

ARKANSAS BLACK HISTORY



Image courtesy of Encyclopedia of Arkansas

William Hines Furbush was born in Carroll County, Kentucky, and very little is known of his childhood. In 1860, Furbush operated a photography studio in Ohio, which led to his first visit to Arkansas in 1862. Furbush eventually settled in Arkansas from 1870 until 1879, where he excelled in politics, including negotiating for the forming and naming of Lee County. Furbush was elected to the Arkansas General Assembly in 1872 as a Republican, where he worked with civil rights issues. In 1873, Furbush and three other prominent Black Arkansans were denied service at a Little Rock (Pulaski County) saloon after the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1873 was passed. The group of men hired lawyers Lloyd G. Wheeler and Mifflin W. Gibbs, who filed a lawsuit against the saloon and won the case on appeal. This verdict is the only known victory under the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1873. Furbush served as sheriff of Lee County from 1873 to 1879, initially receiving support from Republicans and Democrats alike.



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