

## Further Content / Reading Rail Material// HINTON

### Short Bio:

James S. Hinton was the first African American legislator elected in Indiana. He was seated in the Indiana House of Representatives on January 6, 1881 and served one term.

Hinton was born in 1834 to free black parents in North Carolina; the family moved to Terre Haute, Indiana by 1850. James attended a separate school organized and taught by African Americans.

Hinton made his living as a teacher and barber and moved to Indianapolis circa 1860. He participated in organizations, including the Prince Hall Masons and the Oddfellows; he attended the African Methodist Episcopal Church. During the Civil War, Hinton recruited men for the segregated United States Colored Troops – first in Massachusetts, then for Indiana's 28th Regiment, U.S. C. T.

Hinton promoted the Republican "party of Lincoln" to African American voters in Tennessee and Indiana. He served as a presidential elector, 1872, and was the first African American to hold a state office when he was appointed a Trustee of the Wabash and Erie Canal, 1874-78.

After his term in the General Assembly, Hinton – known for his stirring oratory – continued to work on behalf of African Americans and the Republican Party. Hinton died November 6, 1892.

## Quotes // HINTON

### Quotes from J.S. Hinton, Speech delivered at Wood's Hill, Vigo County, Ind., July 4, 1876

Listed in order of preference...

"Let us be consistent in all of our actions, asking nothing for ourselves which we are not willing to yield to others."

"The laws of the country are being so shaped that there shall be no remembrance of his former bondage."

"The forces of truth and the principles of liberty, born in the days of the revolution, and proclaimed in the Declaration of 1776 have placed the negro for the first time in his history on this continent in a position to realize that he is a man and an American citizen."

#### Other Quotes:

• Excerpts from J.E. Land, "Hon. James S. Hinton," *Indiana's Representative Men in 1881* (Indianapolis, 1881), p. 24-25.

"Mr. Hinton is the first colored man who has ever served in the General Assembly of Indiana."

"While a Republican, no Democrat will deny his perfect geniality."

"His thought and culture would entitle him recognition in any body of men."

• Quote from *Indianapolis Leader*, August 13, 1881. (no article title).

"Hon. J.S. Hinton desires it distinctly understood that he is unequivocally in favor of the employment of colored teachers in colored schools. He says that he knows competent colored teachers can be found, and they should be employed."

• Quote from *Indianapolis Leader*, January 8, 1881 (no article title).

"Thirty years ago the Indiana Legislature was engaged in concocting brutal laws to prevent the entrance of colored people into this State. Now a member of the race then proscribed, is a member of the Legislature. Time sets all things right."

"None of the members of the Legislature refused to take their seats Thursday because Hon. J. S. Hinton, colored gentlemen was among their number."

• Excerpts from "A Distinguished Colored Man in Town," *Washington Bee*, January 11, 1890.

"Hon. James S. Hinton, one of the most prominent and influential colored men in Indiana, is in the city, the guest of Mrs. Morris, of the Pension Office. Mr. Hinton called on the President Thursday and had a pleasant interview with him."

"Mr. Hinton is a race man and a fearless speakers (sic) and if the whole Negro stock of Indiana is like this distinguished colored man, the milk and water Republicans must take a back seat in '92. We admire many excellent qualities in the man, and with one hundred men of the Hinton stripe in the lead the colored race is safe."

## Label / Reading Rail Material// HINTON

### Public Life

During the Civil War, Hinton served as a second lieutenant, recruiting troops for the 28th United States Colored Troops at Camp Fremont in Indianapolis. In 1872 he was elected as a delegate-at-large to the 1872 Republican national convention. Serving as trustee of Indiana's Wabash and Erie Canal Fund from 1873-1877 made him the first African American to hold an Indiana state office.

### Indiana House of Representatives

The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1870, allowing African American men in Indiana to vote for the first time in 1870. Only ten years later, in 1880, James Hinton was elected to serve in the Indiana House of Representatives as a State Representative for Marion County. He was Indiana's first African American legislator.

### Opposition:

We noticed that the information we had presented thus far shows Hinton's achievements and that he was a "great man," but perhaps doesn't do justice to showing what he was "up against," so to speak. So we thought something like the following would be useful in showing the prejudice / discrimination / racism of the period in general, while relating it specifically to Hinton...

At the end of the Civil War, James Hinton, as an African American Hoosier could not:

1. Vote in local, state, or national elections
2. Send his children to a public school
3. Serve as a witness in a trial involving white citizens
4. Serve in the Indiana militia
5. Bring an African American family member to live with him in Indiana from out of state

### Hinton as Orator:

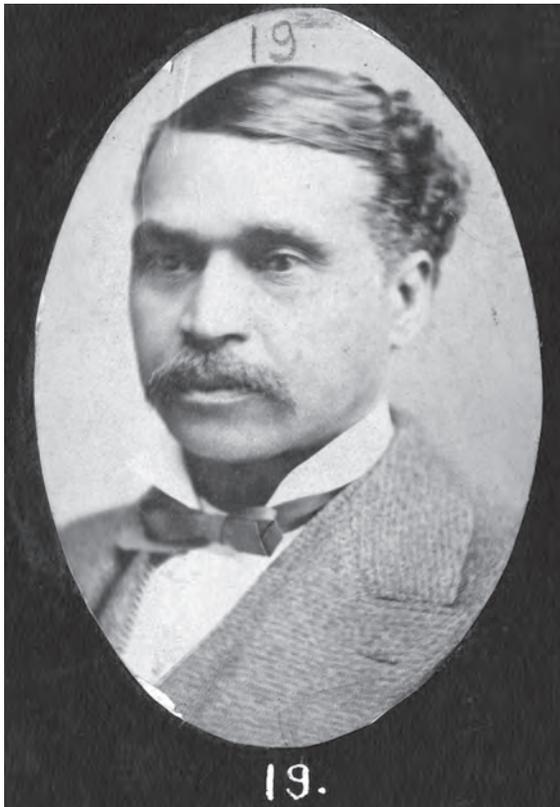
According to the Indianapolis Journal, November 7, 1892:

James S. Hinton was "the state's best colored orator. ... [he] possessed a great influence among the people of his race, being trusted as a man of strict integrity."

### List of Accomplishments:

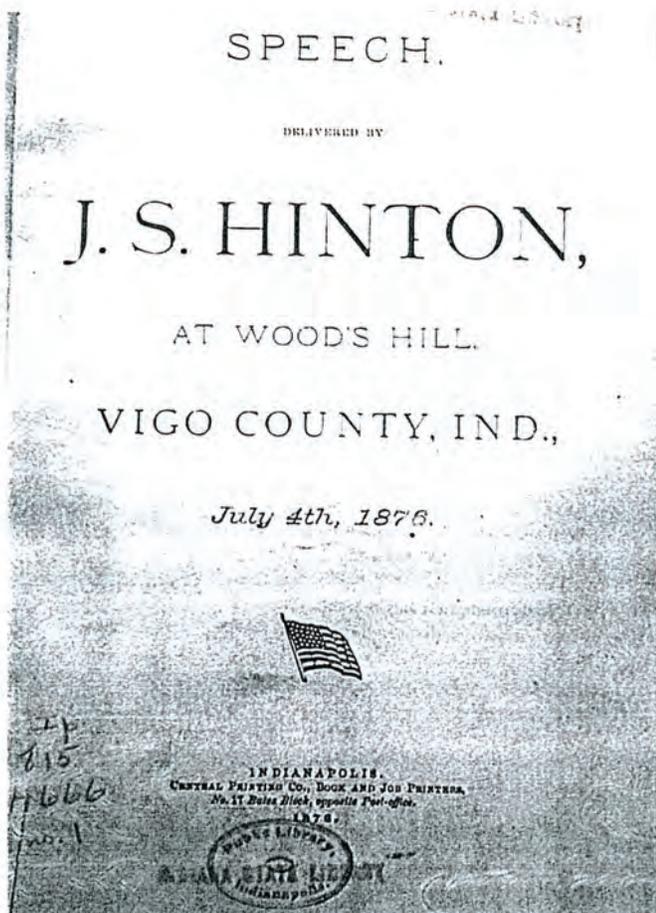
- Educated at a Quaker school in Hartford, Indiana; Collegiate training at the Union Literary Institute, Randolph County, Indiana.
- Recruited for the 54th and 55th United States Colored Troops in Massachusetts during the Civil War
- Returning to Indiana, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and recruited for the 28th Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops.
- Rose to prominence in his community as a Mason, serving as Indiana Grand Master for several years, and as an active leader in the African Methodist Church.
- Nominated by 1869 Black Convention to travel Indiana to promote public funding for schools for African American children
- Began speaking at Republican campaign rallies.
- Delegate-at-large to the 1872 Republican National Convention; Frederick Douglass was only other African American delegate.
- Trustee of Indiana's Wabash and Erie Canal Fund, 1873-1877, first African American to hold an Indiana state office.
- Elected to the Indiana House of Representatives, Indiana's first African American legislator.

## Available Images / Portrait / Speech // HINTON



*Scrapbook of State Legislators, 1881, Indiana State Library, Division of Manuscripts and Rare Books .*

This image of Hinton has taken during his service in the Indiana House of Representatives.

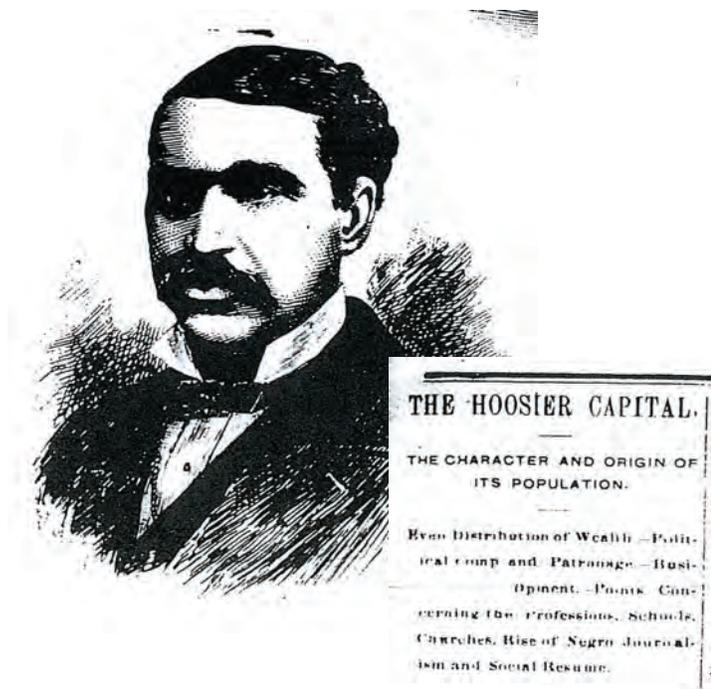


Speech Delivered by J.S. Hinton at Woods Hill, Vigo County, IND., July 4, 1876 (Indianapolis, 1876), Indiana State Library, Indiana Division.

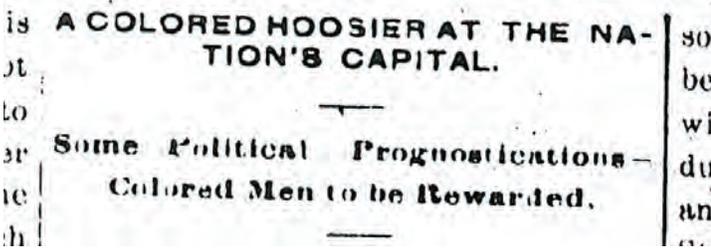
Hinton was a well-known and sought after public speaker.

See excerpt from this speech in "quotes" section.

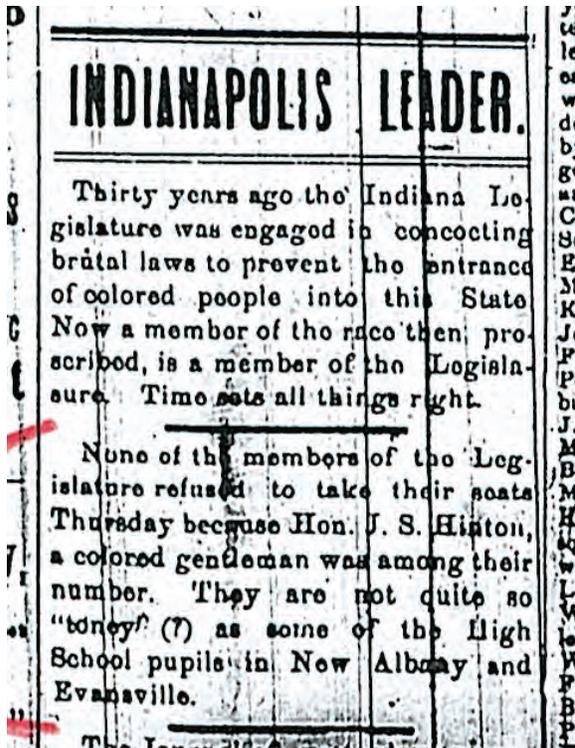
Available Images / Newspapers // HINTON



"The Hoosier Capital," *The Freeman*, January 11, 1890.



"A Colored Hoosier at the Nation's Capital," *The Freeman*, January 1890.



*Indianapolis Leader*, January 8, 1881.

## Available Images / 28th Regiment // HINTON



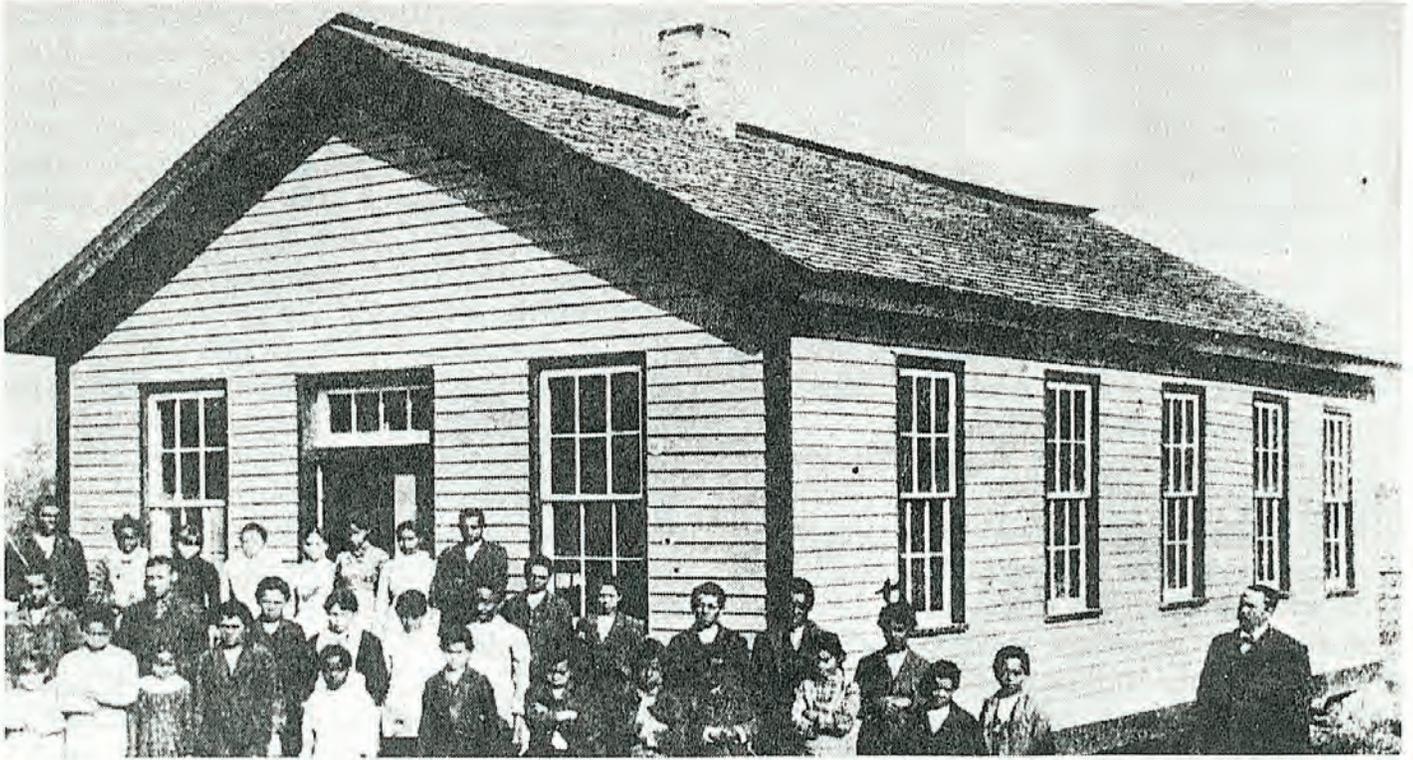
Hinton recruited soldiers for the 28th Regiment.

Wilson, Joseph T., *The Black Phalanx: African American Soldiers In The War Of Independence, The War Of 1812, And The Civil War* (1892).

Indiana's only African-American Civil War regiment served as part of the 28th Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops. African-American infantry was authorized in 1863 to help fill the latest federal quota for soldiers. In April 1864, six companies were organized and activated. The 28th regiment served valiantly in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia on July 30, 1864, when nearly half of the men were killed or wounded. The 28th returned to Indianapolis January 6, 1866 to a reception in its honor; officers and men were discharged January 9.

## Available Images / Education, Late 1800s // HINTON

School photograph for community school at Beech Settlement, Rush County, 1882. *Courtesy Indiana Historical Society Library.*



After the Civil War, African Americans in Indiana wanted the right to vote and wanted schools for their children. In 1869, the Colored Men's State Convention appointed James Hinton to travel the state promoting the importance of education for African-American children, and asking for a fair share of the Public School funds to provide schools and teachers (*Indianapolis Journal*, Jan. 1, 1869).

A few years later, Hinton strongly pushed for the employment of African-American teachers rather than white teachers for the African-American schools in Indianapolis (*Indianapolis Leader*, August 13, 1881).