

White House Historical Association website and lesson plan

<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/presentations/depriest-tea-incident/index.html>

The screenshot shows a website page with a dark red header. The header contains navigation links: 'Main', 'Lou Hoover: An Activist First Lady', 'Pathbreakers: Oscar and Jessie DePriest', 'Video Interview: The DePriest Family Legacy', and 'Classroom Activities'. The main content area features a central dark red box with white text. On the left and right sides of this box are black and white photographs of First Lady Lou Hoover and Jessie DePriest, respectively. The central text includes a title, a subtitle, and three paragraphs of text. At the bottom of the central box is a link: 'First Lady Lou Hoover Encounters Nationwide Controversy →'. Below the photographs are captions: 'First Lady Lou Hoover, 1928. Stock Montage, Harris and Ewing Collection.' and 'Jessie DePriest, 1929. Courtesy of Barbara DePriest.'

Main Lou Hoover: An Activist First Lady Pathbreakers: Oscar and Jessie DePriest Video Interview: The DePriest Family Legacy Classroom Activities

'A Tempest in a Teapot'

The Racial Politics of First Lady Lou Hoover's Invitation of Jessie DePriest to a White House Tea

First Lady Lou Hoover's invitation to Jessie L. DePriest to a White House tea party in 1929 created a storm of protest and indignation. This traditional act of hospitality toward the wife of the first black elected to Congress in the twentieth century created a political crisis for the president and first lady.

This presentation examines the "tempest" from the perspectives of the first lady, the DePriests, and DePriest family descendants.

The story of Oscar and Jessie DePriest highlights the courage and contributions of Oscar Stanton DePriest, the sole black voice in Congress at that time, to the history of the American civil rights struggle and the grace and poise of his wife who ably represented a generation of black women.

[First Lady Lou Hoover Encounters Nationwide Controversy →](#)

First Lady Lou Hoover, 1928. Stock Montage, Harris and Ewing Collection.

Jessie DePriest, 1929. Courtesy of Barbara DePriest.

Mrs. DePriest Guest Of First Lady Of The Land

Mrs. Hoover Invites Congressman's Wife to Tea At the White House

By SARA PELHAM SPEAKS

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 13.
—(By C. N. S.)—Mrs. Oscar DePriest was a guest at the White House on the afternoon of June 12, when Mrs. Hoover entertained at one of a series of teas in honor of the wives and relatives of the congressional group.

Mrs. DePriest wore a charming afternoon ensemble of the loveliest pale blue georgette. The simplicity of the costume was relieved only by a beautiful rhinestone buckle, on the left side of the finely pleated skirt. A coat, the shortest of jackets, completed the costume.

She wore a large hat of rosy-gray hair braid, trimmed with a cluster of hand-cut dove-ray velvet leaves, and a velvet rose placed modishly on the underbrim, framed her face becomingly. She carried a lovely bag which matched her hat, rosy-gray watersnake slippers, and a large pointed fox scarf.

Mrs. DePriest was graciously received both by Mrs. Hoover and the ladies of the cabinet, who, as usual, assisted in entertaining.

The invitation to tea was delivered to Mrs. DePriest by messenger last Wednesday. It was engraved on a heavy vellum card, carrying the White House insignia, and read:

Mrs. Hoover
requests the pleasure of the company of
Mrs. DePriest
on Wednesday afternoon,
June 12th,
at 4 o'clock.



Merry Wives

<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/presentations/depriest-tea-incident/first-lady-lou-hoover.html>

- Newspaper clipping, 1929. Barbara DePriest clipping collection

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO, MONDAY, JUNE 17, 1929.

Recognition Of Representative DePriest By Hoovers Is Causing Stir In Washington

(Special Dispatch to The New York World
and The Sun)

WASHINGTON, June 16.—The social recognition of Mrs. Oscar DePriest, wife of the negro congressman from the first Illinois district, at the White House has dimmed the Hoover popularity in the south, and made it very embarrassing for such public men as Senator F. M. Simmons, of North Carolina; Senator Thomas Heflin, of Alabama; Bishop James Cannon jr., of Virginia, and others who bolted Gov. Alfred E. Smith in the late campaign.

Southern congressmen, generally, Republicans as well as Democrats, think that the president and Mrs. Hoover have made a great and irreparable mistake.

Asked today if the president would comment on the matter the White House answered in the negative.

"The reception of the wife of Congressman DePriest," said Senator Simmons, one of the irreconcilable anti-Smith Democrats, "was exceedingly unfortunate, and much to be regretted."

"It was a great blow to the social stability of the south," said Senator Lee S. Overman, of North Carolina.

"I regret the incident beyond measure," declared Senator Morris Sheppard, of Texas. "It is recognition of social equality between the white and black races and is fraught with infinite danger to our white civilization."

"I deplore it very much; it was a mistake," Senator Heflin said.

Congressional social circles are stirred up over the prominence given Mrs. De Priest by the Hoov-

ers. Many women of that set are quietly announcing that they will have no further part in Hoover social functions.

One southern senator declared: "Why, I do not know what to expect. If I attend the Hoover receptions I may be asked to go to the table with Mrs. De Priest. The easiest way, is to play safe, and remain away. That is what we will have to do."

Already there is a De Priest set in Washington society. De Priest has felt the lash of racial criticism, and resents it. Last fall, soon after he was elected, it became known that Mrs. Vestal, wife of Representative Albert H. Vestal, (Republican, Indiana,) had introduced a resolution to change the constitution of the Congressional Woman's Club, composed of wives and daughters of congressmen, so as to enable the members to bar undesirable persons. This, it was asserted at the time, was aimed at Mrs. De Priest.

Representative George M. Pritchard (Republican, North Carolina), refused to have a room in the house office building by De Priest. In turn, De Priest has stricken the Vestals and Pritchards from his invitation list. He will give a reception June 2, at the Washington auditorium, for the benefit of the Association of the Advancement of Colored People, and all Republican members of congress, except Vestal and Pritchard, are invited.

There is great rejoicing among the negroes throughout the nation over the triumph of Mrs. De Priest. Negro newspapers are full of favorable comment.

<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/presentations/depriest-tea-incident/first-lady-lou-hoover.html>

- Newspaper clipping, 1929. Barbara DePriest clipping collection

C. L. NETHAWAY20 YEARS LOCAL AGENT
REAL ESTATEFLORENCE ACREAGE AND CITY PROPERTY A SPECIALTY
TRADES CONSIDERED

I NEVER SELL OR RENT FLORENCE PROPERTY TO NIGGERS, JAPS OR CHINKS

ONE BLOCK WEST END OF CAR LINE

[FLORENCE] OMAHA, NEBRASKA

June 19, 1929.

Dear Mrs. Hoover,

My WIFE and I are dumb-founded tonight to read in the papers that you have entertained a nigger lady, the WIFE of Congressman elect DePriest of Chicago, Ill.

This makes a great out in our appreciation of you as an AMERICAN citizen. It knocks the bottom of WHITE SUPREMACY in a cooked-hat. In fact, its too degrading for an argument. It places them on an equality with the CAUCASIAN RACE, and assists for the amalgamation of the races.

I fear you do not understand the amount of damage you have done to this Country. The writer would feel very unpatriotic to his Country if he would allow himself to sit by a nigger in any dining room, including the HOME. I know and you ought to know that the nigger cannot be handled in this manner and be considered successful for these United States. I'll admit however its a nigger vote getter for your distinguished husband, whom we all supported because of the fact we wanted an AMERICAN on guard at Washington, D. C.

You must remember we already have 3,000,000 mulattoes in this Country, and now you encourage them as being your equal, making the younger set of nigger girls and boys feel as if they were good enough to intermarry with your Son, and the Sons and Daughters of other AMERICAN families.

I wonder if the Northern people will ever wake up to the fact that the nigger cannot be handled that way, and be a safe factor to contend with. The nigger is here and I want him to be a nigger (stay black). I want him to also have a nigger's job. WHITE SUPREMACY must prevail in AMERICA. If it does not, in another 100 years at the rate we are going, we will be 50 per cent. mulattoes. Do you think that is good for this Country?

The correct solution of the nigger question is their complete disfranchisement by Constitutional Amendment and to treat him more like a hound dog, than a guest at your table at tea. Then you will not have him dictating to you and on an equality with the CAUCASIAN RACE.

Very truly yours,

C. L. Nethaway
Eunice E. Nethaway

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- C.L. and Eunice E. Nethaway to Lou Henry Hoover, 19 June 1929



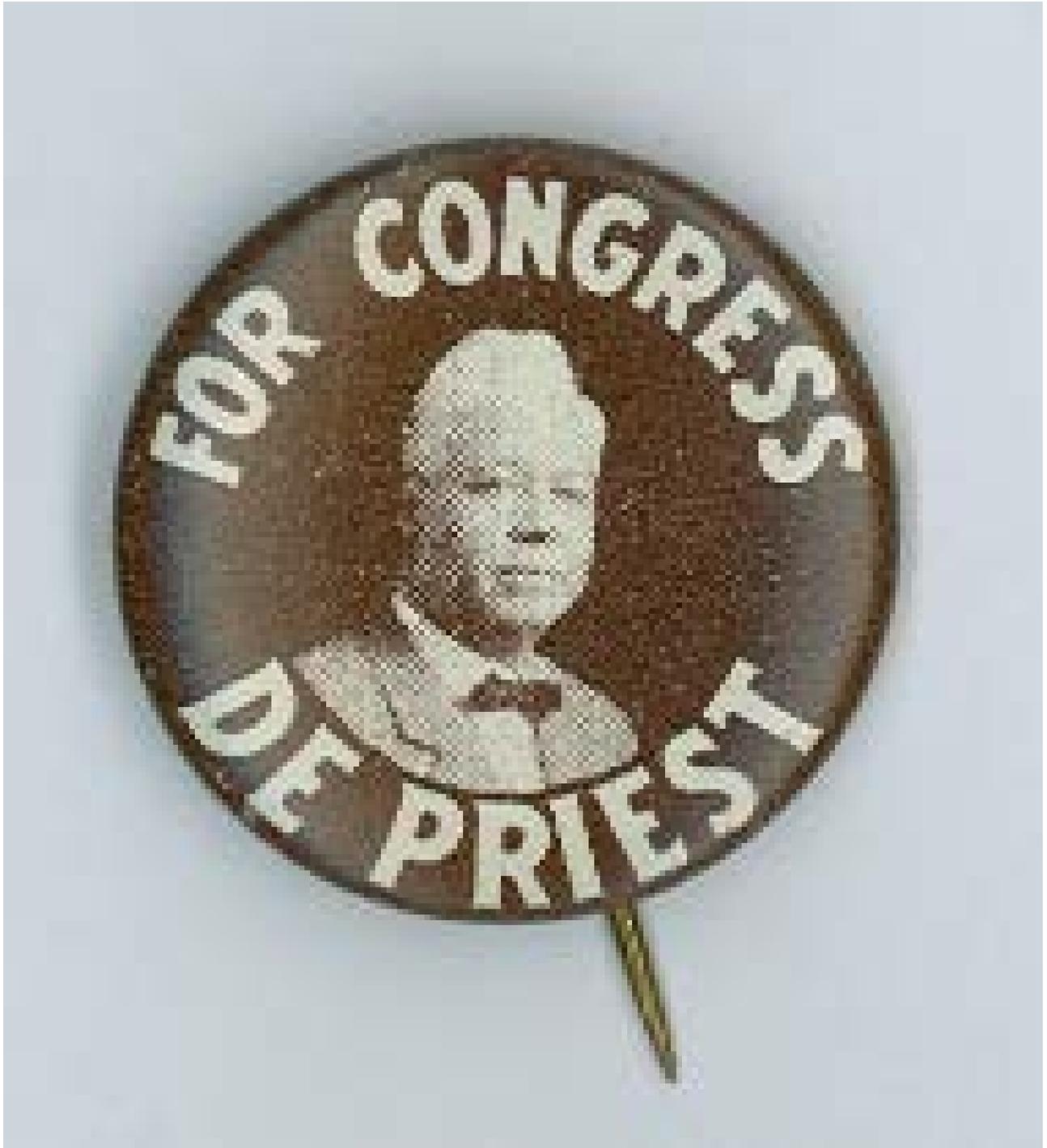
<http://www.whitehousehistory.org/presentations/depriest-tea-incident/african-american-congress.html>

- Standing portrait of Jessie DePriest taken by renowned black photographer Addison Scurlock on the day of the “Tea Incident,” June 12, 1929



http://illinoisreview.typepad.com/illinoisreview/2006/08/illinois_hall_o_17.html

- A photo of Congressman Oscar DePriest



<http://history.house.gov/Blog/Detail/15032395635>

- A campaign button for Congressman Oscar DePriest

Motion to Discharge a Committee from the Consideration of a Resolution

March 5, 1934

To the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

Pursuant to clause 4 of Rule XXVII (see Rule on last page), I, Hon. Oscar De Priest, move to discharge the Committee on Rules

from the consideration of the Resolution

H. R. ; H. J. Res. ; H. Res. 236

entitled, a Resolution to prevent discrimination

which was referred to said committee January 24, 1934

in support of which motion the undersigned Members of the House of Representatives affix their signatures, to wit:

- 1. Oscar De Priest
2. H. Hoepfel
3. J. P. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...
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20. ...
21. ...
22. ...

Discharge Petition #14 Filed by Oscar De Priest Regarding H. Res. 236, a Resolution to Prevent Discrimination, 01/24/1934 - 03/05/1934

This resolution and discharge petition from Representative Oscar De Priest, a Republican from Illinois, attempted to end racial discrimination in the House of Representatives' Restaurant. De Priest introduced H. Res. 236 to the House, which called for the creation of a special committee to investigate the House Restaurant's refusal to serve two African Americans, one of whom was a member of his staff. When the resolution stalled in the Rules Committee, De Priest successfully used a discharge petition to move the bill out and onto the House floor.

http://usnatarchivesexhibits.tumblr.com/post/78650703246/discharge-petition-14-filed-by-oscar-de-priest