



AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN CLAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Early Black Public Officials of Clay County, Florida

During the years following the Civil War, African American citizens became part of the civic and political life of Clay County. The individuals recognized on this page served in county government as voter registrars and county commissioners. Their public service represents an important and often overlooked chapter in the history of African American leadership in Clay County.

VOTER REGISTRAR

Henry “Harry” Tillman | Served 1867–1868

Born in 1841 in Fernandina, Florida, Henry “Harry” Tillman served in the Thirty-third United States Colored Infantry from 1863 to 1866. He later became a businessman and served as Clay County voter registrar from 1867 to 1868. Tillman died in 1903.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

James Andrews [Andreu] | Served 1871–1877

Born in Florida in 1835, James Andrews [Andreu] was a farmer who served as a Clay County commissioner from 1871 to 1877.

Bird Miller | Served 1871–1873

Born in Florida in 1820, Bird Miller worked as a domestic servant and served as a Clay County commissioner from 1871 to 1873. He died in Jacksonville in 1879.

Henry Bram | Served 1876–1877

Born in Florida in 1829, Henry Bram was a laborer who served as a Clay County commissioner from 1876 to 1877. Records indicate that he was living in Green Cove Springs in 1893.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

These early officeholders demonstrate that African Americans participated in Florida public life during the post-Civil War era, including at the county and municipal levels. Their service forms part of a broader history of Black political leadership in Florida during Reconstruction and the decades that followed.

SOURCES

- Brown, Canter Jr. *Florida’s Black Public Officials, 1867–1924*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998.
- Board of County Commissioners. *Who’s Who Politically Speaking in Clay County, Florida, 1858–1986*. 1988.