

GOP: On the Right Side of History



Hiram Revels – 1st African American Senator

Hiram Rhodes Revels (September 27, 1827 – January 16, 1901) was an American politician, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), and a college administrator. Born free in North Carolina, he later lived and worked in Ohio, where he voted before the Civil War. He became the first African American to serve in the U.S. Congress when he was elected to the United States Senate as a Republican to represent Mississippi in 1870 and 1871 during the Reconstruction era.

When Revels arrived in Washington, D.C., southern Democrats opposed seating him in the Senate. For the two days of debate, the Senate galleries were packed with spectators at this historic event. The Democrats based their opposition on the 1857 *Dred Scott* Decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that people of African ancestry were not and could not be citizens.

Revels supporters argued that the Civil War had overturned *Dred Scott* and that therefore, it would be unconstitutional to bar Revels on the basis of the pre-Civil War Constitution's racist citizenship rules. One Republican Senator supporting Revels mocked opponents as still fighting the "last battle-field" of that War. (source: Wikipedia)