



AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

AFRICAN AMERICAN PIONEERS ON THE GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL

Black Municipal Leadership in Green Cove Springs, 1874-1900

During the late nineteenth century, African American men served on the Green Cove Springs City Council and participated directly in the civic life of the community. Their service reflects an important and often overlooked chapter in local history. The officials recognized here served between 1874 and 1900 and came from a range of occupations, including brick masonry, painting, hotel service, carpentry, ministry, and other work.

July Bran [Bram] | 1874-1876; 1878-1879; 1881-1882

Born in Florida in 1829, July Bran [Bram] was a brick mason who served multiple terms on the Green Cove Springs City Council. He died in 1892.

Edward Fells | 1874-1876

Born in either Florida or Georgia in 1852, Edward Fells worked as a painter and was known to live in Green Cove Springs at least through 1920. A Methodist minister, he is said to have served in ministry at Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in Green Cove Springs. He was the father of renowned sculptor and artist Augusta Fells Savage.

Howard Taylor | 1875-1876

Born in 1840, Howard Taylor worked as a hotel servant and served on the Green Cove Springs City Council. He was living in Green Cove Springs in 1880.

Samuel M. Patterson | 1887-1891

Born in Georgia in 1863, Samuel M. Patterson worked as a carpenter and served on the Green Cove Springs City Council. He was a principal founder of First African Missionary Baptist Church and was known to be living in Green Cove Springs in 1920.

Richard W. Redmond | 1890-1892

Born in Georgia in 1869, Richard W. Redmond was a drayman who served on the Green Cove Springs City Council. He died in Clay County in 1928.

Andrew Wiles | 1891-1893

Born in Florida in 1852, Andrew Wiles was a gardener and minister who served on the Green Cove Springs City Council. The source material notes his presence in Green Cove Springs in the 1890 Census.

Lewis F. Forrester | 1896-1900

Born in Florida in 1856, Lewis F. Forrester worked as a head waiter and served on the Green Cove Springs City Council from 1896 to 1900. He died in 1936.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Together, these council members document a sustained African American presence in Green Cove Springs municipal government during the decades following the Civil War. Their public service is part of the city's civic history and the broader story of Black political participation in Clay County.

SOURCES

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