

Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

ACTIVITY: North Carolina's First Black Delegates

In 1867, the General Assembly held a public vote to choose delegates for the 1868 Constitutional Convention. Of the 120 delegates chosen, 13 were Black Republicans who represented 19 majority-Black counties. These men came to be known as the "Black Caucus."

Directions: Read about the following delegates. As you read their descriptions, circle the counties in North Carolina each delegate was from or served in. There may be multiple counties that relate to various delegates.

Parker David Robbins (1834 – 1917)

was born free in Bertie County, North Carolina. His mixed ancestry included Chowan Indians. During the Civil War he served in the Union Army. He was one of 19 persons of color elected to the state House of Representatives in 1868 and served two terms. In 1875, Robbins was appointed postmaster of the town of Harrellsville in Hertford County. He later patented two inventions, built and operated one of Duplin County's first modern sawmills, built many houses in Magnolia, and owned and piloted a Cape Fear River steamboat.

Parker David Robbins, 1865. Pastel portrait, H.1976.11.2, N.C. Museum of History.



Henry C. Cherry (1836 - 1885).

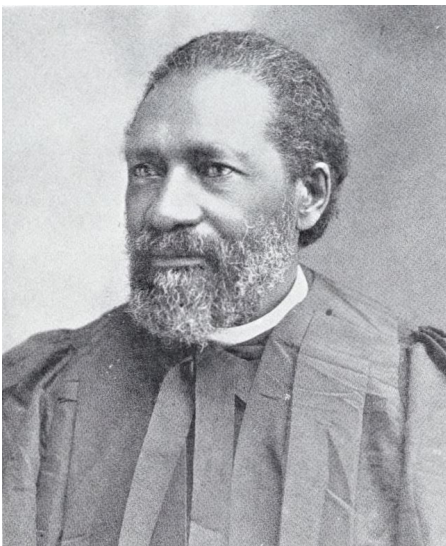
Born enslaved in Edgecombe County, Cherry trained as a carpenter and learned math, reading, and writing. He worked on some of the finest antebellum homes in Tarboro. The citizens of Edgecombe reelected him twice to the state house. By 1870, Cherry had acquired \$1,000 in real property and \$200 in personal property, which reinforced his standing in the community. He had two daughters. One married Congressman Henry Plummer Cheatham of Granville County, founder of the Oxford Colored Orphanage. The other married the state's last Black Republican congressman (and a state legislator), George H. White, a Howard University lawyer whose time in Congress ended in 1901.

John Adams Hyman (1840 – 1899)

was a politician, state senator, and congressman born enslaved in Warren County, near Warrenton, North Carolina. After emancipation he farmed, opened a country store, and became a public-school trustee. In 1867 he was chosen as an election official in Warren County, recruiting emancipated Blacks to register to vote. In 1868 voters elected Hyman and three other African Americans to the North Carolina Senate. He served from 1868 to 1874, when he was elected to the United States Congress and became the first African American to represent North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hyman later moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the U.S. Post Office Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



John Adams Hyman, 1873. National Archives and Records Administration Collection.



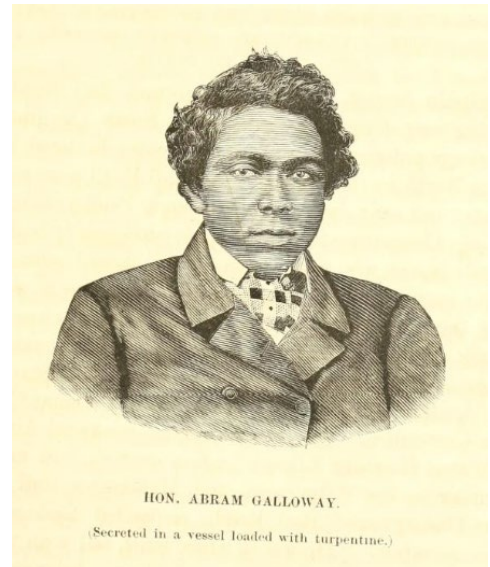
Bishop James Walker Hood, 1910. *An Era of Progress and Promise, 1863-1910: The Religious, Moral, and Educational Development of the American Negro Since His Emancipation*, W. N. Hartshorn and George W. Penniman, eds. Boston, MA: Priscilla Pub. Co., 1910, p. 395.

Bishop James Walker Hood (1831 – 1918)

was born free in Pennsylvania. The son of a minister, Hood became licensed to preach in 1856 by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In 1863 he came to North Carolina as a missionary and helped form many churches, later becoming bishop of a church in Fayetteville in Cumberland County, where he settled permanently. Hood served as chairman of the Freedman's Convention in Raleigh in September 1865 and led efforts for universal education during Reconstruction. In 1870, Governor Holden appointed him assistant superintendent of the State Board of Education, in charge of Black schools. He also held offices as magistrate and assistant superintendent of the state's Freedmen's Bureau. As part of his role in the church, Hood helped to establish Zion Wesley Institute, now Livingstone College in Salisbury.

Abraham Galloway (1837-1870)

The son of an Irish captain of a U.S. government vessel and an enslaved woman from New Hanover County, North Carolina, Galloway became an important leader. He escaped from slavery by hiding in a turpentine barrel on a ship sailing from Wilmington to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln recruited Galloway to become a Union spy. With the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation, he recruited enslaved and free men of color in North Carolina for the new "African Brigade," which became part of the U.S. Colored Troops. Active in politics after the war, Galloway served two terms as a state senator before his death as a young man in 1870. According to the *Christian Recorder* newspaper, more than 6,000 mourners attended his funeral- "the largest ever known in this state."



Abraham Galloway, c. 1868. Engraved portrait in William Still, *The Underground Railroad: A Record...*, Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872, p.150-151.



John H. Williamson, c. 1868. I. Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors*, Springfield, Mass.: Wiley and Co, 1891.

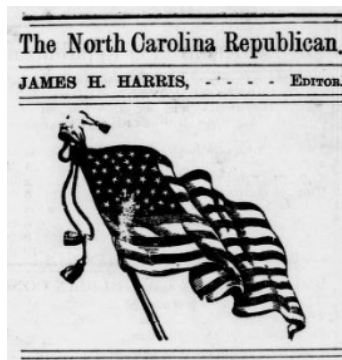
John H. Williamson (1846 – 1911)

was a politician and newspaper publisher. Born enslaved in Covington, Georgia, Williamson grew up in Louisburg, Franklin County. He served six terms as a state legislator from 1868 to 1888. While in office he advocated for equal rights for African Americans. Williamson also served as the justice of the peace, a member of the Franklin County Board of Education, and as a delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1872, 1884, and 1888.

Recognizing the power of the press, Williamson founded two newspapers, *The Banner* and the *North Carolina Gazette*, which reached over 2,000 African American readers.

James Henry Harris (1832 - 1891)

Born free in Granville County, Harris worked as a furniture upholsterer as a teenager. Later he attended school for two years at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, followed in 1862 by travel to Canada, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. In 1863, he helped raise the 28th Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops. After the war, Harris entered politics as a leader of the 1866 Freedmen's Convention in Raleigh. In addition to being a Wake County delegate to the 1868 constitutional convention, Harris served on Raleigh's city council, as a deputy tax collector, and served four terms in the state legislature. In 1866, Harris founded a freedmen's village in Raleigh, which he named Oberlin, by providing loans to African Americans to buy land and build homes. In 1877, Harris was vice-president of the National Black Convention. By 1880, Harris had started and edited one of the state's most prominent newspapers, the *North Carolina Republican*, with the slogan "Firm in the Right."



Harris founded the Oberlin neighborhood and a newspaper. *North Carolina Republican*, Sept. 10, 1880, p. 3, UNC collection; 901 Oberlin Road in Raleigh, August 10, 1972., *News & Observer* negative collection, State Archives of N.C.

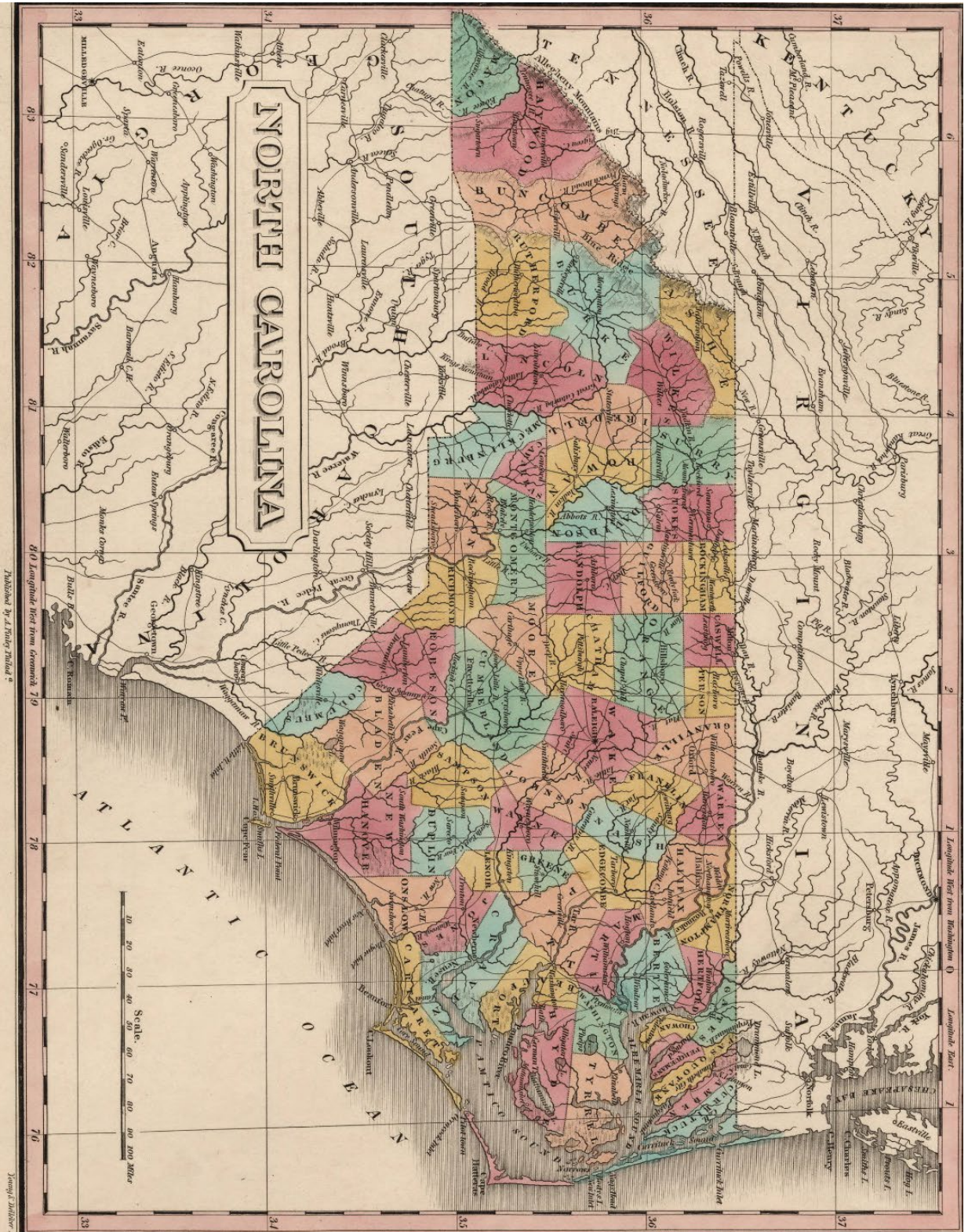
Reflection and Discussion

1. Reflect on the contributions of these delegates. How did their leadership and vision help shape the politics of their time? What can we learn from their achievements today?
2. Along with their political accomplishments, these delegates also strengthened their communities. Discuss the ways each man contributed to one or more communities.
3. Pick a delegate whose actions inspire you. What did he do? Why is it important?

ACTIVITY: Delegates Across the Map

Directions: Study the map and the counties you noted above. Cut the sticky notes provided into four strips, creating 8-12 strips. Write the names of each delegates on a strip. Write your name on a strip too. Place the sticky note of a delegate on his related county on the map (note: some delegates belong to more than one county, so mark as many places as possible with delegate names). Put the strip with your name on the county that relates to you!

Map of North Carolina, A New General Atlas, Philadelphia: A. Finley, Young & Delleker, c. 1832, plate 19



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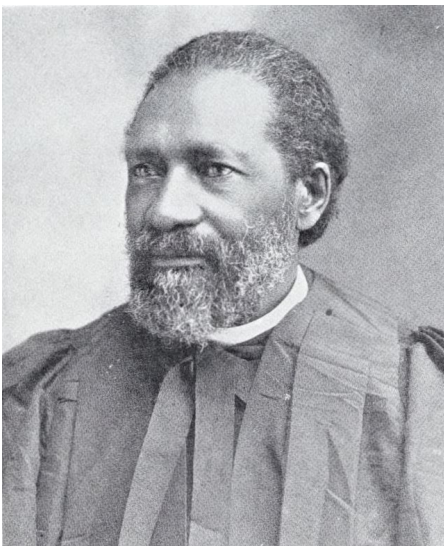
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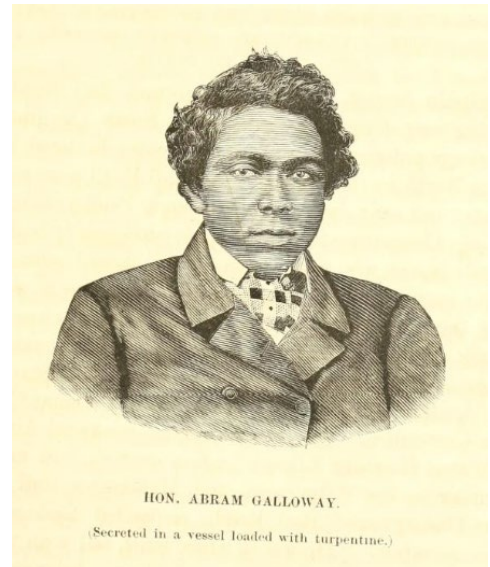
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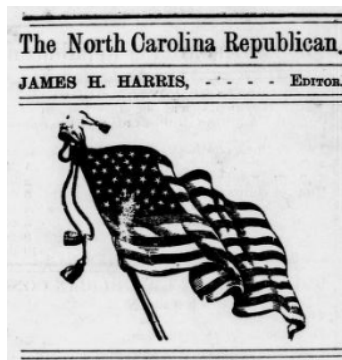
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Reflect & Discuss

1. Reflect on the contributions of these delegates. How did their leadership and vision help shape the politics of their time? What can we learn from their achievements today?
Answers will vary. May contain themes of equality, overcoming adversity, and perseverance.
2. Along with their political accomplishments, these delegates also strengthened their communities. Discuss the ways each man contributed to one or more communities.
Answers will vary. May contain references to creating businesses to bolster African American communities, founding predominantly black neighborhoods, and contributing to politics to advocate for equal rights.

3. Pick a delegate whose actions inspire you. What did he do? Why is it important?
Answers will vary.