THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN BLACK SCHOOLS IN THE POST-BELLUM SOUTH

by

CHRISTINA LENORE DAVIS

(Under the Direction of Robert A. Pratt)

ABSTRACT

The historical focus on women's work as school teachers rather than on their identities as activists, missionaries, social critics, and as women has minimized the realities of life for women who taught in schools for the freed people during and after the Civil War. Ellen Garrison Jackson, Sallie Louise Daffin, Rebecca Primus, and Carrie Marie Blood, black and white women teachers who taught black southerners during the Civil War and Reconstruction, fought for citizenship rights, championed morality, bridged the information gap between Americans in the North and South, and challenged contemporary ideas toward race and gender. The collective biography approach works well for teachers because it fosters a deeper analysis of marginalized groups, nineteenth-century women in this case. Each woman's narrative highlights the complexities of the women's lives by exploring their experiences in the South beyond the duties associated with their positions as teachers. Exploring teachers' work, not simply as educators, but as individuals who faced new and challenging experiences, fosters a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of teaching in the South.

INDEX WORDS: Nineteenth-Century Women Teachers; Nineteenth-Century; Black Women; Black Feminist Thought; African American; Education in the South; Reconstruction; Missionary Teachers

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DEDICATION

To my most cherished friend, Dalelia Queen Davis, for always believing.

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CHAPTER 1
TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS FOR THE FREED PEOPLE

Ellen Garrison Jackson, an African American widow from Concord, Massachusetts, first taught black students in the North before teaching for more than a decade in the earliest post-emancipation southern black schools. Besides teaching day and night school, Jackson's responsibilities as a teacher in the South included organizing fundraisers, visiting students' homes, delivering public addresses, and teaching Sunday School. In 1864, Jackson also courageously sued a white railroad employee for assaulting her, despite her ambivalence about making herself a "public spectacle." Her actions within black communities demonstrated her commitment to the freed people, her belief in the transformative power of education, and her determination to actively promote black civil rights. On the other hand, Jackson's struggles with black male school trustees illuminate the intraracial conflicts in black communities that often stemmed from beliefs in traditional gender roles for women and cultural differences. Experiences described by Martha L. Hoy, another northern-born black woman teacher, add complexity to the tensions between black men and women teachers as the latter asserted their authority and self-dependence.[1]

Twenty-six-year-old Sarah "Sallie" Louise Daffin was a free-black woman from Pennsylvania. As a Philadelphian, Daffin gained educational opportunities uncommon to most

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[1] Ellen G. Jackson to Simeon S. Jocelyn, 13 June 1863 (quote); Martha L. Hoy to Edward P. Smith, 15 June 1870, American Missionary Association Archives (hereafter cited as AMAA). The AMA collection is located in the Amistad Research Center at Tulane in New Orleans, Louisiana, and on microfilm. David S. Bogen, "Precursors of Rosa Parks: Maryland Transportation Cases Between the Civil War and the Beginning of World War," *Maryland Law Review,* 63 (2004), 721 – 751; Dorothy Sterling, ed., *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 274 – 275.

nineteenth-century black women. She graduated from the Institute for Colored Youth, a normal school established by the Society of Friends, then taught black students in northern schools. In 1864, Daffin turned to schools in North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., where she advocated racial uplift through spiritual, educational, and moral development. Driven by her roots in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Daffin used "respectability politics" to present black people as productive and respectable citizens to combat racial discrimination. The lessons she taught reflected middle-class Victorian culture. In her role as a missionary teacher, Daffin improved the lives of the freed people she served as she embraced opportunities for self-advancement.[2]

As a white woman from New England, Caroline "Carrie" Marie Blood took advantage of the demand for teachers in schools for black southerners after the death of slavery. In 1866, thirty-year-old Blood left Lyme, New Hampshire. She taught in freedmen's schools in the South from 1866 to 1876 in four southern states—North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee. Blood worked within churches, conducted interstate fundraising, and encouraged habits of temperance, piety, and chastity among black southerners. Blood practiced a conservative Congregationalist construction of Christianity that championed the superiority of Victorian

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[2] Sallie Louise Daffin to George Whipple, 14 March 1864; Daffin to Samuel Hunt 5 Feb 66; Daffin School Report to the AMA, 2 June 1864, all AMAA; Society of Friends, *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal*, Vol. 76 (Philadelphia: William H. Pile's Sons, 1902), 222-223; Institute for Colored Youth, *Annual Reports of the Board of Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth,*(Philadelphia: Institute for Colored Youth, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1871); Ronald Butchart, The Freedmen's Teacher Project, unpublished database (hereafter Butchart, FTP).

Butchart's Freedmen's Teacher Project provides the statistical data on teachers in this study. For a more detailed description of the database, see Ronald E. Butchart, "Recruits to the 'Army of Civilization': Gender, Race, Class, and the Freedmen's Teachers, 1862 – 1875, *Journal of Education,* 172 no. 3 (1990), 76 – 87.

mores. She used her missionary work as a vehicle for self-empowerment and as a means to spiritual salvation.[3]

By 1864 when Sara Griffith Stanley first applied to teach in black schools in the South, she had attended Oberlin College, in Ohio. The strong educational legacy established by her free-black parents in New Bern, North Carolina, prepared her for the college. Before the end of the Civil War, Stanley decided to join efforts to spread literacy in her region of birth. In her writings, Stanley's interpretation of Christianity framed her critique of coworkers whose unveiled racism, Stanley believed, ran counter to their assertions of Christian beliefs. She contextualized her defense of the personal relationships she developed with white men in language of spirituality and womanhood. As a black woman with a fair skin tone that often led others to mistake her for a white woman, Stanley promoted notions of equality across racial lines. In all, Stanley taught in the South for eleven years, half of them while married to Charles Woodward, a white northerner who worked for the Freedmen's Savings Bank in Mobile, Alabama. Her narrative allows for an exploration of the difficulties women faced as they worked to reach professional and personal fulfillment.[4] Like Stanley, Rebecca Primus, a fourth-generation free-black woman, cultivated

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[3] Carrie Marie Blood to Edward P. Smith, 24 September, 29 October 1868; Blood to Michael E. Strieby, 23 May 1871, all AMAA.

[4] Ellen N. Lawson and Marlene D. Merrill, *The Three Sarahs: Documents of Antebellum Black College Women* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 47 - 64; Judith Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things? Sara G. Stanley and the American Missionary Association, 1864 – 1868," *Church History* 60, no. 4 (December 1991): 493 – 507; Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 271 – 274.

For discussions of colorisms within black communities, see Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 203; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 228; and chapter 4, "African Americans: The Idealization of Light Skin," of Ronald M. Hall's, *An Historical Analysis of Skin Color Discrimination in America: Victimism Among Victim Group Populations* (New York: Springer, 2010), 37 – 56.

intimate relationships during her time in the South. Her correspondences with family, friends, and sponsors convey a coming-of-age story of a single black woman.[5]

This dissertation features these five particular women for a number of reasons. Rich correspondence created by each teacher or by their contemporaries survived in historical archives and in published primary documents in secondary literature. Although most hailed from the North, all differed in terms of class, race, culture, educational training, and religious affiliation. Each woman lived and taught in the South for as few as four years and as many as fifteen years in multiple locales under the sponsorship of a range of benevolent organizations. The propensity for teachers to move from post to post broadened their interactions with students with regional differences that were manifested in levels of academic ability, a range of socioeconomic statuses, and in students' status before the end of the Civil War. My dissertation aims to portray the diversity among individual women to demonstrate the broad spectrum of teachers' experiences in the Reconstruction-era South. Their race, varied educational backgrounds, differing motivations, and class positioning all influenced their teachings and interactions within the black communities they served. Additionally, the attention these women have received in the secondary literature allows for an analysis of how portrayals of black and white female teachers in schools for freed people have evolved over time.

Jackson taught in five towns in three states; Daffin received posts at six towns in four states; Blood taught in five towns in four states; and Stanley taught at schools in four regions across three states. In contrast, Primus taught in only one location. The collective experiences of

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[5] Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854 – 1868*, (New York: One World/Ballantine Publishing Group, 1999), 3 – 7; Barbara Jean Beeching, "Great Expectations: Family and Community in Nineteenth Century Black Hartford," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Connecticut, 2010), 206 – 208.

these women who taught in the South between 1861 and 1876 builds on historiographical treatments of teachers in black schools and provides a platform for the historical contexts that shaped their lives. Their accounts allow for an exploration of women's experiences across and between lines of race and class. They also suggest that emphasizing differences in race among nineteenth-century women teachers has clouded historians' ability to describe commonalities in black and white women's experiences and has masked intraracial differences among women. It illuminates the ways gender informed women's experiences as teachers and as individuals, the nuances of race and religion in women's missionary work, and the intricacies of working with a motley crew that included coworkers, black and white southerners, family and friends, and children and adults. I supplement the narratives of the main characters with the experiences of other female teachers to further illuminate each particular theme. Each of their voices adds depth to portrayals of nineteenth-century black and white female teachers by demonstrating the widespread variability among teachers across and within racial, economic, and regional boundaries.

Contemporary and historical observers have studied women's work as part of the establishment of formal educational systems to serve southern African Americans. As one of the few career choices available to nineteenth-century women, teaching gave women tremendous amounts of independence and geographic mobility. Teaching the freed people was not the first opportunity for northern white women to navigate southern regions, since northern tutors and teachers had served southern white families from the 1840s onward. It did, however, broaden the geographic mobility of free black northern women who had virtually no opportunities to travel throughout the South before Emancipation. Teaching granted the opportunity to earn wages in a profession considered more prestigious than manual labor. It expanded the limited opportunities

for black teachers in the North and also gave them leadership positions, service opportunities, and mobility into territory they would have not dared travel into before the Civil War. African Americans' push for schooling during and after the Civil War opened an expansive field of labor that presented a host of challenges and opportunities for female teachers.[6]

Teaching in the Reconstruction-era South, however, encompassed more than helping black southerners learn how to read, write, and numerate.[7] Northern interest in the process fueled sponsorship from various agencies, institutions, and individuals but also required detailed updates and reports on activities within and outside of the classroom. To ensure continued sponsorship, teachers completed monthly reports and wrote letters that revealed the added responsibilities of teaching former slaves. For example, teachers visited students' homes, distributed clothes, organized Sunday schools and fundraisers, and planned exhibitions to showcase students' accomplishments. Personal testimonies reveal that many nineteenth-century teachers in the post-Civil War South found their task overwhelming; the added challenge of establishing schools for students barred from the culture of education among hostile residents

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[6] Margaret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780 – 1840*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2005); Anne M. Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century: The Role of Women in Sunday Schools," *Feminist Studies* 4, no. 3 (October 1978).

Some free black women journeyed beyond free states. Black women preachers traveled nationally and sometimes internationally to spread the gospel. Jarena Lee, the first female preacher recognized by the AME church, for example, traveled to Maryland to minister to enslaved African Americans before the Civil War. For discussions of black women itinerant preachers, see Chanta M. Haywood, *Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers and the World, 1823 – 1913*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 15, 34 – 60; Sue E. Houchins, *Spiritual Narratives*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29 – 41, 82 – 88; Julianne Dodson, *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the A.M.E. Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

[7] Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865 – 1873,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861 – 1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

with little financial support may have seemed unfathomable.[8] For their efforts, many women enjoyed elevated statuses, as they became models for students and parents alike.

Significantly, some women also took on various forms of civil rights activism during their sojourns south. As Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin argued, teaching served as a "bridge…between [women's] own development and their earnest desire to serve." The historical emphasis on women's work as school teachers rather than on their identities as activists, missionaries, social critics, and as women has minimized the realities of life for women who taught in black schools. The women in this study fought for citizenship rights, championed Victorian morality, bridged the information gap between Americans in the North and South, and challenged contemporary ideas toward race and gender. Exploring a small group of teachers' everyday lives within and outside of school exposes the expected but often unacknowledged activities teachers performed and adds depth to historical conceptualizations of nineteenth-century teachers in post-Civil War schools. This project redefines what it meant to be a teacher in schools for the freed people by reconceptualizing women's work as teachers in the South in the broader context of their professional, political, social, and personal struggles. As Willie Lee Rose argued in 1964, women teachers' contributions to southern society reached far beyond the spread of literacy within the walls of schoolhouses. Arguably as important as reading and

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[8] In "The School as a Workplace," Robert Dreeben noted the difficulties involved in measuring teachers' work output and pointed to the nature of teaching as the barrier to quantification. Dreeben's point, that "anyone assuming the position of teacher…must do the whole job whether or not the parts of the job can be identified," resonated among teachers bombarded with non-academic tasks. Robert Dreeben, "The School as a Workplace," in *Schoolwork: Approaches to the Labour Process of Teaching*, Jenny Ozga, ed. (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1988), 21 – 36, 34.

For discussion of the use of school-related sources and correspondences from teachers to explore nineteenth-century education see, Jo Anne Preston, "Reading Teachers' Mail: Using Women's Correspondence to Reconstruct the Nineteenth Century Classroom," in *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom*, Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn, and Kate Rousmaniere, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 198 – 215.

writing, women's efforts toward self-discovery and self-fulfillment taught lessons of survival, resilience, self-respect, and freedom among southern African Americans. In turn, these women learned similar lessons from black southerners as the latter worked to redefine the parameters of their lives as freed people.[9]

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A number of major themes emerge from the experiences of women who taught in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction including a "black consciousness of literate culture," the implications of gender, race, and religion as a motivating factor for teaching in the South, and the wide range of women's personal experiences. To explore these themes, I use theoretical frameworks that center on nineteenth-century black and white American women's long history of various forms of activism. Anne M. Boylan discussed how nineteenth-century women's benevolent activities challenged gender roles. As Boylan argued, nineteenth-century women demonstrated a revision of the "conversion experience to mandate social action." Increasingly, early nineteenth-century American women experienced a shift to more visible performances of goodwill that reached beyond the home and hearth. Women's involvement in anti-slavery activism, for example, significantly expanded opportunities for women to participate in political affairs. As Julie Roy Jeffrey argued, the immediate push for schools among black southerners at the start of the Civil War allowed many women to turn to teaching as an alternative to abolition after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. While some anti-slavery

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[9] Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, eds., *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life: Their Words, Their Thoughts, Their Feelings* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 282 (quote); Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction;* Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love,* 109 – 139; Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction,* 172; Ronald E. Butchart, "Remapping Racial Boundaries: Teachers as Border Police and Boundary Transgressors in Post-Emancipation Black Education, USA, 1861 – 1876," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 1 (February 2007). For primary sources on the work of Reconstruction-era teachers, see Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 261 – 305.

activists left center stage, many continued to defy traditional gender norms and fight for civil rights as teachers in the racially charged, subjugated South.[10]

Four out of the five teachers who constitute the core of this study identified as African American. I include more black women in my exploration of southern black education because, as Ronald E. Butchart argues, African Americans throughout the nation answered the call to teach in numbers proportionally greater than white Americans. I use black feminist theories to conceptualize the particularities of African American women's experiences as teachers and as women. Black feminist thought serves as a corrective to the historical invisibility of black women in American histories rooted in racism and sexism. Patriarchal systems that limited black and white women's access to formal education generally rendered their voices inaudible in public spheres. Black theorists made black women more conspicuous in early discussions of feminism by expanding the definition of the term "text" to include such writings as letters, editorials, and poetry. These sources vocalize women often silenced in historical narratives and comprise one source base for this study.[11]

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[10] Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century," 71, 76 (quote 1); Louise Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14; Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 13.

[11] Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), xii; Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Feminist Studies* Vol 14, no. 4 (Spring 1988), 67 – 79; Patricia Bell Scott, Gloria T. Hull, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women Are White, All the Men Are Black, But Some of Us Are Brave*, xxi-xxii*;* Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

On traditional treatments of black women in American history, see Patricia Morton's *Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). Morton argued that the largely negative portrayals of black women contributed to scientific justifications of black inferiority that developed in the South's defense of slavery.

Since the institutionalization of Black Women's Studies, the relationship between racism and gender inequality represents a recurring theme in feminist scholarship. I use Frances Beale's double jeopardy paradigm to contextualize experiences specific to black women. Writing from the perspective of a female activist during the Civil Rights Movement, Beale prefigured Patricia Hill Collins who further described how black women navigated the racism and sexism they suffered as African Americans and as women. Published in 2000, *Black Feminist Thought* explored black women's "material realities" to articulate standpoint theory as a platform for understanding black women's history. Their different realities from black men and white women, Collins argued, led to very different lived experiences than those described in black studies and traditional feminist theories.[12]

Importantly, as Patricia Bell Scott, Gloria T. Hull, and Barbara Smith argued, studying alternative texts to understand "supposedly 'ordinary' Black women" contributed to theories that emerged to better understand the peculiarities of black women's experiences. Scott, Hull, and Smith produced an anthology that outlined black women's "embattled" place and over several time periods. The title, *All the Women Are White, All the Men Are Black, But Some of Us Are Brave,* aptly contextualized black women's dual discrimination and historical invisibility in American history. Their portrayal of Milla Granson, an enslaved nineteenth-century black woman who operated a night school in Natchez, Louisiana, describes the important ways that

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[12] Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ed. (New York, NY: The New Press, 1995), 145 – 155. Originally published in *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement,* Robin Morgan, ed. (New York: Random House, 1970); bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class,* (New York: Random House, 1981); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South,* Revised edition, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 106; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 748, 750.

black women, teachers in particular, used their unique knowledge to improve black lives. The actions of Granson and other African American women, they wrote, symbolized black women's "creative, intellectual spirit, coupled with a practical ability to make something out of nothing."[13]

White women operated under a yoke of patriarchy that marginalized their contributions and denied them the full rights of American citizenship. Unlike black women, however, white women benefited from the glorification of whiteness across gendered lines. In 1966, Barbara Welter articulated an ideology of women's separate spheres in her now classic article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." "True Womanhood," Welter argued, defined women by their possession of the "four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity." Scholars including Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Linda K. Kerber, and Julie Roy Jeffrey have since demonstrated the permeability of the long-cited cult of domesticity and its accompanying separate spheres ideology. Despite American women's ability to navigate public spaces and boldly challenge limitations rooted in gender, the cult of domesticity directly mediated and influenced the ways white and black Americans in the nineteenth-century understood their identities. My work adds to that literature, finding that at least these nineteenth century women teachers both mobilized the cult and ideology to their benefit and acted in ways that did not conform to historians' notions of what fit within the cult and its attending ideologies. No matter the numbers of women who contravened separate spheres ideals, the expansive literature that refutes true womanhood as a framework for nineteenth century women does not negate the fact that many adopted essentialist notions of womanhood even as they transgressed those roles.[14]

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[13] Scott, Hull, and Smith, *All the Women Are White*, xix.

[14] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 – 1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966), 152 (quote). The notion of separate spheres, although now widely criticized, was also documented by Carroll Smith Rosenberg. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in*

White women's public efforts to combat sexism demonstrate the inherent contradictions of true womanhood. In *White Women's Rights*, Michelle Newman argued that during the Age of Imperialism some white female reformers articulated plans of assimilating "alien" people to the mores and standards of European society as a mechanism for advancing civilization. As early white feminists critiqued patriarchy within larger society, they suggested that non-white, or otherwise "primitive" women, embrace the gender norms that the former worked to dismantle. Many white teachers approached the freed people with similar goals of assimilation even though the larger society explicitly excluded black women from notions of womanhood. Importantly, Newman acknowledged that free-born, middle-class African American women in the late-nineteenth century also worked toward elevating the masses of fellow African Americans by stressing the need to adopt Victorian family structures and the habits of middle-class Americans. The difference, Newman wrote, was that "Black women's…advocacy of bourgeois respectability...evidence[d]…their commitment to taking responsibility for racial uplift" more that it reflected their class-based cultural norms. Evolutionary theory and the rhetoric of civilization, then, led black women to support and promote ideals of True Womanhood, which reinforced patriarchy.[15]

In efforts to counter notions of black inferiority, African Americans struggled to establish and maintain the integrity of black families and communities. Dominant discourses often equated

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Victorian America (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1985); Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 9 – 39; Julie Roy Jeffrey, "Permeable Boundaries: Abolitionist Women and Separate Spheres," *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 79 – 93.

[15] Newman, *White Women's Rights,* 8, 9 (quote 1), 10, 61, 62; Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 2 – 4.

the success of black communities with black males' access to "patriarchal power and privilege." In this context, many African Americans viewed restoring black manhood, which often meant enabling men to act as heads of household, as an opportunity to improve the economic stability of black families rather than a perpetuation of sexism. Some middle-class black women in post-Civil War America embraced domesticity to assert black womanhood. They also hoped to "gain for themselves the respect, safety, and physical freedom that society routinely accorded white middle-class women." Black women could not escape the ideology of true womanhood because of the pressing need to provide counter narratives to notions of broken black families and prevailing beliefs that the words "pious," "chaste," and "virtuous" applied only to white women of a particular class.[16]

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For a variety of reasons, the teachers of the freed people dedicated more time chronicling everyday classroom experiences than any other group of teachers, creating records of the issues they faced. Northern curiosity about the educability of former slaves created anxious audiences for the first-hand accounts. Linked by monthly school reports and letters, benevolent organizations, family members, and friends relied on correspondences from teachers to stay informed about schools in the South. These sources contain data on student enrollments, extracurricular work, subjects taught, students' progress, and the everyday lives of black and white southerners. The papers of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, the archives of various aid societies, and other sources provide expansive collections of letters from teachers, superintendents, Bureau officials, and southern African Americans. Further, the

[16] Newman, *White Women's Rights,* 3 – 14, 188 n.15 (quote 1), 8 (quote 2), 6 (quote 3), 9.

teachers' letters and diaries, used carefully, provide rich insights into their deeply personal lives, allowing historians to go beyond the technical issues of operating a school.[17]

Mining these sources reveals the processes involved in establishing southern systems of schooling and fosters the development of a clearer understanding of teachers' contributions to the groundwork involved in defining freedom in the aftermath of war and Emancipation. Female teachers take center stage here because nineteenth-century women usually taught longer in schools for the freed people than men who opted for more lucrative careers. Many of the women featured in this study first taught in schools in the North, and their teaching experience served as one motivating factor to take advantage of the southern field.[18] The availability of such primary documents from each teacher allows for an exploration of their historical voice. The teachers selected for this study taught for or gained the sponsorship of at least seven different formal benevolent groups including the American Missionary Association (AMA), the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, the Society of Friends, the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Freedmen's Friends Association of Philadelphia, the Hartford Freedmen's Aid Society, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Some taught in local public schools as the southern states began to move toward comprehensive public school systems.

Of these organizations, the AMA archives, part of the Amistad Archives at Tulane University, contain the most detailed extant records from the five teachers, including hundreds of correspondences that addressed a wide range of issues. The *Christian Recorder*, a newspaper established by African Methodists in Philadelphia to enrich the spiritual, social, academic, and

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[17] The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, hereafter cited as the Freedmen's Bureau.

[18] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 80 – 81, 89, 180 – 181; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 36.

intellectual development of its readership, recognized teachers' work in the South in a number of editorials. The papers of the Freedmen's Bureau at the National Archives, Washington, DC, provide tens of thousands of pages of material related particularly but not exclusively to the bureaucratic work of teachers. Other rich repositories of material from the teachers are scattered from Philadelphia through New York into New England.[19]

In her important study of AMA teachers in Georgia during the Reconstruction-era, Jacqueline Jones noted the necessity of a bit of skepticism when analyzing documents written to sponsoring organizations. Not surprisingly, teachers' writings stressed the academic and behavioral progress of the freed people. Furthermore, some teachers censored their writings to not only downplay the challenges they faced, but also to bolster their own status as educators.[20] The lack of objectivity in correspondence from teachers requires the historian to find evidence not aimed at impressing northerners. Thus, personal journals, letters to family and friends, and other sources not intended for publication provide a means to off-set the biases created by the writers' self-censorship. The expansive collection and analysis of primary documents within the Freedmen and Southern Society Project series and secondary collections of letters written by teachers have provided invaluable insights into teachers' lives. Secondary research on slavery, the Civil War, the work of Reconstruction, pre and post-bellum African-American education in

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[19] The Quaker material is in the archives of the Society of Friends at Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania) and Haveford College (Haveford, Pennsylvania); the papers of the New England Freedman's Aid Society are in the Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston, Massachusetts); the American Freedmen's Union Commission's papers are at Cornell (Ithaca, New York).

[20] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 116 – 117.

the South, and the ways nineteenth-century black and white women navigated gender in a patriarchal society contextualize my arguments.[21]

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From unbridled hostility to flowing praise, the literature on teachers for the freed people from the mid-twentieth century to the present covers a range of tones. In the 1940s, southern apologists like Wilbur J. Cash and Henry L. Swint portrayed northerner teachers as "dangerous do-gooders" who did not give concerned white southerners enough time to educate black southerners on their own. As a part of a Yankee invasion that disrupted southern social norms, traditional scholars argued that the teachers should have anticipated a violent reprisal from white southerners toward black schools because the latter believed that northern teachers indoctrinated the freed people with Yankee values of social equality. Cash wrote that the teachers' lack of respect toward southern race relations crippled their efforts from the start. Swint added that white southerners' claims of northern teachers' political motives and efforts to spread Yankee attitudes worsened black southerners' plight. Both preferred an education that would subordinate the southern black population to the will of southern white power.[22]

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[21] Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 54; Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863–1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 51; Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861 – 1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States, series 3, v. 1, Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861 – 1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States, series 2, The Black Military Experience* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[22] Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1941), 54, 136, 137; Henry Lee Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South 1862–1870* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1941), 57 – 59, 85, 95. Even before Cash and Swint, Luther P. Jackson presented a less than favorable study of the first northern efforts to reconstruct the South. Luther P. Jackson, "The Educational Efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Freedmen's Aid Societies in South Carolina, 1862-1872," the *Journal of Negro History* 8 (January 1923), 1 – 40.

Scholars in the 1950s countered the overwhelmingly negative image projected by Cash and Swint with more moderate accounts of northern institutions and teachers. Richard L. Morton presented a positive evaluation of Margaret Newbold Thorpe, "A 'Yankee Teacher' in North Carolina." In his evaluation of Thorpe's reminiscences, the woman's experiences demonstrated self-sacrifice and a deep passion for educating southern blacks. The obvious prejudices toward the freed people that Thorpe's letters expressed proved inconsequential in Morton's analysis. He concluded that, since she withstood the hardships of adjusting to southern cultural norms, "no one can doubt her sincerity and devotion to her mission." In his 1957 dissertation on the AMA's efforts toward rebuilding southern society, Richard Bryant Drake focused on the AMA's leaders and goals and importantly noted that teaching included a multiplicity of roles aimed at addressing black southerners' immediate needs. His text prefigured later works that provided more detailed accounts of teachers' lives.[23]

By the mid-1960s, scholars focused less on the figureheads of benevolent organizations and more on the individuals performing the on-the-ground work of rebuilding southern society. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, for example, explored the first efforts to rebuild southern society in Port Royal, South Carolina. Her text described "The Port Royal Experiment," as organizers came to call this mass project, which began in 1862. Rose traced the processes that Union soldiers, northern teachers, and black residents of the area undertook to address the plight of the thousands of formerly enslaved blacks on the Sea Islands. Rose introduced a number of more widely-known nineteenth-century teachers, like Laura Towne and Charlotte Forten, in her

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[23] Richard L. Morton, "A 'Yankee Teacher' in North Carolina, by Margaret Newbold Thorpe," *North Carolina Historical Review* 30 (1953): 568, 571, 572, 578; Richard Bryant Drake, "The American Missionary Association and the Southern Negro, 1861 – 1888" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1957).

descriptions of the responsibilities expected of northern-born teachers and reformers. Her book represents one of the first book-length attempts to examine Reconstruction from the lens of social history. Her analysis also illuminated the centrality of black institutions, especially churches, in forming cohesive communities.[24]

Works from the late twentieth century offered a broader range of categories for analyzing the northern teachers' work. Edited volumes of writings by nineteenth-century black women demonstrated the litany of experiences involved in the lives of "the Schoolmarms." Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, for example, published a volume of primary documents from nineteenth-century black women to counter the historical invisibility of black women in American histories. Likewise, Dorothy Sterling's *We Are Your Sisters* included edited sources written by black women teachers to provide a sense of the challenges and difficulties black women teachers overcame. Lawson and Merrill also presented an edited volume of letters and speeches from individual teachers, specifically college-educated, black women activists from the nineteenth century. The authors briefly described black teachers in the South during Reconstruction as feminist-leaning women committed to race uplift.[25] The excerpts included in the study provide evidence of race as a motive for teaching in the South, complaints about low pay, reports of students' progress, descriptions of exhaustive schooldays, struggles with staying healthy, incidents of racism, conflict between and among teachers, white resistance, southern black culture, interracial cultural differences, friendships, and teachers' civil-rights activism, among other themes.

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[24] Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction.*

[25] Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 49 – 64, 149 – 67, 189 – 202, 223 – 29.

Although teaching for black women was a middle-class profession only ideologically, not materially, Jacqueline Jones' landmark study of working-class black women excluded school teachers. Even in a skilled profession like teaching, southern poverty meant teachers lived lives more closely associated with working-class blacks than with those economically situated in the middle-class.[26]

Scholars also tended to focus on women from New England and largely grouped teachers based on their race. One of the reasons for the bias toward New England and missionary elements is that the AMA looms large in the literature on southern black education. As Ronald E. Butchart noted in his 1980 study of black education during Reconstruction, benevolent organizations like the AMA often hired teachers more committed to combating white notions of immorality than illiteracy. Joe M. Richardson's in-depth study of the AMA added a critical interpretation of the teachers' beliefs by likening their racism and notions of superiority to those of many abolitionists, who simultaneously believed in the immorality of slavery and in the inferiority of black people.[27] Writing in 1979, Sandra Small analyzed the writings of twelve white women from northern states as a "starting point in the exploration of schoolmarms' tasks and attitudes." She refuted the image of teachers as political activists aimed at disrespecting

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[26] Loewenberg and Bogin, eds., *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life*, 282; Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 271 – 274; Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790 – 1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 8; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to the Present,* (New York: Random House, 1985).

[27] Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the American Missionary Association* (New York: AMS Press, 1972); Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 105 – 6; Butchart, *Northern Schools*, 46; Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction,* 90, 138; Allis Wolfe, "Women Who Dared: Northern Teachers of the Southern Freedmen, 1862 – 1872," (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1982), 58; Sylvia D. Hoffert, "Yankee Schoolmarms and the Domestication of the South," *Southern Studies* 24 (Summer 1985): 188 – 201.

southern whites while elevating the freed people.[28] Allis Wolfe argued that middle-class values influenced teachers' perceptions of the freed people leading some to criticize southern black culture as uncivilized and barbaric. Their negative conceptualization of the South in general, and black southerners in particular, compelled them to promote teaching lessons on morality over reading and writing. Wolfe recast teachers' work in schools in response to Butchart's study of benevolent organizations that, he argued, could have offered more empowering methods to advance the plight of black southerners than schools. Wolfe concluded that although women's "teaching may have been misguided," [...] "the teachers did mean well" and therefore deserve a less pessimistic treatment than Butchart offered.[29]

Some writers used biography to explore individuals or groups of teachers. For instance, Martha Huddleston Wilkins described Sarah A. Dickey's "noble experiment" as an educator in Mississippi. Wilkins' perpetuated the stereotype of teachers as young, overzealous, northern-born, white women.[30]

Scholars who singled out the motivating factors that drew northern-born women to the South drew key distinctions between black and white teachers.[31] Jacqueline Jones' 1980 analysis

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[28] Sandra E. Small, "The Yankee Schoolmarm in Freedmen's Schools: An Analysis of Attitudes," *The Journal of Southern History* 45, no. 3 (Aug., 1979), 383, 384 (quote 1), 402; Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862 – 1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love* (quote 5).

[29] Wolfe, "Women Who Dared," 6, 12 (quote), 72, 180; Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*.

[30] Cynthia Griggs Flemming, "The Plight of Black Educators in Post War Tennessee, 1865 – 1920," *The Journal of Negro History* LXIV (Fall 1979), 354 – 364, 358 (quotes 1 and 2); Martha Huddleston Wilkins, "Education for Freedom: The Noble Experiment of Sarah A. Dickey and the Mount Hermon Seminary" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Mississippi, 1985), 36 (quote 3); Cash, *The Mind of the South*, 137 (quote 4); Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love* (quote 5); Wolfe, "Women Who Dared," 18.

[31] Clara Merritt DeBoer, "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origin and Work of the American Missionary Association: 1839-1877" (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University, 1973); Linda Perkins,

deserves special attention here, because of its prominent place in the field. Jones focused heavily on middle-class white women who seemingly chose teaching as a respectable alternative to manual labor or to a genteel life as ladies. Women's work in schools for freed people, Jones argued, stemmed from idle lives and exposure to antebellum reform. She reasoned that a "restlessness and a wish to 'do good'" drove some women to southern black classrooms while others sought "an appealing alternative to a life of social pleasantries and 'trifles.'" Jones painted a vivid picture when she described women teachers employed by the AMA in Georgia as well educated, economically secure, and patriotic. Driven by religion and nationalism, she wrote, the "average" white female teacher "rejoiced in the opportunity to be 'useful' and hailed self-sacrifice as a privilege." Teachers did not plan to disrupt racial norms, Jones argued. Rather, they aimed to gain "a personal salvation both earthly and spiritual." Jones' portrayal of teachers' motivations defined the historiography of white women teachers in southern black schools for many years. Subsequent studies note that Jones' focus on northern-born white women largely excluded the contributions of black women who taught in higher frequencies and devoted longer portions of their lives to southern black education.[32]

In her exploration of black women teachers, Linda Perkins contrasted the motivations of black and white women. Unlike middle-class white women who briefly taught in the South for self-affirmation, she argued, black women who taught for the American Missionary Association

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"The Black Female American Missionary Association Teacher in the South, 1860 – 1870," in *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South*, Jeffrey J. Crow, and Flora J. Hatley, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 122 – 136.

[32] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 42 (quotes 1 and 2), 15 (quotes 3, and 4). For a critical evaluation of Jones' work that challenges the historical portrait of teachers as white, young, and abolitionists leaning, see Ronald E. Butchart and Amy F. Rolleri, "Reconsidering the 'Soldiers of Light and Love': Color, Gender, Authority, and Other Problems in the History of Teaching the Freed People" (2003), Http://www.coe.uga.edu/ftp/docs/ReconsiderSoldiers.pdf; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 108.

between 1861 and 1870 used teaching as an alternative to work as domestics, cooks, seamstresses, or washerwomen. While black women worked toward the advancement of black people because of a shared history of racial discrimination, Perkins posited, white women sought an "escape from their idle and unfulfilled lives." Unlike white women, Perkins argued, a sense of racial solidarity guided black women and led many to devote their lives to teaching freed people while white women sought a temporary retreat from their middle to upper-class homes in New England. Perkin's negative caricature of the white women teachers is refuted by studies of the white teachers, many of whom were teachers and activists in the North before going to the South.[33] These types of rigid categorizations based on race fail to consider the multitude of motivations that influenced individual teachers as women and the wide variety of experiences of individual women, black or white.[34]

The tendency to portray black women solely in terms of race and white women solely in terms of gender has continued. In 2001, Julie Jeffrey, for example, described the experiences of Lucy and Sarah Chase, two white sisters from a well-to-do Quaker family. While she admits that most white women did not belong to families as wealthy as the Chases, in some ways, Jeffrey perpetuated portrayals of middle-class white women teachers from property-owning families. Essentially, Jeffrey downplayed many white women teachers' need to work for wages when she

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[33] Perkins, "The Black Female American Missionary Association Teacher," 122 – 33, 124 (quote); Linda Perkins, "The Impact of the 'Cult of True Womanhood' on the Education of Black Women," *Journal of Social Issues* 39, no. 3 (1983): 17 – 28.

[34] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 48; Jacqueline Jones, "Women Who Were More Than Men: Sex and Status in Freedmen's Teaching," *History of Education Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 98.

Ironically, teaching in the Reconstruction-era South did not free educated women from the strenuous work of washerwomen, seamstress, or domestics. Teaching clearly involved a large portion of unskilled and surprisingly laborious labor.

juxtaposed white women's connections to families with some financial means with "black women ['s]…pressing economic imperatives."[35]

In her discussion of the cultural differences between northern teachers and the freed people, Jeffrey noted that many arrived with strongly-worded negative critiques of black southerners at the onset of their stays in the South but became more sympathetic with increased interactions with black southerners. Lucy Chase, for example, criticized southern black religious culture as a "painful exhibition of…barbarism," and "hoped to teach middle-class values and behavior and gender-specific norms." In a footnote, Jeffrey compared Chase's reaction to that of Charlotte Forten, an elite African American northerner, who described formerly enslaved blacks as a "truly religious people. They speak to God with a loving familiarity." Jeffrey did not note, however, that Forten originally assessed southern black worshiping practices as barbaric African traditions. Commendably, Jeffrey's attention to class and educational-based commonalities between white and black northern women teachers provided a base for a better understanding of the teachers she mentions.[36]

In 2005, Kay Ann Taylor compared Mary Peake and Charlotte Forten, two black women teachers, much like Linda Perkins, who, in 1984, used the cult of true womanhood to present black teachers as wedded to racial uplift. Although Peake and Forten each taught for very brief

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[35] Jeffrey, "Permeable Boundaries," 227 (quote 1). Jeffrey cited Ronald E. Butchart's, "Perspectives on Gender, Race, Calling, and Commitment in Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Collective Biography of the Teachers of the Freedpeople, 1862 – 1875," *Vitae Scholastica* 13, (1994). Butchart's most recent book provides a lengthier explanation of women teachers' demographic trends. See Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, ix – xx.

[36] Jeffrey, "Permeable Boundaries," 225 (quotes 1, 2, 3), 226 – 229. Jeffrey is careful to acknowledge northern black women's cultural insensitivities toward black southerners but presents Forten as one who appreciated southern black religion from the start. See, Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," in *The American Negro His History and Literature,* Lewis Lockwood, ed., (New York, 1969: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1864) 65 – 86.

periods—less than six months in Peake's case, Taylor wrote that black women exhibited a "lifelong dedication to the uplift of their race in all facets of life…through education." Taylor highlighted Peake's and Forten's religious sensibilities and self-dependence, and painted them as race crusaders. Finally, Taylor noted that white women averaged two to three years in black schools in the South but did not mention the scores of white women who spent decades in southern black schools. Black women teachers certainly expressed a commitment to the race but, like white women, black women in the South also sought self-discovery and personal growth. Both groups constructed identities based on gendered understandings of their roles in society. Taylor relied on Jacqueline Jones' portrayal of teachers as restless white women determined to serve and described white women as "bound and suffocated by the hegemonic ideal" of true womanhood.[37]

In 2006, Linda Cabral used black uplift ideology as a framework for studying four black women teachers. The marriage of teaching, racial uplift, and the cult of domesticity in these works resulted in useful descriptions of the lives of nineteenth-century black women in schools for the freed people. This continued emphasis on defining black women solely in terms of race and white women solely in terms of gender, however, overshadows commonalities among women across racial lines, as well as variance between and among black and white women.[38]

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[37] Kay Ann Taylor, "Mary S. Peake and Charlotte L. Forten: Black Teachers during the Civil War and Reconstruction," *The Journal of Negro Education* 74, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 124 – 37, 125 (quote 1). Jones presented the desire for self-fulfillment among white women as a motivating factor in *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 42.

[38] Taylor, "Mary S. Peake and Charlotte L. Forten," 125 (quote 1); Linda Britton Cabral, "Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators to the American Missionary Association, 1863 – 1870" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 2006). Cabral presented correspondences from Blanche V. Harris, Clara C. Duncan, Edmonia G. Highgate, and Sallie L. Daffin in the context of racial uplift.

The most recent study of teachers in black schools in the post-bellum South challenges longstanding demographic and cultural descriptions of teachers and argues that traditionalist and revisionist portrayals describe only a minority of the teaching workforce. Butchart's *Schooling the Freed People* enriches historical portraits of teachers by considering such factors as race, birthplace, religious affiliation, and socioeconomic status compiled in his Freedmen's Teacher Project database that documents a range of personal and professional attributes of thousands of identifiable teachers of southern African Americans during Reconstruction. It includes over 11,600 men and women who taught in southern black schools for at least one term, a list compiled from exhaustive research.[39]

Butchart illustrates that the prevailing description of white women from northern states dedicated to advancing black freedom greatly overestimates both the origins of the teachers and their visions for the freed people. He finds that black men and women taught in much larger numbers than previously supposed, northern teachers constituted less than one-third of the teachers in the freed people's schools, both young and older women taught black southerners, and thousands of southern whites taught in black schools. More remarkably, most black teachers were southern-born, even though the literacy rate among black southerners at the end of the Civil War hovered around ten percent. Finally, Butchart finds that hundreds of women took on important leadership work in the schools as principals and even superintendents.[40]

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[39] The FTP includes information culled from "the archives of the aid societies and missionary organizations; state archives; the records of the Freedmen's Bureau, the Freedmen's Bank, and the Southern Claims Commission; military and pension records; college alumni catalogues and archives; and manuscript census returns, including slave schedules, city directories, and similar resources." Biographies, journals, school histories, and secondary literature supplement the archival research. See Butchart, *Schooling the Freedpeople*, 179 – 185.

[40] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 2, 18 – 26; Butchart, FTP. Butchart describes a desire to aid fellow black Americans and an acknowledgement of their common plight among black teachers. As such,

Whereas Butchart pushed well beyond his simplistic depiction of the teachers as "the real heroes of their age" in his 1980 study, even his more recent work fails to explore teachers' lives in depth to identify the multiple roles they played or the identities they adopted. Particularly, he did not give sufficient thought to the enormous challenges they and their students faced. My work stands on Butchart's foundations, but my biographies provide much greater depth to these particular women than he attempted.

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By building on current scholarship and refocusing on familiar sources, I demonstrate the richness of the lives of black and white women from northern and southern states while they taught in the South. Specifically, I evaluate the lives of women teachers to further illuminate contradictions between historical representations of freedmen's teachers and the lives of actual women who taught during Reconstruction. This project is guided by one central question: In addition to "teacher," what identities defined Reconstruction-era teachers' lives and experiences in the late-antebellum and post-war South in the context of the complex interplay of "explosive forces" out of which the first public school systems in the South emerged? I describe the actions and attitudes of women teachers within and outside of classrooms to enrich studies of nineteenth-century women. The collective biography approach works well for teachers because it fosters a deeper analysis of nineteenth-century women in this case. A useful tool for social scientists, I hope to accomplish "good collective biography," which Krista Cowman describes as a narrative

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motivations among African Americans bespoke themes of "racial solidarity and racial uplift and elevation" more than religion or economic necessity, 43 (quote).

that "does not attempt to divorce individuals' own views of their experiences from the social and political contexts in which these experiences were situated."[41]

Women brought overlapping contexts of race, class, and gender, private religious struggles, desires for meaningful relationships, and the negotiation of female autonomy in light of societal expectations of subordination. Female educators were black and white, young and old, southern and northern born, affluent and impoverished. They were activists, missionaries, teachers, *and* women. Most importantly, they were human. Restricted though not bounded by ideology, race, and gender, some women teachers availed themselves of independence, authority, and self-direction provided by black southerners' efforts to educate themselves and their families.[42] The experiences of the women featured in this study supplement the recent historiographical trend to focus on women teachers' lives beyond parameters of race, regional background, and their chosen profession. Ultimately, women's work and lives as teachers defy easy categorization. These women demonstrate the rich, diverse, and occasionally contradictory aspects of teaching in post-Civil War southern black schools along with the ways the social construction of womanhood influenced women's experiences.

The chapters that follow will achieve those goals by highlighting particular experiences of individual teachers. Chapter 2 explores African Americans' efforts to gain literacy skills in the North and South. The historiography of antebellum black education demonstrates the longstanding desire for schooling among black Americans as a weapon against continued racial

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[41] Cash, *The Mind of the South,* 137 (quote 1); Krista Cowman, "Collective Biography," in *Research Methods for History,* ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2012), 96 (quotes 1 and 2). For definitions of, and methodological issues within, collective biography, see Ronald E. Butchart, "Collective Biographies: How Many Cases Are *Enough?* A Dispatch from the Far Side of 11,700 Biographies of Nineteenth Century Teachers," *Vitae Scholasticae* 32, no. 1 (2015), 25 – 34.

[42] Butchart, "Remapping Racial Boundaries," 61 – 78.

oppression. It then focuses on how historians have described teachers in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Chapter 3 presents Ellen Jackson's teaching experiences and civil rights activism to illuminate the intersection of race and gender in the lives of black women teachers. Jackson combatted racism and sexism all while navigating the challenges of teaching in the post-war South.

The next chapter compares the experiences of two northern-born women teachers—Carrie Blood, a white Congregationalist, and Sallie Daffin, a black member of the A.M.E. church. Blood took on leadership roles in Congregational churches, continually campaigned for funds and supplies, and considered it her Christian duty to police the level of commitment of fellow teachers as well as the morality of black southerners. Likewise, Daffin participated in fundraising initiatives, pushed for black teachers for black students, and campaigned for black northerners to migrate to the South. While both traveled to the South to spread morality among the freed people, Blood expressed a much narrower vision of freedom than Daffin who adopted racial uplift as a path toward black empowerment. Chapter 5 turns to more personal aspects of women teachers' lives in its discussion of how Sara Stanley and Rebecca Primus established themselves as committed to their work as educators even as they cultivated rich personal lives. The conclusion briefly describes key points of each woman's narrative within the context of southern culture.

CHAPTER 2
"WE WANT TO GET WISDOM": SOUTHERN BLACK EDUCATION IN THE ANTEBELLUM AND CIVIL WAR–ERA SOUTH

In 1862, William Davis, a freed man and exhorter from Virginia, traveled to New England to provide a first-hand description of the horrors of slavery to encourage more northerners to promote the abolitionist cause. Before his sojourn north, Davis learned how to read with the help of his former owner's son. In his lectures, Davis described how his literacy skills increased his productivity but also expanded his desire for freedom. After the Civil War, Davis encouraged the freed people in Hampton, Virginia, to follow suit. He believed that schooling could protect black citizenship and prove the freed people "worthy of freedom." Convinced that a literate population would force white Americans to reevaluate their perceptions of black inferiority, Davis articulated African Americans' shared hope for a prosperous future through education. "All we want is cultivation," he wrote. "What would the best soil produce without cultivation? We want to get wisdom….Let us get that, and we are made for time and eternity."[1]

Davis' actions and words reflect James Anderson's articulation of a "black consciousness of literate culture." Black southerners' long-held determination to gain traditional forms of knowledge in antebellum America served as a foundation for post-war educational initiatives. The hope that literacy would improve their lives undergirded southern African Americans'

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[1] Lewis C. Lockwood's, "Mary S. Peake: The Colored Teacher at Fortress Monroe," in William Loren Katz, *Two Black Teachers During the Civil War,* (New York: Arno Press, 1862), 64 (quotes 1, 2, and 3). Davis traveled to New England states with Lewis C. Lockwood. Davis taught at the Tyler House, a school at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, during the Civil War.

unyielding efforts to establish schools during Reconstruction. This chapter explores this literate consciousness in the context of the history of black schooling in the antebellum and Civil War-era South. It then focuses on women's experiences as they embarked on teaching the freed people. Scholars have revealed the ways black students' status as a population with a commitment to education impacted classroom dynamics and added to the teachers' overall responsibilities. African Americans' enthusiasm for education before the Civil War provided an ideological foundation for education reform during Reconstruction and prompted an overt backlash from southern whites who remained committed to black subordination.[2]

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The freed people's groundswell of support for schools in the Reconstruction-era South reflected the history of black schooling during slavery. In *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, the pioneering text on southern black education, Carter G. Woodson depicted two periods of education during American slavery. The first phase of tolerance among white southerners for specific types of schooling among enslaved populations gave way to a forceful reaction and a

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[2] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 16 (quote 1).

For discussions of African Americans' work toward and perceptions of schooling in the post-bellum South, see Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861 – 1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 2 – 7, 17 – 51; Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862 – 1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 176; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 5 – 6, 4 – 12; Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 67 – 79; Christopher M. Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862 – 1875* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 23 – 31; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear": Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 34 – 35, 62 – 66, 149 – 50; Valinda Littlefield, "An Open-Ended Education: Problems in Reconstructing the History of an African-American Classroom," in *Silences & Images: The Social History of the Classroom*, ed. Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn, and Kate Rousmaniere (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 147; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

wave of anti-literacy laws from the late 1820s onward. Woodson marked the mid-to-late eighteenth century as an educational "heyday of victory" for African Americans because of the increase in the number of schools for blacks, instances of integrated schooling, and even black instruction of white pupils. He described three types of early advocates—religious individuals dedicated to the spread of Christianity among African Americans, slave owners in the pursuit of more profits, and those who sympathized with the black southerners.[3]

Scholars after Woodson further demonstrated that some white southerners felt a moral obligation to teach enslaved blacks to read the Bible because of the potential benefits of biblical lessons on society at large. Janet Cornelius, for example, noted the use of the Bible as the main teaching text in early educational efforts for black southerners. In *Born in Bondage*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz argued that some slave owners rationalized enslavement by framing Bible lessons as one component of the gift of Christianity to an uncivilized population. Contemporary propagandist like John C. Calhoun urged planters to support slave religion to cultivate a docile workforce. Preachers and religious institutions taught enslaved blacks to be obedient and to accept their divinely ordained plight as unpaid laborers. As an important component in the continuation of the system of slavery, white churches stood at the forefront of struggles to indoctrinate black southerners with biblical passages that suggested black inferiority to justify human bondage.[4]

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[3] Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1919), 2, 43, 108, 206.

Albert J. Raboteau added enslaved blacks as key proponents of black instruction in his study of the religious culture of black southerners. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: the "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 120.

[4] Woodson, *The Education of the Negro*, 3, 4, 63, 93, 208, 210 – 11, 214 – 15; Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear,"* 4 – 5, 22, 39, 53 – 57, 75 – 77, 100; Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 120, 121.

Hilary Moss enriched Woodson's discussion of the economic motivations for white advocates for schooling slaves, particularly in urban centers in the South. Some white southerners acknowledged the increased efficiency and pecuniary value of literate workers. At times, slave owners taught enslaved blacks how to read or numerate based on the types of work the latter performed. Owners who hired out their slaves often catered to the preferences of potential employers in such fields as printing and publishing and publicized the literacy skills of their potential hires. In kind, employers openly advertised for literate hires to serve as drivers, porters, distributors, clerks, and mechanics, among other positions. Thus, owners' desires to maximize profits coupled with employers' desires for literate workers blunted some white southerners' aversion to black literacy. Ultimately, planters' and business owners' quests for economic gain remained the foremost imperative behind southern whites' support of limited black literacy. As Moss argues, tolerance of black literacy among white southerners occurred "only in so far as whites stood to benefit from it." Teaching literacy among enslaved blacks remained the exception, not the rule.[5]

In antebellum America, perceptions of the inferiority of peoples of African descent, the proliferation of abolitionist literature, and violent forms of resistance from literate black southerners fed a growing body of legislation that codified illiteracy among black southerners. Slave rebellions in the antebellum era heightened many slave owners' awareness of the serious threat educated laborers posed to the system of slavery. Convinced that the leaders of the Stono Rebellion in 1739 communicated in writing, some southern governments reacted with anti-

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[5] Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 74 (quote), 74 – 90; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 128, 139. In terms of education in the South, Moss discusses the economic incentives for slave owners to encourage literacy among blacks in Baltimore, Maryland.

literacy legislation. Fifty-two years later, Toussiant L'Overture led the only slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere that resulted in the ousting of a colonial power. The Haitian Revolution put white Americans on edge regarding the possibility of literate black men leading a revolution not unlike the revolution Americans won a generation earlier. In 1822, whites connected Denmark Vesey's ability to read to his botched revolt in Charleston, South Carolina. Less than a decade later, a literate black preacher named Nat Turner sent shockwaves throughout the South and fortified white opposition to educating blacks when he led a deadly revolt in Southampton County, Virginia. Turner's 1831 insurrection occurred on the heels of David Walker's *Appeal to Colored Citizens* in 1829. Walker, a free-black native of North Carolina who lived in Boston, published a call for black self-defense. Walker's text added grist to arguments against black literacy and led whites to shore up anti-literacy campaigns to subjugate both the bodies and minds of their enslaved populations.[6]

Laws defined literacy as a privilege for whites only and established extreme punishments for blacks who dared challenge this restriction. A Virginia delegate vividly articulated the intent of an anti-literacy bill passed by the Virginia House of Delegates. The bill, he wrote, aimed to block "every avenue by which light may enter their minds. If we could extinguish the capacity to

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[6] Moss, *Schooling Citizens,* 10, 44 – 46; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 10, 112 – 13, 155 – 59, 168.

For details on Vesey's plot to liberate blacks in Charleston, see Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 1 – 4. Raboteau noted planters' reluctance to preach the gospel because both Vesey and Turner were motivated to revolt by their religious beliefs. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 163. For details on slave revolts in the Western Hemisphere see, David Walker, *Walker's Appeal in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Colored Citizens of the World*, (Boston: David Walker,1829); David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 205 – 230; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts,* (New York: International Publishers, 1993). In his comparison of three slave revolts in the United States to three in the British Caribbean, Davis argues that enslaved blacks in the United States could not appeal to the government like those in the Caribbean who appealed to British abolitionists. Davis, like Aptheker, portrayed slave revolts as suicidal no matter the region or method.

see the light our work would be completed." Ironically, white southerners' determination to uphold anti-literacy statutes made stealing literacy skills all the more compelling. Legislation and stiff punishments triumphed in terms of keeping most black southerners illiterate. But, to the chagrin of many pro-slavery ideologues, anti-literacy measures did not "extinguish the…light."[7] Rather, white southerners' vehement efforts to keep black people illiterate fueled the desire for literacy. Frederick Douglass stated it plainly in 1855 when he wrote that, "The very determination which [my owner] expressed to keep me in ignorance, only rendered me the more resolute to seek intelligence."[8] Undoubtedly an unintended consequence, staunch opposition to black learning reinforced enslaved men and women's association of schools with social power and contributed to the desire for reading and writing skills among southern blacks.

Historians have described the surreptitious efforts enslaved blacks adopted to acquire the rudiments of literacy in the antebellum South. Even in the face of staunch resistance, some black southerners risked the consequences of learning to read. Christopher Span and others described cooperative learning among black southern families and kinship networks. For instance, Jenny Proctor, along with fellow bondsmen, secretly procured a copy of Webster's *Speller* and studied by the light of a "little pine torch" on an Alabama farm. Lily Ann Granderson likewise taught other enslaved blacks by "night and stealth" on a plantation in Natchez, Mississippi, before the Civil War. W. L. Bost, a former slave from Newton, North Carolina, described a literate young boy as "terrible smart," because the boy would teach other enslaved children out of the Bible. In

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[7] Woodson, *The Education of the Negro*, 10, 112 – 13, 155 – 59, 168; Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear,"* 31 – 32, 63 – 65*;* Thomas Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831 – 1865* (New York: Norton, 1978), 29 (quotes 1 and 2). Woodson noted that the lack of literacy skills among many southern whites discouraged teaching southern blacks.

[8] Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 147 (quote 1).

Beaufort, South Carolina, an enslaved woman spread information to her literate uncle even after her owners resorted to spelling out those words and phrases that they did not want her to understand.[9]

Occasionally, enslaved blacks patronized schools established by free-blacks or religious organizations in the South. Woodson acknowledged the work of the Oblate Sisters, an order of black nuns in antebellum Baltimore, Maryland, where southern custom, rather than strict laws, discouraged the formation of black schools. Historian Diane Batts Morrow produced a detailed study of the Oblate Sisters entitled *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time.* Based on evidence drawn primarily from the Oblate Sisters' diaries, Morrow's study dates the founding of the Oblate's School for Colored Girls to 1828, just a few years before the hostile response to black education after the mid-1830s. Morrow argued that, "the Oblate Sisters exercised self-definition and self-empowerment" in their quest to demonstrate black female virtue. The Oblate's story demonstrates the difficulties faced by blacks dedicated to gaining and spreading literacy as well as black women's adoption of a "politics of respectability" to combat racism and sexism. Morrow creatively compared Sister Mary Lange, a cofounder of the Oblate sisters, to W. E. B. Du Bois, a champion of education and civil rights activism. Her comparison reminds

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[9] Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 37 (quote 2); Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear,"* 59 (quote 1), 61 – 74, 77 – 80.

For discussions of black southerners' antebellum efforts to acquire literacy see also, Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 9, 30, 159, 129 – 132, 206, 208, 209, 216 – 221; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 7 – 29; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 16 – 17; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 4, 21, 72; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 261 – 262; Granderson (also spelled Grandison) may have gained rudiments of learning in a school Milla Granson organized before the war in Natchez. Randy J. Sparks, "'The White People's Arms Are Longer Than Ours': Blacks, Education, and the American Missionary Association in Reconstruction Mississippi," *Journal of Mississippi History* 54, no. 1 (February 1992), 2; Patricia Bell Scott, Gloria T. Hull, and Barbara Smith, eds. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982), xix.

readers of the ways black women in a male-dominated, racist society sought alternative ways to cope with their ascribed second-class status.[10]

In New Bern, North Carolina, John Stuart Stanley and Frances Griffith Stanley educated fellow free-blacks and sometimes slaves in their Stanley School in the early nineteenth century. As Woodson noted, black southerners most often established these schools in urban centers where they enjoyed protection in numbers, more freedom of movement, and less surveillance than in rural areas. Even in cities, however, learning to read and write for enslaved blacks occurred under a shroud of secrecy. Susan Woodhouse and Mary Beasley, two free black women in Savannah, Georgia, for example, secretly taught Susie King Taylor and other southern blacks. Taylor also learned to read from various white teachers, including a white playmate and the landlord's son. At one point, she and others wrapped their books in paper, then entered the teacher's house one at a time to avoid attracting undue attention. Taylor ultimately taught Union soldiers and freed people during and after the Civil War.[11]

While African Americans interpreted the value of literacy differently, many associated schools with social power and considered education an avenue for betterment. Cornelius cited

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[10] Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828 – 1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 11 (quote), 16, 36 – 37, 46, 95 – 96. For more information on the use of respectability politics among black women see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14 – 15, and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992), 261, 266, 271.

[11] Ellen N. Lawson and Marlene D. Merrill, *The Three Sarahs: Documents of Antebellum Black College Women* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984); Susie King Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 3 – 6; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 16, 18 – 19, 49 – 50.

The Stanleys' daughter, Sara G. Stanley, used the educational foundation laid by her parents to enter Oberlin College in 1852. She later taught freed people in the post-war South. In addition to Lawson and Merrill, see Judith Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?': Sara G. Stanley and the American Missionary Association, 1864 – 1868," *Church History* 60 (1991): 493 – 507.

existing literature on the importance of literacy in a person's identity formation and their self-esteem. She added that "literacy was more than a path to individual freedom—it was a communal act, a political demonstration of resistance to oppression and of self-determination for the black community." For some, the thirst for knowledge stemmed from a rejection of their owner's control of their minds. Some aimed to learn a particular skill to perform less labor-intensive types of work. Others resisted the dehumanizing aspects of the peculiar institution by creating identities apart from their slave status. William Davis, a man of faith, sought Bible literacy so that he could read and interpret biblical passages for himself. His literacy skills facilitated his work as an anti-slavery activist during the Civil War. Furthermore, literate slaves who shared their knowledge with others gained a measure of respect among their peers. The fervor for education expressed among former slaves challenged white supremacy in its clear demonstration of blacks' educability and autonomy.[12]

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Ferebe Rogers lived the first thirty years of her life as a slave on a large plantation in Milledgeville, Georgia. Rogers remembered that her owner provided generous rations of food, allowed families to farm four acres of land for their own benefit, and took them to the white, Baptist church on Sundays. Before emancipation, she had been auctioned twice—first upon her owner's death when his children sold her to a man looking for "a good breedin' woman"; the second time when one of her first owner's sons brought her back to the farm of her birth. She never learned how to read, partly because of her owner's threat to cut off her arm if she tried. She also heeded the warning of a literate slave, Enoch Golden, who told Rogers about fellow

[12] Cornelius, "*When I Can Read My Title Clear,"* 3 (quote), 17, 73, 92, 94; Lockwood, "Mary S. Peake," 64; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 41 – 42.

slaves killed by their owners because he taught them to read and write. Rogers' account illustrates some enslaved black southerners' conscious decision to avoid literacy as well as the risk some encountered to acquire literacy skills.[13]

The high rates of illiteracy among the freed people proved the success of campaigns to keep the rudiments of education away from slaves. The freed people struggled against the tightening grip landowners and merchants held on their independence and new economic systems in the South limited African Americans' freedom. Many freed people looked to schools as an important platform for racial uplift and economic independence. In theory, literacy and numeracy skills provided protection from confusing or unfair labor contracts used by employers and merchants to keep the freed people in poverty. At voting polls, reading and writing skills assisted black males who gained the franchise with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in

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[13] Norman R. Yetman, ed., *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2000), 256 (quote 1), 257.

Scholars estimate that the literacy rate of black southerners ranged from five to ten percent by the end of the Civil War, with most citing the higher estimate. In their brief historiography of southern black education, Christopher Span and James Anderson trace literacy rate estimates for black southerners from Woodson in 1916 to Cornelius in 1983. Woodson cited the higher literacy rate and noted that it was even higher before the suppression of black literacy after the 1830s. In his 1935 revisionist study of the Reconstruction of the American South, W. E. B. Du Bois presented the lower, five percent estimate. Just under four decades later, Eugene Genovese noted the conservative nature of Du Bois' figure in *Roll Jordan Roll*. While Anderson's extensive 1981 study of southern black education endorsed the five percent literacy rate among black southerners at the start of the Civil War, in 2006, he and Span agreed with Cornelius whose use of a broader base of primary sources added credence to the ten percent figure. *In Schooling the Freed People*, the most recent broad-based study of black education in the South, Butchart argued that by 1865, "not more than one in ten southern blacks were literate." In her dissertation on educational reconstruction in Richmond, Virginia, and Mobile, Alabama, Hilary Green noted that reports from northern teachers suggest even higher literacy rates among African Americans in urban centers. See, Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, "The Quest for 'Book Learning': African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," in Alton Hornsby, Jr., ed., *A Companion to African American History,* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 295 – 311; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro,* 228; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935, Reprint, New York: The Free Press, 1998), 638; Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 563; Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear,* 8, 9, 63; Anderson *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 31; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 2; Hilary Nichole Green, "Educational Reconstruction: African American Education in the Urban South, 1865 – 1890" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010), 18 – 19.

1870. More importantly, perhaps, acquiring an education represented an outward, symbolic performance of a long-denied freedom. African Americans strove to educate themselves and their children to combat slavery's legacy of racial discrimination in education.[14]

Contrary to early interpretations of the educational reconstruction of the South, northerner organizations did not spearhead the Civil War Era push for black schools. As more recent scholars such Anderson, Williams, and Butchart have shown, the freed people established schools well before the end of the Civil War. In 1861, southern blacks opened more schools than did northern whites, and southern black communities were responsible for more of the early black schools than were northern white educators. In his role as the Freedmen's Bureau's inspector of schools, John Alvord documented the many schools established by former slaves before northerners arrived. The proliferation of these so-called "native schools" illuminated African Americans' initiative and a pre-existing belief in the value of education.[15]

Black Savannahians, for example, established the Georgia Education Association to manage black schools statewide in 1865. Black educators boasted of their accomplishments and, as James Anderson noted, "resisted infringements that threatened to undermine their own initiative and self-reliance." Some teachers established and managed schools without the aid of umbrella institutions, relying instead on their own initiatives and the support of black

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[14] Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865 – 1873,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980, 56 – 58.

[15] William P. Vaughn wrote that education among black southerners did not progress until "Northern religious and philanthropic organizations initiated efforts to educate slaves." William P. Vaughn, *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865 – 1877,* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 3; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 1 – 7, 144 – 145; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 6 – 7; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 31 – 36.

communities. Jennifer Carol Lund Smith's study of black education in four Georgia counties speaks to the multitude of ways black communities worked to establish schools. Black southerners' secret quests for literacy before and after emancipation undoubtedly contributed to the success of benevolent organizations during Reconstruction. Clearly, northern efforts supplemented an education project already underway in the black South.[16]

After emancipation, the politics of race, gender, and region intersected and new institutions and social structures formed to produce higher literacy rates throughout the South. Free and formerly-enslaved African Americans' perceptions of education as a form of uplift and a balm for the pain of racial prejudices coupled with the educational work of churches, benevolent societies, and governmental agencies encouraged the spread of black schools during Reconstruction. Butchart listed over fifty religious and secular Freedmen's Aid Societies based in northern states that existed between 1862 and 1875. Many of these groups that formed to establish schools for black southerners disbanded quickly.[17] The religious organizations and denominations most represented by the teachers in this study include the Congregationalist-leaning American Missionary Association (AMA) and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Northern Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Quakers also used Reconstruction to expand their influence through the South. While they differed in methods and outlook, religious groups

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[16] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 12 (quote 1); Jennifer Carol Lund Smith, "'Twill Take Some Time to Study When I Get Over': Varieties of African American Education in Reconstruction Georgia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1997); Williams, *Self-Taught*, 40.

The following describe early educational efforts among the freed people: Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 673 – 645; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 4 – 27; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 17 – 36; Williams, *Self-Taught*, 1 – 95. For descriptions of the tensions between northern and southern educators, see Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*, 53 – 70; Sparks, "'The White People's Arms Are Longer Than Ours,'" 1 – 16.

[17] Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction,* 5, 7. Vaughn estimated that at least eighty northern-based organizations worked toward southern black education in the first years of the Civil War. See Vaughn, *Schools for All*, 3, 5.

gained members, buildings, land, preachers, and missionaries in return for religious and moral instruction among the freed people.

Formed in 1846, the AMA championed abolitionism before becoming the premier society for the education of freed people in the South. As a religious institution, the AMA's teachers often focused more on teaching Christianity than on more academic subjects. Its leaders preferred teachers who expressed abiding commitments to God through self-sacrifice. Some teachers supported black education but not black empowerment. Many AMA leaders, like its teachers, expressed similar sentiments about black southerners, Chinese and other immigrants, and the urban poor. Missionaries often sought to "civilize" these groups with gifts of education that stressed Christianity. The AMA left the most lasting imprint on black education in the South in its thrust toward normal school training through the establishment of schools that grew to be the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the South.[18]

In 1816, Richard Allen founded the A.M.E. church to offer black Methodists a place of worship after a group of black congregants refused to continue to withstand the discrimination they faced within white Methodist churches. As an expression of African Americans' increased frustrations with American racism, the AME Church played a major role in activism, education, and uplift among free-black northerners. Church leaders and members considered themselves as "agents of God for the task of elevating the Negro race in America" and felt duty-driven to

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[18] Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861 – 1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), vii, 82, 83, 90, 138; Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the American Missionary Association* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909), 117 – 118; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861 – 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 34; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 105 – 6; Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*, 46; Allis Wolfe, "Women Who Dared: Northern Teachers of Southern Freedmen, 1862 – 1872," (Ph.D. Dissertation City University of New York, 1982), 58; Sylvia D. Hoffert, "Yankee Schoolmarms and the Domestication of the South," *Southern Studies* 24 (Summer 1985): 188 – 201.

improve the status of the larger black community. As such, the A.M.E. church spread literacy in its Sunday schools and evening classes and promoted intellectual engagement through community-wide activism. After the Civil War, the A.M.E. church also aimed to spread its influence throughout the South both to expand the denomination's reach and to advance the plight of black southerners. Its newspaper, the *Christian Recorder,* articulated a clear agenda for its members that aimed to improve the lives of African Americans across denominational lines—race uplift through spiritual guidance, moral training, and academic instruction. Church leaders were determined to defend African American rights to citizenship, such as black male suffrage. Still, as Kathleen A. Clark argues, A.M.E. church affiliates "professed their faith in the viability of black citizenship—and yet harbored deep and abiding prejudices toward the freedpeople."[19]

The women featured in this study also worked for non-denominational organizations including the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People and the Hartford Freedmen's Aid Society. In its *First Annual Report,* the Baltimore Association reported the establishment of sixteen schools taught in black churches in the first ten months of 1865. The teachers of those schools gained the sponsorship of the Baltimore Association along with other secular organizations that demonstrated widespread cooperation among relief organizations. Francis George Shaw, President of the National Freedman's Relief Association based in New York, for example, agreed to send black teachers upon request from the Baltimore Association. In 1867, leaders and benefactors met to celebrate the organization's second anniversary. The report of the meeting, published in the *American Freedmen*, plainly

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[19] Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 15 – 16, 29; Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863 – 1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 51 (quote); Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday-School Union, 1981).

stated the goals and methods of the organization. In its plea for continued sponsorship, the organization's leadership expressed its negative perception of the freed people and need for ethical training to combat immorality and vice for the good of the state.

> To these people the law has given freedom and legal rights; from them it demands obedience and service. They are now ignorant and comparatively unrestrained. You must either raise them up or they will drag you down. You must either make them able to know the laws so that they may obey them, or you must pay heavily to restrain them from and punish them for crime. You must either teach them chastity, thrift, sobriety, and decency of conduct, or you must dot your State with alms-houses, jails, and penitentiaries…. They need your money as wages, for without it they will starve or steal; hence you must teach them the value of contracts and the necessity of observing them; unless you teach them to read and write, they can not learn this. The advantages of educating them are great, and we can see no disadvantages.[20]

The Baltimore Association and the New England Freedmen's Aid Society (NEFAS) along with a host of other nondenominational organizations, ultimately collaborated to form a more efficient system. Established in 1866, the national American Freedmen's Union Commission (AFUC) broadened the nonsectarian influence in southern black schools. The AFUC boasted that its schools accepted students regardless of race and adhered to no particular religious denomination. Described as "consistently egalitarian," the AFUC expressed the goal to aid southerners, black and white. Although its ideology asserted African American manhood and rights to full citizenship, its adoption of language about how slavery demeaned black southerners perpetuated ideas of black inferiority. Its constitution outlined a number of goals for its work in the South—establish a bureaucratized system of schools; train the majority of students in elementary branches and offer normal training for advanced students to equip schools with

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[20]Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, *First Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: for the Association), 4, 9, 18; *Freedmen's Record* (February 1865); *The American Freedmen* 1 (January 1867): 1 (quote).

teachers; and work in cooperation with southern blacks and whites. *The American Freedmen*, the AFUC's publication, outlined its "ultimate object of paving the way for a free school system in the South sustained by their own people of all and for all classes and races." This umbrella institution pushed the common school and free-labor ideology as a basis for a reconstructed South. Unlike the AMA and the A.M.E. church, the AFUC and its associates did not establish a permanent presence in the South. In fact, the AFUC dissolved just three years after its founding. Importantly, the NEFAS, one of its affiliates, continued its work in southern education until 1874.[21]

Federal involvement in black education began in 1862 with the appointment of John Eaton as a superintendent of black southerners in Tennessee. As a colonel in the military, Eaton organized school districts, hired educators, and brought some of the existing missionary schools under his supervision. Partly motivated to increase literacy among Union soldiers, military personnel across the South pursued similar avenues as it cooperated with the increasing influx of northern societies.[22] Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands in early 1865 to address the immediate needs of black and white southerners. The Bureau arbitrated labor contracts between freed people and southern planters, addressed grievances presented by freed people in makeshift courts, and encouraged freed men to sign labor contracts.

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[21] *The American Freedmen,* Vol 1, Issue 1, April 1866 (all quotes); Carol Faulkner, *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 34.

The NEFAS reluctantly eschewed its thrusts toward religious training when it joined the AFUC. The AMA rejected the offer to unite with other aide societies under the AFUC umbrella and lived on after the Commission's end in January of 1869. For a detailed look at the conflicts that developed between the AMA and nonsectarian organizations as they worked to gain more prominent positions in southern education see, Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction,* 76 – 95, and Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction,* 73, 279, n. 11.

[22] Vaughn, *Schools for All,* 7 – 9; Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction,* 98 – 102.

In his biography of General Oliver O. Howard, the Commissioner of the bureau, William McFeely described the organization as President Andrew Johnson's conduit for supplying black laborers to planters and businessmen. While some bureau officers genuinely sympathized with the freed people, others aligned more with Johnson's plan for reestablishing traditional southern norms that did not include black landownership. McFeely wrote that the bureau "engaged in the pacification of the freedmen" rather than toward black southerners' empowerment, a goal Howard articulated at the outset.[23]

In 1866, Congress extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau and established explicit educational endeavors that included cooperating with aid societies. The Freedmen's Bureau assisted educational organizations by placing and transporting teachers from the North to the South, by paying the salaries of bureau agents associated with schools, by securing buildings to be used as schools, and by providing building materials for the construction of new schoolhouses. By 1868, Congress had all but discontinued the weakened educational arm of the organization. Although the goals of bureau representatives varied throughout the South, its standard of encouraging restrictive labor contracts between the freed people and white land owners generally outpaced their work in establishing schools to empower black southerners.[24]

In sum, the plethora of northern benevolent organizations motivated by economic, religious, and social opportunities, and the federal government's concern regarding the

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[23] William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen,* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994; first printed in New Haven, CT: Norton, 1970), 3, 311 (quote); Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction,* 97 – 114.

[24] McFeely noted that Howard was largely motivated by religion and, as commissioner, considered his position as "a great opportunity for Christian service." McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather*, 7 (quote). Butchart likewise acknowledged the increased attention Howard granted schools established by religious associations compared to those established by secular societies. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*, 10, 98, 99, 100 – 107.

"contrabands," led to a flood of reconstructionists to the South. While the freed people and northern African American organizations aimed to use economic development through landownership, community building, and education to improve their socioeconomic conditions, northern white organizations generally offered the freed people lessons in thrift, sobriety, industry, and character. The goal of some organizations was to play a part in restructuring the South for economic and nationalistic gains. Most did not aim to dismantle white supremacy; indeed, some believed in and perpetuated the notion of black inferiority. As one historian has argued, "the curriculum was long on the righteousness of the given order, short on social justice."[25] Despite its shortcomings, the freed people's education project existed as one of the very few strategies available for southern black empowerment.[26]

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Teachers entered black schools in the South with different backgrounds, motivations, training, and perceptions that guided their classroom methods. Few knew what to expect as they prepared to teach zealous, but destitute, students in a social climate virulently opposed to black education. A survey of matters commonly associated with teachers in Reconstruction-era schools—overcrowding, discipline, a dearth of supplies, extracurricular responsibilities, and fundraising—provides a useful overview of women's work as teachers and as visitors to the South.

The quest for literacy among the freed people catalyzed the organization of schools with or without school buildings, and the quality of teachers' classrooms and supplies varied.

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[25] Ronald E. Butchart, "Remapping Racial Boundaries: Teachers as Border Police and Boundary Transgressors in Post-Emancipation Black Education, USA, 1861 – 1876," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 1 (February 2007), 77.

[26] Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*, 13 – 17; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro*, 226; Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear,"* 39; Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 80 – 83.

Teachers taught makeshift classes in packed buildings. Overcrowded classrooms of anxious students frustrated efforts to teach and establish order while zeal toward literacy usually kept student enrollments high. Despite their enthusiasm, black students enrolled in schools with a shared ignorance about classroom life. Anti-literacy laws in the antebellum South left most black children unfamiliar with school norms and produced noticeable consequences. In addition to their lack of experience as students, children's limited vocabularies complicated clear communication, especially among isolated populations of black southerners. As Willie Lee Rose wrote, "missionaries…considered the almost incomprehensible Gullah dialect a simple corruption of English." Many years later, appreciation for the communication patterns of the Gullah-Geechee grew after Lorenzo Dow Turner described the West African influences in the vernacular of black southerners along the Sea Islands. In the post-Reconstruction South, however, most teachers interpreted the communicative patterns of black southerners as more proof of the latter's stupidity rather than their lack of schooling.[27]

The chaos of new schools and students demanded systems of organization. Some teachers endeavored to transform their schools based on an emerging northern, urban school model. The techniques teachers adopted depended heavily on school conditions, the availability of supplies, class size, students' skill levels, and the teacher's own academic background. They addressed large class sizes, for example, by dividing classes into grades, holding multiple school sessions in one day, or requesting teaching assistants. Although John Eaton, the first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Education, empowered superintendents to decide the hours, organization,

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[27] Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction,* 96 – 97; Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). Rose's observation on the difficulty of communicating applied mostly along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts where isolation allowed African Americans to retain cultural elements of their African ancestors.

books, and modes of discipline for black schools, the short reach of the Freedmen's Bureau meant most teachers made their own decisions about the inner workings of their classrooms.[28]

School conditions, specifically in cases of overcrowding or a lack of desks, exacerbated efforts to establish order. Teachers occasionally had to contend with both minor and serious disciplinary problems among people who were most likely frustrated at how hard it was to learn. Teachers dealt with such behavioral issues with a combination of modern and traditional techniques. Modern techniques included such tactics as changing the physical environment, showing kindness and compassion, using grading scales, and appealing to students' consciences. Some teachers incorporated floral arrangements and other decorations to encourage good behavior. Sometimes teachers emphasized religion and taught students to behave to avoid God's wrath. More traditional teachers used force and fear to gain the upper hand, and some adopted more forceful modes of discipline including corporal punishment, physical exhaustion, humiliation, and expulsion.[29]

For the most part, teachers taught using common nineteenth-century methods—repetition, catechism, recitation, and lecture. Perceptions of the child-like qualities of African Americans led many educators to believe that the best teachers used methods that appealed to black students' emotions rather than fostering critical thinking to establish order. Some

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[28] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 119; Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 16; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 22.

[29] Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 231; Linda B. Selleck, *Gentle Invaders: Quaker Women Educators and Racial Issues During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1995), 35.

As Butchart argued, gentle disciplinary measures reflected a modern approach to teaching while physical punishments represented traditional methods. Modern methods usually pointed to a more liberating vision of freedom than traditional methods that relied heavily on systems of hierarchy. See, Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 132 – 149.

Scholars have noted teachers' awareness of the importance of environment to student learning. See Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 122; Littlefield, "An Open-Ended Education," 148 – 161.

incorporated object lessons into their routines. Books designed specifically for the freed people emphasized morality as much as literacy and reflected nineteenth-century perceptions of enslaved African Americans as shiftless, lazy, and intemperate. As Robert C. Morris argued, books like *John Freeman and his Family,* by Helen E. Brown, "exhorted [Freedmen] to work hard, to save their money, to take advantage of educational opportunities provided by Northern teachers, to marry, to abstain from liquor and tobacco, and generally to act responsibly in their new state." Of the fifteen books in the *Freedmen's Library,* as the series of textbooks for former slaves published by the American Tract Society was called, most encouraged the acquiescence of freed people to their plight as manual laborers. According to Ronald E. Butchart, "Ideas of black strength, autonomy, equality, and pride found no place in the [American Tract] society's many publications."[30]

Despite the availability of these texts written explicitly for the freedmen's schools, most black students used popular textbooks that circulated nationwide and taught the common branches, which included such subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar. More advanced students studied history and the "higher branches." Some teachers dedicated a good deal of time teaching their northern version of conservative Christianity and considered religious work their most important priority. In *Raising Freedom's Child*, Mary Niall Mitchell

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[30] Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 11, 17, 31; Laura Wallis Wakefield, "'Set a Light in a Dark Place': Teachers of Freedmen in Florida, 1864 – 1874," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (Spring 2003), 413; Robert C. Morris, ed. *The Freedman: Vols. 1 – 6* (New York City: AMS Press, 1980), introduction (quote 1); Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 124 – 128 (quote 2).

Butchart noted that these texts were "'culturally appropriate' with a vengeance." Ronald E. Butchart, "Race, Social Studies, and Culturally Relevant Curriculum in Social Studies' Prehistory: A Cautionary Meditation," in Christine Woyshner and Chara Bohan, *Histories of Social Studies and Race, 1865 – 2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), (footnote quote). See also, Ronald Butchart, "Normalizing Subordination: White Fantasies of Black Identity in Textbooks Intended for Freed Slaves in the American South, 1863-1870," in James Williams, ed., *(Re)building Memory: School Textbooks, Identity, and the Pedagogies and Politics of Imagining Community*, forthcoming, 2016.

argued that missionaries and reformers used before and after images of formerly enslaved children to convey the message that black children could be taught "the value of discipline and industry—the very fundamentals of Anglo-Saxon civilization."[31]

Teaching former slaves in a war-torn region made the teachers' work a good deal more onerous and teachers initiated programs aimed at improving the material and moral conditions of the freed people. As Joe Richardson argued, employers expected women teachers to labor beyond the confines of classrooms to ameliorate the freed people's conditions. Besides teaching day school, teachers organized public exhibitions, taught evening adult schools, and organized Sunday Schools. Many distributed clothing or other aid, regularly visited their students' homes, and wrote letters on the freed people's behalf. All of the teachers were required to report monthly to the Freedmen's Bureau on bureau-supplied forms that demanded exact information on the number enrolled, number of new students since the previous month, the number studying each of the many subjects common to the schools—from beginning reading through physiology to needle-work—extensive calculations of average daily attendance and attendance by gender, as well as answering questions regarding Sunday schools, evening schools, the attitudes of white citizens toward the schools, and other matters related to the schools. Sponsoring agencies expected monthly narrative reports, and some organizations also used standardized forms for school reports.[32]

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[31] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 125 – 149, 125 (quote 1); Mary Niall Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future of Slavery* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 94 (quote). Butchart provides a detailed discussion of the implicit and explicit curricula, pedagogies, and textbooks used in southern black schools.

[32] Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 13; Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 25 (quote 1); Ellen G. Jackson to William E. Whiting, 29 March 1866, 2 April 1866; *American Missionary* (February 1869), 32, all AMAA.

Teachers solicited support from local and outside sources to improve their classroom and living environments. Fundraising proved paramount to a teachers' success and some bequeathed portions of their own monies to their schools despite salaries that were half or less than they could have earned in northern schools. Teachers also wrote to family, friends, acquaintances, churches, and northern societies to request supplies, books, clothing or monetary donations. Some teachers received boxes of supplies from northern friends. The "teacher's home box," as the AMA called it, often contained dried fruits, dried beef, beans, and pickled foods. Store-bought items including coffee, tea, salt, pepper, and household goods added to the comforts afforded by the boxes. At times they contained much needed silverware, dishes, towels, bedding, and even carpet to cover open floors. A few women traveled to surrounding communities to lecture at fundraisers on such topics as the importance of education and temperance. Others established branches of the Vanguard of Freedom, a Freedmen's Bureau-sponsored temperance reform society intended to improve the freed people's morality by discouraging the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the use of "profane and vulgar language." It encouraged the freed people to save the money that they otherwise might spend on alcohol or tobacco.[33]

Beyond those many broader educational activities expected of the freed people's teachers, the teachers faced an array of other challenges that most northern teachers would never grapple with. White and black teachers faced great difficulty when trying to secure suitable housing. In small towns, white southerners who benefited economically by the teachers' presence showed their distaste for the women by charging exorbitant rates for room and board. Those in urban areas who lived in mission homes often met challenging housemates and a lack

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[33] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 139; Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 158; Wakefield, "'Set a Light in a Dark Place,'" 411.

of privacy. Black women who lived in mission homes faced blatant racism from individuals they assumed would support black education and rise above notions of black inferiority. [34] Most whites in the South distanced themselves from their teachers, sometimes women more than men. One teacher noted "the men now and then lift their *hats* while the ladies for variety almost invariably *lift* their *noses*." The level of disgust went well beyond body language.[35] It is in those contexts that five representative women teachers lived and worked. We turn now to their stories.

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[34] Shofner, *Nor is it Over Yet,* 73; *American Missionary* (July, 1869), 163.

[35] Henry Lee Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South 1862-1870,* (Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1941), 95.

CHAPTER 3
"WE CONTEND AGAINST OUTRAGE AND OPPRESSION WHEREVER WE FIND IT": COMBATTING RACISM AND SEXISM IN THE SOUTH

Maria W. Stewart, a pioneering black woman intellectual, was born in Hartford, Connecticut, at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1826, twenty-three year-old Maria Miller married James W. Stewart, a man of apparent wealth in Boston, Massachusetts. Upon his death, after just over three years of marriage, Stewart was "robbed and cheated…out of every cent" of her husband's wealth. Since she was orphaned at an early age, Stewart did not have family members to rely on as a source of support. Thus, she earned money by teaching black students in New York beginning in 1833, then in Baltimore beginning in 1853. During the Civil War, Stewart organized a school for freed people in Washington, D. C., where she taught until 1870. Before teaching, Stewart delivered at least three speeches that were later published in pamphlet form. Her writings shed light on the hardships faced by widowed and single nineteenth-century black women who survived without the financial support of husbands or family members. As a black woman writer, Stewart's work on civil and women's rights demonstrate black women's struggles to survive in the face of racism and sexism.[1]

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[1] Maria Stewart, *Meditations from the Pen of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart (Widow of the Late James W. Stewart,) Now Matron of the Freedman's Hospital, and Presented in 1832 to the First African Baptist Church and Society of Boston, Mass.* (Washington, D. C.: Enterprise Publishing Company, 1879), iii – 12, 8 (quote 1); Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, eds., *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life: Their Words, Their Thoughts, Their Feelings* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 183 – 185; Dorothy Sterling, ed., *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 153 – 159; Ronald E. Butchart, Freedmen's Teacher Project (hereafter Butchart, FTP).

Beginning in 1832, Stewart delivered speeches that addressed issues of race and gender in America. First printed in *The Liberator,* William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, Stewart published her speeches and other writings in book form in 1879. The letters in the preface of Stewart's text that vouched for her character describe the handling of James Stewart's will after his death and

Like Stewart, Ellen Garrison Jackson, a native of Concord, Massachusetts, depended on her own initiative to provide for herself after the death of her husband after a short marriage. Both of these literate African American women turned to teaching as a source of financial support, first in schools in the North and then in schools for freed people in the South. This chapter explores the ways Jackson and other black women teachers responded to racial discrimination and direct assertions of male dominance that they experienced during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The negative reception Stewart received from black male leaders who used gender as the basis for their critiques held some similarities with the responses Jackson and other black women activist teachers experienced. Likewise, Stewart's description of being cheated out of monies raised at a festival organized to contribute to her livelihood has direct parallels to the humiliation Martha L. Hoy felt after her conflict with black male trustees in the South.[2]

Race and gender had particular implications for black women because of American patriarchy and the social construction of gender that have contributed to the subjugation of women across color lines. Literature that described women as the weaker sex in need of men's protection and support limited white women's educational, professional, and political opportunities. As they had in colonial and early America, nineteenth-century white women expanded their influence despite social boundaries. Scholars have demonstrated the permeability of women's roles and refuted ideologies of "True Womanhood" used by some to describe

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illuminate the difficulties women faced due to their circumscribed rights. His death came five years after the two wed.

[2] Ellen G. Jackson to Simeon S. Jocelyn, 13 June 1863, American Missionary Association Archives (AMAA); Sterling, ed., *We Are Your Sisters,* 153 – 159; Marilyn Richardson, *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 99 – 100; Martha L. Hoy to Edward P. Smith, 31 January, 15 June 1870, AMAA.

nineteenth-century women as largely constrained to lives as wives and mothers. But, as Jacqueline Dowd Hall argued, white women received "deference…as compensation for [their] powerlessness." Although these theories failed to portray the realities of life for white women, the construction of the white "Lady" as pious, pure, and delicate, positioned black women as polar opposites—immoral, libidinous, and tough. These widespread perceptions left black women outside of definitions of womanhood, and the combination of racism and sexism contributed to what scholars have since described as black women's double oppression. Frances Beale's "double jeopardy" paradigm and Deborah Gray White's description of the stereotypes of black women that developed in the antebellum South provide frameworks for understanding the ways race and gender influenced black women's experiences.[3]

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[3] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 – 1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966), 151 (quote), 152; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 178, (quote 2); Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South,* Revised edition, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 27 – 62; Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ed. (New York, NY: The New Press, 1995), 145 (quote), 145 – 155. Originally published in *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement,* Robin Morgan, ed. (New York: Random House, 1970); White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 28, 49, 57.

Carroll Smith Rosenberg also discussed the notion of separate spheres in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Scholars have since demonstrated the limitations of the public versus private sphere ideology as a way to describe the lives of nineteenth-century women. See, for example, Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 9 – 39; Julie Roy Jeffrey, "Permeable Boundaries: Abolitionist Women and Separate Spheres," *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 79–93.

For discussion of women's place in colonial America, see Carol Berkin and Leslie Horowitz, eds., *Women's Voices, Women's Lives: Documents in Early American History* (Boston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 12, 48, 95, 126, 159 – 160. Berkin and Horowitz discussed expectations for women in terms of their roles as wives and mothers, their contributions to household management, and the ways they participated in local politics without direct political power.

Beale situated her critique of race and gender in the context of the lives of black women during the modern Civil Rights Movement. She referenced Sojourner Truth as a quintessential example of how the lives of nineteenth-century black women differed from historical presentations of the experiences of middle-class white women.

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Ellen Garrison was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on April 14, 1823, to Susan and John Garrison. Jack Garrison, Ellen's paternal grandfather, escaped slavery in New Jersey after the American Revolution, and then made a home for himself among a circle of elite white abolitionists in Concord. Her mother, Susan Garrison, was a founding member of the Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society. Little is known about when Ellen Garrison became Mrs. Jackson. She seems to have married a Mr. Jackson in the early 1860s. Widowed by 1863 when she first applied for a position as teacher among the freed people, Jackson was one of the one-third of black women who were married or widowed when they began their southern teaching tenures.[4]

Race, gender, and religion all contributed to Jackson's decision to apply for a position with the American Missionary Association. Pervasive racism, a hallmark of American society, undergirded Jackson's strong sense of black unity. "I think it is our duty as a people," she wrote, "to spend our lives in trying to elevate our own race." Her statement reflects the understanding of many leading free-born African Americans, that their social and political fate was linked with the masses of southern freed people. As such, it was vital for educated black Americans to "lift" as they "climbed." Her intentional quest to test the limits of newly-won rights for African Americans reflects black women's long history of civil rights activism.[5]

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[4] George Tolman, *Concord, Massachusetts Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1635 – 1850,* (Concord: Beacon Press, 1895), 299; Sandra Harbert Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 19; Jackson to Jocelyn, 13 June 1863, AMAA; Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861 – 1876,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 23.

[5] Jackson to Jocelyn, 13 June 1863 (quote 1); Jackson to Samuel Hunt, 21 May 1866, AMAA. Black women founded the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) in 1896 and adopted "Lifting as We Climb" as its motto. The motto reflected black women's late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century efforts to defend black womanhood and improve the lives of African Americans across class lines. See, Elizabeth Lindsay Davis, *Lifting as They Climb* (New York: Prentice Hall International,

Gender played a key role in her choice to teach in the South after the Civil War. In her application letter to the AMA, Jackson articulated the physiological pressures of poverty when she wrote that "it cramps one's energies to have to think about the means of living." Teaching existed as one of the few skilled occupations that welcomed women's participation. Before the end of enforced illiteracy for African Americans in the South, educated black women like Jackson found teaching opportunities in privately-funded black schools in the North, in the few schools for freed communities in slave states, or in the very few public schools for black children in the North. [6]

Besides a sense of racial duty and the practical need to achieve some measure of financial stability, Jackson described her public activism and teaching as a God-given duty. She reported membership with the Joy Street Baptist Church in Boston, Massachusetts. In a number of letters, she referenced her belief in God's protection. After her life was threatened by a devastating fire, for example, she wrote: "I think the Lord has something more for me to do and by His help I will try to be more faithful." She believed in heavenly salvation as expressed in a letter to the AMA about reuniting with some of her former students in the afterlife. Finally, her service as a Sabbath

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1996); Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894 – 1994* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 54, 69 – 70, 78, 105.

[6] Jackson to Jocelyn, 13 June 1863 (quote 1), AMAA.

Hilary J. Moss surveyed the educational efforts of black schools in New Haven, Connecticut; Boston, Massachusetts, and Baltimore, Maryland. See, Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 74. To learn more about antebellum schools for black northerners, see, for example, Carleton Mabee, *Black Education in New York State: From Colonial to Modern Times,* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979; Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War,* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1919).

School teacher, Superintendent of Sabbath School, and her eagerness to engage with the freed people on religious matters demonstrate her religious motivation for teaching in the South.[7]

Jackson's first letter to the AMA expressed her interest in gaining a teaching position in the South in June 1863. An unnamed AMA agent added a note to her application that reported that he had spoken with the Reverend J. T. Raymond who served as the minister at Joy Street Baptist. Raymond highly recommended Jackson, which led the agent to rate her as a "superior woman." Her religious background, educational credentials, work experiences, general good health, and a positive endorsement from a respected pastor all qualified her for a position with the AMA. Jackson taught with the support of the AMA in Port Deposit, Maryland, between April 1865 and August 1868; then in James City, Virginia, from January to July in 1869. In 1870, she taught in Cokesburg, Maryland, for the American Baptist Home Mission Society. She also taught in Hillsborough, and Greensboro, North Carolina, as an employee of the Freedmen's Friends Association beginning in 1873. Although details of her teaching career after 1876 elude present-day researchers, Jackson appears to have remained in the South well past the end of Reconstruction. She shared the work of educating the freed people with thousands of other northern-born and southern-born black Americans who comprised one-third of the total teaching force for black schools in the South from 1861 – 1877.[8]

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[7] Jackson to Michael E. Strieby, April 1865; Jackson to William E. Whiting, 29 March 1866 (quote); Jackson to Hunt, 11, April 1866; Jackson to Smith, 1 July 1869, AMAA.

[8] Jackson to Jocelyn, 13 June 1863 (quote), AMAA; 1870 Census, Massachusetts, Middlesex Co., Concord, 593/625, p. 442A; Butchart, FTP; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 19. For reasons unknown, the organization delayed Jackson's hire for a year and a half.

Jackson has been discussed briefly in Sterling, ed., *We Are Your Sisters,* 269, 273 – 275; Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861 – 1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986)*,* 199 – 203; Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 13; David S. Bogen, "Precursors of Rosa Parks: Maryland Transportation Cases

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Jackson traveled from Newport, Rhode Island, to her post at Port Deposit, a small town about forty miles northeast of Baltimore and five miles upstream from Havre de Grace, Maryland. She guessed that the settlement was "about 3 miles long" and no larger than "twice the width of Broadway, New York." This working-class town sat on the bank of the Susquehanna River and was known for its trade in lumber. Bounded by Mt. Ararat, Jackson wrote that Port Deposit residents also mined "a kind of granite...very beautiful when...finished." Jackson noted that African Americans comprised about a third of Port Deposit's population of 1,500.[9]

The traditional responsibilities of teaching were more than enough to keep women occupied but represented only a fraction of the obligatory duties required of teachers in southern black schools. Besides holding two school sessions during the day, Jackson visited students' homes, delivered at least one public lecture, and organized a night school for adults. Jackson personally solicited funds from the AMA and other northern friends, from the freed people, and from community members during public events. She organized community-wide fundraisers for school supplies, for a school building, for classroom furniture, for her room and board, and for her salary. Jackson also taught Sunday School and often read the Bible to friends since the church she attended in Port Deposit did not have afternoon services.[10]

Between the Civil War and the Beginning of World War, *Maryland Law Review,* 63 (2004), 721 – 726; Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right*, 19.

[9] Jackson to Hunt, 13 April 1866, (quotes 1, 2, and 3).

[10] Jackson to Hunt 2 December 65; Jackson to AMA, 2 March 66; Jackson to the AMA, Superintendent's Monthly Report of Schools, June 1867; Jackson to Smith, 2 January, 1 June, 1868, all AMAA. During her first term in Port Deposit, no one attended the night school she opened even though she announced its availability in church for three consecutive Sundays. Jackson posited that few enrolled in night school because she opened the day school to adults as well as children. Her ambivalence about admitting adult

Teachers' involvement in community-wide affairs contributed to the respect and gratitude expressed by community members and others associated with educational reconstruction. In August 1865 after her first term in Port Deposit, African Americans expressed their admiration and appreciation to the AMA. In an appeal for Jackson's return, John Wesley Martin, who drove Jackson to her boarding house when she first arrived in Port Deposit, began by apologizing for not thanking the AMA sooner. Martin praised the AMA for sending Jackson, noting that, "We have tried her one quarter and have found her second to none." Nathaniel Noyes, a Boston native and AMA school supervisor, also lobbied for Jackson's return. He too considered Jackson a competent teacher and bore witness to students' fast progress. The AMA complied and reassigned Jackson to Port Deposit. [11]

Port Deposit residents also demonstrated the esteem they held for Jackson when the school committee asked her "to deliver an address" when she returned in October. Although she worked on a smaller scale than more visible nineteenth-century black women speakers like Maria Stewart, Jackson and other teachers gave public speeches. The request to speak demonstrates the important influence teachers held and the respect they garnered from community members. Although the contents of Jackson's speech are unknown, extant records

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students to the day school faded when she realized that their presence positively affected younger students' behavior. Throughout her time in Port Deposit, Jackson reported the enrollment of between ten to seventeen adults in day school.

Butchart noted that in the early years adults did attend during the day but later attended only at night. Ronald E. Butchart, "Schooling for a Freed People: The Education of Adult Freedmen, 1861-1876," in *Black Adult Education in the United States: An Historical Overview*, edited by Leo McGee and Harvey Neufeldt (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 45 – 58.

Jackson's religious practices represent an area of contention that developed during her last year in Port Deposit, a topic discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter.

[11] Jackson to Strieby, 1 April 1865; Jackson to Hunt, 25 September, 4 October 1865; John Wesley Martin to George Whipple, 5 August 1865 (quote);Nathaniel Noyes to the AMA, 22 August 1865, all AMAA; "Progress in Maryland," *The Liberator*, 30 December 1864.

allow some speculation on the types of topics black women teachers addressed. Martha L. Hoy, a teacher in Prince Fredrick, Maryland, for example, traveled to schools throughout Calvert County to deliver a speech on "the necessity and fruits of education, and many of the evils of intemperance…[and] the use of tobacco."[12]

Whites in Port Deposit did not hold the same esteem for black schools or their teachers and adopted overt forms of intimidation to discourage education and constrain black freedom. Jackson described the personal expressions of opposition to black education that she experienced in dozens of letters to the AMA. When she first arrived in the town, a concern for safety prompted her to postpone home visits, and the harassment students faced on their way to school caused some not to attend. Jackson noted that some parents kept their children home to protect them since "colored people...are stoned and driven about at the pleasure of the rowdies." Even though the federal government acknowledged black Americans' freedom, Jackson noted the lack of protection from law enforcement officials. Jackson asked the AMA for suggestions on how to deal with white residents' continual harassment, apparently to no avail. She soon championed self-defense as a potent weapon against white oppression and demonstrated that belief on a number of occasions.[13]

It seems that white boys in Port Deposit harassed black students much more frequently than teachers. Jackson wrote that, "It is only occasionally that I have been beaten, and stoned in the street by the boys." In a particular case, a white boy challenged Jackson's right to the sidewalk as she and a friend walked to a lecture on July 4, 1865. In her account,

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[12] Jackson to Hunt, 4 October 1865 (quote 1); Hoy to Smith, 31 January 1870 (quotes 2 and 3), AMAA. I describe her work in more detail later in this chapter.

[13] Jackson to Jocelyn, 11 April 1865 (quote 1); Jackson to Hunt, 3 November 1865, all AMAA.

> I was walking with a friend on my way to a lecture to be delivered at Bethel Hall. We were walking very leisurely along when someone came up behind me and trod on my dress. at same time angrily exclaiming. I wish you would not take up all of the sidewalk. somebody else wants to walk as well as you. which I thought to be very likely accordingly I stepped one side and politely told him he could pass by if he wished. waiting for him to do so. He then called me a nigger and told me he would not have any of my sass and told me he would slap me in the mouth. at this point I thought it best to interfere having a particular regard for my mouth. I told him in a very decided manner he would not do it. he then passed on. I have found out one thing about these people if they attack you be careful to stand your ground and they will leave you but if you run they will follow.

In the aftermath of this show of courage against the white boy, Jackson boasted that this time, "they had to run from me." As a resident of a former slaveholding state, the boy may have never interacted with an African American woman who defended herself against his sense of entitlement as she embraced her own rights to the sidewalk. After the incident, the boys generally limited their harassment of Jackson to verbal assaults.[14]

Education and institution building represented some of the most visible assertions of black freedom in the South, thus schools and churches bore the brunt of violent resistance to black freedom.[15] While the white boys resorted to throwing rocks, verbal insults, and physical violence toward black students and occasionally black teachers, older whites resorted to much more violent and intimidating acts to express their animosities toward black freedom. When white southerners set fire to black homes and institutions, they aimed to instill terror among black southerners and discourage future attempts at black empowerment. As Butchart argues,

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[14] Jackson to Hunt, 13 April 1866 (all quotes), AMAA.

[15] For discussions of the perpetuation of white supremacy in the South and the North after the Civil War, see for example, W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, (1935, Reprint, New York: The Free Press, 1998); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817 – 1914,* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750 – 1925,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1976; Roger L. Ransom, and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation,* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865 – 1890,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

white southerners often expressed their rage toward black development through "incendiary terrorism against education [that] thereby became economic terrorism as well." Building schools and churches was costly enough; replacing them added to the financial strain of black communities. Five months into Jackson's second term in Port Deposit, white southerners demonstrated such physical and psychological terror. Jackson awoke in the middle of the night to the bright flames of a raging fire. She alerted fellow residents whose lack of firefighting experience impeded efforts to save their dwelling place. As they all struggled to gather clothes and other belongings, Jackson retrieved her two trunks but "lost a good part of clothing" and a pair of shoes. Thankful that the fire caused no physical injuries, she admitted that things might have been much worse. Jackson never explicitly attributed the fire to arson in her letters, but it is reasonable to assume that someone set the fire to pressure Jackson to close her school and leave the town.[16]

Less than five weeks after the fire, Jackson faced yet another act of racial violence. On Friday, May 4, 1866, Jackson and Mary J. C. Anderson, another northern black teacher stationed in Maryland, collected their monthly salaries and then headed to Baltimore on the 6 o'clock train. It was the end of a week of teaching, Jackson in Port Deposit, and Anderson in Havre de Grace, and the two planned to visit with friends and pick up a few items in the city. The next day, they shopped around then headed to the train station to travel back to their respective teaching posts. When they arrived at the train depot, the two women

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[16] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,*164 – 170, 166 (quote 1); Jackson to Whiting, 29 March (quote 2), 2 April 1866; Jackson to Hunt, 2 April, 11 April 1866; Jackson to AMA, Superintendent's Monthly Report of Schools, April 1866, all AMAA.

Butchart notes the prevalence of violent resistance toward black southern education and describes the longstanding psychological effects of white resistance on black education. See Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 135 – 178.

> took our seats in the ladies' room from which we thrown out literally thrown we came upon next train with the impression that we had been outrageously abused, and insulted and hurt also as it was done in a very rough manner. I feel the effect of it still. I made up my mind to write to General Stennard whose headquarters are in Baltimore but my friends advised me to go and see him and state the case to him which I did and the case is now in his hands. The general also says he wished to ascertain whether respectable people have rights which are to be respected.[17]

In subsequent letters, Jackson reported that the first objection from whites in the depot came in the form of verbal insults from a white woman who felt offended by Jackson's and Anderson's presence. Rather than respond to the woman's insults, Jackson and Anderson remained still and quiet. Adam Snyder, the white station master, stepped in. In an act of defiance that prefigured future demands for black civil rights, Jackson and Anderson refused to give up their seats. Snyder claimed to be a police officer and then forcibly removed the two women, which caused long-lasting physical and emotional pain.[18]

An examination of letters from Jackson to AMA officials reveals Jackson's indignation toward the station master. Jackson detailed Snyder's "forceful ejection" of herself and Anderson: Snyder "grasped my arm so tightly that I felt compelled to cry out, 'Let me alone. Take your hands off me.' That is all I said to him until after the assault. After which I told him he would hear from me again." Already angered by her open defiance and threat, Snyder probably felt enraged when Jackson questioned his claim to be a policeman. When Snyder "very distinctly told me it was none of my business," Jackson ended her interrogation and walked away.[19]

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[17] Jackson to Whiting, 29 March 1966, 9 May 1866 (quote 1), AMAA.

See the following for discussions of black women's positioning outside of Victorian respectability. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 188 – 194; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 71 – 88; Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, 273 – 275.

[18] Jackson to Whiting, 9 May 1866, AMAA.

[19] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866, (all quotes), AMAA.

When word of the incident spread, black Baltimoreans offered the women financial and moral support and encouraged them to follow through with the case to test the strength of the newly-passed Civil Rights Act of 1866. The Act granted African Americans citizenship rights, including the right to sue white Americans and provide evidence in court. Jackson's friends advised her to take advantage of these new rights, so she stated her case to Freedmen's Bureau Superintendent General George J. Stennard. Like Jackson, the superintendent wanted to learn "whether respectable people have rights which are to be respected." The case's potential to measure the state government's commitment, or lack thereof, to protecting black civil rights was not lost on the teachers and their supporters. Clearly familiar with the statute and the legal backing it provided, Jackson and fellow African Americans agreed to carry on no matter the consequences. Stennard soon summoned Jackson to court. She traveled to Baltimore and attended court on Saturday, May 11, 1866. Jackson understood the risks of challenging a white man in a southern court but did not let the potential consequences thwart her resolve to seek justice. She wrote that it "will not benefit us merely as individuals, but it will be a standpoint for others." In *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson,* Blair Kelley noted the verbal and physical violence that black women risked when they filed suit against railroad companies. Their actions, she argued, demonstrated that "black women litigants must have clearly valued civic recognition, inclusion, and equality." Black Baltimoreans likewise acknowledged the broad implications of the case.[20]

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[20] Jackson to Hunt, 9 May 1866 (quotes 1 and 2), AMAA; Blair Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 42 (quote 3); James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 170 – 180, 174 (footnote quote).

Jackson paraphrased the Supreme Court's decision in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sanford* case. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney read the decision that included the statement that black people "had no rights

When Jackson expressed her concern about being a "public spectacle," she alluded to traditional notions of gender that made her appearance in court a potential point of shame. Strengthened by her faith in God, supported by blacks in Baltimore, and driven by a dogged determination, Jackson boldly demonstrated her commitment to full emancipation.[21] Jackson acted in the spirit of Maria Stewart who encouraged civil rights and women's rights activism. In her 1831 pamphlet of writings, Stewart advised readers to, "Sue for your rights and privileges…Weary them with your importunities. You can die if you make the attempt; and we shall certainly die if you do not."[22] Her forceful exhortation that called for direct challenges to racism and equal opportunities for African American women and men prefigured Jackson's statement of resolve in the discrimination case.[23] In the context of the court case, Jackson decreed that, "We contend against outrage and oppression wherever we find it. Firmly standing and giving away for the rudest shocks." Her statement reflected a platform for demands for civil rights as African Americans and as women established by pioneers like Stewart and continued by Jackson and other Reconstruction-era teachers.[24]

David S. Bogen discussed Jackson's resistance to the segregated depot in the contexts of other such cases of discrimination filed on behalf of African American women. Bogen noted that

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which the white man was bound to respect." For more information on the Dred Scott case, see, Austin Allen, *Origins of the Dred Scott Case: Jacksonian Jurisprudence and the Supreme Court, 1837 – 1857* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 160 – 177.

[21] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866 (quote 2), AMAA. In addition to the support of black Baltimoreans, Jackson planned to solicit monetary support from friends and the AMA.

[22] Maria Stewart, quoted from Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 1.

[23] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866 (quotes 1 and 2), AMAA. In addition to the support of black Baltimoreans, Jackson planned to solicit monetary support from friends and the AMA.

[24] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866, AMAA.

even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, it was not likely that an all-white jury in Maryland would rule in favor of two black women's demand for civil rights.[25] Yet, Jackson remained confident about the validity of the case for a number of reasons. For one, throughout the ordeal, she and Anderson did not "lose sight of our position, but maintained our dignity." Specifically, the two did not respond to the white woman's insult or retaliate against Snyder as he threw them from the room. Secondly, Snyder's counsel requested that the two parties compromise rather than go to trial, which, in Jackson's opinion, pointed to their knowledge of wrongdoing. Finally, the railroad's reticence about going to trial convinced her that "the case must be very much against them, or they would not want it disposed of" by negotiation or through a guilty plea. After she and Anderson refused any compromise that did not grant them full rights to the ladies' waiting room, the Baltimore Criminal Court scheduled them to stand before Judge Hugh Lennox Bond, a Republican. Bogen rated Bond as the "judge most sympathetic to civil rights," and surmised that the women believed the federal legislation would trump "any defense based on enforcement of railway company policy." Snyder postponed the hearing by requesting a trial by jury, however, and the case never came to trial.[26]

Despite the lack of legal resolution, Jackson's actions carried great significance. By filing suit in a southern court, Jackson directly challenged southern social traditions that mandated black subordination. The case also held direct implications of gender. Kelley argued that in cases

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[25] Bogen, "Precursors of Rosa Parks," 721 – 751. Bogen discussed Jackson and Anderson in the context of other cases filed by African American men and women related to discrimination in public transportation. His study focused on jurisprudence rather than on social constructions of gender.

[26] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866, (quotes 1 and 2); Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861 – 1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States, series 3, v. 1, Land and Labor, 1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 536; Bogen, "Precursors of Rosa Parks," (quotes 3 and 4).

of black women's exclusion from spaces designated for white women represented acts of racial discrimination, "but also marked them and all black women as immoral or improper. African American women litigants sued not only to defend their right to first-class seating but also to defend their character." Kelley situates the existence of segregated train cars within the nineteenth-century's notions of private spheres for men and women. She wrote that, "gender distinctions were an understood part of American citizenship…[which] granted [white women] the promise of social protection in lieu of political rights." In this context, Jackson's and Anderson's demand for a seat in the lady's room supported the idea that black women also deserved this concession of social protection. Jackson and Anderson used their bodies as a counter narrative to images of black women as Mammies, Jezebels, and slaves in an era that positioned black women as polar opposites of the true womanhood ideal. As a prevailing ideology in the United States, the denigration of black women was also manifested in intraracial interactions.[27]

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Many have chronicled the appreciation the freed people expressed toward their teachers. Less often, scholars describe resistance toward teachers from the very people they wished to serve. At times, black women's efforts to serve as positive representations of black womanhood conflicted with black men's desire to assert a newfound authority as they transitioned from enslaved to freed people. Gender held particular implications for black women because the misogynistic nature of American society and the social construction of the proper roles for men

[27] Kelley, *Right to Ride*, 39 – 46, 208 n15 (quote 1), 43 (quote 2), 39 (footnote quote). Kelley specifically discusses the ladies' car on trains rather than the ladies' room at train depots. She noted that the lack of access to the ladies' car "exposed [black women and children] to white men behaving in a rough and uncultured manner."

and women. Maria Stewart, Ellen Jackson, and Martha L. Hoy all described direct assertions of male dominance that demonstrate the ways affirmations of black manhood after Emancipation often led to the subjugation of black women. Frances Beale's "double jeopardy" paradigm provides a framework for understanding tensions between black men and women rooted in gender.[28]

To understand the occasional intraracial friction among teachers and freed men, we turn to a case Jackson described in August 1868, during her last term in Port Deposit. Besides bouts with direct manifestations of racial discrimination, Jackson also described conflicts with black men who seemed to resent her authority within the community and her work in the church where she maintained a visible and active presence during school semesters. While observations from the school committee and parents proved overwhelmingly positive, the same did not always apply to individual community members.

Gender often informed conflicts between teachers and black male trustees. Jacob Hughes, chairman of the school board, requested Jackson's removal after her third year in Port Deposit. Black trustees in Port Deposit seemingly endorsed more limited roles for women through their vocal opposition to Jackson's activities outside of school. Their statements imply their resentment of her leadership and independence. In Jackson's case, an underlying resentment for her work in the church played a key role in the tensions that developed. Some perceived Jackson as more engaged in proselytizing for a denomination than in teaching.[29] The next chapter details

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[28] Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," 145 – 155. Beale situated her critique of race and gender in the context of the lives of black women during the modern Civil Rights Movement. She referenced Sojourner Truth as a quintessential example of how the lives of nineteenth-century black women differed from historical presentations of the experiences of middle-class white women.

[29] Jacob Hughes, et. al. to the AMA, 18 August 1868, AMAA.

the mixed receptions from black southerners in the context of women who considered themselves as missionaries first and foremost. It also further explores Jackson's conflict with Hughes and other trustees. While religion played a key role in the opposition Jackson faced, gender clearly informed a conflict that developed between Martha Hoy and school trustees in Prince Fredrick, Maryland.

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Martha L. Hoy, a black woman from Brooklyn, New York, was born in 1848. Her educational background is unclear, but she seems to have begun teaching at an early age. Hoy worked for at least four freedmen's aid organizations. Before working for the AMA, Hoy taught from 1865 – 1868 in Annapolis for one year, and in Burkettsville, Maryland, for two years under the employ of the National Freedmen's Relief Association. At age twenty-one, Hoy began her two years with the AMA in Prince Fredrick, Maryland, in October 1868. She continued to teach in Prince Fredrick with the support of an unknown source for another three years after 1870. She then taught in public black schools in Washington, D.C., until at least 1887. The following narrative centers on her two-term stint with the AMA because of the rich letters from Hoy in its archives. Hoy's letters describe her initial successes and the high expectations she held for the Ashbury School in Prince Fredrick, Maryland. Black male community members' efforts to malign her character dulled the joy that stemmed from her students' zeal, parents' thankfulness, persistent progress, cooperation from the rest of the black community, and the well-built schoolhouse owned by a board of black trustees.[30]

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[30] Hoy to Smith, 31 December 1868; *The American Freedman;* William H. Boyd, *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, Together with a Compendium of its Governments, Institutions and Trades, to which is Added a Complete Business Directory and a Congressional Directory,* (Washington, D.C.: Wm. H. Boyd, 1887), 482; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 245 (n. 83); Butchart, FTP. Boyd's directory confirms Butchart's note that Hoy may have taught for more than ten years in the South and extends that

Like Jackson and Stewart, Hoy struggled to secure a semblance of financial stability as a single woman. Besides teaching, Hoy organized school expositions and gave public speeches to raise funds. The fundraising festival she held on May 17, 1869, at the Ashbury School, for example, showcased students' academic progress and surely made the freed people in Prince Fredrick proud. Hoy humbly wished that someone else could describe the event to AMA officials to authenticate her own flattering report. She began her account with the decoration of the schoolhouse:

> The rear and sides of the building were festooned with cedar. The windows decked with Holly, and between each window hung paintings of 'Grant building his Log House,' 'Colored Volunteers,' 'Battle of 54th Mass Regt,' and the 'African Prince.'
>
> In the center of the house hung a large 'Union Flag,' with a portrait of our 'Martyred President Lincoln' hung on it. The word PROGRESS was formed and covered with cedar, on the wall above the Flag on each side of the word progress, were the words, PRESEVERE and ADVANCE.

The program opened with a prayer at 2:00. A packed house of family, friends, members of the community, and seventy-five students celebrated the success of their school. Hoy tested students in the beginners class on spelling and definitions, while others performed "'chants,' address[es], 'recitations,' 'dialogues,'…choruses &[et]c." The end of the two-day exposition culminated with a feast from a table, "laden with fowls, viands, oysters…etc. together with fruits and other delicacies of the season [and] a table with lemonade and raspberry syrup." The seventy dollars collected were allocated for the school and church. Hoy first ordered shutters and planned to have the schoolhouse plastered and surrounded by a fence a couple of months later.[31]

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hypothesis to over twenty years, from 1865 to at least 1887. Extant records do not illuminate her employer after she parted with the AMA.

[31] Hoy to Smith, 29 May 1869 (all quotes), AMAA.

Hoy's fundraising initiatives to support herself and the school included delivering a fifty-page address entitled "Liberty Education and Temperance" to members of Prince Frederick's black community in December 1868. In January 1870, she reported traveling twenty to thirty-five miles throughout Calvert County, Maryland, on Saturdays to deliver the "one hour and twenty minute" lecture. She described it as "beneficial to the people in two ways. 1st advice. 2nd the money which is rec'd from said reading after expenses in travelling are deducted, is given to assist in supporting their school. Of course every little helps." Besides her autonomy and self-determination, this venture suggests her penchant for writing and public speaking.[32]

The initial welcome Hoy received from many Prince Frederick residents gave way to a confrontation between Hoy and a few dissatisfied school trustees. By April 1870, the AMA no longer paid Hoy's salary, and the community did not have money to support her. Unable to garner support on her own, she called on Reverend S. Gross, a literate black man known throughout the community. She and Gross formed the Ashbury School Fund Society in 1869, and reported that they, "succeeded in getting fifty members[,] each member paying one dollar on entering and pledging themselves to renew the school fund whenever the funds were exhausted." About a year later, she and Gross hoped to convince individuals to make a second, one-dollar contribution to the fund since the trustees did not pay her the $10 monthly salary they agreed to pay. At a meeting, Gross pleaded to black community members to donate to the fund. Hoy guessed that he might have succeeded in convincing members to replenish the fund if one of the trustee had not "informed the people that they were giving their money to foolishness."[33] Disagreements came to a head that summer when Hoy planned a two-night fundraising

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[32] Hoy to Smith, 31 January 1870 (all quotes), all AMAA.

[33] Hoy to Smith, 30 June 1869 (quote 1), 31 January 1870 (quote 2), 15 June 1870, all AMAA.

exhibition. The disgruntled trustees publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with Hoy's efforts to collect donations without their permission.

According to Hoy, the trustees expressed their opposition even though most of their children participated in the exercises. On the first night, the trustees showed up late in spite of it being a holiday. By 9:00 pm, however, two of the men arrived, and "in a very indignant manner" inquired about the amount collected at the door. These actions proved mild compared to what transpired the second night. Hoy reported that,

> the following evening about 5 1/2 oclock three of [the trustees] came to the school house and in the presence of their former pastor and several of the scholars abruptly demanded me to show my authority for holding any thing in that house or else they would very soon lock that house up!
>
> I told them that I had the power, and it was right for me to adopt any measure that would prove for the general welfare of the school. I was told to get my money the best way I could and the method I had taken would show to the public the progress of my….I didn't consider my undertaking an enviable one. I told them that our Association or the Bureau would inform them wether I was right or wrong. the reply was that I shouldn't hold anyting there that night!
>
> My response was, that it was my intention to do so!
>
> By that one rose hastily and said "come out here" repeatedly!
>
> I told them gentle-men did not address ladies in that manner!

When their demands to cancel the exhibition fell on deaf ears, one trustee, Matthew Gross locked the doors of the house, leaving Hoy, the minister, and a few students inside. The trustees succeeded in driving away only two of the students left outside. The other students climbed in through the window.[34]

Determined to stop the festivities, the trustees returned an hour-and-a-half later with a note from a courthouse magistrate ordering Hoy to end the event or allow the trustees to collect the proceeds. As she embraced her own authority, Hoy's next move demonstrated her disregard

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[34] Hoy to Smith, 15 June 1870.

for the power that the trustees tried to exert over her. She gave them back their note and said "noth[ing] was lawful marked with lead pencil." By the time the trustees returned with the same note written in ink, "the house was filled with colored and white [people] and we were half through with our exercises!" Hoy passed the revised note to her friends who taught in schools nearby and continued the event. Possibly in deference to the attendees and the children, the men backed off until the end of the exhibition when, Hoy reported, "they came to me publicly and attempted to…cause a deeper [wound]." In an attempt to avoid further confrontation, Hoy suggested that they deal with the matter some other time. Again she used her voice to assert her authority when she began to sing, "Tis pleasant here to dwell below in fellowship and love." The men left when the congregation joined in, and Hoy reported an enjoyable close to the event.[35]

Hoy was undeterred by the disrespect and harsh tones trustees used when they tried to get her to leave the schoolhouse. She withstood the men's challenge to her authority and her lost salary. She could not, however, remain silent when the men publicly questioned her character and virtue. The day after the exhibition, she explained that the trustees,

> attempted to get a warrant out against me, failing in that, these wicked hearted men went to the stores where the lower class of people congregate for gossip and spoke in the most disrespectful manner of their locking the minister and teacher (not mentioning the pupils that were locked in with us) in the school house. I felt willing to lose [the]...money they owe me, and could stand everything but their plot to brand my reputation.

Apparently, the charge that she was locked in the church with the minister implied that the two were sexually involved. The affront to her virtue and character was simply too much to bear. "It has made me sick," she wrote, "heartsick." The trustees' attack on Hoy's integrity led her to report that she had "lost the worth of her labor" in Prince Fredrick. She closed the school quite

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[35] Hoy to Smith, 15 June 1870.

early in the school year and left for Washington D.C. She requested that the AMA and Freedmen's Bureau investigate her account and then assign her to a summer school because she was in dire need of money.[36]

Importantly, at least one freed woman in Prince Fredrick wrote to the AMA to defend Hoy's honor and vouch for the sacrifices Hoy endured as a teacher in the community. As Hoy's neighbor for about five months, Eliza A. Jackson felt confident enough to provide a testimony of her frequent observations of the difficulties Hoy faced outside of school. In that time, Jackson had developed a friendship with Hoy. She vividly described the types of hardships some teachers faced at their posts. According to Jackson, Hoy suffered and survived poor housing, a heavy workload, uncooperative community members, and bouts of ill health. In her letter "To all whom it may concern," Jackson wrote "merely to show how much she has endured and to give Miss Hoy Justice."[37]

In her study of commemorative events and public culture in the South during Reconstruction, Kathleen A. Clark noted specific ways that southern and northern-born free women, freed black women, and northern white teachers constructed their own definitions of freedom for women. Her analysis of black newspapers, national magazines, contemporary manuscripts, and secondary sources noted that women's work within black communities, in schoolhouses, and in churches defied the assertions of male dominance increasingly put forth by black and white men whose definitions of black manhood included authority over women. The references to Hoy's sexuality add a more complex element. Joe M. Richardson referenced instances when southern whites "malign[ed] teachers' character and motives." In this case, black

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Eliza A. Jackson to the AMA, 14 June 1870, AMAA. Eliza Jackson is not related to Ellen Jackson.

men tarnished Hoy's reputation by questioning her morality. It seems that these black men, steeped in the patriarchal ideology of slavery, and as Clark described, actively working to establish black manhood, resented Hoy's independence and refusal to abide by the gender hierarchy they demanded. The passage of the Fifteenth Amendment which established universal male suffrage may have emboldened the men to work to usurp Hoy's authority since it passed a month before the confrontation.[38]

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In May 1866, as Jackson praised the valor of Union soldiers during the Civil War, she acknowledged societal limitations on American women. "Our soldiers went forth with sword and bayonet to contend for right and justice," she wrote. "We could not do that." Although they could not enlist or serve in the military, Jackson affirmed that women could directly contribute to the quest for full civil rights for African Americans. Her school teaching complemented her courageous commitment to championing the citizenship rights of African Americans. As a teacher, activist, and community-wide leader, Jackson tested the nation's commitment to protecting the civil rights granted in the 14th Amendment. Her public challenges to racial discrimination and her teaching reflected a broad definition of freedom for African Americans that included education and equality. Like other disenfranchised American women, she worked outside of political systems to effectively promote equal opportunities. In this regard, Jackson's

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[38] Kathleen A. Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South,* 74 – 75; Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction,* 216 (quote 1). See also, Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Like Clark, Gaines described the patriarchal hierarchies that influenced post-slavery black domestic politics.

actions reflect the legacy of early nineteenth-century black women lecturers, writers, and teachers who established a long history of civil and women's rights activism.[39]

Maria Stewart, Ellen Jackson, and Martha Hoy boldly worked against and around the "interdependent dimensions" of oppression outlined by Patricia Hill Collins. Exploring their experiences illuminate the problems articulated by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in her discussion of the tendency for scholars to use race as the singular lens for understanding the experience of African American women. She argued that, "the totalizing tendency of race precludes recognition and acknowledgment of intragroup social relations as relations of power." While she acknowledged the importance of "racialized cultural identity," she argued that, "it has not sufficiently addressed the empirical reality of gender conflict within the black community or class differences among black women themselves." In this context, Jackson's conflict with black male trustees and the disrespect and shame Hoy felt after black men challenged her character reflect the intragroup tensions Higginbotham described. Jackson and Hoy's experiences as teachers reveal the harms of using race as a metalanguage for understanding African American life and culture. Their work toward black empowerment through education, the attainment of the rights of American citizenship, and the autonomy they demonstrated made them targets of racism and sexism.[40]

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[39] Jackson to Hunt, 21 May 1866, AMAA.
[40] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 4 (quote 1), 5; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992), 273 – 274 (quote 2), 274 (quote 3).

CHAPTER 4
MISSIONARY TEACHERS: THE LEADERSHIP ROLES OF CARRIE MARIE BLOOD AND SALLIE LOUISE DAFFIN

Caroline "Carrie" Marie Blood, a white woman, lived comfortably with her family in Lyme, New Hampshire. Although specific details of her educational training remain unclear, Blood most likely acquired at least some form of secondary education.[1] Fifteen months after the end of the Civil War, thirty-year-old Blood began her southern teaching tenure in Raleigh, North Carolina. She first gained the sponsorship of the Salem Street Congregational Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the American Freedmen's Union Commission. In 1868, she secured a teaching position in Florida from the AMA, a Congregational organization. As a member of the First Congregationalist Church in Manchester, New Hampshire, Blood found motivation in missionary work. The AMA might have been particularly impressed by Blood's religious roots, teaching experience, and the self-direction expressed in her letters. Her employment with the AMA lasted from the fall of 1868 to the summer of 1876 during which time she taught in three southern states—Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee. Blood made it her mission to facilitate the advancement of black southerners through teaching in church and school, raising awareness about southern black education through national fundraising endeavors, and by offering the AMA her evaluation of the shortcomings of other teachers, church members, and the freed people.[2]

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[1] 1850 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 432/430, p. 64B; 1860 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 653/670, p. 522.

[2] *National Freedman* 2 (September 1866): 232; *The American Freedman* 2 (July 1867): 255; *The American Freedman* 2 (October 1867), 301; Carrie Marie Blood to Edward P. Smith, 24 September 1868;

Born in Pennsylvania in 1838, Sarah "Sallie" Louise Daffin belonged to a free-black family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The educational opportunities available to black Philadelphians presented opportunities for Daffin to attend primary school for five years, study dressmaking for eight years, and attend the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY) for two years. Daffin was a member of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, an organization duty-driven to improve the lives of African Americans through community uplift. At the dawn of Reconstruction, twenty-six-year-old Daffin wrote a letter to the American Missionary Association and pledged six months of teaching in a school for freed people. Ultimately, Daffin extended her initial commitment from six months to eleven years. Between 1865 and 1876, she taught continuously in black schools in Wilmington, Delaware; Norfolk, Arlington, and Yorktown, Virginia; Clinton, Tennessee; and Washington, D.C. In her quest to serve God while improving the plight of African Americans, Daffin worked to combat far-reaching negative perceptions of black people that largely ignored class-based and cultural differences.[3]

Both Carrie Blood and Sallie Daffin stand as exemplars of the teacher-as-missionary tendency among the freed people's teachers. In fact, the two inquired about missionary work—

Blood to Michael E. Strieby, 24 Sept 1868, 29 April 1876; Blood to Erastus M. Cravath, 23 May 1871, all AMAA; Ronald E. Butchart, Freedmen's Teacher Project (hereafter cited as Butchart, FTP); A. Knighton Stanley, *The Children Is Crying: Congregationalism Among Black People,* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 10, 14.

It seems that Blood did not want to return to Raleigh even though she had spent a considerable amount of time teaching in that city. See Blood to Smith, 29 October 1868, 27 March 1871; Blood to Cravath, 23 May, 1871, all AMAA.

[3] Sallie Louise Daffin to George Whipple, 14 March 1864; Daffin to Samuel Hunt 5 Feb 66; Daffin School Report to the AMA, 2 June 1864, all AMAA; *The Friend*, Vol. 76, 1902. (Philadelphia: William H. Pile's Sons, 1902), 222 – 223; Annual Report for the *Institute of Colored Youth,* 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1871; Butchart, FTP.

Blood among the Chinese in California and Daffin among African peoples in Africa—prior to applying for positions in the South. They described their work as driven by Divine Providence, dedicated many hours of service to the churches in the communities where they taught, and made converting their students and other community members a top priority. Both also believed in the ideology of civilizationism, a doctrine that labeled African Americans and other racial groups as inferior and in need of the civilizing influence of northern middle-class values. Blood and Daffin's racial differences provide unique insights into the ways race influenced the materialization of these prevailing ideologies in teachers' work in the Reconstruction-Era South within and outside of schools. Discussing Blood and Daffin in terms of their missionary thrusts illuminates the connections and differences between the missionary work of white Congregationalists compared to the missionary work toward racial uplift among members of the A.M.E. church.[4]

Carrie Marie Blood

Carrie Blood's parents, Abel and Susan Blood, reported $3,000 in real estate in 1850. Ten years later, census takers again noted $3000 in real estate and added $1500 in personal estate. The $1500 in personal estate could reflect an increased prosperity for the family or a relative stability. The data remains inconclusive because the federal census did not report the personal

[4] Blood to Smith, 30 September 1870, AMAA; Benjamin T. Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism*, (Baltimore, 1867), Electronic version retrieved from http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/tanner/tanner.html, 447; Derrick Alridge, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. Du Bois, 1892 – 1940," *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2007), 416 (quote). Alridge includes Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism as major currents of thought that hampered Anna Julia Cooper's and W.E.B. Du Bois' efforts to counter ideas of black inferiority even as they worked toward social and political equality.

estate category until 1860. Whatever the case, their 1860 status reflected the probable contributions of three employed daughters and an able-bodied son. Carrie, the second oldest child, worked with her older and younger sisters in a factory and their oldest brother worked on the family farm. Two of the three younger siblings were of school age and attended school. Emancipation and the freed people's education project provided the space for women to demonstrate their religious devotion before God and others as they taught. For Blood, teaching in the South proved more appealing than continuing to labor with her factory-employed sisters and provided an avenue for achieving self-salvation.[5]

The Teacher

Records from the AMA provide the most detailed account of Blood's decade in the South. After teaching at a freedman's school for two years in Raleigh, North Carolina, Blood arrived in Jacksonville, then Florida's most dynamic and northern-oriented city in 1868. She could not begin teaching because neither the AMA or the Bureau of Refugees Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) had secured a space for her to teach. Renting from the A.M.E. Church in Duval County, where Jacksonville is located, was one option that the Freedmen's Bureau agent pursued. However, the two entities could not come to an agreement on the rent fee. The bureau agent convinced trustees of the A.M.E. Church to lower the cost from ten to eight dollars per month, but then declined to pay even that amount. Since white southerners often exacted their vengeance on black schools and churches by burning them down, the trustees probably understood the increased risk of arson if they allowed a white "Yankee"

[5] 1850 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 432/430, p. 64B; 1860 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 653/670, p. 522.

teacher to hold school in their church. The Freedmen's Bureau's inability to find a suitable school building contributed to Blood's request for a transfer about three weeks after she arrived in Florida. Circumstances led Blood to redirect herself 140 miles westward to Monticello.[6]

In 1868, Jefferson County, Florida, ranked as one of the state's leading counties. A centerpiece of the pre-war cotton region, it had boasted large plantations owned by some of the South's premier families and worked by large concentrations of enslaved African Americans. Untouched by Civil War violence, it remained an area of immense influence in the post-war years. Census takers in 1868 discovered 7,089 persons residing there, about five percent of Florida's total. More significantly, Jefferson's 4,546 black majority comprised over six percent of the state's black population. Jefferson stood out as one of Florida's dominant counties, with a sizeable black population served by one black school. Although about 35% more African Americans resided in adjoining Leon County than in Jefferson, the former held five schools for black students.[7]

By the time of Blood's arrival in Monticello, residents had attempted to establish permanent black schools. The first local school for blacks opened in the latter part of 1866. By early 1868, Martha D. Sickles operated a pay school charging tuition of one dollar per month. Blood may have considered Sickles, a black northern missionary, ill-equipped to teach school. Curiously, Blood noted that the town had not had a white teacher in her justification for the need

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[6] Charles H. Foster to Smith, 21 October 1868; Blood to Smith, 20, 28 November 1868, 17, 20 December 1868, all AMAA.

[7] Jerrell H. Shofner, *The History of Jefferson County Florida* (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 1976), 85 – 87, 272, 283, 297; *Jacksonville Florida Union*, 6 August 1868; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor is it Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863 – 1877* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1974); Population data for Leon County retrieved online, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ajac/flleon.htm, June 28, 2014.

to establish an AMA school in the area. By then, the racial climate in Jefferson County had improved somewhat from immediate post-war conditions. Social unrest particularly prevailed in 1867 when the United States Congress approved the Fifteenth Amendment that enfranchised black males over the age of twenty-one. Thus, even national political events affected the atmosphere in the county. By the spring of 1869, the Jefferson County Grand Jury reported improved race relations and by that time could praise the county's citizens for "the supremacy of the law and the good order and quiet [that] prevail[ed]."[8] In December 1868, Blood began teaching at the Howard School, a pay school named for General Oliver O. Howard, Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau. She held day and night sessions in the school building when it was not occupied. Alternatively, Blood taught in a rented hotel room, the county court house, and in a local black church.[9]

During the summer of 1869, Blood briefly served as the principle teacher at a graded free school in Tallahassee, about thirty miles southwest of Monticello. She and three African American teachers managed an average of 250 students divided into grades. Blood taught arithmetic, geography, grammar, history, and writing and composition to fourth graders, the most advanced students. Mrs. F. B. Warner, a married Tallahassee native, taught there for two years; Mrs. Alexander C. Lightbourn taught with her husband in Leon and Gadsden Counties from 1869 to beyond Reconstruction; and Mrs. Mary Eliza C. Kent, a young, married, New York

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[8] Canter Brown Jr., "'Where Are Now the Hopes I Cherished?' The Life and Times of Robert Meacham," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (July 1990): 1 – 36, 5; Shofner, *The History of Jefferson County*, 314 – 315; Grand Presentment of the Grand Jury, Jefferson County, spring term, 1869 (quote 1). This source, Jefferson County Grand Jury Presentment L346, box, 12, folder 102, can be found at the Florida State Archives. New York native, Martha D. Sickles, taught in Monticello for nine years. Butchart, FTP. For more information on reconstruction in Florida, see, Shofner, *The History of Jefferson County Florida*, 85 – 87, 272, 283, 297; *Jacksonville Florida Union*, 6 August 1868.

[9] Blood, School Report to the AMA, February, March 1869; Blood to Smith, 15 May 1869, all AMAA.

native, taught in Tallahassee for three years. The more urban Tallahassee offered a number of amenities not available in Monticello. The school house, for example, was a two-story wooden structure situated in a large yard and surrounded by a white picket fence. The above-average building held "one recitation room upon each floor," desks in each of the four classrooms, and "inside blinds of modern style." Designed to hold 320 pupils, it easily accommodated the teachers and their students.[10]

By August, Blood was back in Monticello at the Howard School. She reported an average enrollment of about 150 students during her eighteen-month Florida career. If her September workload represented an average, Blood worked thirty-eight hours per week in addition to her work in the Sunday school and with the temperance society, a fact that required her to obtain assistance.[11] She petitioned the AMA for help, asking that it send a Ms. E. H. Hamtoon, a teacher in Savannah waiting for an assignment of place, to Jefferson County. Instead, Blood gained the aid of Hattie M. Twoguns. Twoguns, the only documented Native American teacher in schools for freed people, taught for just two months, after which Blood lobbied once more for an assistant. In the meantime, she found it impossible to accomplish her tasks, a condition common among teachers in black schools. She made a necessary adjustment by appointing one of her students, eleven year-old John Thomas, to head the class. Blood believed that Thomas, who had advanced to the *Freedmen's Third Reader*, possessed qualifications enough to handle his younger colleagues. As one of her brightest students, Thomas lightened Blood's load, but this

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[10] Blood to Smith, 1 July 1869 (quote 1 and 2), AMAA. Information about Kent, Warren, and Lightbourn culled from Butchart, FTP.

[11] Blood, School Reports, December 1868, January, February, March, May, July, September and November 1869, January, March and April 1870, AMAA.

solution understandably proved a temporary one. Blood continued to report the need for assistance and ultimately recruited Alicia and Hattie Blood, her younger sisters, to teach with her.[12]

Alicia Blood's lack of teaching experience did not pose a problem for her sister Carrie or for the AMA, despite the AMA's announced insistence that it would only hire experienced teachers. Carrie described Alicia as "a good scholar for country education," and noted that Alicia's deceased mother (the two women were half-sisters) had worked as a teacher. Alicia's arrival in Monticello eased Carrie's workload even though the division of the Howard School into two grades reduced the full range of benefits Carrie had anticipated before Alicia's arrival. Perhaps more importantly, Alicia's presence more firmly connected Carrie to her identities in New Hampshire, as a daughter, sister, and friend. Hattie Blood, a second sister, applied for a position with the AMA in 1867, but she rescinded her application after she received an appointment in Georgia. Years later, Hattie taught with Carrie in Chattanooga, despite objections from an older brother.[13]

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[12] Blood to Smith, December 23, 1868, August 30, 1869; Blood to the Children's Department, February 1869, AMAA.

[13] Blood to Cravath, 27 July 1874; Blood to Smith, 14 March 1870; Alicia Blood to Smith, 20 October 1868 (quote); Hattie Blood to Smith, 2 Nov 1867, 23 July 1875; Hattie Blood to Cravath, 7 July 1874. AMAA.

The Jefferson County Board of Public Instruction paid Carried Blood fifty dollars per month for her services, and she expected the same for her sister Alicia, who had expressed an interest in educating freed people in the South. Alicia Blood taught in Monticello until 1873, and then taught at a black school in Woodbridge, North Carolina, for one year. Two months after Alicia arrived in Woodbridge, the AMA denied Carrie's request to transfer Alicia to Chattanooga, Carrie's fourth teaching post. By the eve of 1876, Alicia taught in Ness County, Kansas, and was married to a man named Mr. Brown. Hattie taught briefly in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1874, until poor health led her to return to her home in Hollis, New Hampshire. She pointed to her work with the AMA as a contributing factor to her failing health and early departure.

In her letters to the AMA, Carrie did not elaborate on the benefits of teaching with her siblings outside of the need for their labor in school and church. Hattie, however, voiced a strong motivation for teaching with a family member or a friend from the North. She wrote that she wanted "to be around New England people and to have someone to go out in company with." Presumably, Carrie and Alicia desired the same. The relative isolation that accompanied teaching in the South meant that besides fellow teachers, many northern-born teachers had few, if any, encounters with others from the North. The Blood sisters followed a pattern set by a number of teachers from the North who worked in southern black schools. Women who managed to teach with "a daughter, a sister, or a life partner," as Ronald Butchart documented, taught longer than those who traveled without a companion.[14]

In addition to the need for assistants, Blood reported high enrollments, irregular attendance, and a lack of supplies, issues common to teachers of the freed people. The few details she provided about her teaching methods provide important insights into her pedagogy. She worked to model her classrooms after the modern schools that increasingly dotted northern landscapes. From Tallahassee, for example, Blood requested that the Leon County School Board provide "blackboards, chairs, clocks, maps, charts, seats in the recitation rooms, hooks for clothing, a well in the yard, and not least a uniformity of books" for their pristine schoolhouse.

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[14] Hattie Blood to Cravath, 7 July 1874 (quote 1), AMAA; Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861 – 1876,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 94 (quote 2); Laura Wallis Wakefield, "'Set a Light in a Dark Place': Teachers of Freedmen in Florida, 1864 – 1874," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 401 – 417, 411.

See also, Ronald E. Butchart, "Laura Towne and Ellen Murray: Northern Expatriates and the Foundations of Black in South Carolina, 1862 – 1908," *South Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times, Volume 2*, ed. Marjorie Julian Spruill, et. al. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010, 12 – 30; Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters From Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854-1868,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

She also requested tablets and readers from the *National Series* which, along with the aforementioned supplies, reflected the ongoing adoption of modern teaching technologies. Securing such materials required patience, ingenuity, and a network of willing donors. Blood possessed all of these characteristics as her successful fundraising campaigns demonstrated.[15]

Like other teachers in black schools in the South, Blood's service involved encouraging others to contribute to southern black education. Details of her fundraising activities permeated her letters to the AMA and represented one of her most valuable contributions to the freed people. As Joe Richardson noted, Blood effectively "loosen[ed] the purse strings of friends and churches" on behalf of the freed people and the churches with which she affiliated. Blood was adept at fundraising locally and nationally. She held school expositions, wrote letters to northern friends and churches, delivered public appeals at churches in the North and Midwest, and pushed AMA leaders to correctly acknowledge donations they received in the *American Missionary*, the mouthpiece of the AMA. Blood's fundraising activities demonstrate her keen record-keeping and accounting skills, increased her traveling opportunities, and illuminate the ways teaching in the South could expand women's geographic mobility and knowledge.[16]

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[15] Blood to The Leon County Board of Public Instruction, n.d. July 1869 (quote 1); Blood to Smith, 17 December 1868, all AMAA; W. DeMunn, F. B. Snow, et. al, editors, *The Rhode Island Schoolmaster, Volume 11 – 12*, (Providence: Cooke, Jackson & Co, Printers, 1864), 198 (following quote). The *Rhode Island Schoolmaster* praised the *National Tablets* for moving away from "teaching mechanically, and *by rote*," because it "gives way to a great improvement—as the child is now taught to think."

For information on the transplantation of modern schools in the Reconstruction-era South, see, Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 120 – 152.

[16] Blood to Smith, 12, 24 December 1868, 15 May 1869, 17 December 1869; Blood to Cravath, 14 August 1873; Blood, School Report, December 1868, January, February, March, May, July, September, November 1869, January, March, April 1870; Blood to the AMA, n.d. February 1869, all AMAA; Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861–1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986)*,* 102 (quote 1).

Six months after she arrived in Monticello, Blood held an exposition to showcase student progress and raise money for her school. She and her students decorated the school building and performed on a raised, carpeted platform. At 7:00 pm, on May 15, 1869, about 140 students entered "with happy faces and in good grace." The formal program opened with a prayer, and students welcomed the attendees with a song. They sang "Happy Greetings to All," one of the archetypes of the present-day "Happy Birthday" song. The upbeat lyrics invited all to thank God for his guidance, protection, teachers, and missionaries.[17]

The Jefferson County clerk, the sheriff, a representative from the Board of Public Instruction for Florida, and others of the "well-to-do class" attended the exposition. Blood reported an especially high admission fee of seventy-five cents, the proceeds of which went toward her board. That amount would have been more than most of Monticello's population could or would pay to attend, thus many curiously peeked through windows and through the door that opened occasionally. When the sheriff propped the door open toward the end of the program, "outsiders quietly drank in the entertainment so new to them." Blood boasted that fifteen or more white attendees "unanimously expressed themselves 'surprised and highly pleased at the efforts of the children.'" She reported the oft-expressed surprise of some white southerners, who, as a matter of course, considered African Americans uneducable. Blood's report included a mention of accolades from Judge Alfred Grumwell, a former Union soldier

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[17] Blood to Smith, 15 May 1869 (quote 1), AMAA.

Horace Waters composed music, published texts, and owned a piano company. Find this and other of Waters' compilations in, Horace Waters, *The Sabbath School Bell: Choice Hymns and Tunes,* (Horace Waters: New York, 1862), 17. Aaron Schwabach, noted that many nineteenth-century songs carried similar tunes because of loose copyright regulations. Schwabach points to numerous prototypes of the modern-day "Happy Birthday" song in addition to Waters' "Happy Greeting to All." See Aaron Schwabach, *Fan Fiction and Copyright: Outsider Works and Intellectual Property Protection*, (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001), 75.

from New York who bought property in Monticello. "With a light heart," she rejoiced that God was true to his promise: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."[18]

Blood had hoped to raise more than the ten dollars collected by the sheriff to go toward covering her room and board. She seemed more successful at collecting material goods for the freed people, books for her school and church, and materials for the temperance society she organized in Monticello.[19] The success of the Hamilton Temperance Division of the Vanguard of Freedom depended on Blood's fundraising abilities. Her efforts to solicit donations for the organization reveal her tenacious spirit and power of persuasion. In a formal presentation, the society unveiled a banner bearing its name, founding date, and city of origin. Blood relied on existing connections with charitable northern friends to secure the gift. Always mindful about acknowledging her benefactors, she named the organization after a Deacon Hamilton from Concord, New Hampshire, who had donated a stove to warm students and churchgoers in Raleigh, North Carolina, where Blood taught prior to her work in Florida.[20]

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[18] Blood to Smith, 15 May 1869 (all quotes), AMAA. It is reasonable to assume that Blood mistakenly reported a $.75 admission fee since most southerners, black or white, would not be able to afford this amount. Comparatively, teachers and other organizers raised one-hundred four dollars at a concert and school exposition in Tallahassee in July; it went toward the $900 mortgage on the church. Blood to Smith, 1 July 1869, AMAA.

Alfred B. Grumwell was a First Lieutenant of the Union Army during the Civil War. He also served a brief term as Postmaster in Monticello, Florida, from March to September of 1870. National Park Service, "U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861 – 1865," http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldier_id=cae493a3-dc7a-df11-bf36-b8ac6f5d926a, accessed March 13, 2013; Ancestry.com, "U. S. Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832 – Sept. 30, 1971," online database accessed December 3, 2012.

[19] *American Missionary*, February 1869 (quotes 1 and 2), AMAA.

[20] Blood to Smith, 24 October 1869, 30 November 1869 (footnote quote), 14 March 1870, AMAA. After failing to receive seventy-five temperance almanacs that she requested that Smith send on credit, Blood altered her description of the newly formed division to reflect its "healthy state" and continued to beseech Smith to send books to the organization. It is unclear if her positive report persuaded Smith to send the almanacs.

Blood also campaigned nationally for financial and material support for the freed people. From Brooklyn, New York, during the summer of 1870, for example, Blood secured financial support for the black minister in Monticello and "collect[ed] money for chairs, collecting baskets, [a] table cloth, pulpit cover, curtain, etc." Three years later, she worked hard to drum up interest about her school and planned to take a collection after a benefit she organized at a Congregational Church in Lisbon Center, New York.[21] Sometimes, her fundraising efforts involved public addresses on her experiences as a freedmen's teacher. While she visited some of her family members in Iowa, for example, she spoke at a monthly concert upon request from the superintendent of the Union Sunday School. She bragged that "after sitting there nearly four hours, I could command their attention all the way through." The local newspaper incorrectly named the Freedmen's Bureau as Blood's sponsor and reported that she "'read a very interesting paper giving an incidental history of her travel interspersed with many pleasing anecdotes.'" Blood was convinced that her talk enlightened those who had very little knowledge about the educational efforts among black people in the South. In fact, she wrote that her address was so compelling that a number of audience members seemed "impressed as I have never known others to be with the greatness of the work."[22]

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[21] Blood to Smith, 12, 24 December 1868, 15 May 1869, 17 December 1869; Blood to Cravath, 14 August 1873 (quote 1); Blood School Report, December 1868, January, February, March, May, July, September, November 1869, January, March, April 1870; Blood to the AMA, n.d. February 1869, all AMAA; Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction,* 102 (quote 2).

[22] Blood to Cravath, 31 August 1871 (quotes 1, 2 and 3), AMAA.

The Missionary

As a lifetime member of the AMA, Blood received the *American Missionary*, the organizations official monthly publication. Editors of the *American Missionary* often published excerpts of letters from teachers and AMA affiliates. These acknowledgments of teachers' work, like visits from various dignitaries, laid bare the challenges teachers faced along with the progress of the educational enterprise. Blood's letters that were printed in the *American Missionary* convey the tireless efforts of a devoted missionary teacher dedicated to the spiritual welfare of her students. In a letter she wrote from her post in Monticello, for example, Blood described the small prayer group that she held upon the request of her students. Blood reported that "language is not equal to convey the far reaching, soul stirring, highly intelligent prayer," delivered by one of her students. Twelve year-old Georgietta, Blood wrote,

> asked the 'Lord to please come here this evening and warm this school room with the Holy Spirit. Do be pleased Dear Lord Jesus, Do take care of these chilun who have naughty ways; and make 'em love to go in a right way- ple-a-se. And be please dear Lord, to help me to be right this e-v-e-nin. And bless my dear teacher, please who has come so far from her home to teach we alls. She's left her home, and her face look like she come here to do us good and she has troubles, and trials with us- and will the good Lord pl-e-a-se give her patience, and make her happy here – an help her to go to Jesus.[23]

These types of excerpts served to encourage subscribers to continue to contribute funds and other goods to the cause as they acknowledged the difficult work of AMA teachers.

Blood meticulously monitored the *American Missionary* to make sure it reported the individuals from whom she received material and financial contributions. All the while, she

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[23] Blood to Smith, 17 February 1869 (quotes 1 and 2); *American Missionary,* April 1869, 91, AMAA. Blood may have developed a special connection to this particular student because it seems that Blood had a younger sister named Georgianna, as per the 1850 Federal Census. By 1860, Georgianna is no longer living with her immediate family. 1850 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 432/430, p. 64B; 1860 Census, Lyme, Grafton, New Hampshire, 653/670, p. 522.

"hop[ed] that the Lord will incline his people to give more for the relief of [the freed people] and bless His work in a still greater measure."[24] Perhaps she realized that people often perform acts of charity for the recognition as well as out of a desire to give to a cause. Blood held the AMA editors accountable when they failed to name the donors that she identified in her letters and corrected mistakes that she noticed in the periodical. She realized that public recognition would encourage continued sponsorship and cast a broad net to gain support.[25]

By 1871, when Blood arrived in Chattanooga, the AMA had established a school and a Congregational Church. Thus, her transition to the Howard School in Chattanooga moved much more smoothly than her arrival in Florida where she struggled to secure a school building and school supplies. The foundation laid by the AMA allowed her to begin her work in the school and church immediately upon her arrival, and issues of spirituality were at the forefront of her concerns. As representative of a denominational wing of the freedmen's aid movement, Congregationalists aimed to extend their own denomination into the South.[26] Congregationalist doctrine stressed a more inward rather than demonstrative conversion, which differed starkly from the highly emotional worshiping practices of African American Methodist and Baptist worshipers. Thus, as Karin Zipf argued, many Congregationalists rejected dancing, shouting, full-body immersion in baptisms, and other expressive forms of worship as pagan African customs.[27]

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[24] Blood to Smith, 13 September 1869 (quote), AMAA.

[25] Blood to Smith, 13 September 1869; Blood to Cravath, 14 June, 23 December 1871, 18 January 1872, 17 February 1872; Blood to Strieby, 27 April 1877, all AMAA.

[26] Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction*, 53, 54.

[27] Karin Zipf, "'Among These American Heathens': Congregationalist Missionaries and African-American Evangelicals in North Carolina during Reconstruction, 1865 – 1878," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, 74, no. 2 (1997), 113 – 116, 119 – 120, 122 – 125; Blood to Cravath, 14 August 1874, AMAA.

Blood, like many Congregationalists, believed in civilizationism through Christianity to proactively shape the moral and spiritual development of the nation's newly freed population.[28] A couple of incidents related to her work within the Congregational Church in Chattanooga demonstrate the cultural biases that shaped her particular understanding of proper spiritual behavior and religious worship. First, her adherence to middle-class Victorian culture mandated that the minister of the Congregational Church in Chattanooga receive a sufficient salary to maintain a certain level of respectability. Blood pushed back when black congregants in Chattanooga questioned the amount the church expected its members to pay the white pastor. Deacon Edward V. Carter spoke for fellow members of Chattanooga's freed population after the pastor requested a salary of $600 per year. According to Blood, Carter remarked that, "A minister is none too good to work as well as I." He argued that he could prosper with half that amount and cited poverty as a logical explanation for the congregation's resistance to the higher salary. Blood wrote that Carter said, "We have to work too hard and go without too much to have a minister who asks for $600 a year." His response and his ability to influence others who had not openly objected to the pastor's salary before Carter spoke disappointed Blood. Instead of $600, a church committee proposed what many considered a much more reasonable amount—$20 per month or $240 per year.[29]

With little compunction against soaking the poor to pay a white minister, Blood defended the higher salary. She outlined the plethora of duties associated with the ministry to argue that $600 per year was far less than the actual value of the minister's services. Preachers, she wrote,

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[28] Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862 – 1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 53, 54.

[29] Blood to Cravath, 31 January 1874 (quotes), AMAA.

used their salaries to give to the needy, provide for their families, buy books, and attend church conferences. She reminded reluctant contributors that these expenses came directly from the pastor's own purse. The constancy of a pastor's duties, she argued, made it impossible for him to work for additional wages. Frustrated by what she perceived as ungratefulness, and seemingly oblivious to the logic behind Carter's statements, Blood reiterated that a top-notch minister could not be had for less than $600 a year. She framed her defense of the contested salary in a language of respectability, insisting that the church "needed a minister that would not be thought inferior to ministers of other churches." Her understanding of religious faith and practice included a particular image of how a "proper" minister looked and acted. It required a man who could "clothe his family respectably" and avoid "mingl[ing] in the lowest society." She did not explicitly disdain manual labor, but she told Carter that the church did not want a preacher who had a second, blue-collar job. To Carter and other congregants, however, the lack of cash circulating within the South along with the freed peoples' long history of unpaid labor made the minister's salary seem especially excessive.[30]

Importantly, Blood's campaign for the higher salary for the white minister did not alienate her from the community of freed people with whom she worked. Just over four months after their disagreement, Carter and over a dozen other members of the church, signed a petition to the AMA that requested that it provide support for Blood to stay in Chattanooga over the summer. It read:

> We the members of the First Congregational Church and Sabbath School feel that in the absence of our teacher, Miss C. M. Blood, from our midst we lose an able and earnest Christian work[er] and knowing that she has not only assisted us in our own community but has also benefited us by her own means and influence abroad and knowing

[30] Blood to Cravath, 31 January 1874 (all quotes), AMAA.

> furthermore that we are unable to defray her expenses through the summer (which we would gladly do if we were able) we earnestly pray you to assist us by defraying her expenses through the summer vacation and by allowing her to remain with us. We do this not by any request on her part but on account of our great anxiety to have her remain with us as her Christian influence is generally felt throughout the entire community.[31]

Their plea pointed to Blood's piety, dedication to the community, and her influence, not only among the freed people in Chattanooga, but also with northern donors. Clearly the community appreciated the hard work she performed on their behalf.

Increasingly, however, Blood's expectations for other congregants and teachers to adopt a similar level of pious devotion led to conflict and discord within the church. During her last two years in Chattanooga, Blood reported disruptions in the Congregational Church that stemmed, in part, from her negative assessment of other teachers and reports of churchgoers' immoral behaviors. Letters from some educators and ministers affiliated with the AMA stationed in Chattanooga during that time support Blood's reports, while others blame the problems within the church on Blood's hyper vigilance. In one particular case, a "scandal" arose in the church when a member faced charges of hiding an out-of-wedlock pregnancy.[32]

The AMA archives do not include response letters from corresponding secretaries to teachers and affiliates, which makes it difficult to fully understanding the case. However, the letters do reveal the high level of dissidence that developed during Blood's final years as a missionary teacher in Chattanooga. In March of 1876, Blood reported that Eliza Brazelton, a single nineteen-year-old church member, "delivered a child…that was taken from the house alive or otherwise by a doctor of disreputable practice." Blood suggested the excommunication of the

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[31] William Monsford and others, Petition to the AMA, 5 June 1874, AMAA.

[32] Blood to Delia Emerson, 17 February (quote 1), 11 March 1876, AMAA.

woman and her mother, whose refusal to discuss the matter, in Blood's opinion, proved her daughter's guilt. Part of Bloods' frustration toward the young woman stemmed from the latter's refusal to confess. Personally outraged, Blood vowed to "ask for a letter of dismission [sic]" if the church failed to "get [Eliza] to humble herself." She wrote that a recently expelled woman "owns her sin while Eliza denies hers." Additionally, she pointed out that another member, Newton Carroll, did not honor his promise to stay away from the "white woman of questionable character," with whom he had kept company. "He does not keep [his pledge]…and lives a lie." She requested advice from the AMA on what actions the church should take. She wanted the two to repent because she staunchly refused to "ask sinners to come to church."[33]

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In her role as a missionary teacher, Carrie Blood demonstrated her ability to successfully navigate multiple responsibilities. With resolve, she habitually worked overtime, solicited and secured additional teachers at various post which increased access to schooling for children as well as adults. Blood's modern teaching methods often provided structure and efficiency to hectic and makeshift classrooms. As a convincing fundraiser, she lobbied locally and nationally for school supplies, clothing, money, and other material goods. She encouraged donors through her meticulous efforts to acknowledge their contributions. While many individuals with whom Blood interacted in southern schools, churches, and communities praised her work, some disagreed on the merits and motivations of her activities. Many correspondences from black

[33] Blood to Emerson, 17 February (quotes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), 11 March 1876 (quote 6), AMAA. Deborah Gray White discussed differing views of motherhood among enslaved African Americans rooted in their West-African ancestry. See, Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: Norton, 1985), 106.

southerners, coworkers, and AMA agents demonstrate the complicated relationships Blood developed during her years as a missionary teacher.

Sallie Louise Daffin

Sallie Daffin's mother, Cecilia Daffin, worked at one time or another as a dressmaker, washerwoman, and a boarding house owner in Philadelphia. Sallie had at least one older brother who worked as a barber and an older sister who worked as a dressmaker. The only extant information about Sallie's father comes in the form of a note from a census taker in 1860 who wrote that Mrs. Daffin '"was wronged out of about $600:—left by her husband."' While surviving records only allow speculation about the status of Daffin's father, the family's wealth makes it reasonable to assume that he held some status within their community and affiliated with other member of "Philadelphia['s] Afroamerican Elite." Dressmaking and barbering provided the type of self-employment that, to some degree, provided a shield against impoverishment. Thirteen years after the noted misfortune, their possessions included real estate and personal property worth $1600. In all likelihood, Sallie's older siblings contributed their earnings to the household income.[34]

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[34] Linda Britton Cabral, "Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators to the American Missionary Association, 1863 – 1870," (Ed.D. Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 2006), 25; Eric Gardner, "African American Women's Poetry in the *Christian Recorder,* 1855 – 1865: A Bio-Bibliography with Sample Poems," *African American Review* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 814 (quote 1); Daffin to Jocelyn, 8 February 1864, AMAA.

Dressmakers often supplemented their salaries by taking in laundry, boarding migrants, and making hats, or completing other sewing orders. Sewers and milliners earned little for eye-straining labor as did laundresses and washerwomen for back-breaking work. Sewing, laundering, and renting rooms, however, allowed women the freedom to perform their work within their own homes or communities. This freed them from the close supervision that live-in domestic servants experienced. See, Julie Winch, *The Elite of Our People: Joseph Willson's Sketches of Black Upper-Class Life in Antebellum Philadelphia,* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 3 – 4, 9; and Emma Jones Lapsansky, "Friends, Wives, and Strivings: Networks and Community Values among Nineteenth-Century

Even though many blacks in the North considered churches and schools as key spaces for the advancement of black rights, most did not enjoy the advantages of traditional schooling. Daffin's privileged background and her residence in a long-established community of upwardly-mobile free blacks, however, enabled Daffin to follow an educational trajectory unlike that of most nineteenth-century African Americans, male and female. She counted herself among the fifty-five percent of literate African American Philadelphians over the age of twenty. Rather than continue in the dressmaking trade, as A.M.E. Bishop Benjamin T. Tanner noted, Daffin chose "the work of brain and heart" over needlework. For Daffin and other black elite, their "head start, in terms of self-expectations as well as economic advantage," provided the option to pursue aspirations as teachers rather than continue as self-employed laborers.[35]

The Teacher

After primary school and a dressmaking apprenticeship, Daffin enrolled at the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY). Quakers in Philadelphia formed the ICY in 1837 to increase opportunities for academic training among free black northerners. In *The Philadelphia Negro*, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote that the ICY sought to provide academic instruction in "various branches of the mechanic arts and trades, and in agriculture," to prepare African Americans for careers as teachers. By 1860, when Daffin received her diploma, the ICY and members of

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Philadelphia Afroamerican Elites," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 108, no. 1 (1984), 12 (quote 2).

[35] Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism,* 446 – 451, 477 (quote 1); Lapsansky, "Friends, Wives, and Strivings," 22; W. E. Burghardt Du Bois calculated that between 1854 – 56, of the African Americans in Philadelphia twenty years old and above, 19% could "read, write and cipher;" 16.5% could read and write; 19% could read; and 45% were illiterate. See, W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, (Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 1899, reprinted in 1996), 87, (quote in footnote), 88.

Philadelphia's African American community lauded Daffin's intellectual talents. At the ICY, Daffin became the first woman formally recognized for her mathematical skills and won two essay contests organized by the Literary Association of Bethel A.M.E. Church. One of those essays, entitled "Temptation and the Tempter," harkened to Daffin's strong support for temperance, one marker of Victorian respectability.[36]

Benjamin Tanner's history of African Methodism included a short biography on Daffin. He wrote that, rather than pursue her original desire to serve "as [a] missionary to dear old Fatherland, Africa," Daffin decided to combat notions of black inferiority in the United States, a work she began in black schools in the North. Motivated by a religious calling, a desire to improve negative societal perceptions of African Americans through spiritual and moral improvement, and armed with a diploma from the ICY, Daffin taught for four years in Pennsylvania and New Jersey after graduation. The *Christian Recorder*'s survey of black schools in New Jersey in 1864 included brief comments on the teachers in its schools. By that time, African Americans in the state adopted a more aggressive approach to education as apathy for public schooling faded. Black schools spread from larger northern towns into rural villages, black communities increasingly owned the school buildings that were often intricately connected to local churches, and the number of black teachers increased. The report praised northern black students whose eagerness for academic training prefigured the zealous quest for education among African Americans in the South. Teaching in black schools in the North gave Daffin practical training for the conditions she would meet in the South. Despite the stark differences

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[36] *Missionary Reporter* 1 (July 1867): 5; John E. Carter, "Annual Report of the Managers of the Institute for Colored Youth," *Christian Recorder* (8 October 1864); *The Friend*, Vol. 76, 1902, (Philadelphia: William H. Pile's Sons, 1902), 222 – 223; Institute for Colored Youth, *Annual Reports*, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1871; Julius H. Bailey, *Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church 1865 – 1900,* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 86 – 88.

between the experience of black northerners and southerners, in both regions African Americans balanced an extraordinary zeal for literacy with the everyday realities of stifling poverty and white resistance to black education.[37]

Daffin declined a promise of steady employment in Philadelphia's black schools and chose to forgo the existing culture of literacy that presented opportunities to interact with other learned African Americans. She relinquished her relatively comfortable status in the North because she felt herself "growing more and more absorbed in the one great and momentous object, viz: the elevation & Christianization of my long oppressed race." Daffin's stellar educational history, prize-winning writing, and decision to teach in the South in lieu of remaining at a school in D.C., as Tanner wrote, bespoke her commitment to "the good work of love and light." An unnamed contributor to the *Christian Recorder* likewise noted that Daffin's "earnest soul found no rest till she went to the South…for the elevation of her people." She believed that she could better serve the larger African American community by contributing to the educational, spiritual, and cultural advancement of black southerners. In straightforward language, Daffin expressed a clear sense of her connection to formerly-enslaved African Americans. In a letter to the AMA, she wrote, "I presume my interest in the Freedmen…will not be questioned when it is remembered, that they are my people." Convinced that only black teachers could fully comprehend the freed people's needs and aspirations, Daffin considered herself uniquely qualified to work with southern black students.[38]

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[37] Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism,* 446 – 451, 448; "Education in New Jersey," *Christian Recorder*, 18 May 1861. Daffin taught at the Chester School in New Jersey; Winch, *The Elite of Our People*, 12.

[38] Daffin to Whipple, 22 June 1865 (quote 1), AMAA; Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism,* 448 (quotes 2 and 3); *Christian Recorder,* 3 October 1868 (quote 4); Daffin to Hunt, 23 August 1865 (quote 5), AMAA.

Over the course of her southern teaching career, Daffin gained support from a number of organizations. She first taught in the South in Wilmington, Delaware, under the sponsorship of a Quaker organization. Daffin then taught for the AMA in Norfolk, Virginia, for one year beginning in March 1864. She spent four months at a school in Wilmington, North Carolina, then went back home to Philadelphia for eight months, during which time she served as a fundraiser for the AMA. Between March 1866 and June 1867, Daffin taught for four, two, and three months in Mount Pleasant, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; and Arlington, Virginia, respectively. In 1867, Daffin accepted a summer teaching job under the sponsorship of the Society of Friends, a group of Quakers who had established a Meeting House in Somerton near Suffolk, Virginia. Beginning in 1868 Daffin taught for at least one year in Clinton, Tennessee, under the auspices of the Garnet League of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. At some point, Presbyterians supported Daffin before she took on a more permanent position in Washington, D.C.'s public schools.[39]

The letters Daffin wrote to the AMA along with letters and reports printed in the *Christian Recorder* provide the most comprehensive account of Daffin's time in the South. Stationed at Norfolk in 1864 under the auspices of the AMA, Daffin organized a new school with two women that they held in the basement of a Methodist church. Soon after her arrival, she

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[39] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 37; Butchart, FTP; Clifton Herman Johnson, *Author and Added Entry Catalog of the American Missionary Association Archives* (Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1970), 649 – 651; "The Garnet League of Harrisburg, Pa., has Commenced the Publication," *Christian Recorder,* 6 April 1867 (quote 1); Daniel R. Biddle and Murray Dubin, *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2010), 284; Daffin, *American Missionary,* 8 (October 1964): 235 (quote 2); "Acknowledgements," *Christian Recorder,* 1 February 1868; J. C. Tate, et. al., "Letter From Clinton, Tennessee," *Christian Recorder,* 1 February 1868; Citizen, "Letter from East Tennessee," *Christian Recorder*, 25 April 1868; "Letter From Clinton, Tennessee," *Christian Recorder,* 3 October 1868; Daffin, "Tennessee Correspondence," *Christian Recorder,* 13 March 1869; "The Following is Clipped from the *Washington Daily Republic*," *Christian Recorder,* 17 July 1873; "Thanks to Miss F. M. Daffin for Schedule of Examinations," *Christian Recorder,* 18 June 1874.

and three other black women teachers participated in an experiment to establish a school with an all-black staff. Daffin, Edmonia Highgate, Clara Duncan, and Blanche Virginia Harris, all free-black northerners, taught together for one term until issues of health forced Highgate to travel back home to New York. Highgate suffered a "malady of the mind" according to Daffin, and Duncan escorted Highgate back to her home in New York. The vague historical record makes it difficult to ascertain the origin of the idea to establish a school in Norfolk with an all-black teaching staff, but the AMA did not encourage the continuation of the experiment.[40]

After one year in Norfolk, the AMA sent Daffin to Wilmington, North Carolina, and then to Arlington and Yorktown, Virginia. During the time that she waited for an appointment to a day school in Wilmington, Daffin held night school for about 30 black men. Teachers often organized night schools on their own initiative or upon appeals from black community members despite taxing daytime schedules. Night classes accommodated those unable to attend day school and demonstrated the freed people's passion for education in the post-bellum South. Importantly,

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[40] *Christian Recorder* 4 (8 Oct 1864): 161 (quote); Daffin to Whipple, 30 April 1865, AMAA; *Christian Recorder*, 5 (10 June 65): 90.

Apparently, Highgate's condition proved temporary since she attended the national black convention held in Syracuse, New York in October 1864. *Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men, Held in the City of Syracuse, N.Y.* (Boston, 1864). For a detailed examination of Highgate's experiences as a woman and teacher see, Ronald E. Butchart, "Edmonia G. and Carolina V. Highgate: Black Teachers, Freed Slaves, and the Betrayal of Black Hearts," in *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865*: *The Human Tradition in America, no. 16.* edited by Nina Mjagkij, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 1 – 14.

On the two-month experiment with the all-black teaching staff at Norfolk, see, Cabral, "Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators," 125; Clara Merritt DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching On: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association 1861 – 1877,* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995); Darlene Clark Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia,* (Brooklyn: NY: Carlson Pub., 1993).

they also reflected a long history of educational development among African Americans in northern communities.[41]

The multitude of students that Daffin met in Arlington compelled her to teach two sessions during the day, one before and another after noon. Her division of the school fostered "more rapid" learning and lessened the difficulties of governing large classes.[42] Incidents in Arlington ultimately led Daffin to resign her position with the AMA. Daffin wrote that she did not resign "because I was dissatisfied with this field, although much has transpired to cause unpleasantness." She remained committed to work as a missionary teacher in schools for freed people; the motivation for her resignation seems to have stemmed from the discrimination she suffered through the actions of "Miss Potter," a fellow teacher in Arlington.[43]

Although Daffin tendered her resignation to the AMA on May 14, 1867, she did consider an offer to teach for the organization in Alabama. Upon the request of black residents of Arlington who "urgently solicited" her to return, Daffin applied for a reappointment to that city for the 1867-68 school year. George Whipple, the AMA's corresponding secretary, seems to have drafted a response to Daffin's request on the back of a second letter she wrote on October 15, 1867, to request a post. He cautioned that the available appointments "are not very desirable in themselves—I mean they offer hard work in probably not very comfortable quarters." Whipple suggested that a position might be available near Ft. Monroe, Virginia, and seemingly aimed to discourage Daffin by warning her that she would "have little if any society or

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[41] Daffin to Whipple, 1 May 1867 (quote 1), AMAA.

[42] Daffin to Whipple, 1 May 1867, AMAA.

[43] Daffin to Smith, 20 May 1867 (quote 1), 14 May 1867; Daffin to Whipple, 8, 14 May 1867, AMAA.

refined…people" with whom to associate. Alternatively, he may have felt the need to gauge Daffin's dedication to the cause in light of her recent resignation. He asked if she was physically ready "to undertake so rough a work," and questioned her faith and commitment to the work.[44] Meanwhile, in 1867, Daffin taught in Somerton near Suffolk, Virginia, with support from the Society of Friends. By February 1868, Daffin seems to have severed all ties with the AMA.

By February 1868, black Philadelphians had established the Garnet League, an African American freedmen's aid group that sponsored Daffin and six other free-black northerners in various communities in Tennessee. Named for the Henry Highland Garnet, the organization originally planned to plant roots in Clinton and build a community of free and freed African Americans. Early on, Daffin's school in Clinton flourished. Community members had constructed a school house that also served as a church with support from white citizens in the North and South.[45] Although it was April, Daffin organized a Christmas celebration to make use of the belated gifts the school received from donors in Massachusetts. At the assembly, young and old students marveled at the tree and gifts they received. A number of speakers encouraged the students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. Words from Captain James N. Ray, a native southerner who joined the ranks of the Union Army, further encouraged the students, but also had the potential to infuriate white southerners. According to the unnamed

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[44] Daffin to Smith, 30 June 1867 (quote 1), 15 October 1867 (quotes 1, 2, and 3), AMAA.

[45] Daffin to Smith, 31 May 1867, AMAA; "The Garnet League of Harrisburg, Pa., has Commenced the Publication," *Christian Recorder,* 6 April 1867; Daffin to D. Burt, 12 February 1868, Letters Sent to the Superintendent of Education in Tennessee, Bureau of Refuges, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land (hereafter LS Supt. of ED TN BRFAL).

contributor to the *Christian Recorder,* Captain Ray spoke of "old glory," of Lincoln, and of the unparalleled sacrifices that led to the end of slavery.[46]

After one year in Clinton, arsonists burned down what the Freedmen's Bureau's Superintendent in Tennessee described as "one of the best buildings, and one of the best schools, taught by one of the best teachers." Daffin speculated that the culprits reacted to the United States flag that flew in recognition of the inauguration of Republican President, Ulysses S. Grant. Additionally, Daffin wrote, "the black board when burned contained the following, '<u>Three Cheers for U.S. Grant, President of the U. States.</u>'" The program held at the school in April 1868, described above, probably sparked the flames that ultimately destroyed the school.[47]

Uncommonly, Daffin earned the support of a committee of local white citizens who wrote a report that publicly condemned the arsonists. The newspaper clipping that Daffin included in her letter to the Freedmen's Bureau expressed white community members' sympathy for the loss of the school and demonstrates white southerners' varying responses to black education. The report warrants reprinting to better understand this variability. It read:

> As citizens representing all classes of political opinion, both during and since the war, we denounce the cowardly and infamous crime in unmeasured terms, and consider all persons connected with perpetrating, instigating or countenancing the same, as unworthy members of a civilized community, and dangerous enemies to the peace and good order of society...
> ....although differing widely on political questions connected with the colored people, we unite in commending the general quiet, orderly and proper conduct they have exhibited in this neighborhood, and especially the earnest efforts and great sacrifices they have made to obtain for themselves and their children the benefits of an education; believing, as we do, that education is one of the best and surest means by which they can fit themselves to be good and useful members of the community.

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[46] Unnamed Citizen, "Letter from East Tennessee," *Christian Recorder*, 25 April 1868.

[47] Daffin to Samuel Walker, 7 March 1869 (quote 1); Daffin to J. Thompson, 7 March 1869 (quote 2), both from the Letters Received by the Superintendent of Education in Tennessee, Bureau of Refuges, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land (hereafter LR Supt. of ED TN BRFAL), roll 4; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 166.

In a measure of good faith, white community members agreed to contribute to rebuilding the school and even allowed Daffin to temporarily hold school in the white Baptist church.[48]

In their work toward racial uplift, Daffin and other northern migrants formed the Immigration Society of Anderson County, East Tennessee, to encourage black northerners to migrate to the state. Founding members of the organization voted Daffin its "permanent Corresponding Secretary," and adopted a number of resolutions to support their initiative. In 1869, this group of northern-born educators wrote a plea that touted the potential for the success of their project. Northern migrants, the group argued, proved able to conduct business and would benefit from the healthy and bountiful environment, natural resources and minerals, and water power. Establishing roots in Tennessee would also spare them the "vicissitudes of the harsh climate and scanty soil of the Eastern States," promoters argued. The petitioners predicted that the region would benefit by gains in manufacturing due to its natural resources and strategic location near the Knoxville and Kentucky Railroad. The resolution pleaded for economically secure businessmen "of liberal education and refined manners" to ensure the success of the venture. They considered the region ripe for black development if black northerners of substance would only take the risk. The destruction of the Clinton schoolhouse and the racial animosities and violence it demonstrated contributed to this unsuccessful bid to encourage northern black migration to east Tennessee. By the 1870-71 school year, Daffin left the state. She served as a principal of a black public school in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. where she remained long after the end of Reconstruction.[49]

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[48] Daffin to Walker, 7 March 1869, LR Supt. of ED TN BRFAL, roll 4.

[49] J.C. Tate, J. Worthington, S.L. Daffin, "Letter from Clinton, Tennessee," *Christian Recorder*, 1 February 1868; Daffin to D. Burt, 12 February 1868, LS Supt. ED TN BRFAL RN 588; Burt to Daffin,

The Missionary

African American churches represented one of the most important institutions in black communities. Founded in 1816 as an expression of African Americans' increased frustrations with American racism, the A.M.E. Church played a major role in activism, education, and uplift among free-black northerners. Duty-driven to improve the status of black Americans, church leaders and members considered themselves "agents of God for the task of elevating the Negro race in America." Bethel A.M.E. in Philadelphia pushed an educational agenda by teaching reading and writing in its Sunday schools and in evening classes; awarding writers in essay contests; hosting literary societies, lectures, and debates; and by publishing a newspaper to promote intellectual engagement as a step toward enjoying the benefits of American citizenship.[50] The newspaper the A.M.E. published was the *Christian Recorder,* a source '"for the Dissemination of Religion, Morality, Literature, and Science.'" The *Recorder* articulated an agenda for its members that reached beyond A.M.E. congregations to rank and file members of African-American communities.

The Reverend Lewis Woodson, one of the church's early ministers, noted that one of the goals of black uplift was to improve the plight of black people as a whole. He echoed the sentiments of many middle-class African Americans when he concluded that no matter their

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25 March 1868, LS, letterbook p. 723, Supt of ED TN BRFAL, roll 1; Daffin, Superintendent Monthly Report of Schools, April 1866; Teacher's Monthly Report of Schools, April 1866, AMAA. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 164 – 170.

[50] Winch, *Joseph Willson's Philadelphia*, 32, 33; Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 15 – 16 (quote 1), 29 (quote 2).

individual successes, black people could not escape the notions of black inferiority that dominated nineteenth-century American thought. When he wrote that '"A few individuals of any class of man, being civilized, enlightened and refined, does not procure for their class such a character,"' he referenced the pervasive racism of American society which viewed African Americans as a homogenous group no matter their socioeconomic status, educational attainments, or adoption of middle-class mores. The solution, many believed, lay in black uplift which promoted education, adherence to a strict moral code, and spirituality among black Americans.[51]

Daffin's name circulated among those of the writer Ellen Watkins Harper and fellow teachers Edmonia G. Highgate and Clara C. Duncan in a report on a national convention of black men convened in Philadelphia in October 1864. This convention resolved to direct "a more stringent and concentrated effort…[toward] the proper path to moral and intellectual advancement." It embodied the A.M.E.'s push toward racial uplift as a panacea for addressing racial discrimination and the growing movement to formally address issues facing African Americans through direct activism and public appeals.[52]

In the South as in the North, Daffin's "moral and mental worth" proved so impressive that one *Christian Recorder* commentator wrote that, "she [was] almost idolized by our entire people." As a member of Philadelphia's free black middle-class society, a prizewinning writer, a graduate from the Institute for Colored, a devout member of the AME Church, and as a teacher

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[51] Lewis Woodson quoted from the *Colored American,* 9 December 1837. See, Byron W. Woodson, *A President in the Family: Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and Thomas Woodson,* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001), 5.

[52] "National Convention of Colored Men in America," *Christian Recorder,* 15 October 1864.

in the Reconstruction-era South, Sallie Daffin reflected solid credit to a number of communities, organizations, and institutions. By 1873, multiple outlets sang praises to her work. The *Washington Daily Republic* credited Daffin's upbringing in Philadelphia and ICY training for her accomplishments. One contributor wrote that in Daffin, the AME church found an educated, pious, and humble worker dedicated to a life of service. Likewise, the *Christian Recorder* published a clipping from the newspaper that boasted that, "Philadelphia has need to be proud of Miss S. L. Daffin….Called to the work, she has not failed to stir up the grace and gifts within her. As to industry, she only knows to 'spend and be spent,' to the end that her school might be ahead of most and second to none and she always succeeds." The newspaper credited Daffin's faith, passion for teaching, commitment to parents, and her genuine interest in black southerners as contributing factors to her success.[53]

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Blood and Daffin proved themselves adept educators, brilliant fundraisers, extensive writers, and women fully aware of their capacity for leadership. Post-bellum American women like Blood and Daffin experienced the shift to a more visible performance of piety that reached beyond the home. They demonstrated a revision of the "conversion experience to mandate social action."[54] Emancipation and the freed people's education project provided the space for women to make use of the skills that they had sharpened within churches and their education to take on leadership positions within southern black communities. AMA and A.M.E. leaders praised the women particularly for their work as missionary teachers, which, in many ways, minimized the

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[53] "The Following is Clipped from the *Washington Daily Republic*," *Christian Recorder,* 17 July 1873.

[54] Anne M. Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century: The Role of Women in Sunday Schools," *Feminist Studies* 4, no. 3 (October 1978), 76 (quote 1).

expansive reach of these women's work. This chapter describes the ways Blood and Daffin used their positions as missionary teachers for the AMA and A.M.E. Church, respectively, to maximize their educational, organizational, and political skills while contributing to the advancement of the freed people. The two women's racial and denominational differences reveal the ways race and religion informed their motivations and actions as teachers. Their detailed biographies coupled with references to the experiences of other teachers add depth to the literature on teachers by complicating the rigidity of race as a way to define women teachers' efforts in the South during Reconstruction. While race clearly informed these women's work, religious ideologies and regional differences also shaped their missionary activities in the South.

CHAPTER 5
THE PERSONAL LIVES OF WOMEN TEACHERS: SARA GRIFFITH STANLEY AND REBECCA PRIMUS

Sara Griffith Stanley, a "third-generation free black" woman from New Bern, North Carolina, had the uncommon advantage of literate parents who operated a school in the antebellum South. Her secondary school training at Oberlin Preparatory School, and teaching certificate from examiners in Brown County, Ohio, qualified her to teach. She taught regularly in Ohio's public schools from 1857 to 1864 and established a remarkable reputation as an anti-slavery activist, writer, and lecturer. The Stanley family had a long history in the First Presbyterian Church in New Bern, and their daughter continued to follow Presbyterian theology after she left the South. Driven by her impressive educational accomplishments, a desire to improve the plight of fellow African Americans, strong religious convictions, and the opportunity to return to the South and live life on her own terms, twenty-five year-old Stanley applied for a teaching position with the American Missionary Association (AMA). Stanley taught for the AMA in Norfolk, Virginia; St. Louis, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; and Mobile, Alabama, from 1864 to 1870. She then taught in Mobile's public schools until 1875. Stanley's religious beliefs undergirded her refusal to accept southern social codes that mandated the separation of blacks and whites, especially in personal relationships. Despite the consequences, Stanley defended herself against white southerners and racist northern coworkers who decried notions of social equality. [1]

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[1] Sara G. Stanley to George Whipple, 28 April 1864, American Missionary Association Archives (hereafter AMAA); Judith Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?': Sara G. Stanley and the American Missionary Association, 1864 – 1868," *Church History* 60 (1991), 449 – 503; Ellen N. Lawson

Rebecca Primus, a fourth-generation free black woman, hailed from a well-known and respected family firmly rooted within Hartford, Connecticut's black middle class. Even without concrete evidence of normal school training, it is clear that Primus had some type of teacher education. Primus attended school at the Talcott Street Congregational Church, where she learned under at least four African Americans who espoused character-building through schooling as integral to African Americans' quest to secure the rights of American citizenship. In December 1865, twenty-nine year-old Primus gained the sponsorship of the Hartford Freedmen's Aid Society, an organization that briefly supplied teachers to the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People. Motivated by her friends' and family's faith in her ability to effect positive change, a belief in the elevating potential of education, a desire to expand her intellect, and a strong curiosity about black southerners, Primus decided to contribute to the freed people's quest for literacy. She began teaching black southerners in Royal Oak, Maryland, where she taught from 1865 – 1869. In just four years, Primus accomplished major advanced in the education of African Americans in Royal Oak, even

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and Marlene D. Merrill, *The Three Sarahs: Documents of Antebellum Black College Women* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 47 – 50; Ronald E. Butchart, The Freedmen's Teacher Project (hereafter FTP), unpublished database. Stanley taught for the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Mobile for two years then taught in in Mobile public schools until 1875.

Stanley appears to have briefly left the employment of the AMA. The AMA archives contain a letter from Stanley on July 18, 1866, that describes her end of term activities at her school in Kentucky. The next letter is dated just under two years later, on April 6, 1868. Since Stanley wrote letters and reports to the AMA regularly at her first three posts, it is reasonable to assume that she did not teach for the AMA from August 1866 to March 1868 since there are no extant letters from Stanley to the AMA during that time period. Although she may not have worked for the organization at the time, the AMA printed excerpts of her letters in the *American Missionary* in December 1866 and March and June 1867. Stanley to the AMA, 19 July 1865, 18 July 1866; *American Missionary,* December 1866, March and June 1867, AMAA. Weisenfeld suggested that issues of health led Stanley to take a break from teaching in the South. Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 503 (n. 39).

as she continued and cultivated personal relationships with family, friends, and her southern host that demonstrate her ability to step outside of her identity as a teacher.[2]

Stanley has received the attention of a number of scholars who demonstrate that her mission in the South included much more than teaching. Judith Weisenfeld, for example, discussed Stanley's deep-seated racial consciousness and commitment to God as driving factors of her decision to work as a teacher in the South. She also described Stanley's challenges to the ubiquitous racial discrimination she experienced among her co-laborers in the southern educational field. Other scholars described her relationships with white men despite protestations from prejudiced coworkers. The following treatment of Stanley's experiences aims to add complexity to the story of a woman concurrently committed to educating freed people and constructing a life that defied societal norms. I also discuss the influence of her mix-raced heritage in her solemn fight for social equality.[3]

Farrah Jasmine Griffin and Barbara Jean Beeching explore Primus' life, the former in an edited volume of letters written to and from Primus, the latter in a dissertation on the Primus family in the context of the growth and decline of a black middle class in mid-nineteenth-century Hartford. Both contribute to traditional narratives of black women teachers by emphasizing Primus' contributions to the educational infrastructure of Royal Oak's black community. Importantly, they also present Primus as a daughter, a sister, a young woman, and a friend. The

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[2] Barbara Jean Beeching, "Great Expectations: Family and Community in Nineteenth Century Black Hartford," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Connecticut, 2010), 3, 4, 57, 81 – 82, 90 – 95; Farrah Jasmine Griffin, *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854 – 1868,* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999), 81.

[3] Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 47 – 64; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 493 – 507; Clara Merritt DeBoer, *His Truth Is Marching On: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association, 1861 – 1877* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995), 56.

intimate letters Primus received from a long-time female friend and her later marriage to her former southern host provide rare glimpses of a nineteenth-century black woman's sexual identity during a period when black women hushed conversations about their sexualities. Darlene Clark Hine identified black women's adoption of this "culture of dissemblance" as a weapon against notions of oversexed black women rooted in slavery and scientific racism.[4]

Rebecca Primus and Sara Stanley defy historical conceptualizations of African American women teachers who worked toward racial uplift in lieu of cultivating rich personal lives. Exploring their experiences counters narratives that perpetuate notions of post-bellum black women as solely dedicated to their students' educational advancement and the betterment of the black communities where they taught to the detriment of their own needs and desires as women.[5] As teachers who openly pursued intimate relationships while they fulfilled their obligations as teachers, Primus and Stanley seemed less concerned with performing gentility and more willing to embrace their needs. Their narratives complicate portrayals of nineteenth-century black women, generally, and black women teachers, specifically. It also provides examples of the ways women's ventures to the South transformed their own lives, not just the lives of their their students and members of the communities in which they worked. While both were African American, Stanley's more Caucasian physical features led to remarkable differences in their

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[4] Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 3 – 7; Beeching, "Great Expectations," 206 – 257; Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance," *Signs* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1989), 912 – 920.

[5] Kathryn Walbert, "'Now it is My Duty to Teach School'": Gender, Race, and Reading in the Mid-Nineteenth Century South, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000), 143, 163 – 164.

experiences as teachers in the South. Discussing the two in concert allows for a discussion of how colorism, or judgments based on skin color, influenced the lives of African Americans.[6]

Sara Griffith Stanley

By the time Sara Stanley left New Bern in 1852, the ostensible tolerance of free-black education among whites in North Carolina had waned. Most southern whites discouraged free-black education, and anti-literacy laws across much of the South criminalized teaching enslaved blacks how to read and write. In his recollections of his life in New Bern written in 1920, John Patterson Green, Sara Stanley's distant cousin, described North Carolina as a state with a lenience for limited black education that slowly eroded as the Civil War approached. Patterson wrote that many free blacks "enjoyed fair educational advantages" in that state.[7]

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[6] For discussions of colorisms within black communities, see Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 203; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 1998; and chapter 4, "African Americans: The Idealization of Light Skin," of Ronald M. Hall's, *An Historical Analysis of Skin Color Discrimination in America: Victimism Among Victim Group Populations* (New York: Springer, 2010), 37 – 56.

[7] John Patterson Green, *Fact Stranger Than Fiction. Seventy-Five Years of a Busy Life with Reminiscences of Many Great Good Men and* Women (Cleveland, Ohio: Roehl Printing Company, 1920), 41 (quote 1). Electronic edition retrieved from http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/greenfact/green.html.

For discussions of black southerners' antebellum efforts to acquire literacy see Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1919), 9, 30, 159, 129 – 132, 206, 208, 209, 216 – 221; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5 – 6, 4 – 12; Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861 – 1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 2 – 7, 17 – 51; Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7 – 29; Christopher M. Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862 – 1875* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 23 – 31; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear": Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 34 – 35, 62 – 66, 149 – 50.

Before the 1850s, white North Carolinians apparently condoned the Stanley School, a private school for free blacks in New Bern. Black students from across the state paid a nominal fee to attend because of the school's reputation for quality training. Green described John Stuart Stanley, the schoolmaster and Sara's father, as a top scholar. In Green's words, "As a reader, speller, and penman, he was not surpassed; and in all the studies, pertaining to a thorough English education, he was the equal of the best." He held even more gratitude for Sara's mother, Frances Giffith Stanley, who taught at the Stanley School when responsibilities to her family of seven did not get in the way. In Green's estimation, Mrs. Stanley was "one of the most faithful and industrious of wives, and loving and affectionate of mothers that ever lived." He vowed to "always revere her name and memory," for providing his solid educational foundation.[8]

In 1856, as tensions over the future of slavery disrupted existing social standards in the South and jeopardized the liberty of free-black southerners, a number of free-black families from New Bern migrated to Cleveland. Green wrote that "petty persecutions and insults" influenced his mother's decision to follow earlier migrants who escaped "from comparative darkness into the light of liberty and justice." Letitia Wood Brown's study of free blacks in Washington, D.C. provided a detailed description of the restriction their lives in southern cities. Free black southerners faced stiff job competition and a low occupational ceiling, risked being sold into slavery, held no political power, no right to bear arms, and, in some locales, suffered curfew laws

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[8] Green, *Fact Stranger Than Fiction,* 42 (quote 1), 43 (quotes 2, 3).

In addition to running the school, John S. Stanley owned a general goods store. See, Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 47 – 50, 48; DeBoer, *His Truth Is Marching On*, 56; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'" 495, 503 – 505.

that further curtailed their tenuous freedom. In a solidly pro-slavery state like North Carolina, it is no surprise that free African Americans sought refuge in northern states.[9]

Like Green, Stanley acquired a firm educational foundation at her parents' school. The Stanley family believed strongly in judging individuals by their merit, of which education was a key component. As such, they made sure that their children continued their education outside of the South. In 1852, Frances Stanley traveled to Oberlin, Ohio, with her sixteen-year-old daughter to enroll her at Oberlin Preparatory School. Oberlin was one of very few American higher-education institutions that accepted black students before the Civil War and one of even fewer to admit black women. Stanley ultimately completed three years of study in the "Ladies Course." Her "common school education" and training at Oberlin qualified her to teach. In 1857, she received a teaching certificate from examiners in Brown County, Ohio, that attested to her aptitude and affirmed her character. Soon after the Emancipation Proclamation foretold the end of slavery, Stanley decided to return to the South to educate fellow black southerners. [10]

Stanley considered it essential to help black southerners "grow in 'the wisdom and knowledge of God,' and…[develop] their intellectual faculties for lives of future usefulness and honor." Before the Civil War, Stanley joined the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, Ohio. As noted above, the Stanley family had a long history in the First Presbyterian Church in New Bern. Sara Stanley credited her "pious and exemplary parents" for teaching her the tenets of Christianity. In a letter to the AMA, Stanley described her interpretation of Christianity, one she

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[9] Green, *Fact Stranger than Fiction*, 45 (quotes 1, 2); Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790 – 1846*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 127, 134, 140, 141.

[10] Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 47 – 50, 48 (quote 1); DeBoer, *His Truth Is Marching On*, 56; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'" 495, 503 – 506. By 1856, Sara's family had joined her in Ohio, first in Delaware, then in Cleveland.

planned to impart to her southern black students. "As I have understood the religion of Christ," she wrote, "the brotherhood of man is its fundamental and elementary constituent." She quoted a number of verses from the Bible that convey messages of humility and good will. Her favorites included First John 4:20: "'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'" She also printed Mark 12:31, a verse she believed embodied the cornerstone of Christian theology: "'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'" The concept of goodwill toward all people because of a shared humanity through Christ guided Stanley's life and work.[11]

Emancipation provided the opportunity for black southerners to finally pursue traditional forms of education openly. Motivated by her racial identification and religious beliefs, Stanley endeavored to use her abilities to help black southerners attain "intellectual power and spiritual greatness, of holiness perfected in the fear of God." Her brand of evangelical Christianity held that one could not save oneself, but that with the right heart and benevolent works, one could be saved. Stanley believed that the "daily toil, self-sacrifice and denial," would help her become, "by Divine aid, richer in faith, richer in love, richer in all the graces of the Holy Spirit." Like Sallie Daffin and Carrie Blood, Stanley aimed to use her work as a teacher to gain God's favor. Of the three, Stanley spoke in the most endearing terms about her southern students, partly a reflection of their shared regional background and also due to her strong belief in the equality of man. Unlike Daffin and Blood, Stanley pursued a personal life that expanded beyond her students' racial and spiritual uplift.[12]

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[11] Stanley to William H. Woodbury, 29 August, 1864 (quote 1), Stanley to Whipple, 4 March 1864 (quotes 2, 3); Stanley to the AMA, 21 July, 6 October (quotes 4, 5) 1864; Stanley quoted from the King James version of the Bible.

[12] Stanley to the AMA, 4 March 1864 (quote 1), 19 January 1864 (quotes 2, 3). See chapter 4 for a discussion of Carrie Marie Blood's and Sallie Louise Daffin's missionary work in the South.

The Teacher

In April 1864, Stanley wrote to the AMA from Norfolk, Virginia, her first teaching post in the South where she taught sixty enthusiastic students. She left Norfolk at the end of 1864 to teach in other southern locales. In 1865, she taught at a free school supported by a "Colored Board of Education" in St. Louis, Missouri. The freed people's warm welcome and appreciation for her work softened the poor conditions she encountered. Community members were unable to sustain the school but impressed Stanley with their initiative and determination. After the free school closed, she taught at a pay school in the area. In 1866, she taught in Louisville, Kentucky, at another pay school managed by the black community. As at the pay school in St. Louis, the indigence of most of the freed people limited Stanley's reach. Still, she reported meaningful academic progress among her students. Her stay in Kentucky proved brief because the school was incorporated into a public school system. Thus, she returned to St. Louis until 1867 then traveled to Mobile, Alabama, where she taught from 1867 to 1874.[13]

Stanley's perceptions of black southerners contributed to her approach to teaching. In terms of discipline, she remained convinced that the freed people's "affectionate nature" contributed to their being "easily governed." She also referenced students' eagerness to learn as a factor in the surprisingly few instances of unruliness that she encountered. Stanley believed strongly in the power of moral suasion in encouraging discipline among her students. As for academic instruction, she described "full and striking illustrations of the simplest things... iteration and reiteration, and frequent reference" as the most efficient pedagogy. Consequently,

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[13] Stanley to Whipple, 28 April 1864 (all quotes), AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 55 – 61; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 449 – 503; Butchart, FTP.

Stanley considered visual aids and repetition particularly important for teaching black southerners.[14]

Just as the public schools in the North were formed, in part, to foster a sense of patriotism among an increasingly diverse population, educators trained in the North who turned their attention to the post-war South envisioned common schools as a socializing mechanism for formerly enslaved populations. Stanley's classroom methods reflected the urban school's attention to modern forms of discipline, its use of classroom technologies, systems of classification, and the shift toward oral instruction. Her schooling taught the importance of "an airy, cheerful, attractive schoolroom" and "the subtle moral influence of material objects" to a school's success. She elaborated:

> Maps, globes, pictures, are disciplinary; the vase of fragrant flowers on the teacher's desk, the green foliage visible at the open window through which the sunshine pours its golden flood and the air comes purely and freshly, are...efficacious in preserving order, in calming turbulent spirits and keeping them attuned to the sweeter harmony of love, gentleness and truth.[15]

She would not always have the advantage of such teaching technologies, however, and poor conditions limited the extent to which Stanley could practice her methods.

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[14] Stanley to the AMA, n.d. March 1866 (all quotes), AMAA; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 495.

Stanley's use of moral suasion reflected rhetoric surrounding the feminization of teaching. Although they disagreed in terms of what positions women would perform in schools, nineteenth-century educational reformers Catherine Beecher and Horace Mann both argued that women held particular traits that made them ideal teachers. For more on the feminization of teaching in northern states, see Jo Anne Preston, "Domestic Ideology, School Reformers, and Female Teachers: Schoolteaching Becomes Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century New England," *The New England Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 1993), 539.

[15] Stanley to Whipple, School report, May 1865 (all quotes), AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarah*, 107; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for these Things?'", 501.

For a discussion of the common school as a socializing mechanism, see, for example, Carl F. Kaestle, "Social Change, Discipline, and the Common School in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 9, No. 1 (Summer, 1978), 4 – 6.

When Stanley arrived in St. Louis, for example, she encountered a situation altogether different from that in Norfolk. She strove to create a welcoming classroom to counter the "feeling akin to despair" that she felt during her first visit to her school. She greeted about 150 students seated in "ungainly, movable seats" in a dark, poorly ventilated church basement with "meager and insufficient" teaching supplies. The lack of supplies forced creativity, and Stanley transformed her classroom and altered her methods as best she could. In one instance, she used a ball from one of her students to teach about the solar system. To foster students' interest and attention, she decorated a blackboard with images of animals, planets, and geometric figures. She also used a crayon to update the geography on "a number of discarded, obsolete, outline maps." Stanley had no illusions about the quality of her sketches, but reasoned that amateur drawings and altered maps were better than none. Besides, the maps covered the smoke-darkened walls. Mother Nature provided finishing touches; "God's pure sunshine," Stanley wrote, made her classroom "radiant with glory." [16]

Stanley's approach to classroom management also demonstrated a modern pedagogy. She addressed the steady increase of students at her school in St. Louis by grouping students into grades. She noted that dividing the school allowed her to accommodate more students, spurred their advancement, encouraged order, and drew the approbation of advocates and opponents of black education, alike. Stanley used the non-traditional teaching methods that she learned at

[16] Stanley to Whipple, School Report, May 1865 (all quotes); Stanley to the AMA, n.d. March 1866, AMAA.

Oberlin, and, as Kathryn Walbert argued, incorporated "significant pedagogical innovation[s] under trying circumstances."[17]

Stanley resolved to spread literacy among black southerners, a people she considered destined for greatness. She encouraged African Americans to actively "cultivate [their] mental faculties… remembering that 'ascendancy naturally and properly belongs to intellectual superiority.'" Free-blacks in antebellum America believed that education, as an improving force, would convince white Americans to acknowledge African Americans' citizenship just as the freed people hoped it would change perceptions of black inferiority. Her advocacy for education reflected this general belief among nineteenth-century African American educational advocates.[18]

The Activist

As a teacher in Norfolk and Mobile, Stanley lived in mission homes, boarding houses for the freed people's teachers established by sponsoring agencies. AMA officials most often established mission homes for their employees who taught in urban areas. In these homes, a group of teachers lived in one house to cut cost and to protect teachers from southern white hostility, a more likely threat for an individual rather than a group of teachers. A house matron managed the affairs of the household such as buying groceries, cooking, cleaning, and paying

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[17] Stanley to Samuel Hunt, 4 May 1866; Stanley to Whipple, School Report, May 1865, AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs,* 55 – 61; Walbert, "'Now it is My Duty to Teach School,'" 185 (quote 1), 143, 163 – 164.

[18] Stanley, "Address of the Ladies' Antislavery Society of Delaware, Ohio, to the Convention of Disfranchised Citizens of Columbus, Ohio," January 1856, in Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 65 – 70, 68 (quote).

For discussions of early nineteenth-century African Americans' use of education as a form of activism, see, for example, Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 128.

rent, and reported to the sponsoring organization. Although living in mission homes afforded the opportunity for fellowship with other educators, they were also seedbeds of conflict and tension.[19]

Stanley had presumed cooperation from the white men and women who voluntarily participated in the freed people's educational endeavors, especially those affiliated with the AMA, a Congregationalist-leaning and historically abolitionist organization. Thus, she was bitterly disappointed when commotion erupted among AMA teachers in Norfolk after Edmonia Highgate, a black teacher, shared her room with a white woman who was headed home from her teaching post in Virginia. As Weisenfeld argued, the negative responses from AMA Superintendent William Coan and teacher Mary Reed, both white northerners, laid bare the lack of empathy for black southerners among some white AMA employees. Coan, whom one twentieth-century researcher described as a "veteran of the abolitionist movement," felt personally affronted by the idea of a racially integrated bedroom even between women. Although the white woman with whom Highgate shared her room did not object to the arrangement, Coan and Reed believed that the act of sharing a room in the mission house promoted social and domestic interactions between blacks and whites. Reed had not imagined that her willingness to teach in schools for the freed people would involve sharing a dinner table and living space with black women.[20]

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[19] Dorothy Sterling, ed., *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 271 – 273.

[20] Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'", 496; Peter Wallenstein and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, eds., *Virginia's Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 190 (quote).

Blanche V. Harris, a northern-born black woman educated at Oberlin College, learned firsthand the strain of being segregated within a mission home. Harris ultimately elected to stay with a black family in the community where she taught because of the racism of white mission house residents. They suggested that Harris "room with two of the domestics,…not expect to eat at the first table, and [only] come in the sitting room sometimes" if she decided to live there. Harris aptly described her confinement

In a letter of protest to the AMA, Stanley chastised Coan who, in her estimation, claimed to be Christian but held fast to "peculiar secession, pro-Slavery and Christian negro-hating principles." Unlike many white worshippers, Stanley considered Christianity and racism as completely incompatible and expressed frustration time and again when fellow AMA employees failed to live up to what she considered fundamental Christian theology. By her judgment, the freed people knew "far more of the vital principles of Christianity and of Faith and practice" than some of her coworkers.[21]

Fannie Gleason, the house matron of the Norfolk Mission Home, endorsed Coan's and Reed's objections to sharing private spaces with African Americans. According to Stanley, Gleason threatened to abandon her post '"if all colored teachers are not removed from Mission house No. 80 on Main Street."' From Norfolk, Stanley wrote at length about the discrimination she faced in the home. A reflection of her linkage of education to character, Stanley pointed to Gleason's "former surroundings" and lack of "intellectual training" as contributing factors to the latter's racist beliefs. Stanley argued that one might overlook Gleason's antics on account of her past. Stanley insisted, however, that the work at hand required empathy from those working in

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when she wrote that, "My room was to be my home." Harris refused to be Jim Crowed in a house with people supposedly sympathetic to southern black progress, especially after an AMA affiliate "remarked [that] although he had brought us down we could not compare with the white ladies." She informed the AMA that if she and her sister Elizabeth resigned, the organization would not have to speculate about the reasons for their departure. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Black Schooling during Reconstruction," in *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women Family, and Education*, eds. Walter L. Fraser, R. Frank Saunders, Jr, and John L. Wakelyn, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 146 – 65; Blanche V. Harris to the AMA, 10 March 1866, AMAA (all footnote quotes).

[21] Stanley to Whipple, 4 March 1864, AMAA; Walbert, "'*Now It Is My Duty to Teach'",* 187 – 191; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 56 – 58, 62 – 64; Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'", 496 – 498, 500 – 503.

freedmen's education. She felt that women, like Reed and Gleason, who did not mask their racism or sympathize with the freed people, jeopardized the success of the education project.[22]

The Woman

The nature of the mission homes left teachers with little privacy and, in Stanley's case, led to conflicts with other teachers over aspects of her personal life. In Norfolk, Stanley experienced humiliation and heartache after being accused of participating in an indecent relationship. The details surrounding Stanley's alleged relationship with a white male teacher remain unclear. Weisenfeld speculated that Stanley was "involved" with Samuel Walker, a teacher stationed in Norfolk. Clara Duncan, another northern-born black teacher, first raised AMA leaders' suspicions after she described one of Stanley's personal letters that Duncan secretly read. After George Whipple, the field secretary for the AMA, asked Gleason about what Duncan reported, Gleason went into Stanley's trunk, took the letters she found, and mailed them to Whipple. In response, AMA leaders summoned Stanley to the AMA headquarters in New York. Once there, Whipple admonished the young woman and informed her of his long-standing skepticism about her success as a teacher for the AMA. Apparently, Whipple had harbored reservations about Stanley before the "affair." He considered her dramatic and pretentious because she continually used her voice to combat the seemingly ubiquitous racism among AMA workers.[23]

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[22] Stanley to Whipple, 6 October 1864 (all quotes), AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs,* 47 – 64.

[23] Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'" 499 – 500 (quote); Titus Brown, *Faithful, Firm, and True: African-American Education in the South,* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2002), 17; Stanley to Whipple, 26 January 1865.

George Whipple was not the only one displeased by Stanley's "perceived 'haughtiness' and outspoken nature." Scholars point to Gleason's racist beliefs as the catalyst for her efforts to act against Stanley. Weisenfeld did not guess what prompted Duncan, an African-American teacher, to report Stanley's questionable relationship. Duncan, like Stanley, had studied at Oberlin and arrived in Norfolk in the spring of 1864. Although scholars have mentioned Duncan's role in the matter, the complexities of the incident beg further consideration. Both Duncan and Gleason acted deliberately and surreptitiously. It seems that Duncan would have known that the information she provided Smith could negatively affect Stanley's standing with the AMA. Extant records do not explain Duncan's loyalty to the AMA's leadership, a group of paternalistic but generally well-meaning white men. There would have been few, if any, material benefits for exposing Stanley's personal life.[24] Even though they were both black women, the two lived dramatically different lives.

While Stanley continued to gain the sponsorship of the AMA through the late 1860s, Duncan left the South after this incident, remained away for four years, returned to the South without AMA support for a two-year stint in Mississippi, then left again. She may have thought that reporting to the AMA headquarters would curry favor with its leaders, even though that appears not to have happened, given her break with the organization. Duncan, a northern-born free-black orphan, differed from Stanley, a southern-born free-black from an elite family. The AMA might have considered Stanley a stronger asset than Duncan because of the former's

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Gleason's letters to the AMA clearly demonstrate her prejudices against African Americans but reveal little in terms of why tensions developed between Gleason and other white teachers, both male and female. Those teachers who Gleason targeted usually sympathized with the freed people in ways that she did not approve. Fannie Gleason to Whipple, 6 January 1865; Stanley to Whipple, 25 May 1865, both AMAA.

[24] Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'", 496 – 498, 500.

educational and cultural background. Whatever the case, Duncan's actions demonstrate the reality of occasional intraracial conflict among teachers. More often, as far as the record reveals, black teachers cultivated positive relationships with each other.[25]

Ashamed and abused, Stanley could find neither words nor strength to clarify the situation to the friends she left in Norfolk but felt that she owed them some type of explanation. She asked Whipple to assist her by allowing interested friends to read the letter he planned to write to Henry C. Percy, an AMA affiliate in Norfolk. She informed Whipple that she wanted to "stand as well in their regard as may be" and entreated him to "say as much as you can in my behalf,…or at least what is best." She knew the incident would tarnish her reputation in the minds of many: "The world is so censorial," she wrote, "and I will be judged harshly, oh too harshly, by everyone in Norfolk."[26]

The reprimand from the AMA hurt Stanley deeply. She referenced the "sore trial," the "dreadful anguish" and likened herself to "a poor helpless child…utterly bruised and broken in mind and in body." She conveyed those emotions in a letter to Whipple.

> That dreadful week of agony in N. York left me with a fevered brain, unsteady nerves, and an absurd womanish tendency to burst into tears without any cause. By and by I hope to be strong and well, and in the busy life I find here, and the constant necessity for activity, forget myself and the poor little work within my own heart.[27]

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[25] Linda Cabral pointed to the all-black teaching force that briefly manned a school in Norfolk in 1863 as evidence of black women's propensity to "engage in some activities with one another." She also noted that evidence of the "deep, personal, and professional relationships" she assumed black teachers developed does not appear in their letters to the AMA. Linda Britton Cabral, "Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators to the American Missionary Association, 1863 – 1870" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 2006), 26 (footnote quotes).

[26] Stanley to Whipple, 26 January 1865 (all quotes), AMAA.

[27] Stanley to Whipple, 25 March 1865, AMAA.

Ultimately, she did find peace within herself after confessing "all my wrong-doing before God." She praised God's capacity for forgiveness and felt "fully and freely pardoned." Stanley noted that, "Identity is so merged in the 'cause'" that fellow educators often expected to observe teachers, not women seeking companionship. She thanked Whipple for his support shown in a short letter. His words, she wrote, "seemed a reminder that I am myself." Importantly, no matter her responsibilities as a teacher, Stanley refused to forget herself or the longings of her heart. After the reprimand, Stanley taught with the AMA at St. Louis and Louisville until 1864 when AMA administrators transferred her to Mobile, Alabama.[28]

In Mobile, Stanley continued to bemoan racist coworkers as the consequences of their prejudices continued to invade her personal life. She faced fierce opposition from AMA affiliates in 1868 when she announced that she wanted to get married to a white northerner in the AMA's Mission Home. Although couples had wed in the house before, some balked at the request because Charles Woodward, Stanley's fiancé, was white. According to Stanley, one coworker, George L. Putnam, vowed to submit his resignation if the AMA allowed the interracial marriage ceremony to occur in the house. Stanley admitted that Putnam was probably correct when he speculated that the marriage would "create a talk." Still, she pursued the matter on principles of womanhood and dignity. She wrote, "Something is due me in the matter as a woman simply…my character would be compromised by a refusal to be allowed to be married in the house where I have lived, and to be required to skulk away as if I were committing a crime." While she admitted to some wrongdoing in Norfolk, Stanley saw nothing immoral about marrying Woodward in Mobile. Resistance to her marriage by AMA officials may have been more hurtful than her reprimand in Norfolk, because this time, Stanley felt no shame in her

[28] Stanley to Whipple, 3 January 1865 (all quotes), AMAA; Butchart, FTP.

actions. As a fully committed activist for social equality, Stanley militantly defied anti-miscegenation laws that proliferated in the South.[29]

In the end she and Woodward did not marry in the Mission Home, even though she thought she had support from some of the AMA's top leaders. The AMA did not acknowledge the role race played in its decision to prohibit Stanley from using the house for her wedding. Rather, Edward P. Smith, the AMA's corresponding secretary at the time, purposely avoided the controversy behind Stanley's marriage. He informed Putnam that Stanley could not marry in the house because she had not followed the proper protocol. Specifically, Smith wrote that "no teacher can be married until her resignation is first accepted at this office." Stanley and Woodward married at a friend's house and established a home in Mobile. Sara Stanley Woodward taught for the AMA in Mobile for two more years, then taught in Mobile's public schools. She also worked as an assistant cashier at the Freedmen's Savings Bank alongside her husband, a cashier. Mr. Woodward later wrote an extensive study of the bank. Lawson and Merrill speculated that, as an educated and analytical woman, Sara Stanley Woodward contributed invaluable insights to his work. Their only child, a daughter, died in infancy.[30]

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[29] Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 68; Stanley to J. R. Shepherd, 6 April 1868 (quotes 1 and 2), AMAA; Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), 29 – 30.

Stanley's fiancé, Charles Woodward, a white New Englander, worked for the Freedmen's Saving Bank. Weisenfeld noted that the marriage did not cause an uproar in Mobile. Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'", 503.

[30] Edward. P. Smith to George L. Putnam, 7 May 1868 (quote); Stanley to Shepherd, 6 April, 2 May 1868, all AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs,* 62 – 64 (quote); Butchart, FTP.

Smith was the AMA's corresponding secretary. In her letter to Shepherd, Stanley reported that Smith told her "that he would himself take pleasure in solemnizing our marriage here." Weisenfeld, "'Who Is Sufficient for these Things?'", 503. Weisenfeld cited Carl R. Osthaus, *Freedmen, Philanthropy and Fraud: A History of the Freedman's Savings Bank* (Chicago, 1976), 49, for the information on the Woodwards work at the bank. Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 503.

After arriving at her first post in March 1864, Stanley wrote to the corresponding secretary for the AMA. Stanley's letter expressed her commitment to enlightening the minds of black southerners and acknowledged an obligation to cultivate students both academically and spiritually. In addition to molding their "plastic minds...for good [and]...in beauty," she sought to fill "their youthful hearts...with upright and virtuous principles" and to lead their "childish feet to...the paths of righteousness." Stanley also understood that teachers held the power to negatively influence their students' futures. "The destiny of their immortal souls is in our hands," she wrote, "and we will be held to a strict accountability for the charge." In the end, the AMA held Stanley more accountable for her personal decisions than for the influence she had on southern black students. Her repudiation of racial discrimination from her coworkers and white southerners manifested early on and demonstrated her commitment to her Christian beliefs. At the same time, she remained committed to living life on her own terms by refusing to abide by southern social codes and anti-miscegenation laws.[31]

Rebecca Primus

Barbara Jean Beeching's dissertation on Hartford, Connecticut, discusses middle-class black families in the context of the city's "arc of growth, peak, and decline" from 1830 to 1880. Her work situates the Primus family within this trajectory and provides an in-depth look at the plight of free-black families in the North in antebellum and post-war America. Holdridge and Mehitabel "Hettie" Primus raised four children, including Rebecca, all of whom attended school. Mr. Primus worked as a porter at the Humphrey and Seyms Grocery store in addition to working

[31] Stanley to Whipple, 28 April 1864 (all quotes), AMAA; Lawson and Merrill, *The Three Sarahs*, 55; Weisenfeld, "'Who is Sufficient for These Things?'", 494 – 496.

as a private waiter. Although Holdridge Primus was the family patriarch, Hettie Primus' contributions as a dressmaker, seamstress, occasional midwife, and nurse undoubtedly bolstered the family's prosperity. Moreover, Beeching argues that Mrs. Primus "in effect ran a sewing business," since she often assigned sewing projects to other women. The Primuses also opened their home to boarders and served as consultants to white residents in search of recommendations for domestic servants.[32]

Rebecca Primus' father used race uplift as a weapon against racism rather than more pointedly political forms of activism. Beeching presents Holdridge Primus' decisions to shy away from activism in the context of the violent backlash that often accompanied efforts to advance African Americans' civil rights. One year before Rebecca's birth, for example, a riot in Hartford illuminated the mounting racial animosity toward free blacks in the North. A mob of whites in the city attacked blacks and destroyed at least three black homes in reaction to a meeting convened at the Talcott Street Church where attendees allegedly discussed the abolition of slavery. The Primuses also knew about the suspected arson of the newly-formed African Methodist Episcopal Church across the street from their home. Racist whites opposed the church's pastor, the Reverend Hosea Easton, who militantly advocated for black rights. These events, as Beeching writes, probably strengthened Holdridge Primus' resolve to remain behind the scenes in terms of addressing racism. In contrast, Mehitabel Primus, Beeching argues, "possessed an independent spirit that her more cautious husband either lacked or concealed." Beeching writes that, because of their lack of power and historic invisibility, "black women could organize, speak, and act to address community needs without raising white resentment."

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[32] Beeching, "Great Expectations," i (quote 1), 77 – 79; Griffin, *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends*; Barbara Jean Beeching, "The Primus Papers: An Introduction to Hartford's Nineteenth Century Black Community," (M.A. Thesis, University of Missouri, 1995), 3 (quote 2).

Thus, Mrs. Primus' status as a black female, in some ways, protected her from the type of backlash her "more cautious" husband would receive had he been more politically active. [33]

Socially, Holdridge Primus was a member of the Prince Hall Mason Lodge in Hartford and was respected as a "genial and dependable friend and pillar of church and community." Like her husband, Hettie Primus held a certain status as a member of local institutions. She was one of the first members of the Talcott Street Church and integrated a couple of previously all-white organizations—the Hartford Freedmen's Aid Society, where she served as the only black board member, and the Women's Christian Association. As Beeching notes, the Primuses achieved astonishing success as unskilled African Americans in the nineteenth century.[34] In addition to their diligence and entrepreneurial spirits, the Primuses success stemmed from their families' history of upward mobility. Holdridge Primus' grandfather, Gad Asher, was a native African enslaved in Connecticut in the 1740s. Although he enlisted with the Patriots in the Revolutionary War in hope of acquiring personal independence, Asher had to purchase his freedom upon the end of the war. As a free man, he acquired enough wealth to buy land that was ultimately bequeathed to Holdridge Primus. Mehitabel Esther Jacobs also descended from free blacks. Her father, Jeremiah Jacobs, was a boot maker with an interracial clientele. Her grandfather, Reece Jacobs, brought his family to Hartford around 1770 and established one of the city's first black households. Rebecca's family provided a solid foundation for their daughter to contribute to the southern educational project. [35]

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[33] Beeching "Great Expectations," 14, 56, 63 – 70, 78, 79, 96 – 97. Beeching cites the *Hartford Courant*, 11 March 1899, which included information on Rebecca Thomas' early affiliation with the Talcott Street Church.

[34] Beeching, "The Primus Papers," 1, 2 (quote); Beeching, "Great Expectations," 15, 40, 77 – 79.

[35] Beeching "Great Expectations," 16 – 57, 41.

The Teacher

Rebecca Primuses family background and early schooling at the Talcott Street Church informed her support of racial uplift through education. Beeching's study points to Primus' role models as guiding influences. Primus learned under at least four individuals who espoused character building through schooling as a key to African Americans' quest for civil rights. The Reverend James W. C. Pennington, for example, became the first ordained minister of the Talcott Street Church in 1840 and taught at the church's school along with his wife. As a leading abolitionist and, for a time, a fugitive slave, Pennington lamented the denial of literacy among enslaved populations and celebrated his hard earned literacy skills. Augustus Washington, another teacher at the church, aspired to earn a college degree but was thwarted by financial constraints. Ultimately, he made his mark as a daguerreotypist and later championed colonization to Liberia. Beeching praised Selah Africanus, a fourth teacher, for his proper grammar and pronunciation. Under the tutelage of these African Americans, Primus developed and sharpened her own command of the English language. The attention to grammar and penmanship in her letters demonstrate her grasp of writing, and the '"Young Ladies night school'" that she organized in her parents' home, suggests knowledge of teaching methods.[36]

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[36] Beeching names Mr. and Mrs. J. W. C. Pennington, Augustus Washington, and Selah Africanus as Primus' first teachers and probable role models. Selah Africanus, who taught in the Talcott Street School from 1847 to 1850, helped organize the 1849 state convention of black men. See David White, "Hartford's African Schools, 1830 – 1868," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* XXXVIIII (April 1974): 48; and Horatio T. Strother, *Underground Railroad in CT*. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1962) 90 – 91.

Primus' educational roots at the Church point to the important functions fulfilled by black institutions, especially churches, in antebellum black life. A rich literature describes the centrality of black churches in the lives of nineteenth-century African Americans. See, for example, Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: The

Primus secured the support of the Hartford Freedmen's Aid Society (HFAS), a group of prominent black and white Hartford residents that mobilized to supply teachers to the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People. As one of only five teachers sponsored by the HFAS, and one of two it sent to the South in 1865, Primus joined a select group of teachers over the span of the organization's four-and-a-half-year history. The backing of these organizations, which required experience with "the most approved Normal School methods," provides further evidence of Primus' teaching abilities.[37]

Before arriving in Royal Oak, Maryland, her assigned post, Primus spent a week in Baltimore where she worked as an assistant to a white male teacher in a black school. A center for educational activism, Baltimore, or "Education's Enclave" as Hilary Moss describes it, headquartered the Baltimore Association. Joining the Baltimore Association's network of teachers provided Primus with the opportunity to interact with other learned individuals. Primus described Park Street, the street she lived on while in Baltimore, as a "rendezvous for the colored teachers under this society." Farrah J. Griffin's edited volume of letters from Primus presents Baltimore as a statewide hub for teachers.[38]

Associated Publishers, 1945); Edward Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828 – 1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[37] *The American Freedman,* 2 no. 10 (January 1867), 149 (quote 1). The HFAS also sponsored Harriet Hamilton, a white woman who taught in Washington, D. C. Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 3, 77, 289 n2.

[38] Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 63 (quote 1).

Primus probably lived at "184 Park St. near Richmond," the return address she gave her parents. Primus to parents and sister, 8 November 1865; Addie Brown to Primus, 16 November 1865 (quote 2), in Griffin, *Beloved Sister*, 82, 83 – 84, 87.

In addition to a larger intellectual community, Primus' trip to Maryland exposed her to many more black people than she experienced in Hartford where African Americans comprised just two percent of the total population. Maryland, a slave state, contained a sizeable black population. Free blacks comprised about 20 percent of its total population. Baltimore boasted more free-blacks than any other American city. In contrast, the city held a relatively small enslaved population. As she noted the demographic differences between the two cities, Primus conjectured that she saw more black people in Baltimore in one day than the total number of black people in Hartford. Her immersion within a community of African Americans presumably influenced her appreciation of black southern culture in ways she had not in Hartford.[39]

After residents in Royal Oak formed a five-member board of trustees chosen by members of a school society, the Baltimore Association agreed to send a teacher to a newly-organized school in that town. Primus arrived in Royal Oak in December 1865 and boarded with board member Charles Thomas and his wife Susan. Freed by self-purchase before the Civil War, Thomas held a unique position in the town. He farmed his own land, supervised laborers at the town's sawmill, and trained horses for a living.[40]

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[39] As a border state during the Civil War, Maryland maintained slavery until 1864; it did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Emancipation Proclamation. Barbara Fields, *Slavery and Freedom in the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 81. Beeching, "Great Expectations", 66, 67, 68.

[40] Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 77, 94, 95, 215, 289 (n. 3). Griffin culled information on Charles Thomas from David O. White's, "Addie Brown's Hartford," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin,* 41, no. 2 (April 1976): 56 – 64; Beeching, "Great Expectations," 219.

Forming a school society managed by a five-member board was a stipulation established by the Baltimore Association before it would send a teacher to a community. Beeching, "Great Expectations, 217; Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 288 – 300.

Primus' approach to teaching included a desire to spread literacy, model proper behavior, and report back to her network of family and friends. She believed in the virtue of merit to defeat racial discrimination and considered education as an indicator of a sound character. To those ends, she taught day, night, and Sunday school in Royal Oak. Although most of her students had no prior exposure to academic instruction, Primus frequently reported their progress. Even as she praised well-behaved students, she noted the need to suppress an occasional "evil spirit among them."[41]

One of Primus' most significant accomplishments was a fundraising effort to build a formal schoolhouse in Royal Oak. Building a schoolhouse often required lobbying on the need for a school, raising funds, and supervising the general construction of the building. Ultimately, the project required support from a wide coterie of groups and individuals, thus Primus' fundraising efforts reached far beyond Royal Oak. As they had in the past, the Primus family marshaled the support of Hartford's black and white residents. In February of 1866, for example, the *Hartford Courant* announced a fundraising fair for the benefit of Primus' school and praised her as a "'credit to her race, and to her native town…as a successful and respected teacher of the freedmen.'" Her brother Nelson, an aspiring artist, donated a few paintings auctioned off at the event. The two hundred dollars collected at the fair plus the twenty dollars raised by blacks in Royal Oak enabled Primus and the Royal Oak trustees to purchase land, secure suitable lumber for the carpenter, and fit the school with appropriate furniture.[42]

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[41] Beeching, "Great Expectations," 207, 212, 230; Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 100.

[42] Griffith, *Beloved Sisters*, 165 – 179, 244 (quote).

The actual construction of the schoolhouse did not go as smoothly as the fundraising effort. Each time problems halted the work, Thomas intervened to push the project forward. He sold a parcel of his own land for the school building after white residents refused to sell a plot for a school. Thomas nudged the carpenter when the latter hesitated to take on the job and after he took longer than expected to complete it. Thomas also secured donations from his former owner and successfully petitioned the Freedmen's Bureau for lumber and desks for the school. Surrounded by a whitewashed fence, the completed schoolhouse "measured 24 x 34 x 13 feet, with two doors, three shuttered windows, and cypress shingle siding." Dedicated in October 1867 as the Primus Institute, the schoolhouse stood as a material reminder of the community's progress. According to David O. White, the Primus Institute served the Royal Oak community until 1929.[43]

The Activist

As a member of this network connected through letter writing, Primus conveyed and stayed abreast of the latest news about other schools and teachers in the Baltimore vicinity.[44] Fellow teachers were but one cohort of the many groups with whom Primus corresponded. Primus' position as a teacher placed her on the front lines of the processes of defining freedom. Her first- and second-hand accounts kept other educators, her sponsors, and her family and

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[43] Primus to her family, 30 September 1867, in Griffith, *Beloved Sisters*, 97, 218; Beeching, "Great Expectations," 233 – 238, 234, 237. White noted that the name of the school changed from the Primus Institute to the Royal Oak School but did not specify the date of the name change. Interestingly, he wrote that "children who attended its classes jokingly told others that they had 'graduated from Primus Institute.'" See, White, "Rebecca Primus in Later Life," in Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 280 (quote).

[44] Primus to parents and sister, 8 November 1865; Brown to Primus, 16 November 1865, in Griffin, *Beloved Sister,* 82, 83 – 84, 87.

friends well informed about the transformations of southern society. Employers and sponsors expected teachers to keep them abreast about the progress of their schools and about their extra-curricular activities. As such, Primus reported to the HFAS, the Baltimore Association, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the Sunday school of her home church.[45]

In letters to her family and friends in the North, Primus related her experiences and those of other teachers and community members. A "politically informed correspondent," as Griffin described her, Primus also reported instances of violence toward African Americans in cities near Royal Oak. An assault by white men on Julia F. P. Dickson, a black teacher in Cambridge, Maryland, for example, resulted in an extended convalescence. Primus wrote that Dickson '"lay totally unconscious for two days and received no nourishment for nearly a week.'" In Easton, the murder of "a very respectable colored man" by a "white rascal…sustained by his Secesh sympathizers," rattled African Americans in nearby cities. Primus briefly described the ordeal faced by Ellen Jackson and Mary J. C. Anderson in Baltimore when the two filed their suit against the Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Wilmington Railroad for throwing them out of the Ladies Room at the depot. She also informed her family of the delay in the case after the defendant requested a trial by jury. Although the outcome of the case eludes present-day researchers, news of the incident circulated among African American communities in the North and South. As Beeching demonstrates, Primus' detailed reportage of discriminatory acts were part of nineteenth-century African Americans' efforts to chronicle their long history of discrimination and racial violence. Besides teaching, Primus recognized her role as a conduit of

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[45] "Rebecca Primus to parents and sister," 7 April, 2 June 1866, printed in Griffin, *Beloved Sister,* 99, 100, 117 – 120, 127 – 128; Beeching, "Great Expectations," 206 – 210. Deirdre M. Mahoney, "'More Than an Accomplishment': Advice on Letter Writing for Nineteenth-Century American Women," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 66, no. 3/4 (2003): 411 – 423.

information to family and friends in the North even as she expressed reluctance about taking on that responsibility.[46]

Letter writing was one of the onerous forms of daily work teachers performed. In an era without electric lighting, let alone typewriters, word processors, or computers, writing long careful letters was very time-consuming. Teachers struggled to create legible, comprehensive, and in Primus' case grammatically sound, letters with faint candle light and limited supplies. Though a difficult task, Primus' intensive writing expanded her intellect as did her engagement with news in the *Hartford Courant,* the *Republican,* and the *Independent,* three liberal newspapers published in her hometown. She also had a subscription to the *Weekly Anglo African,* a prominent African American periodical. Her parents sent these papers and other reading material to Primus while she taught in the South.[47]

Primus adopted her parent's strategy of recognizing but not directly confronting racial discrimination and carefully avoided confrontations with racists whites. When she learned that the postmaster routinely withheld or otherwise meddled with her mail, for example, she elected to collect it in nearby Easton. In terms of travel, she would take a seat in the smoking car if the conductor directed her to do so but switched to a cleaner car after he unlocked the door. She

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[46] "Rebecca Primus to parents and sister," 7 April, 2 June 1866, printed in Griffin, *Beloved Sister,* 99, 100, 117 – 120, 127 – 128; Beeching, "Great Expectations," 206 – 210.

The New England Freedmen's Aid Society, Dickson's sponsor, transferred her to other posts in Maryland for five years then to South Carolina for one year. Primus heard about Jackson and Anderson secondhand from Carrie E. Cummings, another teacher who taught in Maryland between 1865 – 1869. Information on Dickson and Cummings obtained from Ronald E. Butchart's, Freedmen's Teacher Project.

For more information on Ellen Jackson and Mary Anderson's case against the railroad, see chapter three of this study and David S. Bogen, "Precursors of Rosa Parks: Maryland Transportation Cases Between the Civil War and the Beginning of World War," *Maryland Law Review,* 63 (2004), 721 – 751.

[47] Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 215; Mahoney, "'More Than an Accomplishment,'" 411 – 423.

passed this advice to her mother and sister who visited her in Royal Oak.[48] Beeching clearly identifies a commitment to racial justice as one of Primus' sources of motivation and describes, at length, her contributions to the black community in Royal Oak. She concluded that Rebecca, like her parents, "tempered knowledge of her rights with a realistic assessment of the location of political, economic and social power." As a testament to the changes wrought by Emancipation, the lasting legacy Rebecca established with the Primus Institute represented a new, more public approach to racial discrimination among the Primus clan.[49]

The Woman

Beeching argues that Rebecca's paternal and maternal ancestors "adopted the practices of the white culture around them, including some aspects of refinement that would later help define middle class status." Primus' middle-class background did not preclude lasting friendships with individuals across class and regional lines. Addie Brown, a domestic worker, was, like Primus, a free-born New England native. Brown cherished her relationship with Primus and freely expressed her affection in letters she wrote to Primus. During her stay in Royal Oak, Primus developed an intimate relationship with Charles Thomas, her self-purchased southern host. She and Thomas married less than five years after she left Maryland to return to her home in Hartford.[50]

Addie Brown could not claim a tight-knit family of upwardly-mobile African Americans. Rather, she lived intermittently in a number of northern states and cities where she worked as a

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[48] Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 150.

[49] Beeching, "Great Expectations," 209 (quote).

[50] Beeching "Great Expectations," 16 – 57, 41 (quote).

housekeeper, caregiver, and factory worker. She also took on sewing projects in her struggle to earn a living. The experiences of working-class and middle-class black northerners differed in terms of access to education, types of labor, and exposure to Victorian culture. Unlike Primus, Brown did not have the advantage of a formal education. Like many self-taught African Americans, Brown picked up literacy skills piecemeal over time. She actively adopted middle-class cultural norms, pursued intellectual engagement, and adopted Victorian standards. As Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham argued, many nineteenth-century African Americans believed that if black people exhibited refinement, lived pious lives, and eschewed working-class forms of expression, they could prove their merit and slowly diminish racism among white Americans. Tera Hunter described tensions that developed between working-class and middle-class blacks in Atlanta during the Civil War as the latter "tried to mollify white animosity and racial prejudice…by insisting that blacks conform to the standards of a chaste, disciplined, servile labor force—on and off the job." Brown's penchant to disparage behaviors among African Americans that she judged uncouth evidenced her acceptance of the politics of respectability. Brown expressed a belief in racial uplift as a path to reaping the benefits of American citizenship. She and Primus agreed in this regard despite their socioeconomic differences.[51] As Griffin argued,

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[51] Beeching, 260, 265, 269, 273; Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 188 – 144; Tera W. Hunter, "The Blues Aesthetic and Black Vernacular Dance," in Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds., *Major Problems in African American History Volume II: From Freedom to "Freedom Now," 1865 – 1990s* (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2000), 202 – 209, 202 (quote).

Tera Hunter referred specifically reformers who perceived "the blues aesthetic and black vernacular dance" as evidence of black immorality rather than as key elements of black culture. For more information, see chapter 7 of Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom': Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 145 – 167.

Primus and Brown "provide a historical example of women who loved each other romantically and who were no less committed…to the struggle for black freedom and progress."[52]

Beeching explores the relationship between Primus and Charles Thomas that culminated in their marriage between three to five years after Primus left Royal Oak for good. Although Primus' letters sometimes alluded to growing connections, they remained silent on a friendship that moved beyond mere cordiality and respect toward a deep affection. As her southern host, along with his first wife, Sarah, Thomas frequently interacted with Primus on a personal level during her stay in Royal Oak. He met her at the wharf when she returned from trips home, arranged horseback riding excursions, and played a key role in the success of the Primus Institute. A letter to Primus' mother attributed to Thomas demonstrated his profound admiration for Rebecca. Most likely, Rebecca, or some other literate person in Royal Oak wrote the letter because the words do not sound like the language of a rural black activist of uncertain literacy. It read, "The lady-like deportment, sterling ability, and real personal worth of your highly esteemed daughter…has been highly commended by all classes." While he did not explicitly affirm a desire to pursue Primus, his words shed a sliver of light on the attraction between the two that developed over time.[53]

Primus had a cordial, though not close, connection with Sarah Thomas. The latter operated from a standpoint that was entirely different from Primus'. Mrs. Thomas did not have the education, middle-class background, or social status that Primus possessed. A working woman, not a learned teacher, Sarah Thomas remained "less interested in political matters than

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[52] Karen V. Hansen, "'No Kisses Is Like Youres': An Erotic Friendship between Two African-American Women during the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Gender and History* 7, no. 2 (August 1995), 153 – 182.

[53] White, "Rebecca Primus in Later Life," in Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 281.

in running her household." Charles Thomas may have found Primus' political consciousness intriguing since his wife focused on her role as a homemaker and community member rather than working to gain literacy skills. Griffin reported that the rumor mill among present-day residents of Royal Oak says that Sarah Thomas "'died of a broken heart' when her husband left her for the New England schoolteacher."[54] David O. White, another researcher who wrote about Primus' life after Royal Oak, questions this explanation due to his belief that Primus' character would keep her from becoming involved with a married man. While White did not find any evidence of Sarah Thomas' death before Charles married Primus, his high regard of Primus led him to suggest that there are alternatives to the folklore that implies a surreptitious relationship between Primus and Thomas. He acknowledged that Sarah Thomas "deeded her portion of their Royal Oak property to her husband" in 1871 and still hinted that Sarah Thomas died prior to her husband's departure from Royal Oak.[55]

White's reluctance to consider that Primus and Thomas cultivated an intimate relationship during her four years in the Thomas home is indicative of the tendency to present black teachers as especially moral in literature on nineteenth-century black women. Given the historical importance of oral histories in black communities, it is presumable that Sarah Thomas was left behind in Royal Oak to mend her broken heart. If so, Primus may have contributed to the dissolution of the Thomas' marriage during her four years under their roof. It does not mean that she played the role of a seductress intent on capturing Thomas' heart; he may have been completely intrigued by this exceptional woman the likes of whom were rare to the South. For his part, Thomas' active role in developing the Royal Oak community, his efforts toward self-

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[54] Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 77, 246, 274, 281 (quote).

[55] White, "Rebecca Primus in Later Life," in Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 281.

development, his status as a self-purchased landowner, and his local activism surely set him apart from other black men in both Royal Oak and Hartford. As a single woman over thirty open to intimate relationships, Primus may have been equally impressed by Thomas.[56]

By 1900, Rebecca Thomas lived alone in a house down the street from her sister, Isabella, nee Edwards, who worked as a school teacher. Widowed in 1891, after the accidental death of her husband Charles, Rebecca Primus Thomas also survived the death of her only child. Primus' upbringing acculturated her in prevailing aspects of Victorian culture. She formed a community of fellow writers and remained connected to her family and friends in Hartford through personal and professional correspondences. Her writings portray a society in transition even as they narrate the coming of age of a single black woman immersed in southern black culture. Viewing her work in the South alongside other antebellum free-black women teachers reveals varying conceptualizations of the meanings of freedom and adds variance to notions of a monolithic black experience.[57]

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Historians have argued that the desire to uplift the race through educational activism undergirded black women teachers' actions in the South. Linda Cabral wrote that northern-born black women teachers "could have led relatively comfortable lives, married, and shown no concern for [black southerners]….Instead they decided to…submerge themselves in the service of race uplift." Stanley and Primus demonstrate that the two were not mutually exclusive. Both Stanley and Primus contributed greatly to the educational development of the freed people they served. Importantly, they also cultivated intimate relationships that sometimes defied or

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[56] Beeching, "Great Expectations," 218 – 221, 269, 260, 265.

[57] 1900 US census; Griffin, *Beloved Sisters,* 49, 84, 92.

challenged the status quo. These aspects of their existence are often overshadowed or dismissed by the attention to their work as educators in the South, no matter how long or how briefly they taught. The historical tendency to discuss teachers only in terms of their roles in the educational transformations in the post-Civil War South creates the illusion of one-dimensional actors whose lives are valued only by their work as laborers. These women clearly acted freely on their personal aspirations even as they contributed greatly to the progress of freed people in the South. Adding a more focused examination of Stanley's and Primus' experiences as young women committed to pursuing intimate relationships to conversations about their contributions as teachers further acknowledges the nuances of human nature.[58]

[58] Cabral, "Letters from Four Antebellum Black Women Educators," 21 (quote).

CHAPTER 6
THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS FOR THE FREED PEOPLE

The female freedmen's teachers worked in full, complex, confounding contexts. As archetypes of tendencies across a few thousand teachers, the women in this study demonstrate rich cultural, religious, socio-economic, and individual diversity. Race, class, regional background, religion, and gender all came into play in terms of how they navigated the contours of southern society. Each woman sought to contribute to the advancement of their students but differed in terms of their visions of freedom. Ellen Jackson considered full rights of American citizenship for herself and all blacks as the ultimate goal while Carrie Blood worked toward the spiritual salvation of black southerners. Daffin wished to empower freed people by establishing black communities in the South and encouraging racial uplift through spirituality and education. Sara Stanley stressed the miseducation of racist whites whose actions contradicted her understanding of Christianity as a major problem in addition to the need to spread literacy among southern blacks. Rebecca Primus focused on academic instruction and managed the construction of a schoolhouse in a small southern town even as she cultivated a social life that seemed much less restrictive than that described in traditional histories of teachers in the South during Reconstruction.

As a black woman reared in Concord, Massachusetts, a town known for its work toward abolition, Ellen Jackson's actions illuminated her courage and determination in the face of racism and racial violence. While Blair Kelly situates Jackson within the context of black women travelers who fought for access to "white" spaces, as a teacher Jackson realized that access to

these contested spaces would require herculean efforts toward racial uplift. To the stationmaster at the Baltimore depot, it did not matter that Jackson possessed the characteristics that defined nineteen-century Victorian womanhood. Her spirituality, moral fortitude, virtue, and intellect did not factor into judgments about whether she was "fit" to share public space with white women. Her status as an African American superseded her adoption of Victorian culture. Jackson did not belong in the "Ladies Room" at the train depot because traditional narratives positioned black women outside of the confines of womanhood. Jackson, by her teaching and by example, sought to empower students by teaching them to stand up for their rights. She practiced the type of activism demonstrated by other nineteenth-century black women who refused to accept social norms that ran counter to their own sense of self.[1]

Carrie Blood's affiliation with the Congregational Church manifested in a commitment to missionary work which contributed to her heavy focus on morality training alongside academic instruction. Scientific racism and caricatures of enslaved blacks as subservient Sambos and Mammies, insatiable Jezebels, and untrained picaninnies buttressed Blood's perception of African Americans as a group in need of a strict moral code. Her missionary impulse extended beyond African Americans to the Chinese in California, and her whiteness contributed to her judgments of ethnic "Others." As a white woman from Lyme, New Hampshire, whose religious beliefs were closely tied to her belief in the superiority of northern middle-class culture, Blood considered spiritual salvation more important than concrete socioeconomic advancement.

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[1] Sandra Harbert, Petrulionis, "Swelling That Great Tide of Humanity": Concord, Massachusetts, Female Anti-Slavery Society," *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (September 2001). 385 – 418; Blair Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 42.

Blood believed that the freed people should seek heavenly salvation to achieve true freedom.[2]

While Sallie Daffin stressed the importance of spirituality in her classrooms, her dedication to the African Methodist Episcopal Church and its campaign of racial uplift ideology made her missionary work much different from Blood's. Her membership in the Garnet League, an organization that worked to establish all-black towns in the South with northern-born black leaders, pointed to her dedication to institution building and community development, in addition to morality training as a means to empowerment. Daffin taught toward the spiritual development of her students, not only as a means to salvation, but also for its temporal benefits. In the context of racial uplift, education and religion worked in tandem to develop upwardly mobile black communities.[3]

Sara Stanley shared Blood's and Daffin's missionary thrust, but her Christian beliefs manifested in the form of direct challenges to incidents of racial discrimination instead of judgments about black southerners' character. Her status as a southern-born free black woman from a well-respected family led her to push against boundaries that called for racial separation. Her mixed ancestry and Caucasian features made her ultra-sensitive to the absurdity of relying on race to define a person's character. Stanley openly practiced her belief in the equality of humankind by marrying a white northerner despite its illegality. Her activism pressed well

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[2] Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South,* Revised edition, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[3] Julius H. Bailey, *Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1865 – 1900* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

beyond access to public spaces to integrating the most intimate aspects of people's lives. Her vision of freedom included judging individuals based on merit rather than on skin color.[4]

Like Stanley, Rebecca Primus contributed greatly to the advancement of her students but also pursued intimate relationships with a female family friend from New England and with a southern-born man freed by self-purchase. Primus' solidly middle-class background, early schooling, and the self-confidence instilled by her family and friends enabled her to establish a long-standing center of learning for blacks in Royal Oak, Maryland. Although it took time for her to adjust to southern culture, she ultimately developed an appreciation for blacks in Royal Oak.[5]

Socioeconomic standing directly informed teachers' experiences with black southerners, especially in terms of material conditions, social behaviors, and religious tendencies. In his study of the cultural crossovers from Africa to the Americas, Michael Gomez argued that as early as the 1830, "at least two distinct and divergent visions of the African presence in America had achieved sufficient articulation." One group tended to navigate toward Eurocentric norms while the other remained beholden to Afrocentric mores, Gomez argued, and contributed to intraracial class stratification among black people in the post-war South. He identifies the assignment of different forms of labor, increased opportunities to interact with white people, and exposure to conservative religious practices as the conduits to the cultural and economic fissures that

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[4] Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 203; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 228; and chapter 4, "African Americans: The Idealization of Light Skin," of Ronald M. Hall's, *An Historical Analysis of Skin Color Discrimination in America: Victimism Among Victim Group Populations* (New York: Springer, 2010), 37 – 56.

[5] David O. White, "Rebecca Primus in Later Life," in Griffin, *Beloved Sisters*, 280.

developed among southern blacks over time.[6] Domestic and skilled laborers observed southern white culture in more intimate settings than agricultural laborers, which provided the space for a speedier acculturation to European culture than experienced by most enslaved individuals.

In the North, many elite members of free-black communities actively acculturated themselves to middle-class culture on their own accord. Importantly, although middle-class Victorian culture was inherently constructed by whites, it also began to define African American culture. Nineteenth-century free black people worked hard to gain recognition as Americans. Some adopted northern social norms and sought identification as Americans to counter larger society's tendency to view black people as Africans who lived in America. Black Americans considered it their right to embrace mores that increasingly defined American culture rather than cultivate elements of their increasingly distant African heritages. The push to live as Americans and not as second-class outsiders reflected African Americans' keen sense of their contributions to the making of America. They fought against white Americans' perceptions of people of African descent as inherently uncivilized in their quest to reap the benefits of citizenship in a nation that increasingly extended these benefits to European immigrants. Identifying as Americans rather than people of African descent demonstrated a deliberate strategy used by elite

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[6] Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 230 (quote), 228 – 229, 291 – 292. Gomez argued that owners often assigned domestic jobs to enslaved black people with whose features resembled those of their European ancestors and reserved field work and hard manual labor for those with more pronounced African features. During the Atlantic Slave Trade, owners preferred African peoples from certain regions of the continent because of the skills the latter possessed. This led to job specializations among certain ethnicities. As the American-born enslaved population began to supersede the numbers imported from Africa, owners used distinctions in skin color to assign specialized jobs that came with a level of prestige not usually available to field workers. It also came with different forms of abuse often downplayed by domestic workers' access to better material conditions.

black northerners to counter prevailing notions of black inferiority and push for citizenship rights. [7]

The black elite expressed its right to fully adopt the markers of socioeconomic success, even though it often alienated them from the masses of black northerners. Although many members of the black elite immersed themselves (as much as racial barriers allowed) into Victorian culture for their own personal gain, many also considered their actions as weapons against racism. The Primus family, for example, remained certain that adopting the accoutrements of middle-class society would disprove black inequality and keep the family comfortably situated in a city that increasingly constrained the opportunities for African American economic mobility. In fact, this premise buttressed uplift ideology advocated by elite black activists and church leaders.[8]

Middle-class African Americans established institutions and organizations that fostered the formation of churches, schools, and literary societies that all promoted character development and educational advancement as a key to success. The intellectual communities that developed in northern black cities often spearheaded national efforts in the struggle for black citizenship rights. After the Civil War, the black elite continued to focus on moral, religious, and educational training to strengthen black communities and combat racial discrimination. Even though the teachers identified in this study adopted the accoutrements of middle-class society in terms of dress, mannerisms, and refinement, their actual socioeconomic statuses often betrayed the

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[7] Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 209.

[8] Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14 – 15.

middle-class status implied in their performances of gentility. Still, some teachers expected freed people to readily accept northern norms despite the impossibility of achieving middle class status given the material conditions of the South.

Sharon Harley noted that middle-class black women acknowledged the cultural influence they expected to hold within working-class black communities in her study of the founders of the Colored Social Settlement of Washington, D. C. Educated black women at the turn of the twentieth century founded this organization because they believed that their presence among poor blacks would provide positive models of behaviors that could eventually improve the lives of the masses. In the context of racial uplift, Harley argued that teaching was "work, clothed in a reformist veil" that allowed "respectable" black women opportunities to earn money and combat racism. This same concept applies to black women teachers in the South during Reconstruction. Ellen Jackson, Rebecca Primus, Sallie Daffin, and Sara Stanley expected to reach poor blacks by their "example of excellence" in addition to their teaching.[9] As Kevin Gaines argued, "uplift came to mean an emphasis on self-help, racial solidarity, temperance, thrift, chastity, social purity, patriarchal authority, and the accumulation of wealth."[10]

The cultural chasm between northern and southern black religious sensibility, rooted in part in a northern Victorian culture versus a more indigenous southern black religious sensibility, made some black teachers highly critical of southern worship services. In terms of worshiping styles, Gomez described a "house negro"/"field hand" dichotomy to argue that enslaved

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[9] Sharon Harley, "Beyond the Classroom: The Organizational Lives of Black Female Educators in the District of Columbia, 1890 – 1930," *Journal of Negro History* 51, no. 3 (Summer, 1982), 257 (quote 1), 262 (quote 2), 265 n. 29 (quote 3).

[10] Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race,* 2 (quote).

domestics worshiped more often with their owners in conservative Methodist churches while agricultural workers gravitated to more emotive types of praise in Baptist congregations.[11]

While many of the tensions between white teachers and black southerners stemmed from the latter's history of enslavement and the former's beliefs in the ideology of racial difference, black teachers' experiences demonstrate that regional and cultural differences contributed to intra-racial conflicts. Often the double stigma of being black *and* southern influenced conflicts traditionally associated with racism rather than genuine belies in the superiority of northern culture. In her assessment of northern-born teachers in the South, Sara Dalmas Jonsberg absolved four white women who, uncommonly, expressed a "willingness to listen and learn" from the freed people which led them to aspire to "an ultimate goal of racial equality." She argued that over time, their original perceptions of black southerners as abnormal yielded "to a deep affection that [was] not pity but genuine respect." She concluded that, "Maybe they didn't always do it right, maybe they were bound by their culture in ways that made what they did sometimes unwittingly destructive, but they did their best." Although her study focuses specifically on well-meaning white women teachers, Jonsberg's conclusions shed light on black women's regional biases that sometimes manifested in seeming contempt for black southern ways of life. She perceived Mary Ames, Elizabeth Hyde Botume, Sarah Jane Foster, and Laura Towne as "models" not "monsters" because their correspondences reflected a more emancipatory vision of black freedom than traditionally described in studies of "Yankee Schoolmarms in the South."[12]

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[11] Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks,* 230 (quote), 228 – 229, 291 – 292.

[12] Sara Dalmas Jonsberg, "Yankee Schoolmarms in the South: Models or Monsters?," *The English Journal* 91, no. 4 (March 2002), 77 (quotes 1 and 2), 79 (quote 3), 80 (quote 4). Jonsberg examined correspondences from Mary Ames, Elizabeth Hyde Botume, Sarah Jane Foster, and Laura Towne, all

Religion is, ultimately, simply one manifestation of culture. Gaining a traditional education almost inevitably leads one to value a different form of worship than that valued by the differently educated. It is simply true that the religion of the illiterate is far different from the religion of the literate. As educated women, Jackson, Blood, and Primus expected sermons to make sense, to follow a line of argument, to reject some of the magical thinking often reflected among less educated believers. While their educational backgrounds do not excuse their negative judgments of southern black forms of worship, it does help to understand the awkward, complex, contradictory situation of any teacher in a setting such as the South who found it uncomfortable to sit through a sermon from people who had very different understandings of scripture.

Some education instilled hope for little more than people had in slavery. A positive education sought to respect and love the learner in all of her cultural fullness but also to move her to greater intellectual power and thus, invariably, to a different way of being, a different culture. Cultural change is inevitable when we learn. Teachers sought to transform students—from illiterate to literate, from uncouth to refined, from irrational to rational. These women did not expect students to remain as they were when they first entered their classrooms. On the surface, they aimed to equip their students with literacy skills. On deeper levels, some teachers believed that schooling would open avenues for economic, political, and social advancement, while other adopted narrow definitions of freedom that reflected an inability or reluctance to shake prevailing ideologies of black inferiority. The measure of their work depended on what teachers expected students to gain from their schooling.

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white women from northern states whose work among the freed people reflected a more emancipatory vision of black freedom. See also, Laura Matilda Towne, *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne; Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862 – 1884*, Rupert Sargent Holland, ed. (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

The question is the degree to which the teacher can come to understand and value the learner's culture as a resource and build on it to move the learner beyond her culture, without the expectation that she abandon her original culture. The opposite is the teacher who is contemptuous of the culture, sees no resources in it, and demands a complete rejection of the home culture and full (uncritical) acceptance of the dominant culture, which requires an abandonment of the original culture. In both cases, a cultural transformation has happened, but one is empowering while the other is disempowering. Despite the inability to assess the degree to which either stance changed the political and economic realities on the ground in the South, having an empowered sense of oneself, with an appreciation of where one came from and where one has gone and is going, makes her far better prepared to navigate the treacherous waters of the Reconstruction South.[13]

The passage of the 14th Amendment represented a victory for blacks long denied the privileges of living in a democratic nation. The vital contributions of people of African descent in the making of America, a nation that championed "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," meant little in a society that stigmatized blackness no matter the concrete evidence of black ingenuity, intellect, and humanity. No matter their educational attainments, African Americans faced limited opportunities for land ownership, unequal employment, violent reactions to entrepreneurship, and the continued exploitation of their labor. The end of slavery led to drastic changes in the lives of African Americans in the post-Civil War South, but the nation's history as

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[13] John Henrik Clarke, *African People in World History* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1993), 11 (footnote quote). Clarke documented the centrality of studying oneself when he wrote, "…history is a clock that people use to tell their political and cultural time of day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography. History tells a people where they have been and what they have been, where they are and what they are. Most important, an understanding of history tells a people where they still must go and what they still must be."

one rooted in white supremacy crippled the efforts of even the most resilient and hardworking activists.[14] Fated to work in contradictory contexts of federal acknowledgments of African Americans' citizenship rights without any tangible program to protect those rights, teachers in schools for the freed people faced a no-win situation. The "redemption" of the South and its accompanying reassertion of white supremacy and demands for black subordination meant that teachers' on-the-ground work could only plant seeds of social change that would lie dormant for decades. Ultimately, the teachers, like the race as a whole, did not have the tools necessary to challenge the long history of racism fostered by a brutal system of slavery and a stereotyping campaign.[15]

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[14] For discussions of the perpetuation of white supremacy in the South and the North after the Civil War, see for example, W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, (1935, Reprint, New York: The Free Press, 1998); Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm Too Long: The Aftermath of Slavery,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817 – 1914,* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750 – 1925,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1976; Roger L. Ransom, and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation,* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865 – 1890,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

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[15] Stephen Jay, Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton & Company, 1981, revised and expanded version, 1996).

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