JOSEPH RAINEY

ELECTED TO CONGRESS 1870

Born into slavery in 1832, Joseph Rainey was the first African American to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, the first African American to preside over the House, and the longest-serving African American during Reconstruction.

Rainey was sworn in December 12, 1870, and represented his South Carolina district for eight years. He argued for federal protection from Ku Klux Klan violence and demanded legislation to ensure African Americans' civil rights.

" We were earnest in the hour of the nation's PERILS and DANGERS; and now, in our country's COMPARATIVE PEACE and tranquillity, we are in EARNEST FOR OUR RIGHTS."

Representative **Joseph Rainey** of South Carolina

Joseph Hayne Rainey, between 1860 and 1875

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress