drive him to Concord where he was

promptly and safely placed on the Underground Railroad to Canada. Many Blacks were arrested and tried , but they were not convicted for the raid.

Another such episode was foiled and ended miserably. Hayden and another group of Blacks again stormed the Courthouse to free another fugitive slave, Anthony Burns. The group was forced out of the building and Burns was returned South. Several participants were arrested and convicted, but Hayden managed to escape prosecution, alledgedly because of his contacts in the community. This episode was not a total failure as Burns was the last slave arrested and extradited.

Boston schools were desegregated in 1855 and Hayden was invited to speak at the ceremony. Finally on July 1, 1958 Hayden became the first Black man in Massachusetts to hold a public office when he was appointed as a Messenger in the Office of the Secretary of the State. In 1873 Hayden was elected to the State Legislature as a Representative from Boston. Hayden died in 1873 and the former Secretary of State served as a pallbearer at the funeral.

George Lewis Ruffin(Dec. 16,1834-Nov. 19,1886)

Years in Office: 1870-1871

Party: Republican

District: Boston

Place of Birth: Richmond, VA

Education: Chapman Hall

School, Harvard

Law School

Occupations: Barber, Judge,
Lawyer

Biographical Sketch:

George Lewis Ruffin was the first son of George and Nancy Lewis, a family of free Blacks who moved their family to Boston in 1853. Ruffin attended the Chapman Hall School and in 1858 he married Josephine St.Pierre. He worked as a barber and tried to join the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War, but he was too Near-sighted.

He began to study law with Jewill Gatson and became the first Black to acquire a law degree from any university, when he graduated from Harvard. In 1869 he was admitted to the Suffolk Bar and he then joined Gatson's Law firm. The following year he and his law partner earned seats in the Massachusetts House.

Ruffin was nominated by Governor Ben Butler and was confirmed on November 19, 1883 to become the first Black judge in the state of Massachusetts. Another of Ruffin's more noteworthy accomplishments was that at the request of Douglass himself, Ruffin wrote the introduction to The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.

Charles Lewis Mitchell (Nov. 10, 1829 - April 13, 1912)

Year in Office: 1867
Party: Republican
District: Boston
Place of Birth: Hartford, Conn.
Education: ?
Occupation: Printer, soldier

Biographical Sketch:

Charles Lewis Mitchell was born in 1829 to parents, who were free Blacks and well-known throughout the Hartford area. In 1853, they moved to Boston, where Mitchell later got a job with William Lloyd Garrison publishing The Liberator. Midway through the Civil War, Mitchell enlisted in the Union Army. He was stationed in South Carolina where he lost a foot in combat at Honey Hill. His remaining combat time was spent in hospitals.⁷

Soon after he returned to Boston he was elected to the House of Representatives. For years he maintained a good natured feud with Edwin Walker over which of them had been the first Black elected to a State Legislature in the U.S., as Walker had been elected in the same year.

One year after finishing his term, Mitchell became the first Black Inspector of Customs in Boston. And he served as Clerk at the Customs House from 1871-1899. In 1877, he married Nellis Brown, a music teacher and local singer. He died much later of apoplexy.⁸

John James Smith (Nov. 2, 1820 - Nov. 4, 1906)
Years in Office: 1868, 1869, 1872
Party: Republican
District: Boston
Place of Birth: Richmond
Education: ?
Occupation: Barber, hairdresser
Organizations: ?



Biographical Sketch:

John James Smith became the first Black to serve more than one term in the Massachusetts House; as he was elected to serve three terms. As a free Black, Smith left his Richmond, Virginia home and moved to Boston in 1848. One year later, Smith followed many Americans west in the California Gold Rush, but soon returned to Boston.

Upon his return, Smith opened a barbershop at the corner of Howard and Bulfinch Streets. This shop served as the focal point of much of Boston's Black Abolitionist activity. Smith's practice was soon interrupted by the Civil War, as Smith was stationed in Washington, D.C. There he worked as a recruiting officer for the all-Black 5th calvary.

George Lewis Ruffin (Dec. 16, 1834 - Nov. 19, 1886)

Years in Office: 1870-1871

Party: Republican

District: Boston

Place of Birth: Richmond, Va.

Education: Chapman Hall School; Harvard Law School

Occupation: Barber, Lawyer, Judge

Organizations: William Phillips Club, Banneker Literary Club

Biographical Sketch:

George Lewis Ruffin was the first son of George and Nancy Lewis, free Blacks, who moved their family to Boston in 1853. Ruffin attended Chapman Hall School and in 1858 married Josephine St. Pierre. He worked as a barber and tried to join the Army at the outbreak of the Civil War, but he was too nearsighted.⁹

He began to study law with Jewell Gatson and became the first Black to earn an L.L.B. degree from Harvard Law School. He was probably the first Black to acquire a law degree from any University. In 1869, he was admitted to the Suffolk Bar and joined Harvey Jewell's law firm. The following year, he and Jewell won seats in the Massachusetts State Legislature.¹⁰

Ruffin was nominated by Benjamin Butler, then Governor, to become the first Black judge in Massachusetts. He was confirmed on November 19, 1883. Another of Ruffin's more notable accomplishments was at the request of Douglass himself, Ruffin wrote the introduction to The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.

Joshua Bowen Smith (Nov. 7, 1813 - July 5, 1879)

Years in Office: 1873-74

Party: Republican

District: Cambridge

Place of Birth: Coatsville, PA

Education: Public School

Occupation: Caterer; Abolitionist

Organizations: St. Andrews Lodge of Freemasons; Adelphi Lodge

Biographical Sketch:

Born in Pennsylvania, Joshua Smith attended public schools with the help of a wealthy Quaker. In 1836, he moved to Boston where he became the headwaiter at Mt. Washington House. One day while he was serving Robert Gould Shaw, Smith met Charles Sumner and he and Sumner became lifelong friends.

In 1849, Smith established his own catering business, which he operated for twenty-five years. He used his catering business to employ many fugitive slaves. During the Civil War, Governor John Andrew commissioned Smith to provide food for the 12th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers (Webster's Regiment). Andrew then only paid Smith \$23,000 of the purported \$40,000 which the government actually owed. Smith sued but eventually died before the issue was resolved and left his wife with a huge debt.

There are several acts which Smith was responsible for, but for which he receives little or no recognition. In 1851, he petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature for \$1,500 for a monument to honor Crispus Attucks. Although the funds were not granted until the fall of 1865, it was Smith's initiative that was responsible for the monument. In 1865, Smith also promoted the collection of private funds for a monument to Robert Shaw and the 54th regiment. Similarly, the funds were not raised until 1897.

Smith was elected to the State Legislature for two consecutive terms beginning in 1873.

George William Lowther (Jan. 9, 1822 - Oct. 5, 1898)

Years in office: 1878, 1879

Party: Republican

District: Boston

Place of Birth: Edenton, N.C.

Education: ?

Occupations: Hairdresser, Messenger--State Treasury

Organizations: ?

Biographical Sketch:

George William Lowther was born in North Carolina and later moved to Boston. His first assignment in state government was a position as Messenger for the State Treasurer. Lowther became one of the first Blacks ever to hold such a position. In 1878, Lowther sought the House seat for the ninth Suffolk district and outdistanced his nearest opponent by approximately 150 votes.

Lowther lived at a house on 100 Revere Street. He had one son, George W. Lowther, and two daughters, Anna J. and Sara V. Lowther.

Julius Caesar Chappelle (Feb. 28,1852- Jan. 29, 1904)

Years in Office:1883-86

Party:Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth:Chappelle Station, SC

Education: ?

Occupation:Janitor

Organization: ?

William Oscar Armstrong(March 10,1847-May 22,1932)

Years in office:1887,1888

Party:Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth:Oberlin,Ohio

Education: ?

Occupation:Porter

Biographical Sketch:

William Oscar Armstrong first sought the House seat in 1886, but it was awarded to Charles Pain. Armstrong contested the election results and although the details are somewhat sketchy, Armstrong was eventually awarded the seat.

Armstrong was survived by two sons William, Jr. and Theodore T., and four daughters Martha Robbins, Laura M. Lew, Freida Kenney, and one other.

Andrew Berkley Lattimore (Aug. 4,1852- Dec. 14,1907)

Years in Office:1889,1890

Party:Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth:Hampton,VA

Education: ?

Occupation:Clerk

Robert Thomas Teamoh (March 25, 1864-June 20,1912)

Years in Office:1894,1895

Party:Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth:Boston

Education:Industrial Drawing School(photo-engraving)

Occupations:Reporter-Boston Globe

Editor-Boston Courant

Organizations:Rising Sun Lodge of Masons, William
C. Nell Lodge of Knights of Pythias
(Master of Exchequer), EN Hallowell
Division, Knights of Pythias, Boston
Press Club, Boston Young Men's
Republican Club



William Louis Reed (April 5, 1866-Feb. 5, 1943)

Years in Office:1896-97

Party:Republican

District:Boston

Place of Birth:Danville, VA

Education:Stoneham High, Bryant and Stratton
Commercial College

Occupation:Tobacconist

Organizations:Eureka Lodge of Masons, member of Republican
Ward Committee

Biographical Sketch:

William Louis Reed was one of several Representatives who were originally from Virginia. Once in Boston he met and married Harriet Reed and they moved to a house at 33 Irving Street. Reed accomplished most of his achievements after serving in the Legislature. In 1902 he was appointed as an Executive Messenger to the Governor of Massachusetts and his Council. He served at this post until 1925 when he was appointed the Executive Secretary to the Governor and his Council. He held this position until he died in 1943.

Reed's election to the Massachusetts House of Representatives was important, in part, because it marked the end of an era. Reed was the last Black elected from Boston proper until the late 1940's. While Reed was elected in the fall of 1895, the district lines were redrawn in that following year. Ward 9 of district 6, Reed's district and predominately Black, was split in half effectively diluting the Black voter strength. It was merely due to the tradition of electing candidates to at least two terms that Reed was reelected the following year. It was this type of gerrymandering that kept Blacks out of the State Legislature for almost the entire first half of the twentieth century.

William Henry Lewis, Sr. (Nov. 28, 1868-Jan. 1, 1949)

Year in Office: 1902

Party: Republican

District: Cambridge

Place of Birth: Portsmouth, VA

Education: Portsmouth Schools, Virginia Normal
and Industrial Institute, Amherst
College (1892), Harvard Law School (1895)

Profession: Lawyer, Football Coach



Biographical Sketch:

William Henry Lewis, Sr. was born in Portsmouth, Virginia; he was the son of Ashley Henry and Josephine Baker Lewis, who were both former slaves. After moving to Boston, Lewis attended both Amherst College and Harvard Law School. He became a star player at both institutions. In 1892 and 1893, he became the first Black player selected to the All-American football squad. He coached at Harvard for a brief period upon graduation and thus also became the first Black to coach at a major college. After this coaching stint, he was admitted to the Suffolk County Bar and he began to practice law in the Boston area.

In 1899 Lewis held the first of a longline of public posts, when he was elected to the Cambridge Common Council. He was elected in a ward with almost no Black residents. In 1902 Lewis was elected to the Massachusetts State Legislature; again he was chosen by a ward with negligible Black vote.

A long-time opponent of Booker T. Washington, Lewis had attacked him publicly, however, after he met with Washington he became somewhat more sympathetic to Washington's ideas. After completing his first term as a State Legislator, Washington helped convince Theodore Roosevelt that he should appoint Lewis as the Assistant U. S. Attorney for Massachusetts. He served in this position from 1903 to 1906, when he was appointed the Assistant U. S. Attorney General for the six New England states. Thus Lewis became the first Black to hold a subcabinet post.

Lewis later returned to his Boston law practice, where he continued to practice until his death of a heart attack in 1949. Lewis' funeral was attended by many dignitaries, including Governor-elect Paul Dever, Mayor Curley, Judge Francis Ford, and Supreme Court Judges John Spaulding and Harold Williams.

