



Please join us for the
Texas Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony
In Honor Of
Benjamin Franklin Williams
April 23, 2026
3:30 PM
Colorado County Courthouse
400 Spring Street, Columbus, Texas
North lawn (side of flagpole)

For more information contact the County Judge's office at (979) 732-2604

Following the American Civil War and Emancipation of Slaves in 1865, it was not until 1871 that African Americans in Texas were able to uniformly register to vote, following the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

While African Americans served as Delegates to State Constitutional Conventions prior to 1870, the first African Americans elected to serve in the Texas Legislature were elected to the 12th Legislature, which convened in provisional session on February 8, 1870.

Prior to the end of Federal Reconstruction in 1870, twelve African Americans served in the Texas House of Representatives, and two served in the Texas Senate.

This Marker is erected in Honor of Benjamin Franklin Williams (c. 1819 – 1886), Representative in the 12th Texas Legislature representing Colorado and Lavaca Counties.

Benjamin Franklin Williams, born in Virginia, was brought to Colorado County around 1859. After emancipation, he became a traveling Methodist preacher and church leader, founding St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Columbus. Williams also became involved in the Union League, serving as Chaplain. He was elected as a republican to represent Colorado and Lavaca Counties (25th District) in the 12th Legislature; Waller, Fort Bend and Wharton Counties (37th District) in the 16th Legislature; and Waller and Fort Bend Counties (53rd District) in the 19th Legislature. Williams helped found the Town of Kendleton and served as its first postmaster. He and wife Caroline had one son, Thomas.

Erected by the 88th Texas Legislature and the Texas Historical Commission as Authorized by SB 667.