



# African Americans in Minnesota (People Of Minnesota)

*David Taylor*

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While making up a smaller percentage of Minnesota's population compared to national averages, African Americans have had a profound influence on the history and culture of the state from its earliest days to the present. In *African Americans in Minnesota*, author David Vassar Taylor chronicles the rich history of Blacks in the state through careful analysis of census and housing records, newspaper records, and first-person accounts. He recounts their triumphs and struggles over the past 200 years in a clear and concise narrative. Major themes covered include settlement by Blacks during the territorial and early statehood periods; the development of urban Black communities in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth; Blacks in rural areas; the emergence of Black community organizations and leaders in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; and Black communities in transition during the turbulent last half of the twentieth century. Taylor also introduces influential and notable African Americans: George Bonga, the first African American born in the region during the fur trade era; Harriet and Dred Scott, whose two-year residence at Fort Snelling in the 1830s later led to a famous, though unsuccessful, legal challenge to the institution of slavery; John Quincy Adams, publisher of the state's first Black newspaper; Fredrick L. McGhee, the state's first Black lawyer; community leaders, politicians, and civil servants including James Griffin, Sharon Sayles Belton, Alan Page, Jean Harris, and Dr. Richard Green; and nationally influential artists including August Wilson, Lou Bellamy, Prince, Jimmy Jam, and Terry Lewis.

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