

SIX

Frisby C. Battis

My Contribution: I was a strong leader and supporter of Republican politics in the Eighth Ward and greater Harrisburg area. My poolroom served as a social and political hub in the ward and functioned as a headquarters for Republican activity in the Eighth Ward.

My Legacy: I was a strong leader, a politician, and a businessman in the Eighth Ward. I represented the ward for many years as a member of the Common Council. My association with the corner of Short and South Streets was so strong that it became known as the “Battis block” in the early years of the twentieth century.

About Me: “He was a member of Common Council during the bicameral days in the late nineties, and conducted his politics in his poolroom where he also ran a pawnshop.” — *The Evening News*, Obituary, September 1, 1925.

Full Name: Frisby C. Battis • Birth Date: January 1852 • Death Date: August 29, 1925 • Place of Birth: Pennsylvania • Sex: Male • Race: Black (1880 *Federal Census*) • Places of Residence: 1514 N. 5th Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Resided and ran businesses at 139 Short Street and 141 Short Street. • Connection to the Old Eighth Ward: Resident on Short Street for a significant part of life; Republican political leader in ward; poolroom and pawnshop served as a political hub and polling place for the Second Precinct of the Eighth Ward; served on the Common Council of the Eighth Ward in the 1890s • Family Members: Wife: Harriet Battis. Children: Forrest Battis, Paul Battis, James D. Battis, Justice D. Battis, Frisby C. Jr. Battis. Daughters-in-Law: Mildred (son Frisby C. Battis III), Ora M. • Education: Unknown. • Occupations: Poolroom Owner. Pawn Broker. Cigar Dealer. Republican Politician. • Church Membership: Likely Capital Presbyterian Church. • Activism: Politically active through Dauphin Social Club / Hastings Club, Republican Club (vice president), Common Council (Republican representative for Eighth Ward), Dauphin County Afro-American League (chairman executive and state delegate), Republican County Committee (secretary in 1892), Eighth Ward election committee (member and election judge, 1884). Played baseball and served as the team director for Harrisburg’s Olympic B.B.C. • Connections: Joseph Thomas (city council), James Auter (Dauphin County Social Club), Harry Burrs (Dauphin County Afro-American League), Joseph L. Thomas (contemporary state delegate to state convention), Cassius Brown, Colonel W. Strothers.