

ARKANSAS BLACK HISTORY



Image courtesy of Encyclopedia of Arkansas

Charlotte Andrews Stephens is considered the first Black teacher in the Little Rock (Pulaski County) public school system. Native to the Capitol City, Stephens was born to two enslaved parents. Stephens began her teaching career at the young age of 15 when she substituted for her own teacher who had fallen ill. During this time, Little Rock created its own public school system, buying the private school where Stephens had been teaching. After one full year of teaching, Stephens left for Oberlin College in Ohio, where she attended classes for three years. To pay for these classes, Stephens occasionally returned to Little Rock to teach. Stephens taught for 70 consecutive years, retiring in 1939. In 1910, Stephens Elementary was named in her honor and holds that name to this day.



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