

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Archives

Spring 2024



Representative Hart and the All Wars Memorial

Elected in 1924, Samuel Beecher Hart was one of the earliest Black lawmakers to serve in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He was born in March, 1863, in the city of Philadelphia and received his early education at the public schools in Philadelphia, as well as the Emlen Institute at Warminster, Bucks County. He worked as a newspaperman and publisher, as well as an inspector for the Department of Health and Charities in Philadelphia.

Hart served in the Pennsylvania National Guard, rising to the rank of Captain. He was a member of the Gray Invincibles, an African American company which served Philadelphia and the surrounding area for more than twenty years in the late 1800s, eventually serving as their commanding officer.



Hart was elected to the House in 1924, and served until his death in 1936. While in office, he frequently worked to direct appropriations toward institutions serving persons of color, such as the Frederick Douglass Memorial

Hospital and Training School in Philadelphia. He also successfully championed the creation of two new Black battalions of infantry in the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1935, as segregationist policies prevented men of color from serving.

REP. HART, OFFICER IN NATIONAL GUARDS, DIES

PHILADELPHIA, March 25.—UP—Samuel Beecher Hart, member of the Pennsylvania Legislature for the past 12 years, died Tuesday at his home here.

Hart, a Republican leader in the Seventh Ward, represented the sixth district in the State House of Representatives.

Born in Philadelphia in 1863, he received his education in the public schools here, at Emlen Institute, a home for negro boys in Bucks County, Pa., and at Mrs. Lloyd's night school in Cheltenham, England.

Hart served in the Pennsylvania National Guard, advancing from the rank of private to that of captain, and at one time was in command of the Gray Invincibles, First Brigade.

He held several offices in the Phila-

The News-Herald, Franklin, Pennsylvania, March 25, 1936

SPIRITED FIGHT BRINGS RESULTS

HARRISBURG, Pa.—Representative Samuel B. Hart successfully piloted through the House of Representatives a bill which ordered organized and equipped two colored battalions of infantry of the National Guard of Pennsylvania last Tuesday. The bill passed by 192 ayes to 2 nays.

New Pittsburgh Courier, Pittsburgh, March 30, 1935

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Representative Hart Continued

Hart is perhaps best remembered for his efforts to create a memorial to honor the military service of Black soldiers. After championing the legislation for two sessions, in 1927, an appropriation to create a memorial was approved. A commission was assembled by the Governor to oversee the project, and after a competition, sculptor J. Otto Schweizer was chosen to craft the memorial.



Above: The 1934 unveiling where Representative Hart's granddaughter, Doris Jones, pulled the chord revealing the memorial to the celebratory crowd.

Upon completion, the All Wars Memorial to Colored Soldiers and Sailors was placed in West Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. This location was met with criticism, as the original intent for the memorial was for it to be placed in a more prominent location on the Philadelphia Parkway.

For the next 60 years, Representative Hart's granddaughter, Doris, advocated for the statue's relocation. After a 1984 restoration project, efforts to move the memorial were reinvigorated. In 1994, the Committee to Restore and Relocate the All Wars Memorial was successful in having it moved to Logan Square on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, where it remains to this day.



DORIS EMMA JONES
Granddaughter of Representative Samuel B. Hart, who lead the group of children who unveiled the Negro Soldiers Monument in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, on Saturday afternoon.

Above: New Pittsburgh Courier, Pittsburgh, July 14, 1934



Above: Before & After — The memorial underwent conservation efforts in 1984 to return the bronze and granite to its original condition.

Right: The memorial today in its new, prominent location.

Source and photos: <https://www.associationforpublicart.org/apa-now/story/the-all-wars-memorial/>



What to Wear: Fashionable Acquisitions

The House Archives is excited to share some interesting recent donations from former House Members. While the Archives is always thrilled to receive paper-based collections, we have been fortunate to receive several items of clothing and other wearable items in recent months. To care for these donations, the House Archives stores these particular items on hangers that are padded with quilt batting and covered in muslin to ensure plastic and metal do not touch the fabrics. Racks are covered to keep out dust and light. More delicate items in our collection are stored in large acid-free boxes where fabrics can lay flat with minimal stress on their seams.



Left: quilt batting and cotton muslin can be used to help textiles keep their shape when hanging.



Above: Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill gifted the Archives the suit she wore to her first House swearing-in on January 6, 2015.



Left: 2023 Capitol All-Stars Softball game hat.



Below: Senator Lynda Schlegel Culver donated a hard hat from a district event and a ribbon featuring the House Seal from the Montour-Delong Community Fair.

Below: One of several t-shirts Representative Stephen C. McCarter donated.



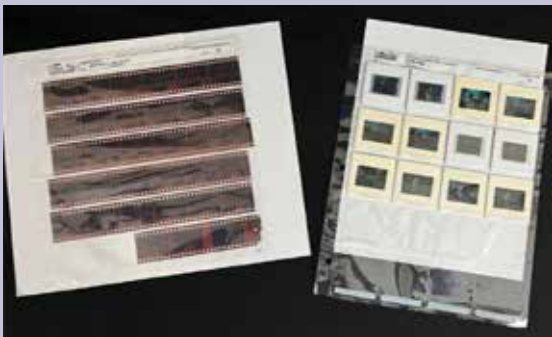
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More Than Pretty Pictures

Photographs of Members at work in Harrisburg and in their districts are some of the most utilized materials from the House Archives collection. However, the Archives has many more film-based photographic materials in our holdings that are not often seen, including contact sheets, film negatives, and slides. These materials are valuable not only because they include rarely seen candid images of lawmakers, but also because they provide insight into the working process of how Members choose images reflecting how they want to present themselves to the public.



Above: This contact sheet from the Papers of Herbert Fineman shows a series of images of him working in the Speaker's Office. One depicting him looking over papers at his desk has been circled indicating it was selected for further use.



Above: Film negatives and slides from the Papers of Robert W. O'Donnell, 1974-1993. This collection has many photographs which have been digitized and are available on our website, as well as many others that could be utilized by interested researchers. Despite the age of these slides (1982), they are still in excellent condition thanks to proper storage in acid-free sleeves.