

# MINORITY CIVIL RIGHTS and the Texas Legislature

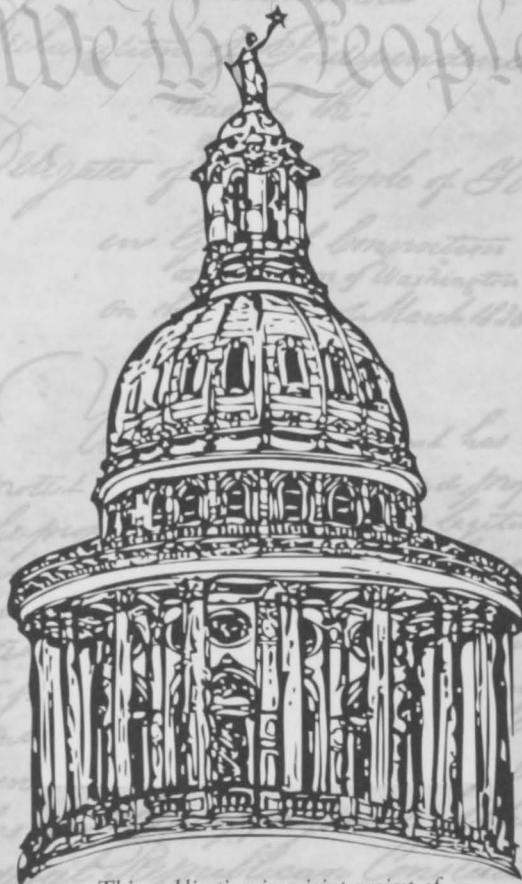
*We the People*



*"Humbly invoking the blessings  
of Almighty God, the people  
of the State of Texas,  
do ordain and establish  
this Constitution."*



# MINORITY CIVIL RIGHTS and the Texas Legislature



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# MINORITY CIVIL RIGHTS and the Texas Legislature



## INDEPENDENCE, STATEHOOD, AND SLAVERY

Texas was a slave state. Black servitude--established in Texas at least by the time of Stephen F. Austin's colony, over the objection of the Mexican government--was secured in Texas' first constitution. The Constitution of 1836 provided that all "persons of color" who were slaves before Texas independence would remain so, and prohibited enactment of any laws restricting the rights of immigrants to bring slaves into Texas from the United States. When Texas was annexed in 1845, these provisions were made part of the state constitution. Unlike some states, Texas did not outlaw teaching slaves to read and write, but slave regulations restricted the right of slaves to sell goods or hire out their own labor, to move around freely, to purchase liquor or carry weapons, or to insult or injure whites in any manner. Slavery in Texas grew rapidly, driven by an economy devoted to, in the words of a contemporary senate resolution, the "purchase of Negroes and the culture of cotton." By 1860, more than 182,000 slaves lived in Texas, about 30 percent of the state population. During the Civil War, the Texas slave population swelled further as slave owners in other Confederate states sought to protect their property from advancing Union troops by sending slaves to Texas. Some estimates put the slave population in Texas at more than 400,000 at the time of emancipation.

Free blacks were never numerous in early Texas--probably no more than 1,000 at any point before the Civil War--but they included distinguished contributors to early Spanish expeditions of the area and to the cause of Texas independence. Samuel McCulloch, a soldier in the Matagorda Volunteer



*Texas did not outlaw teaching slaves to read and write.*

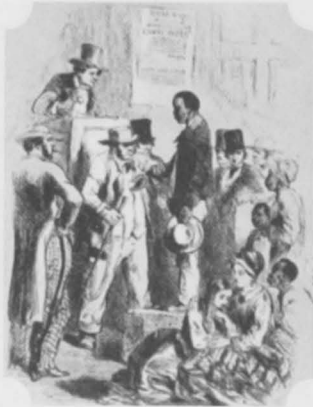


*A typical Texas cotton field at picking time circa 1890*





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*Slave trade in Texas circa 1860*



*The 13-day Battle of the Alamo in 1836 was a pivotal point in Texas' war for independence from Mexico. Nearly all of Texas rebels, primarily American settlers and Tejanos (native Mexicans who fought for Texas), perished in the battle at the Alamo mission in San Antonio. Despite the loss, the Texans went on to win the war.*

Company, was the first casualty of the war for independence, severely injured by a musket ball during the Texans' capture of Goliad in October 1835. Blacks also fought at San Antonio and at the Battle of San Jacinto. Nonetheless, because free blacks undermined a fundamental rationale of slavery--that blacks were racially inferior and fit only for bondage--the Republic of Texas imposed harsh constitutional and statutory restrictions on them. The 1836 Constitution denied citizenship to all blacks (defined as any person of one-eighth African blood), stipulated that no free person of African descent could remain in Texas without the consent of Congress, and prohibited slave owners from voluntarily emancipating their slaves without congressional approval.

In 1840, the Fourth Texas Congress forbade the immigration of free blacks into the Republic and commanded those living in Texas to leave within two years or face enslavement, although it appears the law was not enforced due, at least in part, to the objections of President Sam Houston. The Congress had already passed, in 1837, the first of many miscegenation statutes in Texas. Free blacks in Texas could not vote, hold office, serve on juries, or testify against whites. Following annexation, the Texas legislature made new laws subjecting free blacks to punishments previously reserved for slaves, including branding, whipping, and forced labor on public works.

Native Tejanos, too, faced pervasive discrimination in early Texas--one rooted in assumptions of Anglo superiority rather than set out in law. Well before Texas independence, English-speaking Anglo settlers greatly outnumbered Mexicans in





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the region. They established Protestant churches, relied on Anglo-based legal traditions (including laws of slavery), squatted on land not formally awarded by Mexico, used the Gulf ports to establish far-flung trading relationships, and, to the extent possible, bypassed local Mexican authorities. By the time the Republic of Texas was established, Anglos had created a society in which even Tejanos who supported independence from Mexico were, with few exceptions, relegated to subservient positions.

Several Tejano heroes of the war for independence served in the Texas Senate in Texas' early years. During the initial months of the First Texas Congress, Lorenzo de Zavala, as the Republic's interim vice president, served as the first president of the Texas Senate. A native of Yucatan, de Zavala had served in the Mexican Senate from 1824-1826 and subsequently as governor of the state of Mexico, as secretary of the Mexican treasury, and in several Mexican diplomatic posts. A strong Federalist, he broke with Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna in April 1834 and resigned from the government. De Zavala arrived in Texas in 1835. His fluency in Spanish and English and his extensive legislative and diplomatic experience established him as an influential and unique contributor to the drafting of the 1836 Constitution. Zavala County and numerous streets and schools throughout Texas are named in his honor.

Juan Nepomuceno Seguin was another early Tejano legislator who is well-remembered today. Seguin was a native of San Antonio and served as alcalde in that city in



*Lorenzo de Zavala served as first President of the Texas Senate.*



*Juan Seguin was elected to the Texas Senate in 1837.*





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*Jose Antonio Navarro*



*Jose Francisco Ruiz*

the years before Texas independence. Like de Zavala, he was a Federalist who served in the Mexican Congress at a young age. In 1835, he led a Federalist militia company against Centralist forces in Mexico and afterward organized a Tejano company that, attached to Sam Houston's army, saw action at the Battle of San Jacinto. Seguín accepted the Mexican surrender of San Antonio in June 1836 and served as the city's military commander until his election to the Texas Senate the following year. Seguín served in the senate of the Second, Third, and Fourth Texas Congresses and, despite his lack of English, was chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. In 1839, the fledgling town of Walnut Springs, located in what is today Guadalupe County, was renamed in honor of Senator Seguín.

Jose Antonio Navarro and Jose Francisco Ruiz, both of San Antonio, were delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1836 and signatories to the Texas Declaration of Independence. Ruiz was an experienced officer in the Mexican military before allying himself with the cause of Texas independence. He represented the expansive Bexar territory in the senate of the First Texas Congress. Ruiz's nephew, the lawyer and merchant Jose Antonio Navarro, served as an influential delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1845 and as senator from Bexar in the first two state legislatures. Navarro County is named in his honor. Limited as it was, Tejano representation in the upper chamber ended soon after Texas' entry in the United States. Following Navarro's departure in 1848 and despite the significant Hispanic population in the state, no Hispanic would serve in the Texas Senate for more than a century.



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Rafael de la Garza, who represented San Antonio and the Bexar territory in the House of Representatives of the Seventh Texas Congress, was the only other Tejano to serve in the Congress of the Republic of Texas. Of a prominent San Antonio family, Garza had served as justice of the peace for Bexar County following Texas independence. A handful of Tejanos served in the House of Representatives in the years following statehood and following the Civil War, including Angel Navarro III (San Antonio), Bacilio Benavides (Laredo), Gregorio N. Garcia (El Paso), Jeremiah Galvan (Brownsville), Santos Benavides (Laredo), and Thomas A. Rodriguez (San Antonio). For many decades, however--well into the twentieth century--only rarely was there more than a single Tejano legislator serving in the house, and in many sessions no Tejano served at all.

## THE BLACK CODES AND RECONSTRUCTION

In the chaotic aftermath of the Civil War, Southern state legislatures resisted demands from the North for black equality. Instead, they passed laws modeled on pre-war race relations that were intended to ensure continued racial segregation and discrimination--an attempt, in essence, to win through legislation the war that had been lost on the battlefield. In Texas, the Constitutional Convention of 1866 granted African Americans certain limited rights, including the right to own property, to make contracts, and to sue and be sued, and provided that criminal prosecutions against them would be conducted in the same manner as prosecutions against whites. To maintain the legal separation of the races, however, all blacks were denied the right to vote, hold public office, serve on juries,



### Southern Black Codes



*The Black Codes were laws, made by former Confederate states, intended to ensure continued racial segregation and to limit the rights of freed slaves. To maintain the legal separation of the races, all blacks were denied the right to vote, hold public office, serve on juries, testify against whites, or intermarry with whites.*



*In Texas, the Constitutional Convention of 1866 granted African Americans the right to own property, to make contracts, and to sue and be sued.*







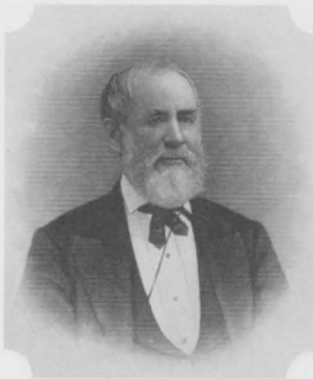
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*A convict-labor law was passed which authorized local authorities to put to work persons sentenced to the county jails for any misdemeanor or petty offense.*

or, in most cases, testify against whites. That same year, the 11th Legislature refused to ratify either the 13th Amendment to the federal constitution, abolishing slavery, or the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African Americans.

The 11th Legislature also enacted “black codes,” measures regulating black labor through apprenticeships, vagrancy laws, and repressive labor contracts, and calculated to keep at least some of the freed slaves in debt-ridden servitude. While avoiding the mention of race, the laws gave local authorities and landowners the ability to intimidate Texas freedmen into either apprentice or contract labor. A convict-labor law was passed that authorized local authorities to put to work persons sentenced to the county jails for any misdemeanor or petty offense. Other legislation excluded Texan blacks from sharing in the public school fund or receiving any distribution of public land.



*Elisha Pease*

Republicans in Washington responded to Southern intransigence by breaking the South into military districts under command of the United States army and declaring the existing governments to be provisional. In Texas, Governor James Throckmorton and Lieutenant Governor George Jones, as well as hundreds of local and county officials, were removed from office. The new government, led by Provisional Governor Elisha Pease, repealed all the black codes, registered blacks as voters, and held new elections open to all male citizens over the age of 21 except felons and those, primarily white Democrats, who had been disenfranchised for their part in the Confederate effort. As a result, African Americans were elected as delegates to the Constitutional Conventions of 1868-69 and 1875 and to the state legislature. The Constitution of 1869 guaranteed voting



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rights for all males over the age of 21 and included provisions stating that blacks should be protected in their property and person, that prosecutions against them should be conducted under the same rules of evidence that applied to whites, and that, under certain circumstances, they should be allowed to testify as witnesses. The following year, the 12th Legislature ratified the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the federal constitution, paving the way for Texas' readmittance to the Union.

During Reconstruction and in the years immediately following, 52 African American men served Texas as either state legislative members or Constitutional Convention delegates. Four men won election to the Texas Senate. George T. Ruby was a free black who moved to Texas from New York after the Civil War, working for the Freedmen's Bureau and serving as deputy collector of customs at Galveston. Ruby became one of the most influential senators of the 12th and 13th Legislatures (1870-1874), successfully backing railroad and insurance legislation and a bill providing for the geological and agricultural survey of the state.

Matthew Gaines was born a slave in Louisiana, secretly teaching himself to read with books smuggled to him by a white friend. He escaped slavery twice, only to be caught and returned. After emancipation, Gaines settled in Washington County as a minister and served with Ruby in the 12th and 13th Legislatures, becoming known as a powerful speaker and crusader on behalf of education, prison reform, and tenant-farming reform. Walter Burton came to Texas as a young slave with his master, Thomas Burton, and after emancipation was elected sheriff and tax collector of Fort Bend County. He



*George T. Ruby*



*Matthew Gaines*



*Walter Burton*





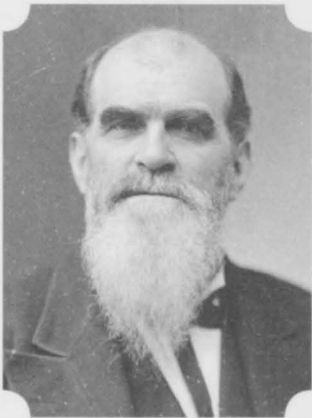
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*Walter Ripetoe*

served in the 14th through 17th Legislatures (1874-1883), helping to establish Prairie View Normal School (now Prairie View A&M University) and promoting educational reforms. Walter Ripetoe (or, variously, Ripton or Rippetoe) was born in Alabama and moved to Texas in 1850 under unknown circumstances. By 1875, he had settled with his family in Marshall and was working as a teacher and professional mechanic. Ripetoe represented Harrison County during the 15th and 16th Legislatures (1876-1881).

More than two dozen African American men served in the Texas House of Representatives during the 1870s and 1880s, including Richard Allen (Houston), Thomas Beck (Navasota), Jacob E. Freeman (Hempstead), Meshack Roberts (Marshall), and Benjamin Franklin Williams (Columbus). As in the senate, however, African American representation in the house quickly declined.



*Richard Coke*

The election in 1873 of Democrat Richard Coke as governor over Republican incumbent Edmund Davis signaled the end of federal Reconstruction in Texas. In addition to basic political rights, blacks had gained control over their schools, churches, and other community institutions. Without land of their own, however, most freedmen continued to work in the fields as (often highly indebted) tenant farmers for white landlords. By the late 1870s, moreover, their political gains were threatened by a new wave of racial intolerance. The 25th Legislature (1897) would be the last that included an African American member for seven decades.



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## THE JIM CROW ERA

Racial segregation in Texas survived Reconstruction and, as segregationists regained control of the government, was increasingly sanctioned in state law. The Jim Crow laws, as they came to be known, were an extensive legalization of pre-war racial relationships in the South. Before 1900, the races were legally separated at almost every possible point of contact, including schools, government agencies, military barracks, sporting and other public events, parks, beaches, swimming pools, restrooms, drinking fountains, street cars, buses, railroad cars, doctors' offices, and restaurants. Segregation was often directed at Hispanics, as well as African Americans, as discriminatory statutes not originally designed with Hispanics in mind were applied against them by Texas law enforcement officials. Local laws and customs often confined African Americans and Hispanics to specific residential areas, and, like blacks, Hispanics worshiped in largely segregated churches. African American and Hispanic children were forced to attend segregated and inferior "colored" and "Mexican" schools. Jim Crow restrictions were also directed at minority political rights. Minority voters faced an array of legislative and extra-legal obstacles: poll taxes, literacy tests, physical intimidation, the stuffing of ballots, and accusations of incompetence.

Southern whites rationalized the segregation of their fellow citizens by claiming that minority facilities were the equal of those provided to whites and that separating the races was sound public policy. In practice, minority facilities were, when they existed at all, distinctly substandard to parallel white facilities. In Texas, the Constitution of 1876 provided for racially





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*The Texas Constitution of 1876 mandated construction of a black university to serve as a minority counterweight to the newly authorized University of Texas.*



*Jose Tomas Canales*

separate, but equal, schools. The act passed by the 15th Legislature (1876) for the appropriation of the public school fund, however, hedged on equal division of the fund, declaring that “colored children shall receive the benefit *as far as practicable* of the public school fund” (emphasis added). Future legislatures, facing the cost of paying for two separate educational systems, repeatedly relied on this and similar loopholes to underfund minority facilities, resulting in an intractable disparity between white and minority schools. The constitution also mandated construction of a black university to serve as a minority counterweight to the newly authorized University of Texas, but the legislature simply never funded it, despite repeated efforts to secure funding over the ensuing decades.

By the turn of the century, following the United States Supreme Court’s sanction of “separate but equal” facilities in the Louisiana case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and approval of literacy tests and poll taxes in *Williams v. State of Mississippi* (1898), segregation and voter suppression were the law of the land. In 1901, the Texas Legislature passed the poll tax law, and in 1903, Texas Democrats implemented the all-white primary, measures that effectively disenfranchised both blacks and Hispanics. The Texas white primary was made possible by court rulings that defined political parties as private organizations able to exclude members. Minority representation in the Texas Senate was long past. It survived in the Texas House, intermittently, only in the person of Jose Tomas Canales of Brownsville. Canales served in the 29th–31st Legislatures (1905–1911) and returned for the 35th and 36th Legislatures (1917–1921).

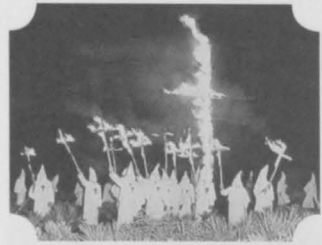


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Throughout the Jim Crow era, lynching, rioting, and other forms of ethnic and racially motivated violence were a constant threat in parts of the state. The Ku Klux Klan and other vigilante organizations fanned the flames of racial animosity. There were race riots in several Texas cities, including Rio Grande City (1888), Beeville (1894), San Antonio and Fort Worth (both in 1913), Houston (1917), Longview (1919), Sherman (1930), and Beaumont (1943), during which minority Texans often witnessed their homes and neighborhoods destroyed. Progressive organizations such as the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching were organized to investigate and document vigilante crimes against minorities.

### THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The decades-long fight against racial segregation and minority voter suppression was waged by a new breed of well-organized minority civil rights groups. Black leaders in Texas established a chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in El Paso in 1915, six years after the founding of the national organization. In the face of physical intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan and harassment by state officials, the Texas NAACP sponsored poll tax and voter registration drives and helped to organize a series of landmark civil rights lawsuits. Under the leadership of A. Maceo Smith of Dallas, the Texas NAACP expanded dramatically during World War II and the postwar years to become the second-largest chapter in the nation, giving further momentum to the cause of civil rights reform in the state.



*The Ku Klux Klan and other vigilante organizations fanned the flames of racial animosity.*



*Jessie Daniel Ames, founder of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL)*







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*Hector García, founder of the  
American G.I. Forum of Texas*



*Sweatt v. Painter 1950*

Hispanics established their own civil rights organizations. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was founded in Corpus Christi in 1929, bringing together a coalition of skilled laborers, merchants, and small-business owners determined to address voter suppression and discrimination against Hispanics in public schools and public housing. After World War II, Dr. Hector García of Corpus Christi and other Hispanic war veterans founded the American G.I. Forum to fight for benefits for Hispanic veterans denied by the federal Veterans Administration. The organization became nationally known in 1948 by challenging a mortician in Three Rivers, Texas, who refused use of his chapel for services for Felix Longoria, a decorated veteran killed in the battle of the Philippines.

Texas' white primary was finally abolished by the United States Supreme Court in *Smith v. Allwright* (1944). Following the historic decision, the NAACP focused on challenging segregated undergraduate, secondary, and elementary educational institutions. Heman Sweatt, a mail carrier from Houston denied admittance to the University of Texas School of Law, agreed to sue the university on the grounds that the state offered no professional school training for its black citizens. The ensuing four-year legal battle resulted in the United States Supreme Court decision *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), eliminating segregation in the South's graduate and professional schools. The Sweatt decision paved the way for the Court's decision in the seminal Kansas case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), requiring an end to the segregation of schools, buses, restaurants, and other public accommodations nationwide.



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Hispanic groups also won court decisions that struck at racial discrimination. The federal district court decision in *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* (1948) made it illegal for public schools to designate specific buildings for minority students. In *Hernandez v. State of Texas* (1954), the United States Supreme Court recognized that constitutional protections were based not only on race, but also on class, and ruled that Hispanics (and, by implication, other racial and class groups) were due equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

By the 1950s, the G.I. Forum and LULAC had developed into the nation's foremost Hispanic civil rights organizations. The two organizations joined together in "pay your poll tax" voter registration drives across the state, dramatically increasing Hispanic voter registration and turnout. In 1956, Henry B. Gonzalez of San Antonio was elected to the Texas Senate, becoming the first minority senator to serve in more than seven decades. In the 55th Legislature (1957), Gonzalez set the senate filibuster record at the time by speaking for 22 straight hours against a set of bills on segregation, most of which were abandoned. Gonzalez's gubernatorial campaign the following year, though unsuccessful, further mobilized Hispanic voters in the state. On election to the United States Congress in 1961, Gonzalez left the senate having led the way for the representation of minority Texans in the upper chamber.

In the Texas House, too, Hispanics saw a slow gain in representation. During the 1930s and 1940s, Augustine F. Celaya (Brownsville), John Charles Hoyo (San Antonio), and



*Henry B. Gonzalez, elected to the Texas Senate in 1956*



*Augustine F. Celaya*



*John Charles Hoyo*



*Arnold J. Vale*



*Eligio de la Garza*





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Oscar M.  
Laurel

Mauro  
Rosas

Arnold J. Vale (Rio Grande City) were the only Hispanics elected to the house. The 1950s saw the election of representatives Eligio “Kika” de la Garza (Mission), Oscar M. Laurel (Laredo), and Mauro Rosas (El Paso), who served together for several legislative sessions. The 57th Legislature (1961) proved to be an important turning point, as six Hispanics were elected to the house. Including Senator Gonzalez, seven Tejanos served in the Texas Legislature during that session.



*On August 30 and 31, 1956, more than 300 whites ringed Mansfield High School to physically prevent enrollment of black students.*

The integration process in Texas was less emotionally charged than in other Southern states, but progress was slow and painful. In the 1950s, most school districts in Texas desegregated without significant incident, but the court-ordered desegregation of the school district of Mansfield, in Tarrant County, provoked a historic confrontation. With the support of the NAACP, three black students obtained a federal court order requiring their admittance to the city’s white high school and, while the school board approved the measure, the mayor, chief of police, and others objected. On August 30 and 31, 1956, more than 300 whites ringed Mansfield High School to physically prevent enrollment of the students. During the demonstrations, whites hanged effigies of blacks and stopped cars entering the town, barring individuals suspected of sympathizing with the students. Governor (and former lieutenant governor) R. Allan Shivers supported the protestors and dispatched the Texas Rangers to Mansfield. In defiance of the federal order, Shivers authorized the Mansfield school board to transfer the black students to Fort Worth. The Eisenhower administration chose not to intervene in Mansfield, but did respond the following year, when a similar, more visible situation arose in Little Rock, Arkansas. Partly in reaction to the Mansfield



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incident, the 55th Legislature (1957) passed segregationist laws encouraging school districts to resist federally ordered integration and supporting segregation of residential areas. Though the new laws were not vigorously enforced, they did have the effect of delaying integration in Texas for several years.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was led nationally by Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr., of Georgia, who advocated nonviolent civil disobedience in the form of boycotts and sit-ins. In 1960, students from Wiley and Bishop Colleges in Texas staged demonstrations and, in March of that year, San Antonio became the first major Southern city to integrate its public lunch counters. Protests, boycotts, and picketing by minorities and their white allies in Austin, Houston, San Antonio, and other cities caused voluntary desegregation of most private businesses in Texas by 1963. That year, in conjunction with the National March on Washington, approximately 900 protesters--including Hispanics, blacks, and whites--marched on the Texas State Capitol to protest the slow pace of desegregation in the state and Governor John Connally's opposition to federal civil rights legislation.

The reformers had an important ally in the White House, Texan Lyndon B. Johnson. When Johnson took office on the death of President Kennedy in November 1963, the legislation that would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was bottled up in legislative committee in both houses of Congress, held hostage by Southern legislators vowing never to allow the measure to come to a vote. As a reform-minded Southerner--



*The March on Washington led by Martin Luther King, Jr., spun off multiple demonstrations throughout Texas in the early 1960s.*



*Students from Marshall's Wiley College and Bishop College sit at a lunch counter in 1960 while participating in a sit-in demonstration at the E.W. Woolworth store in downtown Marshall.*



*Lyndon B. Johnson being sworn in (November 1963).*





## MINORITY CIVIL RIGHTS and the Texas Legislature



*President Lyndon B. Johnson made civil rights one of his administration's top priorities. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law on August 6, 1965.*



*Barbara Jordan was the first African American since Reconstruction to serve in the Texas Senate and then the first African American woman from the South to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

and with decades of experience on Capitol Hill--Johnson was in a uniquely influential position to lead efforts to overcome the hardened opposition in Congress. Johnson rallied the country in public speeches and forcefully negotiated with members of the house and senate, successfully isolating obstructionist committee chairs and forcing the bill to the floor and to passage. The landmark legislation outlawed discrimination in public accommodations and employment and accelerated the desegregation of public schools. The following year Johnson oversaw passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, eliminating local restrictions on voting, particularly literacy tests, and requiring that federal marshals monitor election proceedings. The 1964 and 1965 acts were signal achievements for the nation's democracy and for President Johnson personally. Without Johnson's dedicated support and his deft handling of a divided United States Congress, federal civil rights reform would have been delayed years, perhaps decades, longer.

The federal acts were bookended by two historic civil rights decisions by the United States Supreme Court. *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* (1966) eliminated the poll tax in state and local elections, spurring a dramatic rise in minority voter registration in Texas. And the Court's "one person, one vote" ruling in the Alabama case *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964) forced the Texas Legislature to redistrict for the 1966 elections, leading directly to the election that year of Houston attorney Barbara Jordan as Texas' first black senator since 1883. Jordan was a graduate magna cum laude of Texas Southern University and received her legal education at the Boston University School of Law. In the senate, Jordan's eloquence in debate and her



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pragmatic, nonconfrontational negotiating style earned her great respect. She advocated on behalf of integration, a higher minimum wage, and increased voter registration and served as chair of the Labor and Management Relations Committee. In 1972, her colleagues elected her senate president pro tempore. The following year she was elected to the United States House of Representatives, the first black woman from a Southern state to serve in Congress. Redistricting also broke a decades-long color barrier in the Texas House. Curtis Graves (Houston) and Joseph Lockridge (Dallas) were elected to seats in the 60th Legislature (1967), the first African Americans to serve in the house since 1898.

In 1969, the 61st Legislature passed five acts repealing most of Texas' segregationist statutes, effectively ending the Jim Crow era in the state. In the decades since, the number of minority lawmakers in the Texas Legislature has steadily increased. Sixteen Hispanics—2 senators and 14 representatives—served in the 64th Legislature (1975). By the 70th Legislature (1987), the number of Hispanic lawmakers had increased to 19 representatives and 6 senators. By the 78th Legislature (2003), the count had reached 30 representatives and 7 senators, representing diverse regions of the state including the Rio Grande Valley, El Paso, Dallas, Austin, Houston, Laredo, Corpus Christi, and San Antonio. Among the longest-serving Hispanic senators have been Tati Santiesteban, Carlos Truan, Gonzalo Barrientos, Judith Zaffirini, and Eddie Lucio, Jr. Senator Zaffirini, of Laredo, was the first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas Senate and the first to serve as senate president pro tempore. Long-serving Hispanic members of the Texas House include Roberto Alonzo (Dallas), Hugo Berlanga (Corpus Christi), Albert Luna III



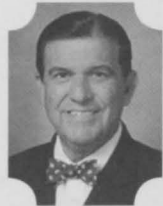
*Senator Carlos  
Truan*



*Senator Gonzalo  
Barrientos*



*Senator Judith  
Zaffirini*



*Senator Eddie  
Lucio, Jr.*







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*Senator Craig A.  
Washington*



*Senator Eddie  
Bernice Johnson*



*Senator Rodney  
Ellis*



*Senator Royce  
West*

(Houston), and Irma Rangel (Kingsville). On her election in 1976, Representative Rangel became the first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas Legislature.

Since the watershed elections of Jordan, Graves, and Lockridge to the 60th Legislature (1967), each succeeding Texas Legislature has had African American members. In 1993, two African American senators and 14 African American representatives constituted 9 percent of the legislature, while about 11 percent of the Texas voting-age population was African American. In 1980, Representative Craig Anthony Washington of Houston became the first African American named house speaker pro tempore. Washington and Eddie Bernice Johnson of Dallas were elected to the senate in the 1980s, and both eventually served in Congress. They were succeeded by former Houston City Council member Rodney Ellis, Dallas attorney Royce West, and Houston businessman Borris Miles. In the Texas House, long-serving African American representatives have included Garnet Coleman (Houston), Harold Dutton, Jr. (Houston), Helen Giddings (Dallas), Senfronia Thompson (Houston), Sylvester Turner (Houston), and Ron Wilson (Houston).

Despite their numbers, Hispanic and African American members of the Texas Legislature have left a big footprint on recent Texas political history--serving as powerful committee chairs and vice-chairs and reaching across party lines to enact legislation important to all Texans.

Minority Texans, representing both major parties, have in recent decades served in high office as attorney general, railroad commissioner, secretary of state, justice and chief justice of the



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Texas Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, and members of Congress. Across the state, minorities serve as mayors, judges, city council members, school board members, sheriffs, and county commissioners. They are each building on the hard-won reforms of previous generations and leading the state forward as Texas strives to live up to its democratic ideals.



*Former Texas  
Supreme Court  
Justice and former  
U.S. Attorney-  
General  
Albert Gonzales*



*Former Texas  
Chief Justice  
Wallace Jefferson*



*Former Texas  
Secretary of State  
Hope Andrade*





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Photographs of former Texas House Representatives pages 12, 15 & 16 courtesy of the State Preservation Board



The Unanimous  
Declaration of Independence  
made by the  
Delegates of the People of Texas  
in General Convention  
at the Town of Washington  
on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March 1836

When a government has ceased  
to protect the lives, liberty and property  
of the people from whom its legitimate  
powers are derived, and for the advan-  
cement of whose happiness it was estab-  
lished, and for the enjoyment of those inalienable  
rights, the hands of the

