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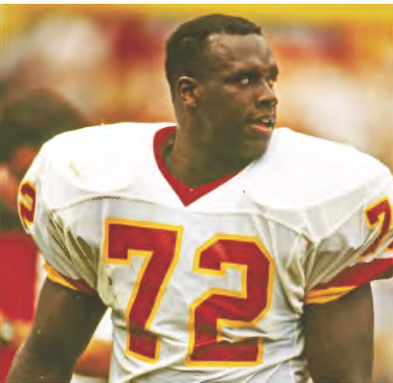
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Texas Black History and Culture Highlights

February 2024



February 2, 1959, Dexter Manley; an American legend, nicknamed the "Secretary of Defense" was born February 2, 1959 in Houston, Texas. Manley was drafted in 1981 by the Washington Redskins. During his career with the Redskins, Manley won two Super Bowl titles, and was named All-Pro Defensive Lineman of the year in 1986. He has been nominated for the NFL Pro-Football Hall of Fame every year since 1996, and he is the Redskins All-Time sack leader. Manley is in the Redskins Ring of Honor and is one of the organizations Seventy Greatest Players. After ten years with the Washington Redskins he played one year for the Phoenix Cardinals and one year with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. After his NFL career ended, Manley revealed that he was functionally illiterate, despite having studied at Oklahoma State University for four years. He returned to school, learned how to read and testified before Congress about his educational journey. More about Dexter Manley can be read [here](#).

February 5, 1877, Henry Ossian Flipper finished 50th in a class of 76, becoming West Point's first Black graduate. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant and assigned to the all-black 10th cavalry regiment in Texas, one of the four all-black "buffalo soldier" regiments in the U.S. Army. Flipper was born into slavery in Thomasville, Georgia, in 1856, the eldest of five brothers. Flipper attended Atlanta University during Reconstruction. As a freshman, he was appointed by Representative James C. Freeman to attend West Point, where four other Black cadets were already enrolled. Flipper served in Texas until 1881 when he was dismissed for allegedly embezzling funds, a charge he vehemently denied for the rest of his life. In 1994, his descendants applied to the U.S. military for a review of Flipper's court-martial and dismissal. President Bill Clinton posthumously pardoned Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper in 1999. More about Henry Ossian Flipper can be read [here](#).



February 7, 1927, Jazz pop vocalist and pianists Ernie Mae Miller was born in Austin, Texas. The granddaughter of L.C. Anderson, Prairie View A&M University's second principle, Miller began playing the piano at age five. She began studying the baritone saxophone in her high school. Later, she studied music at Prairie View, where she was a member of the Prairie View Coeds, a 16-piece all-girl band that toured the East Coast and Central America during the summer. From 1951-1966, Miller entertained at Austin's New Orleans Club on Red River Street. Her popularity helped usher in the beginning of Red River Street's reputation as a live music destination. Ernie Mae Miller recorded two live albums while performing at the venue — both entitled Ernie Mae at the Old New Orleans Club. She was also a regular at the Driskill and Commodore Perry Hotels. Her music career span was more than fifty years. More about Ernie Mae Miller can be read [here](#).



February 10–14, 1868, African Americans in Texas experienced the right to vote for the first time. Congressional Reconstruction officers carried out an election in all Texas counties to determine whether or not a constitutional convention should be held to write the new constitution required for re-entry into the United States. Nearly 40,000 African American voters cast their ballots in favor of holding a convention in June 1868. Ten elected freedmen were among the 90 delegates who convened to write the constitution. More about the first Black voters in Texas can be read [here](#).

February 12, 1854, Sarah Mitchell Ford, freedwoman was born into slavery in Brazoria County, Texas. Sarah lived with her parents in East Columbia until marrying in 1874. After marrying Wes Ford, she and her husband moved to their own cabin not far from her parent's home located nine miles west of Angleton in West Brazoria County. She and her husband gave birth to eleven children. After her husband's death and the loss of four children, Sarah moved to Houston's Third Ward. She lived in Houston until her death in 1945. Sarah's story has is one of 300 interviews chronicled in the late 1930s by the Texas Writers' Project as part of the Federal Writers' Project under the Work Projects Administration (WPA). Her interview details her memories of enslaved community culture, emancipation, and life after emancipation. More about Sarah Mitchell Ford can be read [here](#).



February 16, 2015, Dr. Ivy Ruth Taylor declared her candidacy for re-election as mayor of San Antonio. In 2014, Taylor was appointed mayor to serve in the interim after Julian Castro was appointed Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under the President Obama. During San Antonio's 2015 mayoral election, no candidate received a majority of the vote. A runoff election occurred and Taylor won against her rival, 51.7%–48.3% retaining her position as mayor for a full two-year term. She was also the first African American to be elected mayor of San Antonio and only the second woman in that position. In addition, Taylor was the first female African-American mayor of a city with a population of more than one million. Taylor was born and raised in New York, but relocated to San Antonio to serve the Housing and Community Development Department. More about Dr. Ivy Taylor can be read [here](#).

February 20, 1874, The Texas Senate confirmed Walter Moses Burton's election after months of contesting his win. He was first elected to the Fourteenth Legislature in 1874 and served almost continually until 1883. Born into slavery in North Carolina in 1840, he was brought to Texas in 1850. After emancipation, Burton purchased several tracts of land from his former owner. He became active in Republican party politics and was elected as the sheriff and tax collector in Fort Bend County in 1869. In the Senate, he championed education and advanced a bill that called for the establishment of Prairie View Normal School. After leaving office, he returned to farming but continued to be active in the Republican party until he died in 1913. Burton is also the last African American elected to the Texas Senate until Barbara Jordan's election in 1966. More about Walter Moses Burton can be read [here](#).





February 21, 1936, Lawyer, educator, and politician, Barbara Jordan was born in Houston, Texas' Fifth Ward. A Democrat, she was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate after Reconstruction and the first Southern, African American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1966. In 1976, she became the first African American, and the first woman, to ever deliver a keynote address at a Democratic National Convention. In 1994, Clinton awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the NAACP presented her with the Spingarn Medal. She was honored many times and was given over 20 honorary degrees from institutions across the country, including Harvard and Princeton, and was elected to the Texas and National Women's Hall of Fame. More about Barbara Jordan can be read [here](#).

February 23, 1861, The Texas State Legislature voted in favor of an Ordinance of Secession from the Union. This decision marked the beginning of the Civil War. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 prompted the secession of southern, slave-holding states. The majority of Texans feared the election of a Republican would threaten slavery, which they believed was a vital part of the economy of the young state. Not all Texans bought into the idea of secession, most notably Sam Houston, the Unionist governor of the state. Although Houston himself was a slave-owner and opposed abolition, he actively worked to keep the state from seceding. Governor Houston was evicted from office when he refused to take an oath to the Confederacy. Houston was replaced by Lieutenant Governor Edward Clark. The Union would prove victorious four years later. More about Texas succeeding from the Union and the Civil War can be read [here](#).



February 26, 1971, Erica Abi Wright, known professionally as Erykah Badu, was born in Dallas, Texas. Badu is an American singer and songwriter. Influenced by R&B, soul, and hip hop, Badu rose to prominence in the late 1990s when her debut album *Baduizm* (1997), placed her at the forefront of the neo soul movement, earning her the nickname "Queen of Neo Soul" by music critics. Badu's first encounter with show business occurred at age four, singing and dancing at The Black Academy of Arts and Letters (TBAAL). During her teens she had decided to change the spelling of her first name from Erica to Erykah, upon realizing that the original spelling was a "slave name". She adopted the surname "Badu" because it is her favorite jazz scat sound. Badu's discography includes eight albums with the latest recording completed in 2015. Badu's career exceeds the field of music as a couture model, online entrepreneur and actor on stage and screen. More about Erykah Badu can be read [here](#).