

Prairie View A&M University

Digital Commons @PVAMU

Newsletter Collections

Academic Affairs Collections

4-2024

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

Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/newsletter>

Recommended Citation

Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture. (2024). Texas Institute for the Preservation of History and Culture Newsletter - April 2024. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/newsletter/862>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Academic Affairs Collections at Digital Commons @PVAMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newsletter Collections by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @PVAMU. For more information, please contact hvkoshy@pvamu.edu.



Texas Black History and Culture Highlights

April 2024



April 1, 1917, Texarkana native, composer, and pianist Scott Joplin died in New York City. Joplin was born in Northeast Texas in 1867. He is celebrated for being the inventor of "Ragtime," a precursor of jazz. Born into a musical family, Joplin began sight reading and playing piano at age eleven. As a young man, in 1888, Joplin earned a living by teaching piano and playing in brothels and saloons. Between 1890 and 1907, Joplin lived in Missouri, Illinois, and New York while composing music and touring with his eight-member band, the Texas Medley Quartette. While touring, his sheet music was published, purchased by millions, and transposed onto metallic scrolls to propel self-playing pianos. He settled in New York City in 1911 and focused on developing *Treemonisha*, the first grand opera by an African American. Joplin wrote forty-four original ragtime pieces, as well as two operas and one ragtime ballet. He is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery in New York City. More about Scott Joplin can be read [here](#).

April 4, 1872, The African Methodist Episcopal Church established Paul Quinn College in Austin. The school's original purpose was to educate formerly enslaved people and their descendants. Initially named the Connectional School for the Education of Negro Youth, classes occurred in churches and people's homes, but in 1877 the school established a site in Waco, Texas. The college was renamed Waco College, and freedmen learned blacksmithing, carpentry, tanning, and saddle work. The college grew under the leadership of Bishop William Paul Quinn, who raised funds and expanded the curriculum to include classical subjects like Latin, mathematics, and English. In May 1881, the college was chartered by the State of Texas, and the name was changed to commemorate the contributions of Bishop William Paul Quinn. The college relocated to southeast Dallas, Texas, in 1990. In 2021, Paul Quinn announced it would house an International Baccalaureate school for students in grades six through twelve. More about Paul Quinn College can be read [here](#).



April 6, 1927, Surgeon and anti-abortion activist Dr. Mildred Fay Jefferson was born in Pittsburg, Texas. The only child of a Methodist minister and a schoolteacher, she earned her bachelor's degree from Texas College. Her family relocated to Boston, where Dr. Jefferson earned a master's degree in biology from Tufts University. She was the first Black woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School in 1951. She became the first woman to practice surgery at Boston City Hospital. She was one of the founders of Massachusetts Citizens for Life in 1970. She also helped found the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), initiating a political action committee supporting anti-abortion candidates running for office. Dr. Jefferson compelled President Ronald Reagan to change his position from pro-choice to anti-abortion. She died in 2010 at age 83 and was buried in her hometown of Carthage, Texas. More about Dr. Mildred Fay Jefferson can be read [here](#).

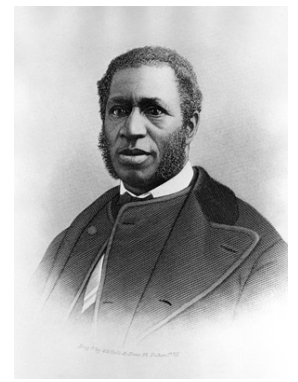
April 9, 1866, The Civil Rights Act of 1866 became effective. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the first United States federal law to define citizenship and affirm that the law equally protects all citizens. In the wake of the American Civil War, it was conceived to protect the civil rights of persons of African descent born in or brought to the United States. The Act was passed by Congress in 1866 and vetoed by U.S. President Andrew Johnson. In April 1866, Congress again passed the bill to support the Thirteenth Amendment, and Johnson again vetoed it. Still, a two-thirds majority in each chamber overrode the veto to allow it to become law without presidential signature. John Bingham and other congressmen argued that Congress did not yet have sufficient constitutional power to enact this law. Following the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, Congress ratified the 1866 Act in 1870. More about the Civil Rights Act of 1866 can be read [here](#).



April 11, 1968, The Civil Rights Act of 1968 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. This law is a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The 1968 Act expanded on previous acts and prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, (and as amended) handicap, and family status. Title VIII of the Act is also known as the Fair Housing Act (of 1968). From 1966 to 1967, Congress regularly considered the Fair Housing Bill but failed to garner support for its passage. The

assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968, and the riots occurring nationally compelled President Johnson to push for the bill's swift approval. More about the Fair Housing Act can be read [here](#).

April 12, 1825, Richard Harvey Cain, a founder of Paul Quinn College, was born in West Virginia. Cain was a minister, an abolitionist, and South Carolina's State Representative from 1873 to 1875 and again from 1877 to 1879. He was an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) preacher. In 1865, he became the superintendent of AME missions, and in 1880, he began serving Louisiana and Texas. On April 4, 1872, Cain collaborated with a team of AME preachers to launch the Connectional School for the Education of Negro Youth in Austin, Texas. In 1877, the college relocated to Waco and was renamed Waco College. In 1888, the state of Texas chartered the college and changed its name to Paul Quinn College to commemorate the contributions of Bishop William Paul Quinn. Cain served as president from 1876 – 1880. More about Richard Harvey Cain can be read [here](#).



April 13, 1952, Professional baseball player Dave Hoskins became the first African American to play in the Texas Leagues as a pitcher for the Dallas Eagles. Hoskins was born in 1925 in Greenwood, Mississippi. In 1936, he moved to Flint, Michigan. In the Flint City League, as both an outfielder and pitcher, he was signed to the Cincinnati Clowns of the Negro American League. In the Negro League, he played for the Chicago American Giants, Louisville Buckeyes, and the Homestead Grays. While he occasionally pitched during his amateur and Negro League tenures, Hoskins was an outfielder. Five years after Brooklyn Dodger, Jackie Robinson broke the color

barrier on the East Coast; Hoskins continued advancing equality in the Southwest. Hoskins was the Texas League's best pitcher in 1952 and earned an All-Star nod. Retiring in 1960, he returned to Flint and worked for General Motors. He died in 1970. More about Dave Hoskins can be read [here](#).

April 15, 1926, Opera singer Roberta Dodd Crawford debuted at Chicago's famed performance venue, Kimball Hall. Roberta Dodd Crawford was born in Bonham, Texas. She attended Wiley College for two years, then Fisk University to study voice with the esteemed librettist Roland Hayes. In 1920, Crawford moved to Chicago to study for six years with a prestigious vocal coach at the Chicago Musical College (now Roosevelt University). Her 1926 Kimball Hall performance received favorable reviews from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the *Chicago Daily News*, and the *Chicago Defender*. She sang songs in French, German, Spanish, Italian, and English, as well as a Negro spiritual. She traveled to Paris, where in 1931, she made her French debut by singing selections in five languages at the classical concert hall, the Salle Gaveau. Crawford performed in numerous American and European cities. She died in 1954 in Dallas and was buried in Gates Hill Cemetery in Bonham. More about Roberta Dodd Crawford can be read [here](#)



April 16, 1836, Emily D. West, aka Emily Morgan, most famously known as the "Yellow Rose of Texas," was kidnapped from her post as a housekeeper at the New Washington Association's Hotel in Morgan's Point, Texas. A free person of mixed race, West was captured by the troops of General Antonio López de Santa Anna as they prepared to face an army led by Sam Houston in the Battle of San Jacinto. The song "The Yellow Rose of Texas" grew out of the folklore surrounding the 1836 attack, with West as a critical reason for Texas' victory. The Battle of San Jacinto states that Santa Anna was having sex with West and was distracted during Sam Houston's attack. There is no record of Santa Anna being with a woman then, but in 1842, Sam Houston's battle account was recorded in the journal of Englishman William Bollaert. The song's composer is also a mystery, though its original lyrics suggest a black man: "There's a yellow rose in Texas/That I am going to see/ No other darky (sic) knows her/No one only me." After the Battle of San Jacinto, West returned to her New York home in March 1837.

Monuments to Emily West exist in Houston and San Antonio. More about Emily D. West can be read [here](#).

April 28, 1909, Librarian Algerene M. Atkins Craig was born in Austin, Texas. Craig was the first Black elementary school librarian in Texas. She received a bachelor of science degree from Prairie View College (now Prairie View A&M University) in 1931. She earned her certification in library science from the University of Southern California and the University of Texas at Austin. In 1932, Craig began teaching in Austin's segregated public school system. In 1934, she organized the first library available to African American students in Austin at the Gregory Town School (later E. L. Blackshear Elementary School.) After having served forty-three years as a teacher, librarian, and assistant principal at Blackshear Elementary School, Craig retired. She was a dedicated archivist and a longtime Travis County Historical Commission (TCHC) contributor. In 1988, she received the Black Heritage Outstanding Citizen Award. She was honored repeatedly for work on behalf of various local, state, and national organizations and her church. Algerene M. Atkins Craig died in Austin, Texas, on February 28, 1996. She was buried at the Assumption Cemetery. More about Algerene M. Atkins Craig can be read [here](#).

