

FORTY EIGHT

George H. Imes

My Contribution: I fought for the freedom of enslaved Americans in the Civil War. After the war, as an orator and delegate of the Republican party, I fought tirelessly for the freedoms, equality, and opportunities of Black Pennsylvanians. Understanding the critical need for a strong education, I served as a public school teacher, principal, Sunday school teacher, and school board member in the communities of Harrisburg and Steelton. I even at one point ran as the Republican candidate for the Lieutenant Governor position in 1886. I edited local newspapers that championed the fundamental political rights and equality of African Americans.

My Legacy: I advocated for better schools for people of color in Harrisburg and worked to foster new opportunities for their education and economic opportunity in Pennsylvania. I campaigned and spoke constantly for Black political rights as a member of the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League and the Republican party. I had a major impact on the reform of local education and municipal government through my newspapers and numerous speaking engagements.

About Me: “He enlisted in March 1864, when in his 20th year, leaving home at night with the plan in his mind” — Benjamin Albert Imes on his brother George H. Imes enlisting in the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War (Source: Mary Braxton, descendant)

“He is a man of marked intellectual force, and has always taken a prominent part in the progress of his race.” — *Harrisburg Telegraph*, August 24, 1892,

“George H. Imes, of Steelton, one of the most popular colored men in this state, at one time independent candidate for lieutenant governor, one of the originators of the colored state fairs.” — *The Gazette*, August 26, 1892.

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Full Name: George Hezekiah Imes • Birth Date: October 8, 1844 • Death Date: August 25, 1892 • Place of Birth: Franklin County, Pennsylvania • Sex: Male • Race: “Mulatto” (1880 *Federal Census*) • Places of Residence: 945 Fifteenth Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Steelton, Pennsylvania • Connection to the Old Eighth Ward:

Taught at schools on South Street and North Street; attended Capital Presbyterian at the northern boundary of Eighth Ward; worked with many men and women who lived in the Eighth Ward. • Family Members: Father: Samuel Imes. Wife: Sadie Imes. Children: Aura Imes, Otho Imes, Amy Imes, Jessie Imes, George Lake. Mother-in-Law: Mary Clarke. • Education: Good education that prepared him for occupation as teacher, principal, and editor. • Occupations: School Teacher and principal at North Street School, Calder Street School, and Cherry Alley School House. Professor. Sergeant in the 43rd USCT, Company D, Infantry (March 11, 1864–October 20, 1865). Editor of the Harrisburg Times and Steelton Press. • Church Membership: Capital Presbyterian Church (joined in 1871), Lost Creek Presbyterian Church in McAlisterville, PA (Source: Mary Braxton, descendant). • Activism: Served as member in civic and political organizations including: the Pennsylvania State Equal Rights League, the Masonic Order, Odd Fellows, Union of Sabbath School Workers, and State Afro-American League; directed Steelton Literary Society; selected as Republican delegate for Harrisburg's Seventh Ward and ran as candidate for Lieutenant Governor; organized as Commissioner for State Fair for Colored People. • Connections: John Q. Adams, James Auter, Josephine L. Bibb, Peter Blackwell, Cassius Brown, William Howard Day, William R. Dorsey, H. H. Garnet, James H. W. Howard, Spencer P. Irvin, Robert J. Nelson, Hamilton Newman, Joseph B. Popel, and Joseph L. Thomas.

M.B.*/A.M./K.W.M.