

PERSONNEL  
—OF THE—  
TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT

—FOR 1885—

Containing Biographical Sketches of the  
*Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Heads of Departments and Members and Officers of the*

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE.

—WRITTEN BY E. H. LOUGHERY—

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# A. UNDERWOOD.

There is no occasion more fascinating to the Texan chronicler than to write a history—though it be but crude and brief—of the life of one of the old Texas heroes who nursed the young republic, fought for its freedom from the Mexican yoke, and has lived to see the darling land of his youth become one of the proudest States in the American Union. The subject of this sketch was born February 13th, 1810, in Dracutt, Massachusetts, and was liberally educated in the schools of his native town. His father was a soldier of the Revolution, and was as enthusiastic in his support of the declaration of independence as old John Hancock himself. There was no braver or more heroic soldier in the Continental army. Young Underwood being of a bold and romantic turn of mind, and thinking that he could perhaps lay the foundation of a fortune in the wilds of Texas—then a sparsely settled Mexican colony—sailed from Boston, Massachusetts, February 12th, 1834, and after a wearisome voyage of two months sighted the Texas coast and stepped ashore at Velasco, April 11th, 1834. He settled at Columbia, then the Municipality of Columbia, now in Brazoria county—and commenced merchandising on a small scale. He has lived at his present house over 50 years and under seven government—Mexican, Provisional, Republic of Texas, State of Texas, Confederate States of America, Military and the present State government. He rallied to the first call for troops and served, as only a Texan of those heroic days could—throughout the first campaign against Mexico, and was acting as Post Commissary at Columbia before the battle of San Jacinto, in which he took part. He was postmaster at Columbia from the first organization of the Republic up to the period of annexation. Unexpectedly to, and unsought by him Mr. U. was unanimously nominated, by convention, in the city of Galveston to represent the sixty-fourth district—Galveston and Brazoria counties—in the Nineteenth Legislature and was elected at the polls by 6,302 votes, his opponent only receiving 46. He was on the following committees: Finance, Insurance, Statistics and History and Public, Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Underwood cast his first vote for Andrew Jackson and has ever since kept in line and fought for the success of the principles of the Democratic party. This great old man is still vigorous, walks erect, and his mind is as strong, active, and luminous as in the days of youth. Judging him from physical appearances a stranger would not think him over

fifty years of age. The counties of Galveston and Brazoria honored themselves when they selected this able gentleman.

#### W. F. UPTON.

W. F. Upton was born in Winchester, Tennessee, in 1832. Since 1842 he has lived in Fayette county, Texas, and has engaged successfully in farming and merchandising. His first mercantile venture was made at High Hill, three miles from Schulenberg—his present home—in 1867, since which time he has built up an extensive trade. During the civil war he served under the flag of the Confederacy, and since the close of hostilities has been one of the ablest and most untiring exponents of Democratic principle in the State, and has labored for the elimination of sectional jealousy, and the establishment of a complete union of North, South, East and West. He was a distinguished member of the Eleventh, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Legislatures, from the seventieth district—Fayette county. During the session of the last Legislature he was Chairman of the Committee on Finance, and a member of Penitentiaries, Private Land Claims, and other important committees. Col. W. F. Upton is well known throughout Texas, and his invaluable services need no favorable comment by the pen of a biographer. He has ever ranked among the first of his colleagues, has made a bold, conservative and reliable leader, and has left the impress of his powerful mind upon all of the important and salutary laws passed by five legislatures. He would grace the most exalted position to which the people of Texas could call one of her citizens.

#### B. F. WILLIAMS.

B. F. Williams, colored, who represented the fourteenth district—Waller county—in the Nineteenth Legislature, is sixty-five years of age. He is a quiet, sensible and well informed man, and won the good will of his fellow members. Those who have known him for years speak of him in terms of commendation, and state that they never knew a better colored man. He is a minister of the Gospel and is a zealous Christian worker among his people.

#### R. H. WOOD.

R. H. Wood, who represented the 87th district, composed of the counties of Refugio, Goliad, Victoria, Calhoun, DeWitt