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The First Colored Senators and Representatives, In the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States

Stock#: 51248
Map Maker: Currier & Ives
Date: 1872
Place: New York
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 12.5 x 10.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Scarce Currier and Ives lithographic print showing the first 7 African American members of Congress.

This broadside depicts the first African Americans who served in the United States Congress. Following ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, black men in all of the former Confederate states could vote. Most of them became Republicans, and together with white Republicans won election to local offices and to state legislatures.

From left to right, the senators and representatives are:

Hiram Rhodes Revels was born free in North Carolina. Revels served as an army chaplain for a black regiment during the Civil War and helped establish schools for the freed people. After the War, Revels moved to Mississippi. In 1869 the Mississippi legislature elected him to the United States Senate, in which he was the first African American member. He served from February 1870 to March 1871.

Benjamin Sterling Turner was born a slave in 1825 in North Carolina. Turner moved to Alabama with his owner and was sold when he was twenty years old. During the Civil War, Turner raised enough money to purchase some property, and after emancipation he worked as a merchant and a farmer. In 1870, he successfully campaigned for an Alabama seat in the House of Representatives. He served one term in the Forty-second Congress, from 1871 to 1873.

Josiah Thomas Walls was born a slave in Winchester, Virginia, in 1842. In July 1863, in Philadelphia, he



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enlisted in the Third Infantry Regiment, United States Colored Troops. Discharged in October 1865 in Florida, he remained in that state. Walls was elected to represent Florida in Congress in 1870 but lost his seat early in 1873 when the candidate he had defeated successfully challenged his election. Walls had won an at-large seat in 1872, so he returned to Congress and won again in 1874, but early in 1876 he lost his seat once more as a result of another successful challenge to his election.

Also born into slavery in South Carolina, **Joseph Hayne Rainey** was the first African American to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and was the first black man to preside over the House. While enslaved, Rainey worked as a barber in South Carolina and in Philadelphia. During the Civil War, he worked for the Confederacy until 1862 when he and his wife escaped and went to Bermuda. After the war, he and his family returned to Charleston. In 1870 he was elected to the House of Representatives to complete the term of a congressman the House had refused to seat. He was reelected three times and served until 1879.

Robert Brown Elliot was born in England. In 1867, Elliot moved to South Carolina, where he practiced law and entered State politics. Elliot was elected to Congress in 1870 and reelected two years later, serving from 1871 until he resigned in November 1874. While serving in Congress, Elliot advocated a bill that later became the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Robert Carlos De Large was born to free parents in Aiken, South Carolina. De Large was elected to the House of Representatives and served from March 1871 until he lost his seat early in 1873 when the man he defeated successfully challenged the result of the election.

Jefferson Franklin Long was the second African American elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1870. He was born a slave in Knoxville, Georgia. Self-educated and trained as a tailor, he became a successful businessman in Macon, Georgia after the War. After Georgia was readmitted into the Union in 1870, Jefferson Long was elected to fill a vacant seat in the House of Representatives. Long served in the House from January 16 to March 3, 1871. He was the first African American to speak on the House floor.

Detailed Condition: