

# Freedom's Lawmakers

A Directory of Black Officeholders  
during Reconstruction

ERIC FONER

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62. A Presbyterian minister, he served as a chaplain in the 26th U.S. Colored Infantry during the Civil War. After the war, he preached as a Methodist minister.

In 1865, Randolph applied for a position with the Freedmen's Bureau, writing, "I don't ask position or money. But I ask a place where I can be most useful to my race." Sent to South Carolina by the American Missionary Association, Randolph, with the Reverend E. J. Adams, founded and edited the *Charleston Journal* in 1866 and was associate editor of the *Charleston Advocate* in the following year. A Union League organizer and assistant superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, Randolph was vice president of the Republican state executive committee, 1867, and was elected chairman of the Republican state committee by the party convention of 1868. One white Republican described him as "quite a speaker and a good man, but totally unfit for that position."



Benjamin Randolph

Randolph represented Orangeburg County in the constitutional convention of 1868 and in the state Senate and as county schools commissioner in the same year. At the constitutional convention, he said: "My radicalism consists in believing one thing; that 'God created all nations to dwell upon the earth.' " He proposed that the constitution authorize the legislature, as of 1875, to make literacy a qualification for voting. Accused by Democrats of making "incendiary speeches," Randolph was assassinated by the Ku Klux Klan in October 1868 while campaigning for the Republican party in Abbeville County.

See also Figure 3

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#### Randolph, J. W. (dates unknown)

Mississippi. Mulatto.

Represented Sunflower and LeFlore counties in Mississippi House of Representatives, 1874-75.

See Figure 6

Satcher, *Mississippi*, 206.

#### Ransier, Alonzo J. (1834-1882)

South Carolina. Born free. Mulatto. Literate. Clerk, editor.



Born in Charleston, possibly the child of immigrants from Haiti, Ransier worked before the Civil War as a clerk with a leading shipping house. He attended the South Carolina black convention of 1865 and was one of the delegation chosen to present its memorial to Congress. In 1866, he was associate editor of the *South Carolina Leader*. Ransier represented Charleston at the constitutional convention of 1868 and in the state House of Representatives, 1868-70, where he chaired the committee on privileges and elections. He also served as a presidential elector in 1868, and was also a registrar; Charleston County auditor, 1869-70; and a trustee of the state orphan asylum. In 1868, Ransier was chosen to succeed Benjamin F. Randolph as chairman of the state Republican party after Randolph's assassination. In 1869, he obtained a charter for the Amateur Literary and Fraternal Association of Charleston. The following year, Ransier was among those demanding more offices for blacks and was elected lieutenant governor, serving to 1872. In 1872, Ransier was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served for one term, 1873-75.

Ransier attended the state labor convention of 1869. According to the census of 1870, he owned \$550 in real estate, but in 1872 he paid taxes on real estate valued at \$7,857. He was secretary of the black-owned Enterprise Railroad. In an 1870 speech in predominantly white Spartanburg County, Ransier

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