



Story Ideas

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African-Americans who shaped history in the Hershey Harrisburg Region

[Original article](#) appeared on *Pennlive.com* by Teresa Bonner on Feb. 11, 2013.

Sidebar: Events in HHR honoring Black History Month 2015.

Whether fighting to end slavery, helping slaves escape to freedom, nurturing young minds in the classroom or taking power seats in government, black leaders have left their marks on Harrisburg history. As the nation marks Black History Month, here are 15 notable black figures from the midstate's history, and their achievements.

Abolitionist

Jane Marie Mars Chester was born a slave in 1801 in Virginia. She escaped to the North in 1825, married George Chester, operated a restaurant and became Harrisburg's major caterer. The restaurant was a gathering spot for abolitionists. She died in 1894.

Educators

John P. Scott became Harrisburg's first black school administrator when he was appointed Calder Building principal. He touched the lives of thousands of students in his 47-year career. Scott was the patriarch of one of the city's most enduring families. On the day of his funeral in 1931, city schools closed in his honor.

Charles Fuller Howard served for 50 years as principal of Steelton's Hygienic Elementary School, a school for black pupils in grades ones to eight. He became a teacher at Hygienic after graduating from Steelton High School in 1885 and was appointed principal in 1886. He retired in 1936.

Emma Thompson McGowan was an inspiration to her pupils in Carlisle's segregated schools. She was born in Virginia in 1876, and taught for 30 years in Carlisle's Lincoln and Wilson buildings before retiring in 1943. She died in 1966. The school board renamed the high school's West building after her.

Journalists

Thomas Morris Chester, a son of Jane and George Chester, was born in Harrisburg in 1834. He recruited soldiers for the U.S. Colored Troops and was the only black war correspondent to work for a major white newspaper. He was admitted to the English bar in 1870. He died in 1892.

Peter Sullivan Blackwell published the Steelton Press, a newspaper for the black community. He was elected to Steelton Council in 1904 and was an entrepreneur and community organizer.

Lawyer

W. Justin Carter Sr. (1866-1947), an attorney, was one of the original members in 1905 of the Niagara Movement, the precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was a secretary to Lt. Gov. Edward E. Beidleman. Gov. George Earle named him chairman of a commission to rewrite the state Workmen's Compensation Act.

Photographers

William C. Goodridge, born in 1806 in Maryland, arrived in York in 1811, built a five-story building in downtown York, operated a railway freight service and was a stationmaster on the Underground Railroad. His son, Glenalvin, founded one of the most enduring black photography firms in America.

Charles Franklin Moss (1878-1961), a Winchester, Va., native, was an accomplished photographer and artist with studios in Harrisburg and Carlisle.

Politicians

Andrew M. Bradley, who died in 1983, played pivotal roles in state government, the Democratic party and the development of Harrisburg. He became the first black to serve in a Cabinet post in Pennsylvania when Gov. George M. Leader appointed him state budget secretary in January 1955. Two years later, he became state secretary of property and supplies.

C. Delores Tucker was a groundbreaking politician and civil rights crusader. She was the first black female vice chairman of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party, the first female vice president of the Pennsylvania National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the first black and first woman to serve as Pennsylvania secretary of the commonwealth. She died in October 2005.

School board president

The Rev. William Howard Day (1825-1900), a recipient of a master's degree, newspaper editor in Cleveland and prominent educator, settled in Harrisburg in 1872. He was elected to the Harrisburg School Board in 1878 and was its first black president.

Soldier

Ephraim Slaughter's life began in slavery in North Carolina, but he escaped to the North and fought in the Civil War to end racial servitude. He died in Harrisburg in 1943 at 97, the city's last Civil War veteran.

Underground Railroad conductor

Harriet McClintock Marshall, who lived near North Front and Calder streets, assisted in the feeding, clothing and care of escaping slaves who found shelter at Wesley Union AME Zion. She is buried in Lincoln Cemetery.

YWCA director

Ella Frazier was executive director of the Harrisburg YWCA Phyllis Wheatley Branch at Cowden and Briggs streets from 1923 to 1955. She involved girls in athletic programs, encouraged teens to learn office skills, offered homemaking advice to young mothers, and, at night, often took to the streets to talk to idle youth, suggesting they become involved in productive activities. She died in 1977.

Who do you think are the [African-American leaders today who may someday earn a place on a list of those who helped shaped the midstate's history?](#)

This list was originally compiled in 2007 by late Patriot-News reporter Mary O. Bradley.

SIDEBAR:

Sample of events in the Hershey Harrisburg Region in honor of Black History Month 2015.

[Black History Month at the NCWM](#) - 2/9/2015

Runs from 2/1/2015 to 2/28/2015

The National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg, PA

["Unicorn in Captivity": Poetry & Perspectives...](#) - 2/11/2015

YWCA Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA

[Make That Change!](#) - 2/19/2015

Sunoco Performance Theater, Harrisburg, PA

[Community Free Day at The PA State Museum](#) - 2/22/2015

The PA State Museum, Harrisburg, PA

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The Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau (HHRVB) is the official non-profit partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) serving Pennsylvania's Dauphin and Perry counties. This Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) accredited organization is committed to actively marketing the region locally, domestically, and internationally to leisure and business travelers; meeting & convention planners; sporting event producers; and group tour leaders. For more information go to [VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org](#), or call 877-727-8573.