

SCAVENGER HUNT:

Tennessee's First African American Legislators

Can you name the correct legislator?

1. In 1873 a Nashville barber became the first African American ever elected to the Tennessee General Assembly. What was his name?
2. In 1881 a state representative from Davidson County authored a bill to allow African American students, for the first time, into the School for the Blind in Nashville, and the School for the Deaf and Dumb in Knoxville. The bill passed into law by a vote of 59-1, even though its requirement that the schools provide segregated facilities was against federal law. Who was this legislator, who was also an employee of the U.S. Department of Revenue?
3. This former slave became an attorney during the Reconstruction Era and was appointed a magistrate in the 9th Civil District of Tipton County in 1878 and 1879. He served two terms in the General Assembly, representing Tipton County from 1881-1885, and he was elected chairman of the New Counties and County Line Committee. His run for the Senate was thwarted by election fraud. What was his name?
4. Born in Ohio, where he studied at Oberlin College as a child, this state legislator was the first African American admitted to the bar in Memphis and also the first African American to plead before the Supreme Court of West Tennessee. He served as Assistant Attorney General in Memphis and as a Republican Presidential elector. In 1884 he represented activist Ida B. Wells in her lawsuit against a railroad company. Who was he?
5. In 1906 United States Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan issued a stay of execution for a convicted rapist, marking the first time in history the Supreme Court had intervened in a state criminal court case. Two other legal precedents were set in the same case when the Supreme Court, for the first and only time in its history, brought criminal charges against several individuals involved in this case, and then agreed to hear the contempt trial themselves. The Chattanooga lawyer whose appeal initiated these actions had been a member of the Tennessee General Assembly. A chapter of the National Bar Association in Hamilton County, TN, is named for him. Who was he?
6. The only African American Democrat elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in the 19th century, this Fayette County farmer and cotton ginner was a deacon in the Baptist church and a member of the Masonic order. What was his name?
7. Born into slavery, this teacher and businessman attended Fisk University, where he sang with the original Fisk Jubilee Singers and was part of their first American tour. A member of the Memphis City Council, he was elected to the General Assembly in 1884. Who was he?

8. This three-term state legislator was born a slave in Madison County and was taught to read by his master's children. A passionate scholar, he attended Oberlin College, then won a Peabody Scholarship to Fisk University. He was still a student there when he was elected to the General Assembly from Haywood County. He was the first African American nominated to be Speaker of the House during the same year he received his law degree. A powerful public speaker, he was a delegate to both State and National Republican Conventions and gave the speech nominating the Vice-Presidential candidate in 1888. Forced to leave Haywood County because of racial violence, he moved to Chicago, where he developed a successful law practice. Who was he?

9. Although he did not learn to write until he was 19 years old, he entered high school at that time and became such an excellent student that he was admitted to Fisk University on a Peabody Scholarship. Although he was elected twice to serve Fayette County, racial violence in the county forced him to relinquish his second term in order to ensure the safety of his family. He studied theology at Roger Williams College, later teaching there briefly. A gentle and thoughtful minister, he served churches in Clarksville and Kansas City before moving to Washington, D.C., where he was pastor of the Berean Baptist Church for 46 years. What was his name?

10. How many of the fourteen 19th century African American legislators have entries in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia*?