

### **\* \* Some Early Black History \* \***

Following the Civil War, the Free Blacks were a calming influence on the newly freed slaves thereby preventing many possible abuses to the town citizenry.

Many of the skilled craftsmen and artisans were Black men, slaves and free Blacks.

During the Civil War, John Saucier, a slave, was the lead axeman in the remarkable overland movement of a ship from Wolf River to Bayou Bernard.

The first Artesian Well was dug by Blacks from Alabama

The manners, health and education of many white children depended on their Black nurse (nannie)

The St. Paul United Methodist Church is the second oldest practicing faith

Goodwill Baptist Church

St. Philomena Catholic Church was built in March 1911.

In 1870, the Sisters of Mercy established a school for 60 Black students. This education continued to 1914 following the establishment of St Philomena Church with lay teachers for the Black School.

The Church leaders became a guiding force for later voter registration drives  
Public school for Blacks started in the 1870s, with a Black school Board established in 1877

In 1891, J.W. Randolph was appointed principal of the Black School occupying the former white school on Clark St where the Senior Citizen Center and Boys and Girls Club are now located.

Professor J. W. Randolph is the undisputed giant of the Blacks as far as early contributions to the community are concerned. He was first appointed principal of the colored public school for the 1891-92 school term. He served in that role with the exception of one school year until his death in the early 1920s.

Professor Randolph not only did his job as principal of the school, but also acted as superintendent for the colored public school. He went outside the tax structure to secure funds for the school from the Rosenwald Foundation and similar sources. He lived and worked day and night for the betterment for the Colored public school system.

In addition to his role as an educator, Randolph was an attorney and served in the Mississippi Legislature representing the Gulf Coast.

A portrait of J. W. Randolph formerly hung on the walls at Randolph High School, but mysteriously disappeared some time during conversion of the school from Randolph High School to the segregated Middle School. The loss of the portrait was later blamed on Hurricane Camille.

In 1930, donations from parents and \$348.54, representing the remainder of Randolph's estate, was used for school furnishings.

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Quoting from the N.O. Daily Picayune, on September 14, 1900, "About 175 of

the best colored men met at the Town Hall today, and after considerable discussion notified two agitators of their own race, Ben Adams and Mann Sharper, to leave town immediately or suffer the consequences."

"The two men had been making remarks calculated to bring about trouble between the races, and the best colored element took the matter in hand, and their action met with the approval of the white people."

In a follow-up story, the N.O. Picayune stated on Sept 18, 1900, "It is rumored that the two Negroes run out of the Pass by the colored citizens last Friday are likely to sneak back, in which event the colored folks have expressed a determination to fix them so that they will never trouble any other community."

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Historically, Black people have made many contributions to the local community from the first inception of the City. From the Charlot Asmar 800 arpents of downtown property emanated a number of prominent Black businessmen. One of these was Martial Dedeaux who owned and operated a Cleaning and Pressing shop, an Ice House, and a Taxi cab company.

Martial Dedeaux, formerly owned a large business where the Heritage Building is located on Scenic Drive, became an active leader in the civil rights struggle. His son, Martial, Jr., became a local civil rights leader.

Pass Christian has always been proud of its citizenry. Former Mississippi Lieutenant Governor Bidwell Adam of Pass Christian prevailed in favor of the Blacks and was one of the first White men to have a joint business with a Black businessman, Marshall Dedeaux. The name of the firm was Dedeaux and Adam.