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Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture Newsletter - March 2024

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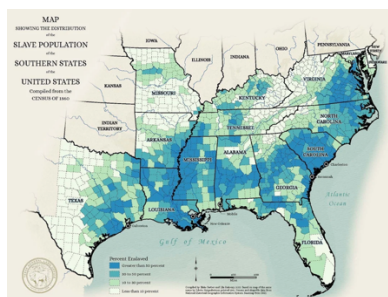
Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture. (2024). Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture Newsletter - March 2024. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/newsletter/860>

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Texas Black History and Culture Highlights

March 2024



March 2, 1807, The United States Congress passed the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, which banned the importation of slaves into the United States. While this legislation marked a significant step towards the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery itself would not be abolished in the U.S. until several decades later. When Texas became the twenty-eighth state in 1845, Texans continued to import Africans illegally into the state. During the entire period of the African slave trade in Texas, between 1818 and 1860, slave ships frequently appeared along the Texas coast between Corpus Christi and Sabine Pass. Most of the African slaves brought to Texas were landed in the vicinity of Galveston Island and the neighboring rivers that emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. More about the African slave trade into Texas can be read [here](#).

March 3, 1947, Texas Southern University (TSU) was established. TSU is the nation's third largest Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with an enrollment of nearly 10,000 students. A state-supported institution of higher learning located just southeast of downtown Houston TSU was created when the Fiftieth Texas State Legislature passed a bill establishing a "Negro University with a law school to be located in Houston." This bill grew out of demands by African Americans for graduate and professional training in the state of Texas, and because of a lawsuit filed by Heman Marion Sweatt, to desegregate the University of Texas Law School. Approximately 300 students enrolled when TSU opened its doors in September 1947. On June 1, 1951, the Texas Legislature changed the name of the university from Texas State University for Negroes to Texas Southern University (TSU). More about Texas Southern University can be read [here](#).



March 4, 1897, Poet, Bernice Love Wiggins was born in Austin, Texas. Wiggins' work is affiliated with the Harlem Renaissance period due to her poetic tone and style. Her work was published in the El Paso Herald, the Chicago Defender, the Houston Informer, and other newspapers across Texas. Her father, Jessie Austin Love, was also a poet who attended college but in 1903 she was orphaned and raised in El Paso, Texas, by an aunt. Her volume of poetry, *Tuneful Tales* (1925), contains 102 poems which are written in dialect form Wiggins' poetry focused on her experience of the black community of her time. She also wrote poetry about racial discrimination, lynching, and poverty. She "condemned the injustice of laws against prostitution" in her poem, "The Vampire." Upon marriage in 1915 she moved to Los Angeles with little documentation about life as a writer upon moving to California. She died on January 27, 1936, and was buried as Bernice Love Clay in the Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles. More about Bernice Love Wiggins can be read [here](#).

March 7 1960, Civil rights activist Mary Lillian Andrews launched a letter-writing campaign to desegregate several of San Antonio's downtown businesses that operated lunch counters. Andrews's letters drew attention to ongoing segregation in each establishment and urged the businesses to integrate. Inspired by the recent student sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, and in other Southern cities, Andrews and the NAACP Youth Council called on businesses to respond to the letter or to expect demonstrations. On Sunday, March 13, 1960, the group organized a rally which drew up to 1,500 attendees. At the meeting, they established a deadline of March 17th for businesses to respond to the letters. By March 15th In a joint statement issued to the public, several stores agreed to adopt "a policy of no discrimination at their eating facilities." News reports credited San Antonio as the first Southern city to desegregate dining facilities as a "community effort" in the midst of demonstrations across the U.S. More about Mary Lillian Andrews can be read [here](#).



March 11, 1878, Prairie View A&M University opened its doors with an enrollment of eight students, all men, for the first state-supported college in Texas for African Americans. The school, located 50 miles northwest of Houston, had its beginnings in the Texas Constitution of 1876, which, in separate articles, established an "Agricultural and Mechanical College" and pledged that "Separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored children, and impartial provisions shall be made for both." Thus, Alta Vista Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas for Colored Youth was established on August 14, 1876. Prairie View, a land-grant university authorized under the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890,

is part of the Texas A&M System. Prairie View is the second oldest public institution of higher learning in the state. It offers baccalaureate degrees in 50 academic majors, 37 master's degrees, and four doctoral degree programs through eight colleges and the School of Architecture. PVAMU is the largest HBCU in the state of Texas and the third largest HBCU in the United States. More about Prairie View A&M University can be read [here](#).

March 18, 1996, The court decision was determined in Hopwood v. Texas by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit that the University of Texas School of Law could not use race as a factor in determining which applicants to admit to the university. This was the first successful legal challenge to a university's affirmative action stance since a 1978 case in California. In Hopwood, four white students who had been rejected from the University of Texas at Austin's School of Law challenged the institution's admissions policy on equal protection grounds and prevailed. After seven years as a precedent, the Hopwood decision was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003. Contemporary challenges to affirmative action in the Supreme Court have been led by Edward Blum, a University of Texas alum who has been a longtime critic of the university's admissions policies. More about Hopwood vs Texas can be read [here](#). More about the current status of affirmative action and college admission policies can be read [here](#).

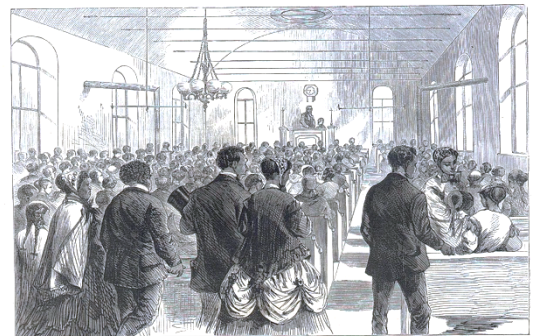




March 23, 1938, Attorney and the 54th mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, Maynard Jackson was born in Dallas, Texas. A member of the Democratic Party, he was the first Black mayor of Atlanta and of any major city in the South; his three terms made him the second longest-serving mayor in the city's history, after six-term mayor William B. Hartsfield. Jackson spent his childhood in Dallas, attended high school in Atlanta then was accepted to Morehouse College. He received his law degree from North Carolina Central University. As mayor, he is notable also for public works projects, primarily the new Maynard H. Jackson International terminal at the Atlanta airport, and for greatly increasing minority business participation in the city. After his death in 2003, the William B. Hartsfield Atlanta International

Airport was renamed Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport to honor his service to the expansion of the airport, the city, and its people. More about Maynard Jackson Jr. can be read [here](#).

March 22, 1866, The Texas State Central Committee of Colored Men, a Black State Convention, occurred in Austin, Texas. Black state conventions were held in Texas on at least ten occasions during the period from Reconstruction to express the concerns of Blacks in an era before the existence of lasting groups that focused upon the economic, political, and civil rights of minorities. Often these state meetings sent delegates to national conventions seeking the same goals. The goal of the March 22nd meeting was to express a desire to work with the Freedmen's Bureau to gain funding that would benefit former slaves. Black State Conventions occurred from 1873-1885. These gatherings occurred in cities and smaller towns to explore solutions to a wealth of issues that included landholding, lynching, lack of adequate schools, harsh treatment in prisons, inequitable enforcement of laws against intermarriage, and railroad segregation. More about Texas' Black State Conventions can be read [here](#).



March 29, 1867, Mattie B. Haywood White, the teacher, artist, and Austin, Texas resident was born in Tennessee. Upon graduating from college in Nashville, she moved to Austin. In 1892 White founded Austin's first private school for African American girls. In 1900 she was hired to teach art at the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institute for Colored Youth, a position she held for over forty years. She used sign language, written instructions, and patterns to teach fiber arts, drawing, and painting. Mattie B. White was an interdisciplinary artist creating oil paintings, hand-painted plates, embroidery, and crochet work. She often painted landscape scenes and was awarded first prize at a National Women's Federation Meeting for an oil painting of bluebonnets. She partnered with her husband, Thomas J. White, who strived to commemorate Black emancipation by helping organize the Travis County

Emancipation Celebration Association. The organization purchased land for a park in East Austin. The Foundation for Women's Resources recognized her contributions as a teacher and artist by including White in the traveling exhibition *Texas Women: A Celebration of History (1981–82)*. More about Mattie B. Haywood can be read [here](#).