



DEBRA DEBERRY
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA



Celebrate Black History

*"As long as the people don't fear the truth,
there is hope. For once they fear it, the one
who tells it doesn't stand
a chance."*

- Alice Walker





The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry
Clerk of Superior Court
DeKalb County



Frank Cavalier Braxton, Jr.

(March 31, 1929 – June 1, 1969)

"Groundbreaking Cartoon Animator"



Frank C. Braxton, Jr., was born on March 31, 1929, in Los Angeles, California. As a child, Frank had a talent for drawing and sketching. He spent most of his time with a sketch pad and drawing pencils in his hands sketching images of LA in the 30s and 40s. In 1947, Frank graduated from Manual Arts High School, where he left his mark with school art projects and caricatures of his classmates. After high school he studied art and music at Los Angeles City College.

While at LA College, Frank met a fellow voice lesson student, Ben Washam. Ben was a highly respected senior animator for Warner Brothers. In 1954, Ben approached the studio head, Eddie Selzer, and encouraged him to hire Frank to work in the studio with him - where Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies cartoons were produced. Frank immediately became Ben's apprentice/assistant and later served as a journeyman animator, making him the first and only Black animator working in Hollywood at the time.

In 1956, when Warner Brother shut down for six months to retool, Frank was recommended to Disney Studios where he worked for only 10 days before he was hired as an assistant animator by veteran animator/director Abe Levitow. He then worked with animator Bill Hurtz at Shamus Culhane Productions and later, at Jay Ward Productions. It was during this time that Frank's production work aired on NBC-TV in 1959. His work on popular cartoons, **Peabody's Improbable History** and **The Bullwinkle Show**, was viewed by children everywhere on Saturday Mornings.

In 1960, Frank animated the television cartoon series, **Mr. Magoo**. That same year, he was elected president of the Screen Cartoonist's Guild, making him the first black person to be president of any film union in Hollywood. Four years later, in 1964, he directed **Linus the Lionhearted**.

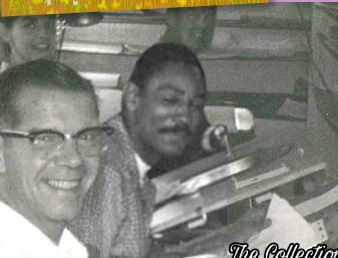
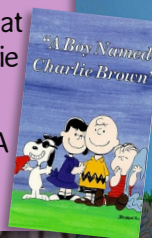
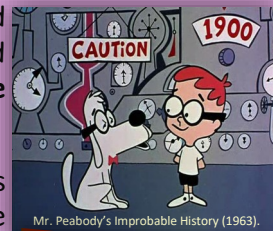
Frank also began teaching animation to inner city youth at the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles using equipment donated from various studios. Around this same time, Frank was diagnosed with Hodgkin Disease. Just as his career began to peak, his illness limited his ability to work.

In 1968, Frank began working with Bill Melendez Production TV specials like "You're in Love, Charlie Brown" and "He's Your Dog, Charlie Brown". What turned out to be his last project, the feature length "A Boy Named Charlie Brown," was released in 1969, after his death.

On June 1, 1969, Frank Cavalier Braxton, Jr. passed away at UCLA Medical Center from Hodgkin Disease. He was only 40 years old.

In 2019, Frank was posthumously awarded the International Animated Film Association's Winsor McCay Award for his "recognition of lifetime/career contributions to the art of animation". He was also posthumously awarded the "Animation - Annie Awards" for excellence in animation. The award was accepted by his wife, Bette and his two children, Aleta and Scott. Also present at the ceremony were his four grandchildren.

After Frank, many talented Black artists, including Floyd Norman, Leo Sullivan, Richard Allen, Norm Edelen, and Ron Husband followed with impressive careers in the industry.



Frank Braxton Jr. and Ben Washam.

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Zandra Iona Flemister

(November 21, 1951 – February 21, 2023)

“First Black Woman to Serve as a U.S. Secret Service”

Zandra Iona Flemister was born November 21, 1951, in Frankfurt, Germany, while her father served in the U.S. Army. When the family returned to the U.S., they settled in central Connecticut. Zandra's mother, Pearl, was active in the Civil Rights Movement and brought Zandra along with her to the 1963 March on Washington. At age 16, Zandra was part of the Poor People Campaign March on Washington, following the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King. After graduating high school in 1969, she attended Northwestern University, earning a bachelor's degree in political science in 1971. It was during a job fair that Zandra met a Secret Service recruiter who told her that although she was overqualified for the uniformed service, she should apply to be a special agent. She was hired and moved to work at the Washington field office.

On Aug. 5, 1974, she became the first black woman to serve as a United States Secret Service Agent. Initially, Zandra worked undercover, assigned to investigate counterfeit and treasury fraud. Later she was assigned to protective details for Vice Presidential candidate, Bob Dole's wife, Elizabeth, as well as the daughters of both President Gerald Ford and President Jimmy Carter. In 1976 she suffered a serious concussion in an auto accident during the presidential campaign.

“Lady Bird Johnson” the wife of former President Lyndon B. Johnson, had lifetime Secret Service protections and would often request Zandra to attend social events. Zandra once learned to ski in order to accompany President Ford on a skiing trip.

Although her professionalism impressed some notable subjects, many of Zandra's male peers regularly mocked her notoriety for being the first and only black woman to serve in this capacity. She was subject to ridicule by her superiors for her natural hairstyle and it was reported that colleagues taped a picture of a gorilla over her photo ID and regularly used racially derogatory terms. Although Zandra had a reputation for being unflappable in a crisis, she soon realized that she could not advance her career with the secret service.

In 1978, Zandra left the Secret Service agency and joined the State Department where she remained for 30 years. She married in 1981 and had one son. During her time with the State Department Foreign Service interagency, she managed visa screening programs in Pakistan and South Korea, established a multinational anti-visa fraud working group in London, and worked extensively on counter-narcotics in Pakistan. She advanced to the rank of Senior Foreign Service Officer.

In 2000, Zandra provided an affidavit in support of a class action racial discrimination lawsuit against the Secret Service, with more than one hundred former agents joining the suit. Following her exit from the Secret Service, the retention rate for Black female special agents was so poor that by 2001, not one black woman had served long enough to retire from the agency. The Secret Service ultimately reached a \$24 million settlement in 2017, with the agency promising to change its promotion procedure but denying any wrongdoing or institutional prejudice.

In 2003, Zandra earned a master's degree in national security logistics from the National Defense University. Soon after, she started experiencing serious memory loss, due to early onset dementia. She retired in 2011. On February 21, 2023, Zandra Iona Flemister died from respiratory failure brought on by Alzheimer's disease.

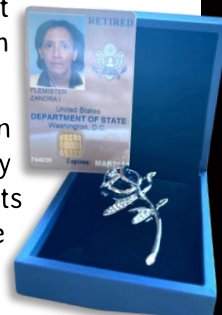
In October 2023, the Center for International Affairs and World Cultures of Northwestern University established the Flemister Fellows. The endowed fund honors her legacy by supporting students studying in the field of international relations. The fund supports undergraduate students from underserved populations with financial need, with a preference for first generation college students. Each recipient is awarded a blue rose pin, which is a symbolic representation of support among Black women in the Secret Service.



President Ford and Special Agent Zandra Flemister



Agent Zandra Flemister escorting Prime Minister of Jamaica, Michael Manley (far right)



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Jack Leroy Cooper

(September 18, 1888 – January 12, 1970)

"Pioneering Black Radio Announcer and DeeJay"



Jack Leroy Cooper was born September 18, 1888 in Memphis, Tennessee. He was the youngest of 10 children raised in a poor, single parent household. By the fifth grade, Jack moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he dropped out of school and began working at a racetrack. As a young teenager, Jack entered boxing matches to win prize money. His talents for boxing earned him a living, winning over 100 bouts, including the Cincinnati newsboy title and the Ohio Negro Welterweight Title. Around the age of 17, Jack began working in vaudeville shows, singing, dancing, and later writing and performing skits with his wife, Estelle. Together they created the Cooper and Lamar Music Company.

While touring across the mid-west, Jack began writing for black newspapers in Memphis and Indianapolis. In 1924, Jack was offered a position of Assistant Theater Editor with the Chicago Defender, a popular newspaper that advocated for racial, economic, and social justice. There Jack wrote a weekly column called "Coop's Chatter." Jack's influence was so impactful that he was chosen to help open the paper's new Washington, D.C. office in 1925.

A producer for Washington station, WCAP, hired Jack to work as an actor on comedy skits based on the "negro" dialect. The show was successful, but required Jack to perform minstrel shows aimed at white listeners. Because of the degrading nature of the show, Jack left the station and returned to Chicago hoping to create a radio program aimed at black audiences.

In 1929, a small, low-signal station in Chicago, WSBC, agreed to air Jack's show "The All-Negro Hour," hosted a variety of live music and vaudeville comedy and specifically hired black performers that sought to avoid the perpetuation of negative racial stereotypes. His success during these performances, led him to develop his skills as a radio mogul. Jack began playing music records on the radio. By 1937, Jack was heard on WSBC five days a week, hosting a variety of programs that played an eclectic blend of black music, ranging from blues to jazz to gospel. Jack's success created a radio industry boom for black disc jockeys across the country.

Jack realized the importance of reaching a wider audience through his radio presence and began utilizing radio as a social force on behalf of the black community. In 1938, he created a programming slot called "Search For Missing

Persons" - a show focused on reuniting families after the migration from the south to the north.

During this time Jack built his own radio studio and earned income from selling radio advertising to both black and white customers as well as local entertainment spots.

By the 1940s, Jack created multiple social radio programs such as "Listen Chicago" focused on news about current events. By the late 1940's Jack Cooper had built the largest black radio operation in the United States and was earning over \$200,000.00 a year. Jack pioneered syndication and also remote broadcasting, by having wires from some stations sent to his house.

Jack retired from radio in 1959. His success laid the groundwork for generations of black radio personalities and "deejays". Jack L. Cooper died on January 12, 1970 at the age of 81 and is buried in Cook County, Illinois.

In 1975, West Pullman, Chicago named a city park after Jack Cooper.

In 2012, Jack Leroy Cooper was posthumously inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame.



Jack Cooper Is Announcer Over WSBC

When the officials of WSBC decided to appoint Jack Cooper as radio announcer in charge of the "All Negro Hour" the whole thing was an experiment.

But now, due to Mr. Cooper's success in bringing good talent before his radio audience, and his cleverness as an announcer, he has now become a permanent fixture.

The appointment was made Nov. 8, 1929.

Mr. Cooper, or "Coop," as he is widely known in the stage profession, was a successful actor and producer before turning to newspaper profession in 1927, and though the profession is a very hard one, he is a gentlemanly and capable performer who is all glad to see him win success in the radio field.

By bringing race talent to the fore over the radio "Coop" is breaking down barriers in this field just as other barriers have yielded to ability where color prejudice had been a bar.

Mr. Cooper is the only member of our group to become a full-fledged radio announcer in the United States, and so far as we know, in the world. Tune in on him every Sunday night over WSBC.



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Lucy "Aunt Lucy" Higgs Nichols

(April 10, 1838 – January 29, 1915)

"Celebrated Nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War"

Lucy Higgs Nichols was born into slavery on April 10, 1838 in Halifax County, North Carolina. Lucy, along with her family, was held in chattel slavery by the Higgs family. Lucy and her siblings were shuffled back and forth between Higgs family members fighting for ownership after the patriarch died. She was moved to Mississippi, and then to Tennessee. In 1862, just after the start of the Civil War, she learned that she would be moved further South. Lucy, then 24 years old, seized the opportunity to escape to the North with her young daughter, Mona, and several others. They moved North and eventually crossed the Hatchie River, almost 30 miles from their start location. There they found the Union Army's 23rd Volunteer Indiana Regiment, who were camped near Bolivar, Tennessee. The soldiers embraced Lucy and promised she and her daughter would not be returned to her former circumstances. Here she met her first husband.

Lucy began working tirelessly for the Union soldiers as a nurse, seamstress, cook, and laundress. With her daughter by her side, Lucy travelled with the Regiment and was present at such critical battles as the Siege of Vicksburg and the Siege of Atlanta. She also followed the Regiment through General William Tecumseh Sherman's March to the Sea. She was known to be devoted to her daughter, as well as the soldiers that lovingly named her "Aunt Lucy."

The harsh conditions of war proved to be too much for Lucy's young daughter, and Mona, no older than five, died just after the surrender of Vicksburg.

The soldiers saw Lucy and Mona as family and gave an elaborate funeral and burial for Mona. She was buried in a grave, next to other Union soldiers. Although Lucy was devastated, she continued on with the Regiment, following the soldiers to the end of the war, to Washington, D.C. Lucy marched with the soldiers as part of the Grand Review of the Federal Armies.

Lucy worked as a family caretaker for some of the officers of the 23rd Regiment. In 1870, she married John Nichols, and they lived together in New Albany, Indiana.

While living in New Albany, Lucy maintained contact with her fellow members of the 23rd Regiment. She attended every regimental reunion and marched in each Memorial Day parade. Lucy became a member of the New Albany chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization of veterans of the Union forces.

In 1892, Congress passed an act that granted pensions for Civil War nurses. Lucy applied for pension, citing medical issues which impacted her ability to work, but was rejected twice because there was no official record of her service. Fifty-five of the veterans that she served during the war, wrote letters of support for Lucy and in December 1898, a special act of Congress was passed and Lucy was approved for a \$12 per month pension for the rest of her life.

After the death of her husband John, Lucy was admitted to the Floyd County Poor Farm on January 5, 1915. Just weeks later, on January 29, 1915, Lucy Higgs Nichols died at the age of 77. She was buried with military honors in an unmarked grave in West Haven Cemetery in New Albany.

In 2011, a state historical marker was placed outside the Second Baptist Church, where Lucy had been a member of the congregation.

On July 3, 2019, a stone statue of Lucy Higgs Nichols and her daughter Mona was erected in New Albany, Indiana.



LUCY HIGGS NICHOLS
Lucy, born a slave April 10, 1838, was owned by the Higgs family that by 1850 lived near Bolivar, Tennessee. She gained her freedom in 1862 by escaping to the 23rd Regiment, Indiana Volunteers camped nearby. She worked as a nurse for the soldiers as they fought in many major battles of the Civil War. She married out with them in Louisville in 1865.



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Barbara Hillary

(June 12, 1931 – November 23, 2019)

"First Black Woman Explorer to Reach the North and South Pole"



Barbara Hillary was born June 12, 1931 in Manhattan, New York. Barbara's father died when she was just two years old and his death created a financial hardship for her mother. Although her mother worked long hours cleaning homes, she always made time to read to Barbara and emphasized the importance of education. Barbara attended New School, a private research university where she studied Gerontology - the study of social, cultural, psychological and biological aspects of aging. Barbara earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree. She used her education in Gerontology to establish a career in nursing, focusing on staff training on aging and care service systems in nursing homes and facilities.

In her mid 20's, Barbara was diagnosed with breast cancer. At the age of 66, she was diagnosed with lung cancer which required surgery to remove part of her lung. In spite of her health challenges, Barbara spent 55 years working in the nursing field before retiring.

After retirement, Barbara was ready for her next adventure - Arctic traveling. She photographed polar bears in Manitoba, a province of Canada, and went dog sledding in Quebec. When she heard that no black woman had ever been to the North Pole - she knew exactly what she would do next - be the first.

Barbara faced two major challenges in her quest to reach the North Pole - finances and health. Although part of her lung had been removed, Barbara trained extensively - joining a gym, lifting weights, walking miles on a treadmill and hiking while pulling weighted sleds, just to build up her strength and lung capacity. She would need to be in top physical and mental shape to cross-country ski for eight to ten hours a day to make it to the North Pole. She also needed funding.

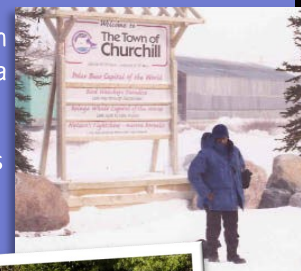
At that time, an expedition to the North Pole cost around \$20,000 for equipment and transportation. Barbara sent letters requesting donations to sponsors and eventually collected \$25,000 for her historic trip. In the spring of 2007, she signed on for an expedition with Eagles Cry Adventures and was taken by helicopter to a Norwegian base camp about 30 miles from the North Pole.

She hiked with the team, carrying the heavy equipment on her back, trekking over the frozen, snow-covered ground. On April 23, 2007, at the age of 76, Barbara Hillary became the first black woman to reach the North Pole. She was also one of the oldest to ever make the journey. Overwhelmed with excitement, Barbara removed her extreme cold-weather gloves and immediately suffered frostbite on her fingers.

Four years later, she would set another record, on the other side of the world. On January 6, 2011, Barbara Hillary, age 79, became the first black woman to reach the South Pole.

At age 87, Barbara travelled to Outer Mongolia to spend time with nomadic groups, studying the effects of climate change on their way of life. Her experiences in polar climates transformed Barbara into an environmental activist. She delivered inspirational speeches to colleges and organizations, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) on the subject of the effects of climate change.

Although her next adventure was planned, Barbara's health began to decline rapidly. On November 23, 2019, Barbara Hillary died. She was 88 years old. In 2020, Barbara Hillary was posthumously inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



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George Shirley
(April 18, 1934 -)



"First Black Lead Performer with the New York Metropolitan Opera"

George Shirley was born on April 18, 1934, in Indianapolis, Indiana. At the age of four, George was singing in church with his parents, and by age five, he had won First Place in a local talent competition. George's father took an auto industry job in Detroit and moved the family to Michigan.

George played the baritone horn in a community band and studied voice in high school which earned him a music scholarship to Wayne State University. He graduated in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in Music Education and became the first black high school music teacher in Detroit High Schools. George married Gladys Ishop in 1956, and later that year, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. While in the Army, George became the first black man to sing with the U.S. Army chorus. It was during this time that he was encouraged by his fellow choir members to pursue a career in opera.

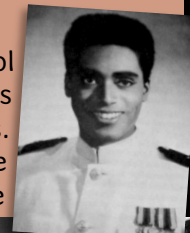
After he returned from the service, George made his opera debut with a small troupe at Woodstock in New York, as Eisenstein in their production of *Die Fledermaus*. The following year, after winning in the American Opera Auditions of New York, he was invited to play the role Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Boheme* in Milan, Italy. In 1961 he received an offer from the Metropolitan Opera after winning first prize in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions where he performed *Nessun Dorma*. There, George Shirley became the first black male to receive a contract from the Met and the second black male to perform there (Note: The first was Robert McFerrin (father of Bobby McFerrin)). George performed 28 major roles in 26 operas during his 11 seasons with the Met, appearing more often than any other tenor.

In 1968 George received a Grammy Award for singing the role of Ferrando in Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte*, a recording that also featured opera greats Leontyne Price, Sherrill Milnes, and Tatiana Troyanos. In 1980 George was asked to teach voice at the University of Maryland. In 1985 he received their Distinguished Scholar Teacher Program award. Upon moving back to his hometown of Detroit in 1987, he became a professor of voice at the University of Michigan, a position he held until his retirement in 2007.

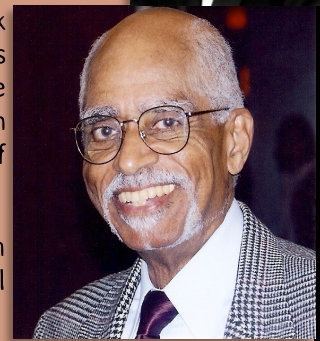
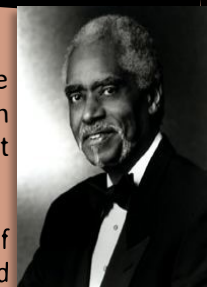
In all, George's music career has lasted more than 50 years. He has sung the lead role in over 80 operas at major opera houses, all over the world. And, although he is known as a trailblazer, gives credit to *his* trailblazing role models - Roland Hayes, the first superstar black tenor, as well as opera singer Marian Anderson, and concert singer Paul Robeson.

In 2008, the George Shirley Voice Scholarship was established at the University of Michigan. In December 2014, George released a recording of *Negro Spirituals* entitled "George Shirley at 80: My Time Has Come!". In 2015, President Barack Obama presented George with the National Medal of Arts Award, which is given to individuals or organizations who have contributed significantly to the cultural life of the United States. George was presented with the William Warfield Legacy Award in 2019 for his dedication to the advancement of African American classical vocalists.

George Shirley currently resides in Michigan and serves as Joseph Edgar Maddy Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Music (Voice) School at the University of Michigan.



Soprano Leontyne Price, conductor Karl Bohm, and George Shirley



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Dr. Alexander Thomas Augusta (March 8, 1825 – December 21, 1890)

"First Black Professor of Medicine and Highest-Ranking Black Officer in the Union Army"

Dr. Alexander Thomas Augusta was born March 8, 1825 in Norfolk, Virginia to free parents. Later, his parents moved to Baltimore, Maryland where he worked in a barbershop while studying. At an early age, he showed an interest in medicine. Although discrimination kept Alexander from attending the University of Pennsylvania, a local professor began teaching him privately.

In 1847, at the age of 22, Alexander married Mary O. Burgoin. In 1850, the couple moved to Toronto where Alexander was accepted into the Medical College at the University of Toronto. In 1855, he opened a Drug Store in Toronto offering medicines and other medical services. He received his M.B. (Bachelor of Medicine) degree in 1856 and was later appointed head of the Toronto City Hospital.

Augusta was inspired to action when the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. Alexander wrote to President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, on January 7, to offer his services to one of the Black regiments in the Union army. He requested an appointment as surgeon to some of the colored regiments or as a physician to some of the depots of freedman. On April 14, 1863, Augusta was the first out of eight black officers in the Civil War commissioned as a U.S. Army Major in the Union army and appointed head surgeon in the 7th U.S. Colored Infantry. Although he was a Major, his pay was only \$7 a month, significantly lower than that of white Privates. In protest, he wrote Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson who raised his pay to the appropriate level for commissioned officers.

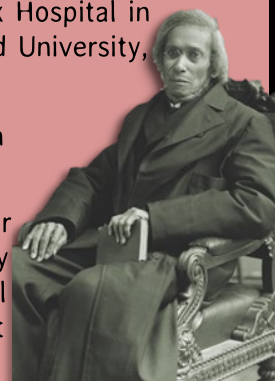
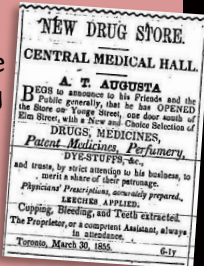
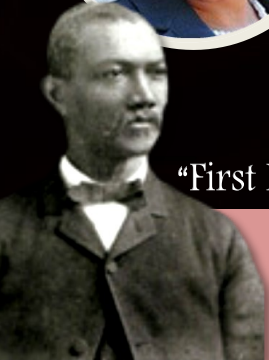
Although he was an Army officer, Alexander suffered violence and discrimination for wearing his uniform in public. Many of the lower ranking surgeons complained about being subordinate to a black man. At the same time, streetcars were still segregated. President Lincoln responded by placing Alexander in charge of the Freedman's Hospital at Camp Barker near D.C.

In February 1864, Alexander was thrown off a streetcar during a rainstorm, wearing his Army uniform. He was forced to walk in the rain, arriving wet and late to his meeting with Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. The Senator was so outraged when he learned that Major Augusta was forced off the streetcar that he immediately requested that Congress allow blacks the same railroad privileges as whites, changing the laws and desegregating streetcars in the capital.

In 1865, Alexander was promoted to Lt. Colonel - making him the first highest-ranking black officer in the U.S. Military at that time. In 1866, he was discharged from the military, and became the head of Lincoln Hospital in Savannah, Georgia. In 1868, he opened his own practice in Washington, D.C and became the first black medical professor as one of the original faculty members of the newly formed Medical College at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Later he was the attending surgeon at the Smallpox Hospital in Washington in 1870. Alexander continued teaching Anatomy at Howard University, and remained there until 1877.

Dr. Alexander T. Augusta died on December 2, 1890. He was 65. He was buried in Section 1 of Arlington National Cemetery, making him the first black officer to be buried in the Arlington National Cemetery.

In May of 2023, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital in Fairfax County Virginia was renamed The Alexander T. Augusta Military Medical Center. Upon the hospital's naming, it was redesignated from a Community Hospital, a type of Medical Department Activity (MEDDAC) to a Medical Center (MEDCEN), a higher designation assigned to the largest and most capable military medical facilities.





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Eunice Roberta Hunton Carter

(July 16, 1899 – January 25, 1970)

"First Black Woman to Pass The New York State Bar"

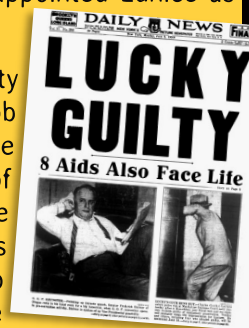
Eunice Roberta Hunton Carter was born July 16, 1899, in Atlanta, Georgia. Her parents, William and Addie, were well known educators and activists. Her father was a founding member of the black division of the Y.M.C.A. and nearly single-handedly integrated the nation's YMCAs in the Jim Crow South and was one of the first top Black administrators of the international YMCA. Her mother was active in the NAACP and was one of two women selected to check on the condition of black servicemen serving during WWI in France. In 1906, her father moved his family to New York to flee the Atlanta Race Riot.

Eunice received a bachelor's and a master's degree in Social Work from Smith College. She was only the second woman in the school's history to receive both a bachelor's and master's degree in four years. She married Lyle Carter, one of the first black dentists in New York in 1924, and together they had a son. While working as a Social Worker, she attended Fordham University studying Law. In 1932, she became the first black woman to receive a law degree from Fordham University. In 1933, Eunice became the first black woman to pass the New York Bar. In recognition of her accomplishment, Smith college awarded her an honorary Doctorate in law in 1938.

Eunice began her work in both law and international politics. In 1934, she was nominated to represent New York's 19th District in the State Assembly. She was the first black person to ever gain the Republican nomination for that office. Eunice's platform highlighted the need to reduce the age limit for receiving pension, enforce tenement housing legal compliance, and advocate for the continuation of unemployment insurance. She fought to oppose racially motivated discrimination in public works employment. She lost the election by a mere 1,600 votes. Following the 1935 riots in Harlem, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia appointed Eunice as secretary on the Committee on Conditions in Harlem.



That same year, Special Prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey appointed her as his deputy assistant prosecutor. Dewey hired a team of 20 lawyers to help him take down the mob and Eunice was the only woman and the only black person among them, making her the first Black female prosecutor in the United States. In the high-profile prosecution of organized crime, Eunice's tireless work and clever strategizing linked prostitution in the city to the work of New York Mafia crime boss, Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Her work was



crucial to the case that proved the mob ran New York City's brothels, and her influence convinced witnesses to testify about Luciano's involvement. The mob kingpin was sentenced to 30 to 50 years in prison in 1936. The case brought national fame for Thomas Dewey, who was later elected as governor of New York. Eunice's work earned her a great deal of respect in the office. In 1938, she was named to Dewey's staff to lead the Abandonment Bureau of Women's Courts.



In 1945, Eunice opened her private practice. She immediately connected her work with the NCNW (National Council of Negro Women) to address international women's issues. Two years later, she became business partners with journalist and businessman Ernest E. Johnson to form Carter-Johnson Associates, a public relations firm geared toward minorities and shared office space with her law firm.

Eunice was a legal advisor to the newly formed United Nations, a secretary of the Mayor's commission on conditions in Harlem, and several other national and global organizations. She was also active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NAACP, National Urban League, and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

Eunice Hunton Carter died in New York City on January 25, 1970, at the age of seventy.

In 2019, the grandson of Eunice Carter, Yale Law School Professor Stephen L. Carter, published a book called, "Invisible: The Forgotten Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster".

Eunice's story inspired a character in HBO's award-winning drama, "Boardwalk Empire" in 2014. People mocked the depiction as a Hollywood fantasy that a Black woman working as a prosecutor in the 1930s seemed unbelievable, but it was in fact, Ms. Eunice Carter.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry
Clerk of Superior Court
DeKalb County



Thomas Fountain Blue

(March 6, 1866 – November 10, 1935)

"First Black Man to Head a Public Library"

Thomas Fountain Blue was born March 6, 1866, in Farmville, Virginia. His parents were former slaves. He graduated from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1888. After college, he taught school in Virginia. He attended Richmond Theological Seminary and graduated in April of 1898 with a Bachelor of Divinity. During the Spanish American War, Thomas served in the Sixth Virginia Volunteers and was stationed in Camp Poland in Tennessee and Camp Haskell in Georgia. In 1899, after the war, he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where he oversaw the Colored Branch of the Louisville Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association). He also served on a number of civic associations, including as a charter member of the Louisville Chapter of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History later named Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1973.

On September 23, 1905, Thomas, now referred to as "Reverend Blue" was chosen to head the Louisville Western Colored Branch Library, the first public library in the nation to serve black patrons with an all-black staff. This "library" consisted of three small rented rooms located in a private residence.

In 1908, the library moved into a larger space in the Carnegie Building, located at 10th and Chestnut Street. In 1914, Thomas opened the 2nd Carnegie Branch Library, in Eastern Louisville.

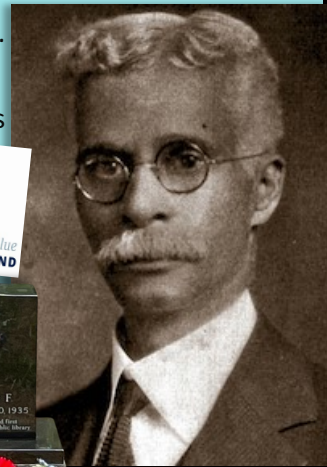
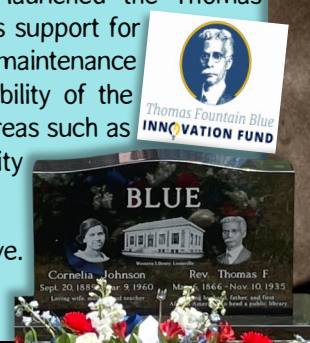
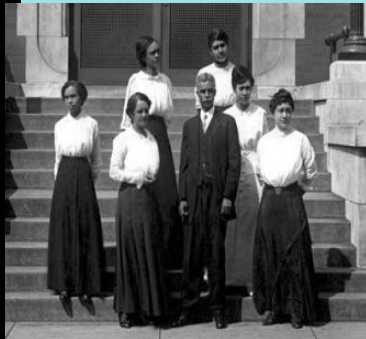
In 1919, a "Colored Department" was created in the Kentucky public library system, the first of its kind organization in any public library system in the United States. The department covered two Carnegie locations, two junior high schools and 29 additional locations filled with books to be checked out in Louisville and Jefferson County. During the 1921 Joint District Meeting of Indiana and Kentucky Librarians and Trustees, Rev. Blue and his assistant Rachel D. Harris gave attendees a tour of the library's Western Colored Branch. Rachel D. Harris went on to become the first black woman to manage a Public Library.

With the growing number of locations, Thomas saw the need for library apprenticeship classes for future librarians. In 1922 at the Annual Meeting of the American Library Association in Detroit, Michigan, he presented a paper titled, "Work with the Negro Roundtable". In his paper, he talked about the librarian training class he started at the Western Colored Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library. His training class was the first library training program offered in the South for black students interested in working as a librarian, and was in operation from 1912 until 1931. His class drew the attention of aspiring black librarians from as far as Houston, Texas and as close as Virginia. The growing interest in library service led to the establishment of the Hampton Library School at Hampton Institute in Virginia in September 1925, with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. At the time, there was only one other accredited library school in the South, Atlanta (now Emory University Library School). Thomas married Cornelia Phillips Johnson in 1925. Together they had two sons.

Rev. Thomas F. Blue served the Louisville Free Public Library, from 1905 until his death on November 10, 1935. His achievements in library services garnered him national recognition as a pioneer in the field of public service.

In December 2023, the Louisville Free Public Library Foundation launched the Thomas Fountain Blue Innovation Fund in honor of Thomas. The fund provides support for librarians and local branches for reading programs, resources, books, maintenance of library spaces and to combat budget cuts that impact the availability of the resources. The fund also covers a \$10,000 grant to support specific areas such as Innovation, Access and Equity, Awareness and Engagement, and Capacity Building for the system.

When Thomas and his wife Cornelia were buried, they were placed in an unmarked grave. On July 16, 2022, a headstone identifying their gravesite was installed. Their granddaughter and great-granddaughter were present for the installation.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



Harry Pace & Black Swan Records

(January 6, 1884 – July 19, 1943)

"Owner of the First Major Black-Owned Record Company"

Harry Herbert Pace was born on January 6, 1884, in Covington, Georgia. Harry was raised by his mother Nancy, after his father died when Harry was just an infant. By the age of twelve, Harry had completed elementary school. He attended Atlanta University and studied under W.E.B. Du Bois. He graduated as valedictorian at the age of 19. After graduation, Harry worked at a printing company and in the banking and insurance industry in Atlanta.

After moving from Atlanta to Memphis in 1912, Harry met W.C. Handy, who was a songwriter, American composer and musician, who referred to himself as the **Father of the Blues**. W.C. Handy had written the first commercially successful blues song called "Memphis Blues." W.C. was also a popular bandleader in the famous clubs of Beale Street. Harry and W.C. began writing songs together and later formed the Pace and Handy Music Company. The company was one of the earliest black-owned sheet music publishing companies and an industry leader of the Harlem Renaissance. In 1918 the pair moved the company to New York. By the end of the year their catalog included The Memphis Blues, Beale Street Blues and The St. Louis Blues. In 1917, Harry worked with James Weldon Johnson, Dr. Charles Johnson, Dr. Louis Wright, and Walter White to charter the Atlanta branch of the NAACP.



Following the example of the Broome Special Phonograph Records Company, the very first black-owned and operated music company, Harry founded Pace Phonograph Corporation Inc., in March, 1921 using \$30,000 in borrowed capital. The Pace Phonograph Corporation allowed more creative liberties with their artists, where Broome published only black classical music. Black Swan Records, so named to pay homage to Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, a famous 19th Century entertainer known as the "Black Swan" for her singing, focused on the sultrier sounds of Jazz and the Blues. Very few white-owned record labels, such as Columbia, Victor, Aeolian, Edison and Paramount, recorded Black artists at the time. When they did, it was often limited to novelty songs and minstrelsy. Harry announced the new Pace/Black Swan label with ads in Black newspapers across the country with the slogan "The Only Records Using Exclusively Negro Voices and Musicians".

In May of 1921, Harry invited jazz, gospel and blues singer Ethel Waters, to his studio on 138th Street in Harlem to record the iconic, "Down Home Blues". When the record came out, it sold over 100,000 copies in the first six months, which was remarkable at the time. With the success of "Down Home Blues", Ethel Waters and the Black Swan Troubadours went on tour, travelling to 53 cities, including towns in the deep South which was dangerous for a Black band at that time. Throughout 1921, Black Swan Records released 78-rpm records of jazz, blues, gospel, arias, and spirituals. It put out the first ever recording of the song that would soon become the Black national anthem: "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing", co-written by James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson. By the summer of 1922, the company had a staff of 30 employees, including its own 8-man orchestra, seven district managers in major cities, and over 1,000 record dealers.

From 1921 to 1923, the company released 180 records - a record in itself that wouldn't be topped by a black-owned record company for another 30 years. Harry and Black Swan Records managed to turn the initial \$30,000 investment into a \$100,000 profit.

But, almost as soon as the company began to find financial success, the popularity of radio changed course. The popularity of radio, coupled with white-owned record companies paying artists more money, struck a crippling blow to Black Swan Records. By December 1923, Black Swan Records filed for bankruptcy and their catalog was sold off. In March 1924, Paramount Records, a white-owned company, purchased the Black Swan label, but discontinued it shortly thereafter.

Harry moved to Chicago in 1925 and opened the Northwestern Life Insurance Company, one of the largest black-owned businesses in the North in the 1930's. He received a Law Degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1933 and began working to challenge Chicago's discriminatory covenants, which barred black people from living in the Washington Park Subdivision of Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood. In 1940, Harry was part of the legal team that brought **Hansberry v. Lee** to the U.S. Supreme Court. His testimony in the case was crucial to putting an end to redlining in Chicago and other cities. The case inspired playwright Lorraine Hansberry to write, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Her father, Carl Hansberry, was the plaintiff in the case.

On July 19, 1943, Harry Herbert Pace died at the age of 54. He was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, in the Bronx, NY, before many of his friends knew he was gone.





The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



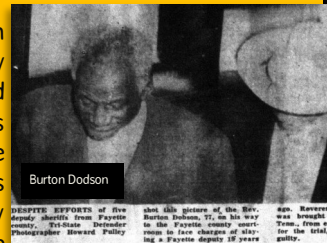
"Tent City / Fayette and Haywood Co. Tennessee"

(1950 - 1960's)

"Key Civil Rights Movement for Black Tennessee Voters"

The Tent Cities of Fayette and Haywood Counties, Tennessee was a grassroots voter's rights movement that was initiated, organized and maintained by black resident in the southwestern corner of Tennessee.

On May 23, 1940, a Fayette County Tennessee deputy sheriff was killed in a shootout outside the home of a black man named Burton Dodson. Although multiple deputies were shooting into the home of Mr. Dodson, his own son was grazed by an officer's bullet, Mr. Dodson was blamed for the deputy's death. Knowing the swift and violent backlash of being accused of killing a white man in the south, Mr. Dodson left town. A warrant was issued and eighteen years later, Dodson was captured in St Louis and returned to Fayette County to be tried for murder. At the time, mid 1950s, the population of Fayette County was about 70 percent black. However, there were no black jurors to serve on Dodson's case, because so few blacks were registered to vote in Fayette County. Mr. Dodson, 78 years old, stood trial for first degree murder of a white deputy with an all white jury. Although facts presented during the trial proved it was forensically impossible for Mr. Dodson to have committed the shooting, he was convicted of second-degree murder in April 1959.



Burton Dodson

Following the conviction of Dodson, his attorney, John Estes encouraged black residents of Fayette County and its neighboring county of Haywood to register to vote. Their effort was met with immediate resistance from the all-white county leadership. In response to this, black leaders formed the Fayette County Civic and Welfare League (FCCWL) and the Haywood County Civic and Welfare League. In June and July of 1959, these leagues held black voter registration drives for the August Democratic primary. Hundreds of black voters registered to vote for the upcoming primary.



In August of 1959, black voters were blocked from voting in the Fayette County Democratic Primary. White party officials claimed that primary elections were not covered under the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and they had the right to deny any citizen the ability to vote in the party's primary. The Civil Rights Commission officials asked to inspect Fayette County voter rolls in order to investigate the allegations of disenfranchisement. In an attempt to stall the investigation and keep black citizens from continuing to register, the county's election commission resigned. This prompted a legal suit contesting the primary's legality. In April of 1960, a federal judge overturned the primary in a consent judgment that also put a legal end to all-white

elections in both Fayette and neighboring Haywood County. As a way to penalize black voters, a "Blacklist" was created. Those on the list were unable to buy food, gasoline, or take out bank loans. Some had their insurance policies cancelled and were fired from their jobs. There was also an embargo placed on the one black-owned gas station and any sympathizers. In September of 1960, the Department of Justice brought charges against twenty-seven businesses and two banks in neighboring Haywood County, which was also affected by the embargo.



In the Winter of 1960, white farmers evicted over 400 black sharecroppers from their land.

Many black sharecroppers had worked and lived on the land for generations. The evictions happened so quickly that many families were forced to pack their possessions into trucks and live in old army tents on the farms of Shepard Towles and Gertrude Beasley, the only two black landowners in the area. Their properties, located in both Fayette and Haywood counties became known as "Tent City" and "Freedom City." The displaced residents struggled to receive food and goods, due to threats and physical interference from the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council. A story in the New York Post prompted the Justice Department to amend their lawsuit to include thirty-six white landowners who had evicted their tenant farmers. Meanwhile, the displaced black families faced violence and attempts to starve them out of their shoddy, makeshift homes. Even the Red Cross refused to provide supplies or emergency aid. Incidents of harassment and shots being fired into the camp continued.

Activists on the "Operation Freedom" bus filled with food and supplies arrived only to be met with a blockade from local white residents. In June 1961, President Kennedy issued an Executive Order sending surplus food to Fayette County. Previously, county officials declined surplus food from the government, even though the county was one of the poorest in the nation. The denial mostly affected black residents since the lack of federal assistance, including food, reinforced Black sharecropper's dependency on white landowners and the segregationist practices that had held sway over them since slavery.

In July of 1962, the federal district court formally prohibited the use of economic pressure to discourage black citizens from voting. While the Tent Cities remained until 1963, residents began moving into low-income houses. The FCCWL, with the help of a number of college students, continued to register voters until 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1965, which put a legal end to formal and informal voter discrimination, undoubtedly owes its passage to the work of organizers and residents and allies of Fayette and Haywood County.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



"Moses 'Fleet' Fleetwood Walker" (October 7, 1857—May 11, 1924) "Official First Black Major League Baseball Player"

Moses "Fleet" Fleetwood Walker was born October 7, 1857, in Mount Pleasant, Ohio. His father, Dr. Moses W. Walker, was one of the first black physicians in Ohio and learned to play baseball from local Civil War veterans. His mother, Caroline Walker, was a midwife. In the Fall of 1878, Fleet entered Oberlin College where he played in all five winning varsity games of the season. Fleet left Oberlin College for the University of Michigan where he played for two more years. In 1882, he married Arabella Taylor. Together the couple had three children.

After college, Fleet used his baseball skills to earn a living as a bare-handed catcher with various minor league teams in Cleveland and Pennsylvania. In 1882, Fleet's Oberlin teammate, pitcher Harlan Burket, went to play professional baseball with a minor league team, the Toledo Blue Stockings. Fleet was later added to the team in the early summer of 1883. That same year the manager of the Chicago (Illinois) White Stockings, Adrian "Cap" Anson, protested, stating his team would not play Toledo with Fleet Walker in the lineup.



In 1884, the Toledo Blue Stockings moved up to the major league level when they joined the American Association - making Moses "Fleet" Walker a major league baseball player - and the official first black baseball player in the major league. With his new status came abuse and criticism. Racist fans of opposing teams, hurled insults during the games, especially when the team traveled south. Some hotels would not allow Fleet to stay with the other players, and opposing teams protested by refusing to take the field. At one point, Fleet's younger brother, Weldy joined the team, but only briefly. Between May 1 and September 4, 1884, Fleet played forty-two games for the Toledo Blue Stockings. By the late 1880s, growing segregationist policies nationwide barred blacks from major-league baseball. After Fleet played his last game for Toledo in 1884, no other black player would appear in the major league until Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier again in 1947. Fleet and several other black players played for a few more years in the minor leagues until 1889.



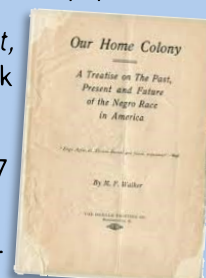
In April 1892, Fleet was attacked by a group of white men. During the attack, he fatally stabbed a man and was arrested. He was later acquitted of second-degree murder by an all-white jury who agreed he acted in self-defense. On June 12, 1895, Fleet's wife Arabella died of cancer. Three years later, he remarried Ednah Mason, another former classmate from Oberlin College. In September 1898, postal inspectors charged Fleet with mail robbery. He was found guilty and served a year in jail.

After his release, Fleet and Weldy purchased and operated the Union Hotel in Steubenville, Ohio. They also bought The Opera House, a "moving-picture" theater in nearby Cadiz, Ohio. The brothers published a black-issues weekly newspaper, *The Equator*. Fleet had three inventions improving film reel loading and changing and applied for patents on the equipment.

In 1908, Fleetwood Walker published the pamphlet *Our Home Colony: A Treatise on the Past, Present, and Future of the Negro Race in America*. In his writing, Fleet expressed racial defeat and urged black people to leave the U.S. in search of better opportunities in Africa.

Moses "Fleet" Fleetwood Walker died of pneumonia on May 11, 1924, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was 67 years old. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Union Cemetery, Steubenville, Ohio.

The Oberlin College Heisman Club, an alumni athletic support group, selected Fleet Walker for induction into the college's athletic hall of fame in May 1989. They gave Fleet's hall of fame plaque to his grandnephew. In 1990, the same group placed a 350-pound granite tombstone on Fleet's grave to mark his place of rest. In 2017, the Ohio Legislature established an annual Moses Fleetwood Walker Day on his birthday. Fleet Walker was inducted to the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame in 1991.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



Marcenia Lyle "Toni" Stone (July 17, 1921 – November 2, 1996)

"First Black Woman Pioneer in the Negro League Professional Baseball"

Toni Stone was born as Marcenia Lyle "Toni" Stone, on July 17, 1921 in Bluefield, West Virginia. Her parents moved the family to St. Paul, Minnesota when she was ten years old. As a child, Toni leaned toward more activities that were more often identified with boys, such as baseball and track & field. She earned the nickname of "Tomboy". Her love of sport was so concerning to her parents, that her father contacted a local priest to talk her out of playing baseball. Instead of trying to deter young Toni, the priest invited her to play with his team little league team, the St. Peter Cleavers. Toni attended Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis but dropped out by the age of fifteen. She first played second base with the all-male Twin Cities Colored Giants semi-pro team, a local barnstorming club that traveled around the Midwest and Canada.

During the 1936-1937 season, Toni worked out with the St. Paul Saints of the American Baseball Association. In 1937, she moved to the California Bay Area, working odd jobs to care for her sister until 1946. While in San Francisco, Toni played for the American Legion Team and the San Francisco Sea Lions in the West Coast Negro Baseball League, making about \$200 to \$300 a month. In 1949, she played a season with the New Orleans Creoles but left to play with the Black Pelicans, another Louisiana team.

In 1950, at the age of 29 and under pressure to conform to the societal "norms", Toni married 69-year-old, Aurelius Alberga. Unsurprisingly, her new husband did not approve of her playing baseball.

In 1953, Toni signed with the Indianapolis Clowns as a second-baseman, making her the first woman to play professional ball with the Negro League. The newspapers claimed that attendance at Clowns' games hit record levels when Toni started playing. Her image was used on the team's promotional materials to sell tickets, even though some male players continued to shun her.

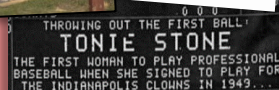
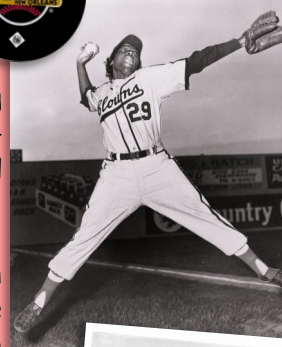
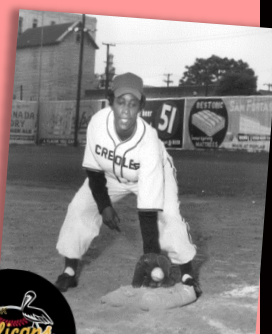
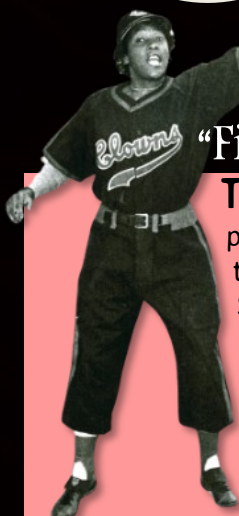
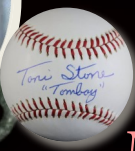
While playing in the Negro Leagues, Toni was knocked down by pitchers, taken out on double plays by baserunners, and generally treated the same as male ballplayers while on the field. She wasn't given a locker room and often had to change in the umpire's locker room. The highlight of her career was hitting a single run off pitcher Satchel Paige. Toni appeared in fifty games in her first season but was traded during the off-season to the Kansas City Monarchs. After the 1953-1954 season with the Monarchs, Toni retired from professional baseball, with a batting average of .243. She proudly displayed the scars on her left wrist, from a runner that spiked her on 2nd base.

In 1990, St. Paul, Minnesota, declared March 6 "Toni Stone Day". In 1996, the city named a baseball field in her honor. Toni Stone Field is in the Dunning Baseball Complex, near the neighborhood where Toni grew up. She was inducted into the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame in 1993 and posthumously inducted into the Minnesota Sports Hall of Fame in 2021.

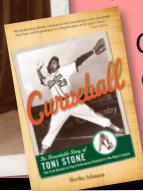
Toni cared for her husband until his death in 1987. On November 2, 1996, Marcenia "Toni" Stone, died of heart failure in Oakland, California. She was 75 years old.

On June 20, 2019, the world premiere of the stage play, *Toni Stone*, opened at Roundabout Theatre Company's, Laura Pels Theatre, in New York. The play is based on the book *Curveball, The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone* by author Martha Ackmann.

Toni Stone



Clowns Report Signing Gal To Play Second Base



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



Jane Matilda Bolin

(April 11, 1908 – January 8, 2007)

“First Black Woman to Serve as a Judge in the United States”

Jane Matilda Bolin was born on April 11, 1908, in Poughkeepsie, New York. Her British mother, Matilda, died when Jane was eight years old. Her father, Gaius C. Bolin, was the first black person to graduate from Williams College and was head of the Dutchess County New York Bar Association. Gaius was also a founding member of his local NAACP chapter, and let his daughter read Crisis magazine, which chronicled lynchings targeting Black Americans.

Jane was a brilliant student who graduated from high school at the age of 16, and immediately enrolled in Wellesley College. One of only two black female students, she was often ostracized and lonely. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1928, being recognized as a top performing student. When Jane shared her desire to work in the legal field, addressing social problems like poverty and racial discrimination, she was discouraged and told there were not many opportunities for women in law. Jane's father, an attorney, was initially opposed to Jane studying law. He suggested that she should become a school-teacher. Jane was undeterred and enrolled in Yale Law School. She was the only Black woman, and one of the few Black students on campus. In law school, she faced discrimination from her classmates, including Southern students slamming classroom doors in her face. Jane graduated in 1931, becoming the first black woman to earn a Yale law degree.

She passed the bar exam in 1932 and practiced in her father's firm during the first two years of her legal career before marrying attorney Ralph Mizelle and moving to New York in 1933. In 1936, Jane ran, unsuccessfully, for the New York Assembly, but her campaign established her in New York Politics. As a result, she was hired as assistant corporate counsel for New York City, making history again, as the first black woman in that position.

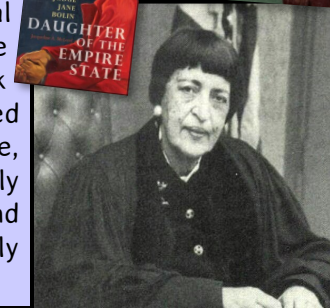
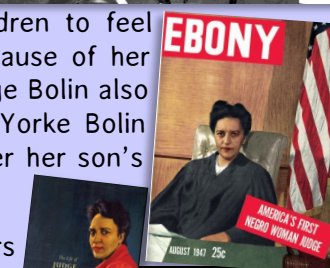
On July 22, 1939, Jane received a strange call requesting her to appear at the World's Fair before Mayor Fiorello La Guardia. Jane and her husband arrived at the World Fair and nervously waited for the mayor to arrive. When Mayor La Guardia arrived, he briefly spoke to her husband and then announced to Jane that he was going to make her a judge. He directed her to raise her right hand and began to issue her oath. Attorney Jane Bolin became Judge Jane Bolin, the first black women judge in the United States.

Judge Bolin was appointed to the Domestic Relations Court, later named Family Court. She heard domestic abuse cases, juvenile homicides, and a multitude of cases involving neglected children. While on the bench, she did not wear her judicial robe because she wanted children to feel comfortable talking to her. She was an outspoken advocate for children and civil rights. Because of her rulings, publicly funded childcare agencies could not reject the admission of Black children. Judge Bolin also stopped the court from assigning probation officers based on race. Judge Bolin's only child, Yorke Bolin Mizelle, was born during her early years on the bench. Her husband Ralph died two years after her son's birth. She was a single parent until she remarried seven years later.

Judge Bolin was the only Black woman judge in the United States for 20 years. She spent 40 years on the bench and received appointments from four different mayors. She served on the National Board of the NAACP, as well as the boards of the National Urban League, the Child Welfare League and the Dalton School. With Eleanor Roosevelt, she helped re-establish the Wiltwyck School for Boys as a non-sectarian and interracial rehabilitative center for juveniles. She received honorary degrees from Morgan State University, Western College for Women, Tuskegee Institute, Hampton University, and Williams College. When she was forced to retire at age 70, she reportedly said “they're kicking me out”. She continued her service by volunteering in public schools and served on the New York State Board of Regents. Defying her father's belief that judges die early from the stress of the job, Judge Jane Matilda Bolin lived to be 98 years old.



Jane Bolin and her father, Gaius C. Bolin.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County

Benjamin F. Hardy

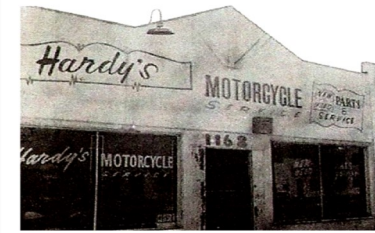
(July 25, 1921 – January 15, 1994)

“Builder of the Iconic Easy Rider Captain America Chopper”



Benjamin F. Hardy was on July 25, 1921, in Los Angeles, California. As a child, “Benny”, as he was called by his family, was interested in mechanics and motorcycles.

In 1946, at the age of 25, Benny opened Hardy's Motorcycle Service Shop in South Central, Los Angeles, California. He was well known in the black community and the local motorcycle club community as the go-to guy for all things motorcycle related. He built motorcycles and “choppers” from scrap parts and junk bikes he collected after accidents. He was also well known in the Watts area by black motorcyclist's clubs and custom bike enthusiasts.



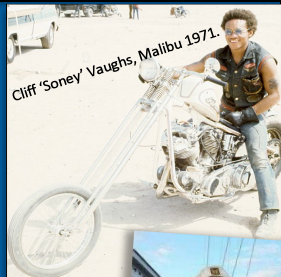
In the early 1960's, actors Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda were developing the storyline for the 1969 movie “Easy Rider”. The independent “road drama” movie featured two bikers who travel throughout the American Southwest, carrying large sums of money concealed in the gas tanks of their motorcycles. When Hopper and Fonda approached Harley Davidson motorcycles and asked for a couple of free bikes to be used in the film, one which would be destroyed during the filming process, Harley Davidson declined. Harley Davidson didn't want their bikes associated with the “outlaw” film. Fonda decided to call on Cliff “Soney” Vaughns, a black man, motorcycle enthusiast, and filmmaker, from the South-Central L.A. area to build some bikes to be used in the film. Cliff immediately called on his motorcycle mentor, Benny “The King of Bikes” Hardy, to work with on the project. The two men along with three other mechanics used old police motorcycles and built two bikes that would become the stars of the film: the “Billy Bike” and the “Caption America Chopper”, which featured an American Flag painted across the large gas tank. The Captain America bike, made from a 20-year-old, heavily customized Harley-Davidson panhead, is considered the most iconic motorcycle ever built. It became a symbol of a generation and an anti-establishment means of travel.



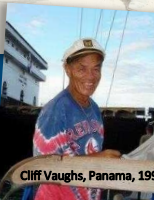
The 'Billy' bike was typical of the custom motorcycles Black bikers were riding in L.A. at the time. The custom bikes featured drag bars, large exhaust pipes, high handlebars, extended front forks, and heavy chrome pipes - many features that were Benny Hardy trademarks. The pair also built additional replica bikes of each motorcycle for the end of the movie where the bikes are destroyed. As history would have it, Benny and Soney's historic contributions to the iconic film were overlooked at the time. The film earned 60 million worldwide and cost only \$400,000 to make. Despite the film's financial success, Benny and Cliff were paid only \$1,250 per bike, with no movie credits.



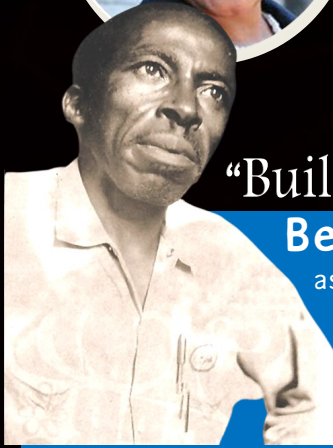
After the movie, Soney Vaughns produced a motorcycle safety film, 'Not So Easy', featuring Peter Fonda, Evel Knievel, and the LAPD motorcycles drill team on Harley-Davidsons. In 1976, he left the U.S. to live on a yacht in Mexico. He was a longstanding member of the historically black Motorcycle Club “Chosen Few MC” out of Los Angeles. Benny Hardy kept running his motorcycle business and enjoyed some notoriety within the black biker community who continued to support his shop.



Benjamin “Benny” Hardy died on January 15, 1994. Twenty years after his death, the iconic Captain America chopper sold for \$1.35 million. In 2008, Benny's work was featured in the exhibit “Black Chrome” which highlighted Black Motorcycle Culture, at the California African American Museum. The 2009 documentary, “History of the Chopper”, recognized “Benny” Hardy and “Soney” Vaughns as the builders of the Easy Rider choppers. Clifford “Soney” Vaughns died on July 2, 2016.



Soney Vaughns was a civil rights activist who worked with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Stokely Carmichael in the late 1950's and early 1960's. There is a famous 1964 photo of Soney being pulled by the National Guard, while protesting in Cambridge, Maryland.

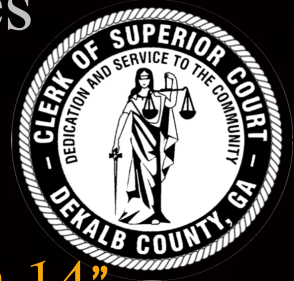


Benny Hardy



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



"Armelda Hattie Greene and The Golden 14"

(1918 - 1919)

"First Black Women to Muster into the United States Navy"



Twelve of the Golden Fourteen, from Kelly Miller's *History of the World War for Human Rights*. Front row: 2nd from left, Josie Washington; 4th from left, Armelda H. Greene. Back row: 3rd from left, Kathryn E. Finch; 5th from left, Sara Davis. The remaining women of the group, unidentified in or absent from this photo, are Fannie Foote, Sarah Howard, Pocahontas Jackson, Olga Jones, Inez McIntosh, Marie Mitchell, Anna Smallwood, Carol Washington, Ruth Welborne, and Maud Williams.

The Golden 14 were the first black women to muster into the United States Navy during World War I. The women were dubbed the Golden 14, in retrospect, in homage World War II's Golden 13, the first black men U.S. Navy officers.

In 1916, President Wilson won his second presidential term, and his administration began preparing for the possible entry into the growing European conflict (WWI). During this time, President Wilson was promoting the passage of the Naval Act and the Naval Reserve Act, that called for vastly enlarging the US Navy. In 1917, the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, began filling shore billets vacated by men reporting for sea duty, and new shore billets created by the Navy's expansion, with white women. Most of the women enlisted as yeomen. Yeoman were clerks, typists, and stenographers. A few served as messmen, cooks, electrician's mates, telephone operators, and intelligence analysts.

On August 12, 1918, her 29th birthday, Armelda Hattie Greene became the first black woman to enlist in the U.S. Naval Reserve Forces. Armelda was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on August 12, 1889. She was a light-skinned, college graduate, a divorcée, and former school teacher. She was working as a civilian clerk when America entered World War I in 1914. Because she had a very light complexion, it is believed that she was mistakenly initially identified as white, during her recruitment. Recruiters at this time, in Boston, Norfolk, and Washington, were turning away qualified black women who attempted to answer the Navy's call.

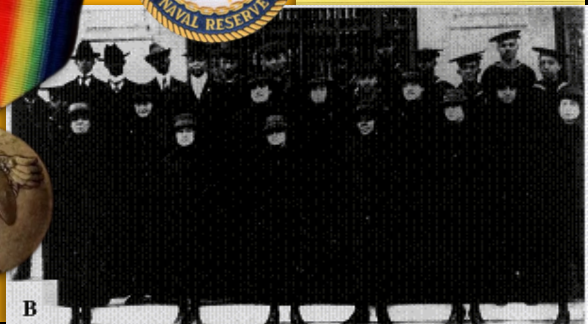
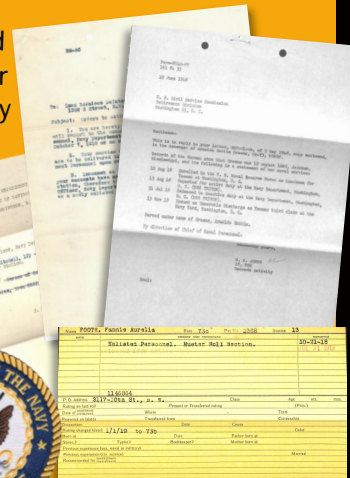
Armelda was in the Aviation Department before being assigned to the Division of Enlisted Personnel, Mustering. The Muster Roll Division kept track of sailors throughout the war. Armelda's brother-in-law, John T. Risher, a Black seaman, was chief of the Muster Office in the Bureau of Navigation. Because of his role, Risher was instrumental in Armelda's transfer. Risher also used the broad language of the Naval Reserve Act and the military's pressing need for administrative support to recruit thirteen more black women and ten black men to work in the Muster Office. Black women working as clerks, typists, and stenographers, broke the cycle of blacks solely working in the mess or as laborers.

Armelda's Navy performance record was exemplary. She qualified by exam for promotion to Yeoman Third Class (E-4). As a senior Yeoman, she trained and supervised the other members of the "Golden Fourteen". Later she was promoted to Yeoman Second Class (E-5). The Navy required all women yeoman to be mustered out by the end of 1919. On November 13, 1919, Armelda Greene received an honorable discharge from the Navy.

The Golden 14 encompassed a diverse group of women from all over the country. Some of the more notable Golden 14 were Sara Davis Taylor, sister of John P. Davis, who was the founder of *Our World*, one of the first national Black magazines, and Ruth Alma Welburn, the grandmother of Ronald H. Brown, the Secretary of Commerce under President Bill Clinton. The others, Pocahontas A. Jackson, Catherine E. Finch, Fannie A. Foote, Olga F. Jones, Sarah E. Howard, Marie E. Mitchell, Anna G. Smallwood, Maud C. Williams, Carol E. Washington, Josephine Washington, and Inez B. McIntosh, remain pioneers of black history as well as naval history.

The Golden 14 were awarded the World War I Victory Medal for their service before returning to civilian life.

Armelda Green continued to work in the Department of the Navy as a civilian clerk. Later she moved to Philadelphia to be near her younger sister. There she took a clerical position in the Works Progress Administration. Armelda Hattie Greene died on February 19, 1966, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the age of 77. She is buried with a military headstone, in Mount Lawn Cemetery, in Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry
Clerk of Superior Court
DeKalb County



Eddie "The Sheik" Gardner
(December 1887 – August 1966)

"Iconic Black Ultramarathoner and Running Legend"

Eddie "The Sheik" Gardner was born in Birmingham, Alabama in December of 1887. Shortly after his birth, his family moved to Seattle, Washington. Eddie's mother died of tuberculosis in 1911, when he was 22 years old.

In 1914, Eddie returned to Alabama to attend Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), a technical school for blacks founded by Booker T. Washington, where he learned how to repair steam boilers. He joined the track team and became a star athlete. After graduation, Eddie returned to Seattle and began repairing steam boilers at the

Puget Sound and Light Company. Eddie continued running and entered many local races, including the Washington

State Ten-Mile Championship, held each year in Seattle. By 1927 Eddie had won the ten-mile championship three times, setting a state record for that distance. He beat some of the best college and independent athletes of the region, many who were younger than Eddie.

In the Summer of 1927, a race director named Charles C. Pyle advertised for the "First Annual International-Trans Continental Foot Race". The foot race would cross the United States, leaving Los Angeles and ending in New York City, covering 3,400 miles. The prizes were astonishing for the time: \$25,000 for 1st place, \$10,000 for 2nd place, \$5,000 for 3rd place, and \$2,500 for 4th place. The 5th through 10th place finishers would each earn a \$1,000 prize. The entry fee of \$125.00 covered the runner's food, housing (tents that would travel with the runner), shoe repair, and minor medical care that the runners needed along the grueling race. Race staff followed the runners, driving up and down the day's route, carrying coffee, food, and water. Over 200 men applied to participate in the race, with only 5 being black. The most notable runner was Eddie Gardner.

Eddie trained intensely for months, running through the streets of Seattle wearing what would become his trademark uniform - a white towel or t-shirt tied around his head, a white sleeveless shirt, and white shorts. Onlookers dubbed Eddie "The Sheik" after the popular 1921 Rudolph Valentino movie of the same name.



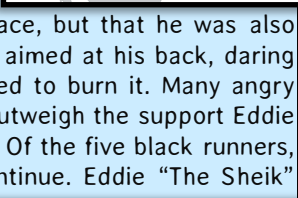
Eddie "The Sheik" Gardner at the start of the race.

The race, coined "The Bunion Derby", left Los Angeles on March 4, 1928, with 199 runners. For two and a half months, runners traveled a designated route each day, stopping each night and starting together again the next day. Each runner's arrival time was recorded on a cumulative log. The fastest cumulative time would determine the winners and their place. The grueling course led runners across the mostly unpaved Route 66, through the muddy Texas panhandle, into the rolling hills of Oklahoma and through the Ozark mountains of Missouri. The runners didn't reach paved roads until they arrived in Illinois. Each day or "stage" of the race averaged about 40 miles. Eddie ran impressive times each day.

But he, along with the other four black runners, faced not only the physical challenge of the punishing race, but also the Jim Crow south. Word spread to white southerners that Eddie was not only competing in the race, but that he was also outpacing many of the elite white runners. In one case a white farmer followed Eddie on horseback with a rifle aimed at his back, daring him to pass another white man. On another day, a white mob surrounded Eddie's trainer's car and threatened to burn it. Many angry onlookers hurled racial slurs and threats at Eddie and the other black runners. Their threats, however, did not outweigh the support Eddie received from the black communities cheering him along the way. Eddie was a symbol of hope and black pride. Of the five black runners, only three finished the race. One black runner was hit by a car, and a second was physically unable to continue. Eddie "The Sheik" Gardner finished 8th out of 55 finishers of the race, earning the \$1,000 prize.

The 2nd Annual "Bunion Derby" was March 31, 1929. This time, the course started in New York and ended in Los Angeles. Eddie "The Sheik" covered 22 miles in less than 3 hours and was leading the overall race when he crossed the Free Bridge over the Mississippi River that separated Illinois from Missouri. He was wearing his signature outfit, displaying the race number of 165. Under his number, Eddie had attached an American flag. Unfortunately, Eddie would not finish the 2nd Trans-America race. Just after Eddie crossed into Oklahoma, he pulled a hamstring muscle. Although he was in pain, he attempted to continue the race. He later told reporters that he wanted to win the race, for his people.

When the Great Depression hit, Eddie remained in Seattle and returned to work as a steam boiler repairman before eventually becoming a steel worker. After 1929, C.C. Pyle never hosted another Trans-American Footrace, and the time of the Bunion Derby came to end. In 1938, Eddie won a 52-mile-long walking competition called "the Lake Hike" around Lake Washington, beating the course's previous record. However, it was the last endurance competition he won. Eddie's wife died in 1960. Eddie worked as a school janitor in North Seattle until he died of a stroke in August 1966, at age 79.





The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



"Saltwater Railroad" (1821)

"Coastal Underground Railroad that led to the Bahamian Islands"

The Saltwater Railroad was a southwardly coastal route that many enslaved people, along with Seminoles and free people fleeing capture, used to escape the Southern states in the early 1820s.

Long before Harriet Tubman and the Underground railroad became the escape passage North, enslaved people from modern-day Georgia and the Carolinas journeyed to Spanish controlled Florida in search of freedom.

In 1819, Spain transferred its Florida territory to the United States under the Adams-Onís Treaty. Prior to the transfer, Spanish Florida was a safe-haven for freedom seeking Africans with a large concentration of black Seminoles living in Negro Fort - a short-lived fortification inside of Fort Gadson, built by the British during the War of 1812. The Fort, located near the Apalachicola National Forrest, was destroyed and the occupants killed in 1818 by Confederate troops, under the command of Andrew Jackson. After the invasion, the free, largely black population could not travel north to the free states, so instead, they moved south. Their route to freedom is known as the Saltwater Railroad.



Unlike the Underground Railroad - an informal network of abolitionists and safehouses that helped enslaved Africans escape to the free Northern states and Canada - the Saltwater Railroad led its passengers to Key Biscayne, on the southeastern coast of Florida.

Nearly 1000 escapees traveled more than 500 miles, contending with challenges on their long journey. The land was undeveloped and full of swamps, insects, animals, and slave hunters from the North, as well as some indigenous tribes looking to capture and return escapees in exchange for weapons and compensation. It was Black Seminoles who helped the escapees with navigational assistance, food, and supplies along the way. Black Seminoles were runaway slaves from plantations in South Carolina and Georgia who sought refuge in Spanish-controlled Florida and lived among the Seminole Indians.

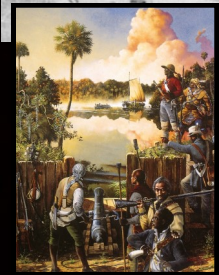
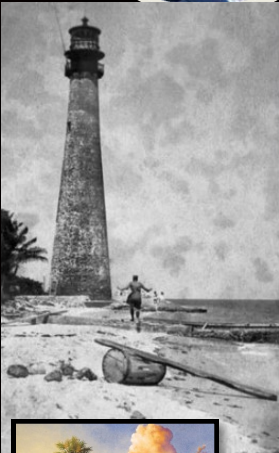
When groups arrived at the southeastern Florida coast, they negotiated with Bahamian wreckers and fishermen who sailed Florida's southern coast in search of marine salvage. If they were fortunate, they would haggle a fair price and board a boat bound for the Bahamian Andros Island - the closest land to the Florida coast. The Bahama Islands were under the control of the British, who had abolished slavery. Other escapees would risk the trip in dugout canoes with makeshift sails for the 154-mile crossing to the islands.

The dangerous ocean voyage offered no guarantees. While crossing the gulf stream, the escapees risked capture, storms, boats capsizing, and death. The fortunate ones found their destiny on Red Bays on Andros Island, an island that is still home to descendants of those that found refuge many years ago. Bahamian descendants, some who still call themselves Black Seminoles, live in the Red Bays settlement on Andros. Cuba, Haiti, and other islands in the Caribbean region were additional secondary destinations for the Saltwater Railroad.

With the final transfer of Florida to the U.S. was completed in 1821, Florida became a typical southern state that established a slavery-based economy. The U.S. military was brought in to capture escaping slaves and their native helpers.

The dark beaches of Cape Florida offered refuge for escapees until December 17, 1825, when the Federal Government built the Cape Florida Lighthouse, making it difficult for escape, essentially shutting down the Saltwater Railroad.

The Cape Florida lighthouse is the oldest structure in Miami Dade County and still stands in Bill Baggs State Park. In September 2004, Cape Florida was designated an official National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site.



The Clerk's Black History Series

Debra DeBerry Clerk of Superior Court DeKalb County



William T. Shorey

(July 13, 1859 – April 15, 1919)

"First Black Man to Command a Whaling Ship"

William T. Shorey was born on July 13, 1859, in the Caribbean Island of Barbados. As a boy, William saw little opportunity in his homeland and did not want to follow in his father's footsteps as a sugarcane farmer. At the age of 17, he boarded a ship bound for Boston. During his first trip, William quickly learned the dangers of whaling after a whale attacked the vessel, smashing into the sides of the ship. When he arrived in Boston, he immediately began working as an apprentice whaler. In 1880, William sailed from the East Coast, around the Cape of Good Hope, and eventually to San Francisco aboard the whaler "Emma Harriman". In 1884, William made his home in California and married Julia Shelton, a newspaper publisher from a prominent black family. The following year, William received his official Master's License, allowing him to command any size water vessel, anywhere in the world. Most of his voyages were based out of San Francisco, which by 1900 was the foremost international trading hub on the North American West Coast, importing and exporting over six million tons of goods. His ships were comprised of multi-racial crews.

Although Julia ran the household while William was away at sea, she and the children would sometimes accompany William on his whaling expeditions. Julia and William would write vivid accounts of their ocean travels in letters to the editor of the Black-owned newspaper, "The San Francisco Elevator". Some brave reporters would row out to William's ship in small boats to grab scoops about death-defying experiences, coining William, the "Black Ahab", and writing articles that described him as a hero who battled monster whales and typhoons to save his crew from horrific disasters. One account tells of a 1904 voyage where whales smashed two boats to pieces, amazingly, with no loss of life. Another story told of a voyage in 1905 that returned 3000 pounds of bone and 230 barrels of oil. This meant a good profit for the owners, fair pay for the skipper, and officers and \$1 each for the green hands. Shorey's ship, the "John and Winthrop" survived two serious storms during the 11-month trip. The story Julia wrote about their three-year-old daughter Victoria's remarkable ability to steer a large "whaling bark" (a ship with three or more masts) was met with great excitement from their community. Unfortunately, one of their voyages ended tragically when their 20 year-old daughter, Zenobia Pearl became ill on a trip to Hawaii, and died soon after they returned home.

In 1907, William's ship was hit by a typhoon off the coast of Japan while returning from an expedition. His crew members reported that the boat was smashed and the sails were lost as large waves swept over the decks in a storm that lasted for 30 harrowing hours. On the same trip they almost smashed into rocks while traveling through dark and dense fog. They attributed Captain Shorey's remarkable seaman skills, calm demeanor and leadership as being the reason they were saved from certain death. The incident was likely the reason that William retired from the sea the following year at the age of 49. He continued to work as a special agent at the Oakland docks, but the remaining years of his life were devoted to his family and community.

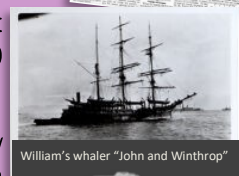
Both before and after his retirement, William Shorey was a prominent civic figure in the San Francisco area. In 1903, he hosted a dinner at his home with influential black citizens from the Bay Area to welcome Booker T. Washington, who spoke to raise funds for his school at Tuskegee.

After his retirement, the far west end of 8th Street was renamed Shorey Street by a City ordinance. Captain Shorey was the first black Oaklander to be so honored. His home, the Shorey house, was restored and enlarged in 2007. In April of 2013, the Shorey House was designated a historic landmark in Oakland.

Only two of the Shorey children lived into adulthood. William Shorey fell victim to the Spanish Flu and died on April 15, 1919 at age 59. His wife, Julia died in 1944 at the age of 78. They are buried at Mountain View Cemetery, in Oakland, next to three of their children.



Zenobia and Victoria on her mother's lap.



William's whaler "John and Winthrop"



Daughter, Victoria Shorey



Julia Shorey



William & Julia



VICTORIA & SHOREY