

Reels

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- Dictionary of America Biography
- Dennis Malone
- Charles Schubert's Sons 1935
- The Rising Sun
- William Wells Brown
- Negro Orators and their Orations
- Book of Woodmen

Waring Cuney

Negroes of New York

Hiram Rhoades Revels

Hiram Revels a Methodist clergyman, United States senator, and educator, was born of free parents in Fayetteville, North Carolina in September 1822. He was of mixed African and Croatan Indian descent. For some years he was a barber in Lincolnton, North Carolina, but in 1844, he went to Indiana and attended a Friends' school at Liberty. Soon afterward, he was at school in Drake County, Ohio, and later attended Knox College. In 1845 he was ordained minister in the African Methodist Church and subsequently carried on religious work among the Negroes in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Settling in Baltimore, he served as pastor of a church there and also as principal of a school for Negroes. (1)

During the Civil War he assisted in organizing two Negro Regiments in Maryland. In 1863 he went to St. Louis to establish a school for freedmen, and there he aided in recruiting another regiment. The following year he became chaplain of a Mississippi regiment and served for a short time as provost marshall of Vicksburg. He organized several Negro churches in Jackson and then engaged in pastoral work in Kentucky and Kansas. In 1866 he settled in Natchez and in 1868 joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. That same year he was elected alderman. He entered politics reluctantly, fearing race friction and the possibility of a conflict with his religious activities, but he won the liking and respect of the white people of the state, and he was successful in divorcing his church work from politics. (2) He was elected to the state senate from Adams County, and in January

1870 he was elected to the United States Senate, succeeding Jefferson Davis. The election of Hiram Revels to this office took the country by surprise, and as the time drew near for the Negro to take his seat, the interest became intense. The nation stood in silent amazement at this new phase of American life when on February 25th 1870 the first Negro senator took his seat. (3) He served until March 4, 1871. Revels was a Republican, but he was not a radical, and in the Senate he was a conservative.

After his retirement in 1871 he was elected president of Alcorn University, at Oakland, near Rodney, a recently opened institution for Negroes, which position he filled with credit. In 1873 at the request of Governor Ames he served as Secretary of State. (4) In 1875, he was active in behalf of the Democrats in the state campaign which led to the overthrow of the Carpet-bag government, and defended his course in a string letter to President Grant, printed in the Jackson Daily Times, November 10th. In this letter he said that all good men had combined to defeat the Republicans. (5) In 1876, he again became president of Alcorn University. In June of the same year he became editor of the Southwestern Christian Advocate. After his retirement he lived at Holly Springs and was actively engaged in religious work until his death which occurred while he was attending a Church Conference at Aberdeen on January 18, 1901. His wife, Phoebe and two daughters survived him.

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