



Black Congressmen During Reconstruction: A Documentary Sourcebook

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During the Reconstruction, African Americans from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia?former slave-owning states?were elected to Congress in remarkable numbers. They included lawyers, teachers, businessmen, editors, and ministers. African Americans gained the right to vote through the Reconstruction Acts and the Civil War Amendments, and elected 2 blacks to the Senate and 19 to the House of Representatives. This book provides brief biographical sketches of these extraordinary politicians and excerpts from documents illuminating their activities in Congress.

These politicians took an active role and spoke out on issues from civil rights legislation and policies on Native Americans to the Chinese Exclusion Bill and foreign policy. They demanded a federal law making lynching a capital crime, denounced massacres in the South, and decried the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. They played important roles until the South successfully drove blacks away from the polls and from Congress.

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